



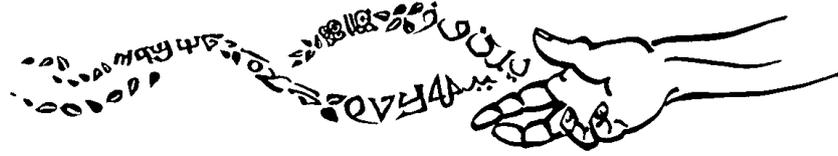
# FEL XX HYDERABAD

**Organisers:**  
Foundation for Endangered Languages, U.K.  
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**Language Colonization and Endangerment:  
Long-term Effects, Echoes and Reactions**  
December 9-12, 2016  
University of Hyderabad, India

FEL XX Proceedings  
Back side of front cover



# **FOUNDATION FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES**

in association with

**University of Hyderabad**

**Centre for Endangered Languages and Mother Tongue Studies**

**FEL XX**

**Language Colonization**

**and Endangerment:**

**long-term effects, echoes and reactions**

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Nicholas Ostler and Panchanan Mohanty

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### Details of the cover

Front page: Top: A Gutob Gababa woman in Tokkali village, Koraput  
Middle: Savara painting, Gajapati  
Bottom: Gugaguda paddy fields, Koraput

Back page: Top Left: Temple of the Savara tribe, Rigidisima, Khurda  
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# Language Colonization and Endangerment: long-term effects, echoes and reactions

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## Introduction

FEL's XX conference, held in Hyderabad, India, has a theme based in historical causation: specifically colonial régimes, and their effects on language use, both immediate and long-term, and whether directly, or through a chain of intermediate reactions. Colonization is an age-old and world-wide phenomenon of human history, at least 5000 years old, and so are its linguistic effects. But inevitably our interest in this conference will be focused particularly on the colonialism of the last 500 years, and the effects in South Asia, where our meeting takes place. Our chief colonial players, then, have been the Mughal sultanate and the British empire.

Colonial governments often, but not always, favour their own native language, as the dominant power. (The Mughals, with their long-standing passion for Persian, are an interesting exception to this.) But they may also foster new languages, and re-order the relations, and relative vitality, of different language communities under their sway. The emergence of Hindi and Urdu, for example, is inexplicable without considering the language policies of the last two dominions in South Asia since 1500.

Then, after independence, there is also an inevitable reaction, and a taking stock within the new governing structures, on the appropriate roles for languages in the new era. Ironically, and as a challenge for democratic language planning, these new policies may pose new threats for many of the more endangered languages that they affect.

At any rate, colonial organization and its aftermath cannot be ignored in assessing past language dynamics, the current situation, and the prospects for future development of languages in what promises to be a less hierarchical future.

We have ordered our discussions temporally, into three day-long streams focused on the past, the present and the future, entitled *The Past – Colonial Languages; Effects of Colonization – Lead-up to the Present*; and *Reactions and Future Policies*. This means that the more historical descriptions occur on the first day, and those –perhaps more starry-eyed– which discern the birth of new world orders of language, tend to come on the last day. But

nothing is clear-cut in the world of language communities, and so all the papers have a pronounced historical memory.

## The Past

Our keynote paper is given by our host in Hyderabad, Prof Panchanan Mohanty, recounting the principal feature of a little known endangered language, Walmiki, which happens to be named after the famous author of the epic Ra:ma:yaṅṅa. It is an interesting puzzle, having many different attributes which would suggest it belongs to quite different families, hence – in a way – shows how mixed is the heritage of which we are trying to make some developmental sense.

The historical pageant begins with Elnazarov's paper on British and Russian military scholars attempting a first scientific documentation of the languages of Central Asia. Hasnain is equally historical in interest, but adopts much more theoretical outlook in surveying the clash between colonial ideas of language and the reality on the ground in South Asia. Prasannanshu gives an overview of the various languages of the Delhi region, the city which has been north India's effective, and mostly official, capital for over a millennium.

Asoulin and Whaley turn our attention away from Asia to consider how colonial explorers and settlers have named bodies of water in North America, noting that indigenous names are more likely to stick on large-scale features, continental-scale rivers and lakes. Satyanath describes the challenges to mapping the complexity of linguistic diversity in Bengal. Coluzzi offers a thought-provoking piece comparing the linguistic histories of Italy and Malaysia, both territories with considerable regional language diversity that had survived colonialism from a distant past, but where more recent internal colonialism led by an autonomous central government has in effect imposed a single norm.

Dattamajumdar gives a description of Bodo, Rabha and Tiwa, three small language communities of the Indian north-east, tracing their interrelation diachronically, and revealing that colonial effects are only a small part of the story. Naby recounts another prima facie surprising case of ineffective colonialism, namely the reasons for the discreet presence, and then disappearance of Ottoman

Turkish, both during and after the Ottoman empire. Hashami looks at post-colonialism, specifically the spread of a particular kind of Hindi in Bihar, and its contact effects.

Balasubramanian offers a work of philology, interested in the social and commercial determinants of a bilingual agent's mixed Tamil and French in the early colonial history of Pondicherry. Das places Rabha (one of the languages discussed by Dattamajumdar), a language with Mongolian affiliations, in its historical background of the 'Koch' empire, with the various changes that have followed, particularly noting some details of its phraseology.

### The Present

Rei-Doval reviews the changing status and use of the Galician language in North-West Spain, apparently facing decline although it has survived a history on the edge two global empires, those of Spain and Portugal. David et al. look at the career of the Sindhi language, with a strong Muslim community since the early Turkic incursions into Sindh, and which was promoted by the British as a potential unifier for the region; since the creation of Pakistan, however, it has faced government-supported competition, primarily from Urdu. Nonetheless, the language remains stronger at home than in the Sindhi diaspora.

Walsh and Troy offer a pioneering study of the influence that Australian aboriginal languages have sustained from Asian and European languages, none of which would have happened, of course, without the British colonization of the continent. Tamsunungsang and Bareh look at the language situation in the eastern Himalaya, considering its roots in colonial policy, but also the more recent effects of standardization on the diversity of language use (notably Khasi and Ao), but favouring some local languages (e.g. the young pidgin Nagamese) as well as English. Troy and Bhatti, natives respectively of Ngarigu and Saraiki communities, compare the pressures on their home language communities.

We then have four papers which describe and analyse languages of the Indian north-east: Odisha and Jharkhand. Anderson and Gomango look at Juray, a Munda language; there has been Indo-Aryan influence, but not in the British period. Bapuji writes on Ollari Gadaba, a Dravidian language, "colonized" by the mainstream Oia, which has replaced some of its lexicon, pronouns and numerals. Satapathy describes So:ra:, a variety close to Oia, which is interesting for language attitudes and also the effects of geographical position. Krishna Bhattacharya writes on Birjia in Jharkhand, describing its history, but also its current pressures from Hindi and Sadri.

Barasa looks at the fraught survival of the Ateso language in Kenya and Uganda in East Africa, in a situation which de facto favours English. Sharma talks about language endangerment in the new-ish Indian states Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. By and large the Indo-Aryan languages of the state are prevailing at

the expense of the Tibeto-Burman languages which are spoken in the highland regions to the north.

### The Future

Sequeira and Enakshi recount the chameleon-like career of Konkani in south-west India (notably Goa), affected by Marathi, Portuguese and British imperialism in the past, which has taken new directions after independence. Mesthrie et al. report on the language as it established itself in the Cape Town area of South Africa. There it survives without official support, apparently jumping a generation. Hudson talks about how the Ulithian language in the Pacific has recreated itself as a "mother-tongue", giving a new meaning to *language coalescence*.

Reverting to the Himalayan region, Longkumer reports on how Nagamese, in origin a pidginized version of Assamese, has grown as a lingua franca in Nagaland, at the expense of smaller local languages. Pandey describes another pidgin, "Parushi", spoken by the Nath Panthi Dauri Gosavi (NPDG) community, a nomadic tribe in Maharashtra.

Faraclas et al. compare three mother-tongue literacy and community-base approaches in very different regions: St Eustatius Dutch in the Caribbean; intercultural bilingual education in Honduras in Central America, with a variety of local languages; and more community-based literacy in Vanuatu and Papua-New Guinea in the South Pacific.

There are then two descriptions of Nihali, an endangered language of Maharashtra, which appears to be isolated genetically. Nagaraja is concerned to pre-figure its future, while Mohan tries to puzzle out its wider relationships.

The volume closes with two more philosophical pieces: Bhattacharya writing about conceptual and legal issues that surround the status of languages in India; and Singh more generally envisions a New Linguistic World Order.

### Thanks and Acknowledgements

Out first thanks go to the Committee members who gave their time and expertise to evaluating papers. These were Adriano Truscott, Cassie Smith-Christmas, Christopher Moseley, Claudia Soria, David Nathan, Femmy Admiraal, Ghilad Zuckermann, Hakim Elnazarov, Maya David, McKenna Brown, Salem Mezhoud, Serena d'Agostino, Tseard de Graaf. In India and beyond, new friends did us similar service: Krishnaswamy Rangan, V Gnanasundaram, Rajend Mesthrie, Sonal Kulkarni-Joshi, Shailendra Mohan, S. Imtiaz Hasnain, Krishna Bhattacharya, S. Bhattacharya, B Ramakrishna Reddy, and Awadesh K Mishra. Serena provided our theme. We also thank the FEL Treasurer, Steven Krauwer, for all his attentions to the financial aspects of FEL XX.

Speaking for FEL itself now, Nicholas thanks Prof. Panchanan Mohanty, and the organizing committee in India, for their help. Panchanan in particular has been genial and generous in supporting all aspects: meeting, accommodation, excursion, and so much more.

# Keynote Paper — A Pilot Study of Walmiki and its Present Status

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## Abstract

Walmiki is the name of both the community as well as the language they speak. This community lives in the Dandakaranya area in Koraput district of the state of Odisha, India and claim themselves to be the descendants of Valmiki who composed the Sanskrit classic Ramayana in the pre-historic times.

Odisha is a unique state in the sense that it hosts as many as 62 scheduled tribes and 93 scheduled castes. No other Indian State has this kind of distinction. Besides these, the largest numbers of Dravidian and Munda languages, which are mostly spoken by various unprivileged social groups, are also spoken in Odisha. But, interestingly Walmiki has not found a place in any study dealing with the languages or cultures of the state of Odisha. This community was discovered during one of our field trips to Koraput, a southern district in the state of Odisha, India. These people live in the interior villages like Kanta, Kularsing, Andragarh, Golluru, Sujankota and Darelu in Koraput district and in a couple of villages of Andhra Pradesh. The population strength of this community is very small and their language is an endangered language. This paper is the first attempt to study this language in some detail.

We collected the basic vocabulary consisting of the words for numerals, colours, body parts, kinship terms, pronouns, and days of the week along with different types of sentences, i.e. declarative, conditional, interrogative, and negative of this language for this pilot study. Though we could see that lexically and grammatically it is Indo-Aryan to a large extent, it possesses a number of words and morphological characteristics which are clearly non-Aryan i.e. both Dravidian and Munda. For example, words like /ko:ti/ 'monkey' and /a:tta/ 'mother-in-law' are Dravidian. The numerals also present an interesting picture. While the Indo-Aryan numerals like 'twenty-nine' or 'ninety-nine' are usually expressed as '(one) less than thirty' and '(one) less than hundred' respectively, these are formed as 'twenty-plus-nine' and 'ninety plus-nine' in Walmiki. It is clearly the Dravidian system of numeral formation.

Another set of interesting characteristics we noticed in Walmiki are those which are identical to Marathi, e.g. words such as /undar/ 'mouse', /čangli/ 'good', and the possessive marker /-ča:/ (masc.) and /-či/ (fem.) Usually in Indo-Aryan, the numerals after ten consist of the small number followed by the big one. Let us take examples from Odia, a major Indo-Aryan language spoken in the state of Odisha: /ektiris/ 'thirty-one' (literally 1 + 30), /ba:stari/ 'seventy-two' (literally 2 + 70), /čaura:nabe/ 'ninety-four' (literally 4 + 90). But the penultimate numeral in each set of ten shows a different pattern, e.g. /aṅṅatiris/ 'twenty-nine' (literally (one) less than 30), /aṅṅača:lis/ 'thirty-nine' (literally (one) less than 40). Interestingly, though Walmiki uses the Indo-Aryan numerals, the combining pattern after 'twenty' is clearly Dravidian wherein first the big number is used and the small one follows it like English. The following examples from Telugu, a South Central Dravidian language, will drive home the point: /na:labhai:aidu/ 'forty-five' (literally 40 +5), /ya:bhai:a:ru/ 'fifty-six' (literally 50 +6). Walmiki also uses the same pattern, e.g. /bisek doni/ 'twenty-two' (literally 20 +2), /nabenau/ 'ninety-nine' (literally 90 +9).

Now the question is how and why Walmiki possesses these characteristics which are found in other languages and language families. We want to link all these to the Walmiki community's migration under the pressure of colonization and argue in this paper that these speakers were probably speaking a Dravidian language when they were in Maharashtra where Marathi is the dominant language. They migrated to Odisha at a later point of time and claimed decent from the great poet Va:lmi:ki in order to settle down in the Dandakaranya area which has an important place in the Ra:ma:yaṅa and to gain acceptability by the surrounding peoples. This is the reason for which all these characteristics from different language families are found in this language.

## 1. Introduction

India has been considered a 'sociolinguistic giant' because a very large number of languages belonging to at least four major language families, i.e. Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austroasiatic, and Tibeto-Burman are spoken and these have been in contact with each other for millennia in this sub-continent. According to the 2001 Census data, 76.86% of the Indian population speak Indo-European languages, 20.82% speak Dravidian languages, 1.11% speak Austroasiatic

languages and 1.00% speak Tibeto-Burman languages. Again, 96.56% Indians speak one of the 22 scheduled languages as their mother tongue whereas the remaining 3.44% speak all the remaining languages. These statistical data are indicative of the anomalous linguistic situation in India. After the 1961 Census, the Govt. of India decided not to publicize the names of those languages which are spoken by less than 10,000 speakers. This decision has made the situation worse because no data are available about these minor languages which are mostly spoken by various small

tribal communities and scheduled castes. Therefore, a large number of languages are decaying due to our ignorance and neglect and Walmiki, which is the focus in this paper, is one them.

## 2. About Walmiki

Walmiki is the name of both the community as well as the language they speak. The community is also otherwise known as Balmiki. The eastern Indo-Aryan languages in general convert the individual occurrences of /w/ into /b/ (e.g. /wa:yu/ → /ba:yu/ in Odia and Bangla, etc.) and Balmiki has clearly been under the same influence. As per the 2011 Census, the Walmiki community consists of 1402 members out of which 724 are male and 678 are female. 70.11% members (i.e. 983) of this community live in Dandakaranya area of the Koraput district in Odisha followed by the Malkangiri district which is inhabited by 18.54% (260) of them. Thurston (1909:310) reports that this community is named Walmiki because it “lives on the products of ant-hills” and /wa:lmi:kam/ refers to ‘white-ant hill’ in Sanskrit. But this observation does not seem to be convincing. In fact, by occupation the Walmikis are cultivators and collectors of forest products.

Though now they are surrounded by different tribal communities the Walmikis have been classified as a scheduled caste in the state of Odisha (Ota and Mohanty 2015). Another issue is that there are no fixed criteria all over the Indian peninsula to determine the status of a community, i.e. whether it is a scheduled caste (SC), a scheduled tribe (ST), or an other backward caste (OBC). Therefore, the same community may be a scheduled caste in one state, a scheduled tribe in the neighboring one and an other backward caste in a different state. This categorization has also created a lot of discontent among various communities. For this reason, the Walmikis who have been categorized as a scheduled caste by the Government of Odisha, have been making an effort to be recognized as a scheduled tribe.

Odisha is a unique state in India in the sense that it hosts as many as 62 tribes and 93 scheduled castes speaking different languages belonging to various language families. Besides these, the largest number of Dravidian and Munda languages, which are spoken mostly by various small communities, are also spoken in this state. That is why, it has been called a sub-linguistic area as well as convergence corridor (Mohanty 1997, 2007, 2016). No other Indian state has this kind of distinction. But surprisingly, Walmiki has not been able to attract scholars’ attention so far for the study of either its language or its culture. We came across this community during a field trip to the district of Koraput in Odisha earlier this year. These people live in the interior villages like Kanta, Kularsing, Andragarh, Golluru, Sujankota and Darelu, etc. in Koraput district and in a couple of adjoining villages of Andhra Pradesh. The Boya and the Paidi communities living in Andhra Pradesh also call themselves Walmikis. It will not be out of place to mention that Bhattacharya (1957) has

mentioned about a tribe called Poya which spoke a Dravidian language. In spite of our best efforts, we have not able to trace any tribe by this name in Koraput so far. In all likelihood, this Boya community has been reported as Poya by Bhattacharya.

The Census of India figures clearly indicate that the strength of this community has dwindled in the last 50 years and the Census figures from 1961 to 2011 are as follows:

1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
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111	1423	1960	1324	1145	1402

The whole community claims themselves to be the descendants of the great saint-poet Va:lmi:ki, who is called *a:di kavi* ‘first poet’ of Sanskrit because of his great classic composition *Ra:ma:yaṇa* in the pre-historic times. According to these people, Va:lmi:ki lived in that place and his *a:śrama* ‘hermitage’ exists there.

The Walmiki community is endogamous and is divided into various clans, i.e. balu, macha, pangi, bagh, toi, gurud, sanku, goduda, nag, hanu, etc. These clans are further divided into a large number of exogamous lineages, viz. Gampa, Karnam, Rangi, Gamparai, Chetty, Pineemala, Mangha, Chenda, Gandru, Kuda, Sandadi, Agathambidi, Pargi, Mosia, Samareddy, Mandi, Verngada, Londadi, Talani, Chautia, Narigeli, Kora, Marati, Adikatia, Landa, Nikulu and Kommu, etc. (Ota and Mohanty 2015:268).

It should be noted here that such a large number of clans along with their lineages are not commonly found in the case of most other communities. This makes the Walmikis a unique community, especially when it consists of only 1,402 members.

## 3. The Data

When we came across this community during our field trip, we collected the basic vocabulary of this language consisting of the words for numerals, kinship terms, body parts, colours, days of the week along with different types of sentences, i.e. declarative, interrogative, negative and conditional. In this pilot study, we will focus only on the basic lexicon and some morphological aspects which seem interesting from a linguistic point of view.

## 4. Numerals

The numerals in Walmiki present an interesting picture about the language. Usually in Indo-Aryan, the numerals after ten consist of the small number followed by the big one. Let us take examples from Odia, a major Indo-Aryan language spoken in the state of Odisha: /ekatiris/ (literally 1 + 30) ‘thirty-one’, /ba:stari/ (literally 2 + 70) ‘seventy-two’, /caura:nabe/ (literally 4 + 90) ‘ninety-four’. But the penultimate numeral in each set of ten shows a different pattern, e.g. /aṇatiris/

(literally (one) less than 30) ‘twenty-nine’, /aṇača:l̪is/ (literally (one) less than 40) ‘thirty-nine’. Interestingly, though Walmiki uses the Indo-Aryan numerals, the combining pattern after ‘twenty’ is clearly Dravidian wherein first the big number is used and the small one follows it like English. The following examples from Telugu, a South Central Dravidian language, will drive home the point: /irawai tommidi/ (literally 20 +9) ‘twenty-nine’ and /tombai tommidi/ (literally 90 +9) ‘ninety-nine’ respectively. Walmiki also shows the same pattern, e.g. /bisek doni/ (literally 20 +2) ‘twenty-two’, /nabe nau/ (literally 90 +9) ‘ninety-nine’. It can be noticed here that Walmiki uses /doni/ for ‘two’ which is similar to Marathi /don/ ‘two’. Again, Walmiki uses /ekonis/ for ‘nineteen’ which is again like Marathi /ekonis/ in connected speech and /ekonwis/ in careful speech.

It is clear from the above that though Walmiki uses Indo-Aryan numerals, the grammar for combining these into higher-order numerals is Dravidian.

## 5. Kinship terms

Kinship terms are considered a part of the basic vocabulary in any human language because human beings live in families. These are also considered highly culture-specific. A careful consideration of the Walmiki kinship terms demonstrates that this kinship system is a blend of the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian systems. Consider the following examples of reference kinship terms:

<u>Walmiki</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>Indo-Aryan/ Dravidian</u>
mʉʉa: ta:ta	great grandfather (maternal)	moṭha pandʒoba: (Marathi)
aja:	grandfather (maternal)	aja (Odia)
a:i	grandmother (maternal)	a:i (Odia)
na:ti	grandson	na:ti (Odia)
na:tun̪i	granddaughter	na:tun̪i (Odia)
putra:	father’s brother’s son	putura: (Odia)
naḍema:la anna	middle brother	naḍuma anna (Telugu)
ta:ta:	grandfather	ta:ta (Telugu)

It is evident from these examples terms that Walmiki kinship system is again a confluence of the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian systems.

## 6. Body Parts

The Walmiki words for various body parts exhibit a similar trend. The following examples are illustrative:

<u>Walmiki</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>Indo-Aryan/ Dravidian</u>
seṇḍi	hair	seṇḍi (Marathi)
a:ṅkhi	eye	a:khi (Odia)
da:nta	tooth	da:nta (Odia)
aṅṭu	knee	aṅṭhu (Odia)
bujam	shoulder	bujam (Telugu)
gunḍe	chest	gunḍe (Telugu)
naḍumu	waist	naḍumu (Telugu)
mi:sam	mustache	mi:sam (Telugu)
a:ṅkhi repa:	eye lid	a:khi (Odia), reppa (Telugu)

These examples clearly show that the body part words used in Walmiki are from various language sources. Needless to say that, this kind of situation is not usually found in many other languages.

## 7. Colours

Unlike English, Walmiki has fewer basic colour terms. Out of these, the sources of the most basic two colour terms, i.e. white and black are difficult to determine, e.g. /čakil/ ‘white’, /ni:ḍi/ ‘black’. Though Pandharipande (1997:369) has used /ni ya:/ for ‘black’, some other Marathi scholars I have contacted do not agree with her and opine that it should be ‘blue’. But in Walmiki the terms for ‘black’ and ‘blue’ are different, i.e. /ni:ḍi/ and /ni:la/ respectively. Then, there are at least three colour terms that can have their origin in Dravidian. These colours are red, green and purple which are denoted by /eraṅga/, /pacana/, and /wanga/ respectively in Walmiki. The comparable Telugu colour terms /erupu/, /pačča/, and /wanka/ make it evident that the Walmiki terms can be treated as the cognates of these.

## 8. Other Significant Words

A careful analysis of the collected Walmiki words in our data portray a picture which opens up two different sources before us, i.e. Indo-Aryan and Dravidian. As expected, because of its long contact with Odia, there are a good number of words in Walmiki whose cognates are found in Odia, e.g. /na:ũ/ ‘name’ (Odia /nā:/), /kukuḍa:/ ‘rooster’ (Odia /kukuḍa:/), /a:ji/ ‘today’ (Odia /a:ji/), etc.

But the presence of some Marathi words in it, though very few in number, is exciting and indicative, e.g. /ča:ŋgli/ ‘good’, /undar/ ‘mouse’, etc. These words are not used at all in any variety of Odia.

There are some other nouns in Walmiki referring common animals, food items, and even some verbs which are evidently Dravidian in origin. For example, /koti/ ‘monkey’, /seruku/ ‘sugar-cane’, and /siŋd̪itai/ ‘is cutting’, etc. These words convey the same meanings in Telugu. But it is important to note that there are quite a number of Walmiki lexical items for which the sources could not be determined, e.g. /ča:ɽu/ ‘leg’, /čakil/ ‘white’, etc. and further research is required for it.

## 9. Some Morphological Aspects

Another set of interesting characteristics we noticed in Walmiki are in its morphology. It uses /baja:r-te/ ‘market-to’, /un-te/ ‘inside-to’ in which /-te/ is an accusative marker. It can be mentioned here that /-te/ is used widely in Munda languages to mark an object, e.g. Kharia /a:m-te/ ‘you-to’, Juang /a:roki-te/ ‘they-to’. Even Odia uses it for the same purpose in the case of the first person and second person singular and non-honorific pronouns, e.g. /mo:te/ ‘me-to’, /to-te/ ‘you-to’.

Walmiki words like /brukyam-lu/ ‘trees’, /gaɽɽa:lu/ ‘beard’ clearly show that /-lu/ is a plural marker in it. It is also well known that the plural marker in Telugu is /-lu/ e.g. /pilla-lu/ ‘children’, /ce:tu-lu/ ‘hands’, etc. So it is reasonable to argue that Walmiki has acquired it from Telugu, which is also spoken widely in South Odisha.

Interestingly, Walmiki uses the possessive markers /-ča:/ (masc.) and /-či/ (fem.) frequently, e.g. /tum-ča:/ ‘your’, /sunita:či/ ‘Sunita’s’, etc. While these possessive markers are very normal in Marathi, these are never found in either Odia or Telugu. Therefore, our contention is that Walmiki has got it from Marathi.

## 10. Concluding Remarks

From the above discussion, it is clear that the lexicon and morphology of Walmiki possess characteristics which are traceable to different language families like Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and Munda. To be specific, the presence of a few vocabulary items and grammatical morphemes frequently attested in Marathi is surprising. On the basis of these, it can be argued that in all probability the Walmiki community lived in Maharashtra some time in remote past. They migrated to their present domicile, i.e. the Dandakaranya area of the Koraput district in Odisha under some pressure of colonization. While migrating from Maharashtra to Odisha, it must have been a very long journey for this community and it must have come in close contact with other communities for longer periods in different places on the way. As a result, the Walmiki language has acquired a lot of linguistic and cultural characteristics from the other communities it came in contact with. This may be one of the reasons for which it possesses an

unusually large number of clans and lineages/septs. Another piece of evidence in support of its migration comes from the fact that it uses /č/ for the Sanskrit /kṣ/.

For example, it has /lačimba:ram/ ‘Thursday’ for /lakṣmiva:ram/ because Thursday is considered to be the day of Goddess Lakshmi, who is the goddess of wealth in the Indian pantheon.

Usually, this /kṣ/ of Sanskrit has been retained as /kkh/ or /kh/ in the eastern Indo-Aryan languages like Odia, Assamese, and Bengali, etc. when it is found to have become /č/ in other branches of Indo-Aryan through various stages of Prakrit.

Another hypothesis is that Walmiki came into existence as a pidgin and over a period of time became a creole. That is why, it possesses lexical and morphological features of different language families of India.

The other hypothesis is that the number of lexical items whose sources are difficult to determine implies that Walmiki may be an isolate. The very name of the community as well as the language, Walmiki, indicates that it probably did not have any unified and stable source. Some of these issues will most probably be resolved if we undertake a detailed analyses of more lexical, morphological and syntactic data of this language.

This community has named itself after the great saint-poet of ancient India Va:lmiki purposefully, most probably after reaching the Dandakaranya area. The probable reason is that Dandakaranya has an important space in the *Ra:ma:yaṇa* and this community must have gained acceptability and respect from communities around them by claiming descent from the ancient seer Va:lmiki.

## Colophon

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# **Endangered Languages of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush in the Works of the Russian and British Explorers during the Colonial Period**

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## **Abstract**

The mountain regions of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush are home to some of the most ancient languages, known as Pamiri, Nuristani and Dardic languages which were preserved in the isolated mountain ravines of Central Asia for centuries. The exploration of the uncharted territory, initiated by the British and Russian agents and officers for military purposes, led to the production of a body of knowledge about the cultures of the mountain communities, including their languages. Many of the military officers had a background in oriental studies and were engaged in recording and learning of the languages of the mountain communities. The demarcation and annexation of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush by the Russians and the British in the 1890s facilitated the arrival of imperial scholars to the mountain regions to study the indigenous languages and their vitality under imperial rule.

This paper presents the description of the languages of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush in the despatches, reports and publications of the British and Russian explorers, highlighting their contribution to the study and preservation of the endangered languages. The paper also explores the attitude of the colonial rulers towards the languages and cultures of the mountain dwellers as it emerges from the works of the imperial administrators, officers and scholars. It will be demonstrated that the interest and the study of the indigenous languages did not materialise into actual policy actions and promotion of the languages. Nevertheless, colonial rule, particularly Russian and subsequently Soviet rule, provided an environment which was conducive to the preservation of endangered Pamiri languages.

## **Introduction**

The vast mountainous region of Central Asia, encompassing the Pamirs, Hindu Kush and Karakorum mountain ranges is host to numerous small ethnolinguistic groups. Scholars often classify the region as an 'ethnographic museum'. In all certainty these groups have retained their distinctive linguistic and cultural diversity due to the geographically complex pattern of the mountainous terrain.

The genealogy of these mountain languages places them within the broader group of Indo-Iranian and Indo-Arian languages. They have been classified as Eastern Iranian, Nuristani and Dardic languages within those groups. The exception is the Burushaski language, spoken in Hunza-Nagar and Yasin area in Gilgit district of Northern Pakistan, which is known as a language isolate; that is, its membership of a linguistic phylum is not established.

The mountain region in the heart of Asia remained an uncharted and mysterious land for the European until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the time of Marco Polo, the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Venetian traveller, who crossed the Pamir mountains on his way to China and left an account of his journey through the Pamirs, very few Europeans ventured into the mountain area until the beginning of the rivalry and struggle for supremacy in

Central Asia between the Russian and British empires. Captain John Wood of the Indian Navy paved the way for exploration of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush in the modern era. His discoveries, in the words of Curzon, 'reawakened public curiosity in a subject, which had almost faded out of human interest, and have provided background for the whole of our subsequent knowledge' (George N. Curzon, 2005:73). In 1837-1838, John Wood was dispatched on a mission from Kabul to Kunduz. Continuing his journey further to the north, Wood went all the way to Ishkashim, where he touched the source of the Oxus and went as far as Victoria Lake. Wood's writings also generated the interest of the British Indian authorities, who embarked upon dispatching their surveyors and agents to explore the uncharted lands in the north-western borders of British India. The travels of the British agents became more frequent in the second quarter of the century, as the political importance of the region gained momentum due to the inexorable advance of the Russians across Central Asia. In the span of a quarter of a century, Russia conquered key cities in Central Asia, Tashkent, Samarkand and the Kokand khanate (1876), and extended its protectorate over Khiva khanate and Bukharin emirate reaching the outskirts of the Pamirs by the early 1880s.

The expansion of the Russian Empire into Central Asia challenged the position of the British Empire, being the

sole European superpower in the east posing a threat to Britain's maintenance of the northern borders of its Indian colony. The confrontation and struggle for supremacy in Central Asia, known also as 'The Great Game', prompted the study of the uncharted mountain territories of Central Asia. The desire to understand in order to rule, subsequently transcended the political horizons, resulting in the discovery of the rich heritage of the indigenous populations of the mountain regions. The Pamir and Hindu Kush mountain territories captured the attention and imagination of both Russian and British explorers, military officers and agents of the empires. Initially exploring the geographical landscape and political situation in the mountain area for military purposes, as their primary objectives, the agents of empires showed increasing interest in the cultural practices of the communities, including their hitherto unknown languages.

### **British Explorers of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush**

The British exploration of the mountainous regions of Central Asia preceded Russia's engagement with the regions. The first British agents who penetrated the mountain region were of south Asian origin and were known as *pandits*. They were well prepared in the techniques of intelligence gathering before being dispatched to the Central Asian lands. A leading role in the mobilisation of the *pandits* as British agents was played by Thomas George Montgomerie (b. 1830), a surveyor of Great Trigonometrical Survey of India (GTS) who together with William Johnson conducted a survey of Kashmir between 1855 and 1859, and was awarded the prestigious Founders' Gold Medal by the Royal Geographic Society (RGS) in 1865. After the completion of the survey of Kashmir, Montgomerie entertained a strong desire to expand the survey into the lands further north of Kashmir, including Ladakh and Chinese Turkistan. Having realised the dangers of dispatching Europeans into the hostile environment, he contemplated the use of *pandits*, which had been practised by the British since 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the 1860s the GTS sent several *pandits* to various regions of Central Asia. One of the earlier recruits for the GTS was *pandit* Abdul Majid, who was engaged in a secret mission to Central Asia. In December, 1860 he was dispatched from Peshawar by the general governor of Peshawar Lord Canning on a 'mission of courtesy' to Kokand (Derek Waller. 1988: 74). On his way Abdul Majid made the first recorded description of crossing the Pamir from south to north.

In subsequent years, several *pandits* were dispatched to the Pamirs and Hindu Kush, the most prominent being Muhamad Amin, Mirza Shuja, Havildar and Mullah. They were proficient in Pashto, Persian and English.

Knowledge of Persian was a particularly important ability, enabling them to communicate with the people of the mountain region who by and large understood Persian as their literary language. Mirza, who embarked on his journey to Central Asia in October, 1868, went to the Pamirs via Badakhshan. During this journey through Wakhan, Mirza identified routes leading to Chitral and Hunza in the Northern frontier of India. Havildar and Mullah explored the Hindu Kush region providing detailed description of the routes and places they visited, the system of governance, economy, political situation, agricultural activities, clothing and housing of the people. The *pandits* alluded to different languages spoken in the mountain ravines, but did not actually attempt to record them. It was, nevertheless, the first information which increased the interest and desire of the British explorers to visit the lands. The description of the *pandits*, at the same time, revealed the risks and dangers of passing through mountainous territories under inhospitable weather conditions, as well as the risks of exposure of their true identity and objectives as British agents. Mirza, for instance, had to bribe one man in Faizabad of Badakhshan who was threatening to denounce him as a British spy (Waller, 1988:308). Mirza was in fact murdered on his second expedition to Bukhara in 1872-73.

Informed by the *pandits*, the British were well advanced in the exploration and reconnaissance of the region before their formal dispute and engagement with Russia to determine their spheres of influence. It was largely due to the information provided by the *pandits* that the British successfully negotiated their spheres of influence with Russia in the 1872/73 agreement.

In 1870s British officers formed the bulk of the explorers who penetrated the mountain ravines of the Hindu Kush and the Pamirs. In 1873 a special mission led by Sir D. Forsyth visited Kashgar and in the spring of the following year crossed the Pamirs and visited Sarikul and Wakhan. A member of the mission, Major John Biddulph, expressed particular interest in the languages of the mountain dwellers. He was appointed as a political agent in Gilgit in 1877 by the Indian Government, a position he held until 1881. His stay in Gilgit allowed Biddulph to travel extensively to Wakhan, Chitral, Yasin and Sarikul and other places in Hindu Kush, recording the customs, ceremonies and languages of the people. In his fundamental work, 'Tribes of the Hindu Kush', Biddulph notes that 'apart from political consideration, the countries about which I write, possess much of great ethnological interest' (John Biddulph, 1880:ii). In the appendix of his book he provides a description of ten languages spoken in the south of the Hindu Kush, including Burushaski, Shina, Chilis, Torwalik, Bushkarik, Gowro, Narisati, Khovar, Bushgali and Yidghah (Munjani). Apart from the list of the languages and the places where they are

spoken, Biddulph provides an outline of the grammar, formation of verbs, adjectives and nouns. The grammar is followed by a list of vocabulary of approximately 800 words for each language. Biddulph acknowledges his lack of proficiency in the languages and his methods of analysis and points that 'in the hands of a skilled philologist, they will probably help to throw light on the ethnological affinities of the different tribes mentioned in this volume' (Biddulph, 1880: 155).

Drawing on his observation of the similarities and differences between the languages, Biddulph classifies the languages of the Hindu Kush and the Pamirs into three groups. In the first group he places the languages of Sarikul, Shughnan, Wakhis, Munjan, Ishkashim, Sanglich and Ishkashim. It is noteworthy that this classification was well in accord with the later grouping of these languages as Pamiri languages as Eastern Iranian cluster of the Indo-European languages. In the second group he classes Khovar of Chitral and the languages of the Siyah-push tribes; and the third group comprises Shinas, Gowra, Chilis, Bushkarik and Torwalik, spoken in Indus and Konar valleys. Biddulph also notes the distinguishing qualities of the Burushaski language spoken in Hunza and Nagar, which remains a language isolate to this day.

Biddulph also assessed the vitality of these languages and expressed his observation of their endangerment as follows:

The process of the disappearance of a language seems to be that the tribe first become bilingual, as in the case at present in Shighnan, Wakhan and Sarikul, where almost every man speaks Persian in addition to his native language, and in the Swat, Kooner and Punjkorah Valleys, where many of the Dard tribes speak Pashto in addition to their own dialects. In the course of time, increased intercourse with the outer world causes the more widely-spread of the two languages to be preferred, and finally altogether adopted, to the exclusion of the native tongue, which falls into disuse. Such a process must be accelerated by the absence of writing. (Biddulph, 1880:158).

The above and other passages from Biddulph's works indicate that he saw the disappearance of the endangered languages of the Hindu Kush as inevitable, not only due to the number of the speakers and the influx of Pashto and Persian speakers from the south, but also due to the 'unwillingness of the mountain dwellers to strike out new modes of life and their want of cohesion among themselves' (Biddulph, 1880:164). This line of thought was not shared by all the British explorers who were engaged in the study of the culture of the mountain dwellers. The most prominent of them was Dr Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner who acquired fame for his Hunza and Nagar Handbook called 'Dardistan'. Dr Leitner's anti-imperial views and his criticism of

the British encroachment into Hindu Kush, which are clearly reflected in his writings, raised concerns among the British authorities, who tried to dismiss his assertions and scientific discoveries. Leitner openly criticized the establishment of the Gilgit agency and the arrogance and the ignorance of the British military officers sent on missions to the mountain regions.

He maintained that the acquisition of proficiency in the Pamiri and Dardic languages was inseparable from a holistic understanding of the region, which included knowledge of the geography of the mountain areas and culture of its inhabitants. Since much of the knowledge about the localities and their features were gained from the locals, it was deemed necessary to learn the local languages. In this case, the Russians seemed to have been more inclined to learn the languages of the local inhabitants, in comparison with the British explorers. Leitner maintained that 'the points in which most Englishmen are as deficient as Russians are generally proficient, are languages and a sympathetic manner with natives' (Leitner, 1978: Appendix 1:19). Linguistic knowledge was also found important for the safety of explorers to uncharted territories. Leitner narrated that it enabled him to pass unharmed through regions previously unknown and among tribes hitherto unvisited by any European.

Leitner also considered linguistics important in topography and geography and claimed that 'the absurd mistakes now made in at certain learned societies and in certain scientific journals, regarding the Pamirs, would be avoided by a little study of the Oriental languages concerned.' He highly valued the languages of the mountain dwellers as prehistoric languages of the Indo-European nations. With regard to the Burushaski language he stated:

The language of Hunza and Nagar solves many philosophical puzzles. It is a prehistoric remnant, in which a series of simple consonantal or vowel sounds stands for various groups of ideas, relationships, etc. It establishes the great fact, that customs and the historical and other associations of the race are the basis of the so-called rules of grammar. The cradle, therefore, of human thought as expressed in language, whether of the Aryan, the Turanian, or the Shemitic groups, is to be found in the speech of Hunza-Nagar. To destroy this by foreign intervention, which has already brought new diseases into the Hindu-kush, as also a general linguistic deterioration, would be a greater act of barbarism than to permit the continuance of Hunza raiding on the Yarkand road (Leitner: 1978: Appendix 1:10).

Leitner thus clearly noted negative impacts of foreign intervention, despite its alleged benefits in bringing peace and stability to the region.

Leitner introduced the term Dardistan and applied it to the whole region stretching from Hunza to Chitral and the people designated as being of one race. In contrast to Biddulph who considered the Dards as a decadent race, Leitner emphasized the positive qualities of the people of Dardistan and advocated the preservation of their cultural and linguistic heritage.

The description of languages of the Hindu Kush appears as part of the characteristics of the people and the description of their customs, traditions, folk songs and legends. The study and recording of the languages and the legends of the mountain dwellers led Leitner to believe that 'they preserve the pre-historic remnants of legends and customs that explain much that is still obscure in the life and history of European race'. (Leitner: 1978: Appendix 1:10)

Leitner's designation of the whole region as Dardistan faced severe criticism from subsequent explorers of it, who found the diversity of linguistic groups striking. Even the linguistic affinity did not disguise differences in character, habits and attitudes. The British officer Colonel Reginald Charles Francis Schomberg following the footsteps of Leitner and Biddulph extensively travelled across Gilgit and adjacent territories. He maintained that 'The people of Nagar bear no resemblance to those of Hunza, and their only common bond is language, not blood, and even in their speech there are many differences...They differ as much as Punyali from a Madrasi' (Schomberg 1935:126).

He further states that 'two unfortunate pseudo-scientific words' have been allowed to obscure the 'racial diagnosis' of the region: the first is Dardistan, with the term Dard for its inhabitants, and the second is the word Yeshkun. He rejected the generalisation of the word Dards and Yeshkunis as applied towards the people of such diverse nature (Schomberg, 1935:1926).

The debate on the pedigrees, linguistic features and the dissemination of the Aryan races, allegedly originating from the Pamirs and Hindu Kush, continued to feature in the writing of the British explorers of the region during the colonial period. The answer to these questions was often sought in the languages of the native speakers of the mountain region. The linguistic diversity of the languages and the number of speakers of the languages in various localities was pointed out in the despatches and papers of other well-known British explorers and military officers, such as Ney Elias, Colonel T. E. Gordon, Robert Shaw, Dr Bellew and others. British officer Robert Shaw, for instance was the first explorer to produce sketches of Wakhi and Sarikuli grammar which were accompanied by three texts and a list of vocabulary of the two Pamiri languages. At the same time Dr Bellew and Biddulph published small dictionaries of the Wakhi language. In general, the gathering of information and intelligence

about the north-western borders of the British India became a basis for the study of the culture and traditions of the people in the Hindu Kush and the Pamirs.

## **Russian Military Orientalists**

One of the qualities of the Russian military personnel in the Russian empire was their education in Eastern culture and languages, which was generally provided through the growing institutions of oriental studies during the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Many military officers in the Russian army received their systematic training as military orientalists (военные востоковеды) in centres of oriental studies in Saint Petersburg, the Caucasus (Tiflis) and Turkestan (Tashkent). The development of military orientalism (военное востоковедение) led to the formation of a new speciality 'officer-orientalist' (офицер-ориенталист) in the Russian army. By 1917, military orientalism had developed into an independent field of knowledge about the East. Russian military orientalists made exceptional contributions to the study of the eastern parts of the Russian empire and adjacent countries, such as Afghanistan, India, China and Japan. The scholarly works of Russian military officers touched upon diverse disciplines, including geography, statistics, cartography, military history, archaeology, ethnography, languages, demography and the history of the material and spiritual culture of the eastern peoples. Understanding the culture and traditions of the societies which were integrated into the Russian empire was an integral part of the extension of dominance and control by the Russian empire.

The Russian orientalists drew much of their information on the Pamirs from Western explorers up until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. I. P. Minaev (1840-1890), one of the most prominent Russian orientalists, drew on the publications of Western explorers and scholars as well as literary sources to provide an overview of the geography, the history and the people of Central Asia. However, more reliable information about the region was generated by the scientific expeditions which the Russians embarked upon towards the end of the nineteenth century. These expeditions were led by the Turkestan military division based in Tashkent. It dispatched and supplied most of the scientific and military expeditions to the Pamirs. The first expedition to the Pamir region set out in 1876 under the supervision of General Mikhail Skobelev (1843-1882). It conducted the reconnaissance of the eastern Pamirs, including the Alay valley and springs of the Karakul river mapping out the geographical landscape of the Pamirs. These expeditions became more frequent towards the end of the nineteenth century. Primarily pursuing military objectives, and delineating the geographic landscape and the mountain ravines and routes leading to Afghanistan and the

northern borders of British India, the explorers also described the way of life of the local inhabitants, the administrative structure of the principalities and provided insights into the relations of the mountain-dwellers with their neighbours in the surrounding valleys.

A noticeable trace in the history of the Pamirs at this period was left by Russian military orientalists and officers such as D. L. Ivanov (1846-1924), M. E. Yionov (b. 1846), B. Grabczewsky (1855-1926), G. A. Shpilko (b. 1872), A. Snesev (1865-1937), D. V. Putyata (1855-1915), A. G. Serebrennikov (b. 1865), V. N. Zaytsev (1851-1931), S. P. Vannovskiy (d. 1914), A. G. Skerskiy (b. 1861), E. K. Kivekes (1866-1940), I. D. Yagello (1865-1942).

Major reconnaissance and exploration works on the Pamir region were accomplished by the expeditions which were carried out from 1883 to 1888. The 1883 Pamir expedition was led by the officer of the General Staff, Dmitriy Putyata, (1855-1915), a renowned explorer of the Pamir, whose expedition mapped out the Pamir region. A member of the expedition Dmitriy L. Ivanov (1846-1924), a geologist by profession, was a keen observer, writer and photographer, and vividly described the culture and a way of life of the local population. The accounts of his trip appeared in his article 'Шугнан' published in 1885. D. Ivanov was the first Russian explorer to record samples of folklore and the languages of the inhabitants of Shughnan and Rushan. He presented his records and materials to the Russian Geographic Society. The materials drew the attention of the well-known Russian specialist of ancient Iranian languages, academician Karl Germonovich Zaleman (1849 – 1916), who placed high value on their significance for modern scholarship. In 1895, Zaleman published *The Shughnan dictionary* of D.L. Ivanov, supplemented with his own commentary.

In 1891, a major military expedition under the leadership of E. Yionov (b. 1846) was dispatched to the Pamirs with the aim of establishing a permanent military base in the mountain area. The establishment of the Russian military fort in the Pamirs in Khorog facilitated further exploration of the region. One of the most outstanding military orientalists of that period was Captain Adrian Georg'evich Serebrennikov (b.1863). Serebrennikov participated in the 'Pamir Campaigns' (1892-1895), and produced several works on the Alay and Pamir regions.

Serebrennikov was the first European explorer to provide a detailed description of the Shughnan principality, including its natural resources, agricultural activities, culture and religious affiliations. His essay on Shughnan appears as the most comprehensive description of Shughnan at the time it was published. While describing the vegetation and fruit plants, Serebrennikov provides the names of the trees and

plants in Shughni languages as well. He also gives the pronunciation of numbers in Shughni and observes some similarities between the Shughni language and English (Serebrennikov. 1895). Though he does not seem to have made a deliberate effort to record the language, his descriptions are interesting to compare with the Shughni language as known at present.

Some of the Russian officers who served in the Pamirs learnt the language of the natives and developed close bonds with local people. The most prominent of them was Captain Eduard Karlovich Kivekes. He defended the local people against the abuse and atrocities of the Bukharan officials who ruled Shughnan for 10 years under the protectorate of Russia (1895-1905). Kivekes headed the Pamir detachment for number of years until 1907 and left good memories among the people of Shughnan. He mastered the Shughni language and had friendly relations with the locals. Before departure from Shughnan he adopted a Shughni girl called Gulbegim and took her to his home country Finland. (Khudonazarov 2006, 219-231)

Another head of the Pamir detachment based in Khorog was Captain Andrey Snesev who closely observed and recorded the traditions of the inhabitants of the Pamirs. He wrote several articles on the subject. In 1908, he was a member of the Russian delegation which participated in the XV International Orientalist Congress in Copenhagen. Snesev notes the profound and elaborate traditional practices of the mountain people, the study of which, in his view, would enrich the knowledge of humankind about their origin. In his concluding remarks, he states:

In the mountain-dwellers of the western Pamirs, we have in front of us the most conserved group of people from the remote past – a group which maintained its languages, customs and possibly its exterior appearance through the centuries. In this people, speaking imaginatively, we see the most yellow leaves of the history of humankind. This in itself should prompt us to study this people, their language and social life while it is still fresh and uncontaminated... The study of these mountain-dwellers would also be beneficial as it would shed light into the remote past of the Indo-European race. (Andrey Snesev, 1904:420).

The passages echoes well the description of the British explorer Leitner mentioned earlier about the importance of the languages of the inhabitants of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush to trace the history of the Indo-European race.

Among the pioneers of Russian scholarship on the people of the Pamirs, a prominent position is held by

a famous linguist of Iranian languages, Professor Ivan Ivanovich Zarubin (1887–1964). Zarubin laid the foundation of what is called ‘Pamirology’ or ‘Pamirian studies’ (Памироведение), which is today represented by a large corpus of linguists and the Institute of the Humanities (formerly Institute of Pamirian studies) in Khorog, Tajikistan. Zarubin obtained his specialised education from the historical and philological department of Saint Petersburg University (1907 – 1912).

Zarubin’s first expedition to the Pamirs took place in 1914, in which he accompanied a French scholar, R. Gauthiot. The expedition crossed the Sarez lake in the central Pamirs and descended into the Bartang valley, one of the impregnable valleys of the Pamirs. Zarubin participated in and led a series of ethnographic expeditions to the Pamirs between 1915 and 1928 which resulted in the gathering of a great number of materials on the Pamirian languages, folklore, culture, religious traditions and practices. Zarubin produced over 30 scholarly publications on the languages and culture of the people of the Pamirs. He was the first scholar to classify and study the phonetics of the Pamiri language.

An important dimension of Zarubin’s study of the linguistic heritage of the Pamiri people was his holistic approach, which included the relation of language to the culture and history of the speakers of the language. In addition to linguistic analysis of the oral tradition, he recorded various legends, folktales, local practices, house construction, and agricultural activities, etc.

In 1938, Ivan Zarubin was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philological Sciences and the title of Professor for his contribution to the Iranian linguistics. The scholarly degree was awarded to Zarubin for his outstanding achievements without formal defence of a dissertation.

## Conclusion

The exploration of Pamirs and Hindu Kush by the British and Russian military officers, agents and explorers served political purposes and pursued imperial objectives. Nonetheless, the colonisation period was characterised by the emergence and development of scholarship on the mountainous region in diverse fields of the humanities and natural sciences. The information provided by Russian and British intelligence not only fed into the policies and military actions of the higher echelons of the administration, but also found its way to a wider academic audience, enriching the knowledge, understanding and

motivations of the generation of scholars who engaged in the study of the region.

It is apparent that the writings of the British and Russian officers and explorers laid the foundation of the linguistics of the endangered languages of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush. Apart from listing and recording the languages of the mountain dwellers, they also reflected on the vitality of the languages expressing their ideas and concerns about the loss of the languages for the human knowledge. The British and Russian military officers, by and large, believed in the civilising mission of their empires, and importance of the winning over the nations which came under their control. A deeper knowledge of the people, particularly their language and traditions, often changed their attitude towards the locals and prompted them to voice out the interests of the people and call for justice and learning.

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# Linguistics in the Colonial Context

## Language Ideologies and Language Inequality

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### Abstract

Nebrija's grammar of Castilian (1492) marks the beginning of history of colonialism and linguistics. Before the Spanish sailors sailed to conquer the New World, the author recommended his then newly published grammar to Queen Isabel with the infamous observation that "language has always been the consort of empire"

In the colonial projects around the world the background of the colonizers often failed to appreciate the sensitivity of the social relations of language of the colonized subjects. When viewed from the Indian (or South Asian) perspective, the social relations of language in the ideas of India found in different periods of history did not gel well with those who came with the background that was inspired by the European Romantic movement and the philological science. Brought up with the Greek concept of logos that associated words with reason, the early colonizers clearly demonstrated bewilderment towards the linguistic diversity of the colonized and were mostly at a cross road while dealing with a multiplicity of tongues.

The colonialists' understanding of the nature of 'language', 'culture' and 'society' significantly impacted languages of the colonized and made it difficult to reduce differences in cultural rationality between the two minds – the colonized and the colonizer.

### Language Colonization: Some reflections

History is important. It takes one to a comfortable zone of contentment or to a uncomfortable zone of unsettlement laden with squirm and anxiety. It is, therefore, not very surprising that the serious issue of "Language Colonization", which is the theme of FEL XX, could never invite any critical scrutiny from scholars representing serious disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology or economics. (Mignolo 1992) Prior to George Balandier (1951), who proposed his theoretical approach to a colonial situation, the 'linguistic turn' in historiography which would provide historical examinations of ideologies of language, was found missing in most of the scholarly writings.

More than a decade after Balandier, Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) asserted his claims surrounding the autonomy of the discursive formations that are responsible for the discursive practices in which humans engage and emphasized the social and historical significance of language,

but colonization of language was still not an issue for him. According to Mignolo, an Argentine semiotician, this happened because Foucault based his archaeology on "the paradigmatic example generally understood as the Western tradition" and thus "overlooked the case history in which an archaeology of discursive formation would have led to the very root of the massive colonization of language which began in the sixteenth century with the expansion of the Spanish and Portuguese empires." (1992, p. 301) Hence, Nebrija's grammar of Castilian (1492), which marks the beginning of history of colonialism and linguistics, was recommended to Queen Isabel with the infamous observation that "[l]anguage was always the companion of empire...language and empire began, increased, and flourished together." (Trend 1944, cited in Errington 2008, p. 18)

Said, who had inherited the scholarly legacy of Foucault, nevertheless was aware of the European consciousness. Inspired by the European Romantic movement and the philological science, the European

consciousness was at a cross road when confronted with a multiplicity of tongues. It demonstrated its bewilderment towards the linguistic diversity. While the underlying theme of Orientalism is the affiliation of knowledge with power, Said significantly departed from Foucault's notion of discursive formation to confront the West's construction of the East. In the process, he provided an alternative way to understanding the role of discourse in colonial situations by allowing the discursive practices to assume a far more important position than force or coercion. Quite akin to Fanon, not from "below" but from "above", he convincingly demonstrated that the seemingly stable "objective" body of European knowledge of the Orient was in fact the history of engagements of the Europeans to understand the bewilderment and anxieties of human diversity, "...a continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of their differences from 'us'". (Said 1994, pp. 331-332)

Like the East has been a construct of the West, America, according to O'Gorman, emerged as an idea in the European consciousness. O'Gorman's *The Invention of America* not only "opened the doors to deconstructing the discursive formation...identified as the invention of America" (Mignolo 1992, p. 301) but its discovery on "one happy day in October of 1492" was also perceived as a self-congratulatory move towards "an ideological construction presupposing that America was an already existing entity awaiting discovery." (Mignolo 1992, p. 301)

### **Language Ideology**

If *The Tempest* had been our first literary encounter with different facets of colonialism, plethora of publications on endangered languages have created public awareness and exhorted us to align ourselves with the cause of documentation, preservation and protection of endangered languages. Several agencies have emerged in support of the 'wake-up call', thus, demonstrating our Academic Social Responsibility towards the liminals and the marginals. We are aware of the essentialist streak of linguistic determinism

that runs through much writing on language endangerment. We are also aware of the ideology of nation-state that forms the basis of criticism of language rights. But we also need to understand how and why "language has always been the companion of empire." I now take some critical distance to explore the ideology of language in the colonial context that have shaped and reshaped our worldview and our perception of language.

### **Language Ideology and Logic of Coloniality**

Western epistemic 'rationality' had always remained not only pervasive but also self-congratulatory. A critical unpeeling or deconstructing of the surface episteme of rationality that marks western modernity clearly shows the inseparability of western modernity from the logic of coloniality. The logic of coloniality that operated through a series of interconnected heterogeneous historic-structural nodes had to pass through colonial and imperial differences for getting the inter-connections nodes secured. According to Mignolo (p. 3), they were premised on the following hierarchies:

- a. "A spiritual/religious hierarchy that privileged Christian over non-Christian/non-Western spiritualities was institutionalized in the globalization of the Christian (Catholic and later Protestant) Church; by the same token, coloniality of knowledge translated other ethical and spiritual practices around the world as "religion."
- b. "An aesthetic hierarchy (art, literature, theater, etc.)... that manages the senses and shapes sensibilities by establishing norms of the beautiful and the sublime, of what art is and what it is not, what shall be included and what shall be excluded, what shall be awarded and what shall be ignored" through institutions such as museums, school of arts, glossy paper magazines, etc.
- c. "An epistemic hierarchy that privileged Western knowledge and cosmology over non-Western knowledge and cosmologies was institutionalized in the global university system, publishing houses, and

*Encyclopedia Britannica*, on paper and online."

- d. "A linguistic hierarchy between European languages and non-European languages privileged communication and knowledge/theoretical production in the former and subalternized the latter as sole producers of folklore or culture, but not of knowledge/theory."
- e. "A particular conception of the 'modern subject'; an idea of Man, introduced in the European Renaissance, became the model for the Human and for Humanity, and the point of reference for racial classification and global racism."

Any discussion on colonization is premised on the critique of modernity which emerged from the non-Western histories. Decoloniality and postcoloniality originated in the Third World. Mignolo (p. xiv) argues that colonial discourse that makes distinction between the ancient and the modern and between the civilized and barbarians privileges the architects of Western civilization not only "to capitalize on many previous achievements" but also achieve five hundred years of "grandeur equal to great civilizations like Ancient China and Ancient Egypt". Mignolo, however, makes it clear that his critique is not "against European modernity". As he puts it: "while European modernity should be admired for its many virtues, its imperial bent to 'save the world' by making of the world an extended Euro-America is unacceptable." (p. xiv)

Mignolo suggests that there is a "colonial matrix of power" leading to disputes in the context of decoloniality and postcoloniality. The disputes that arise over the "control of knowledge, of authority, of the economy of the norms regulating gender and sexuality, and the assumptions regulating racial classification of people and of regions." (p. xv) Mignolo says that there are several options (that in this argument he defines as "epistemic and political projects"), and further outlines for each option several avenues—all outlined in chapter 1). Mignolo says that such an outline of options and

avenues is helpful for clarifying what the decolonial option offers and what is necessary for distinguishing the polycentric world order in the making from the pluriversal world orders to which trajectories of the decolonial option aspire. The decolonial option, in the singular, as in many other cases a sphere of believers and actions that orient our thinking (such as for instance the Christian option, liberal option, the Marxist option, the Islamic option, the feminist option, etc.), means that, while simultaneously none of these options are uniform and homogenous, they are diverse and polemical between themselves.

One of the defining features of decolonial options, argues Mignolo, is the "analytic of the construction, transformation, and sustenance of racism and patriarchy that created the conditions to build and control a structure of knowledge, either grounded on the word of God or the word of Reason and Truth." (p. xv) With this kind of knowledge-construction it becomes "possible to eliminate or marginalize what did not fit into those principles that aspired to build a totality in which everybody would be included, but not everybody would also have the right to include." (p. xv) Right to inclusion is, indeed, there, but not a reciprocal right because inclusion is a one-way street.

The seeming benevolence associated with inclusion, however, remains confined to the colonial matrix of power, for it is the codified power relations that controls and decides the inclusion and/or welcome of the entities. As Mignolo points out, "The locus of enunciation from which inclusion is established is always a locus holding the control of knowledge and the power of decision across gender and racial lines, across political orientations and economic regulations." (p. xv)

The decolonial option has to decenter the locus of enunciations and dispel both the "myth of universality grounded on theo- and ego-politics of knowledge", and the assumption that there are global needs but only one (diverse) center where knowledge is produced to solve the problem of everybody" (p. xvi) By raising open questions such as:

“what kind of knowledge, by whom, what for?” the decolonial option anchors the decolonial epistemologies to a definite “place” that is outside the configuration of the colonial matrix. According to Mignolo, it is the place which allows the subjectivity to be foregrounded and transmitted: “I am where I do and think.” (p. xvi) This onsets the break from the Western code and also upsets the imperial imaginary. Mignolo cites Evelyne Trouillot’s opening announcement: “I am a woman, I am black, and I am Haitian” in the 2006 Sixteenth International Conference of the Academy of Latinity in Lima for elaboration. It not only unsettles the patriarchy (I am a woman), the racism (I am black), and the imperial geopolitics (I am Haitian) but also moves a step forward to delink from imperial imaginary, and engages in knowing-making as a Haitian.

“Coloniality” is already a decolonial concept, and decolonial projects can be traced back to the last decade of the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Modernity is an alter ego of coloniality. There is no modernity without coloniality. Coloniality, in fact, is constitutive of modernity. Modernity, whose point of origination was Europe, is a “complex narrative that builds Western civilization by celebrating its achievements while hiding at the same time its darker side, ‘coloniality’” (Mignolo, p.3)

### **Colonial Language Ideology**

While Nebrija’s grammar of Castilian marks the colonial language ideology, Thomas Macaulay 1835 (India) represents the cultural assault on India’s traditions. It was first officially announced by William Wilberforce in his 1813 speech to the English Parliament. Wilberforce argued that the English must ensure the conversion of the country to Christianity as the most effective way of bringing it to ‘civilization’. Although the imperial governance countenanced abject failures in their effort to Christianize the Hindu population, the 1835 ‘Minute’ by Governor General Lord Babington Macaulay was a great success. It not only undermined the entire intellectual output of India and Arabia but also imported its civilizational

arrogance and instilled the collective feeling of inferiority:

*I have no knowledge of either Sanscrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanscrit works. I have conversed, both here and at home, with men distinguished by their proficiency in the Eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education.*

*It will hardly be disputed, I suppose, that the department of literature in which the Eastern writers stand highest is poetry. And I certainly never met with any orientalist who ventured to maintain that the Arabic and Sanscrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations. But when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded and general principles investigated, the superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy, the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same. (<http://www.vvv03.com/Minutes.pdf>)*

speech, Derrida, in his deconstructive reading of the *Phaedrus*, quotes the Second Letter of Socrates which alludes to importance of orality over literacy. Socrates writes:

*Consider these facts and take care lest you sometimes come to repent of having now unwisely published your views. It is a very great safeguard to learn by heart instead of writing. It is impossible for what is written not to be disclosed ... That is the reason why I have never written anything about these things, and why there is not and will not be any written work of Plato's own ... What are now called his are the work of a Socrates embellished and modernized ... Farewell and believe. Read this letter now at once many times and burn it." (Letter II, 314 cited in Jacques Derrida (1981) *Dissémination*. Translated by Barbara Johnson. London: Athlone Press, cited in Woolard 1998, p. 22)*

*Phaedrus* is a dialogue revolving around the art of rhetoric and how it should be practiced; it not only prescribes safeguard from writing what has been learn by heart but also asserts the supremacy of the oral, which was later inverted in Renaissance Europe. European legacy of 'scriptism', argues Harris (1980), is "smuggled into the apparent oral bias of contemporary linguistic concepts, from sentence through the word to the phoneme." (cited in Woolard 1998, p. 22)

Oral and written are two interrelated systems of human interactions. These two modes of human interaction define the dynamics of colonization of language. What counts as real literacy has political and economic consequences, for the "definition of what is and what is not literacy is", according to Woolard, "never a purely technical but always a political matter." (1998, p. 23) Form of writing, and not the invention of alphabetic writing, was linked with the economic structure and political design, which sharpened the divide between "literate and oral cultures" (Finnegan 1988, Street 1984, Mignolo 1989, cited in Mignolo 1992, p.302) Subsequently, in the European tradition the

language ideology of alphabetical bias emerged as a civilizational norm through which literate traditions were selectively evaluated and controlled.

### **Language Ideology and Discourse of Development**

The ideology of development with regard to language is founded on the implicit ranking of languages and their suitability for modern functions. The perceptive observation of Sahlins that "[Indigenous peoples]...have not organized their existence in answer to what has been troubling us lately. They do not live either for us or as us." (1999, p. 406) captures the moment of anxiety and limitations of our engagement with the participating partners on the margins, whose languages are condemned "to perennial status as underdeveloped when compared to the metropole." (Blommaert 1994 cited in Woolard 1998, p. 21)

Of a number of assumptions and discursive regularities shared by different perspectives on development that Ziai (2011) talks about, the two most important from our point of view are existential and methodological assumptions. According to Ziai, the existential assumption associated with the concept of 'development' is that it "functions as an organising and conceptual frame". (2011, p. 3) As an organizing frame it links the entire diversity of "social, economic, political and cultural phenomena to a single process of 'development'" and the conceptual frame interprets the diversity "as manifestations of 'development' and 'underdevelopment'". (Ziai 2011, p. 4) Both the organising and conceptual frames resonate with Foucault's conception of power, as they not only allow the succession of diverse and dispersed events "to link [in]to one and the same organising principle" but also "subject them to the exemplary power of life... to discover, already at work in each beginning, a principle of coherence and the outline of a future unity" (Foucault 1972, cited in Ziai 2011, p. 4). The methodological assumption, on the other hand, is premised on an evolutionist heritage of development and provides a possibility of measurement on a universal scale. It follows a linear progression

of development and looks at non-Western societies as historically backward. It chronologically compares their backwardness to certain periods of European history and also treats it as inevitably the best friend of development. With this “chronification of spatial co-existence” (Melber 1992, cited in Ziai, 2011, p. 5) as one of our defining features of development the colonial expansion and their model of the world has allowed our understanding of folk to rest on the assumption that it has developed in a linear progression from one stage of civilization to another. The non tribal groups are consequently placed at the top, identifiable with modern standards and higher civilization, while the tribal groups are deemed to be traditional and backward.

Both these assumptions associated with the concept of development reflect Eurocentric biases and carry sense of authority and asymmetrical power relations. For they refuse to realize that neither the succession of dispersed events nor these historical processes can simply be linked and reproduced by other countries in completely different historical, cultural and social contexts. As Pieterse puts it, these varied experiences and reflections wrapped in the lack of understanding of history and cultural context have created “the impression of our living in a cardboard world, making gestures to cut-out rather than real figures.” (2000, p. 130) Context is important. It not only brings the dimension of relativism in description and evaluation, but also creates a possibility of defying any logic of ‘ism’ – a belief that there is something that can find its immortalized relevance cutting across time and space.

The hegemonized cultural space and rationality has allowed little room for ‘other’ cultures to exist. It has even set its own terms and categories to define rationality, making all other descriptions of an individual or groups outside ‘their’ world appear ridiculous and irrational. Quite close to what Wittgenstein argued that it is in the nature of humans (including linguists) to think that they are “tracing the outline of [a] thing’s nature [here, a language] over and over again,” when

they are in fact “merely tracing around the [literate] frame through which [they] look at it.” (Wittgenstein 1953: 48, cited in Errington 2008, p. 7)

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# **Languages Spoken in Delhi and NCR: Colonial History and Current Numerical Picture, with a Look at On-going Efforts**

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## **Abstract**

Many languages around the world are becoming endangered and are dying, and this phenomenon is seen in India and its parts, too. Death of a language is not just the loss of a language, but has serious accompanying social implications. UNESCO in its *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* has listed 198 Indian languages as: Vulnerable, Definitely Endangered, Critically Endangered, Severely Endangered or Extinct. However, the online atlas shows 197 languages in this category: this number is an interesting coincidence as the census of India 2001 also list 197 languages as Mother Tongues in Delhi. This is not just a coincidence, rather also a grim reminder, as a vast majority of these languages is in fact endangered (Moseley, 2010). Some communities were singled out in a type of racial profiling by the colonialists in India as criminal tribes. Their identity, language and culture were stigmatized by such a labelling and must have suffered a setback. In recent times there has been a substantial amount of government effort to preserve and promote endangered languages, but it remains to be seen how effective it will prove to be.

## **Introduction and Background**

The UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003) characterizes a language as endangered language 'when it is on a path toward extinction', and they go on to add that 'a language is in danger when its speakers cease to use it, use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains, and cease to pass it on from one generation to the next. That is, there are no new speakers, adults or children.'

World over linguistic diversity and heterogeneity is under threat. For example: Krauss (1992) says that 'the coming century will see either the death or the doom of 90% of mankind's languages'. Putting the need of preserving endangered languages and linguistic diversity in context Hale (1992) says that 'linguistic diversity is important to human intellectual life-not only in the context of scientific linguistic inquiry, but also in relation to the class of human activities belonging to the realms of culture and art.' He also points that 'language-in the general, multi-faceted sense-embodies the intellectual wealth of the people who use it.'

A survey of the census of India 2001 reveals that 197 Mother Tongue languages are spoken in the region of Delhi. There have been some

direct and incidental, but scattered works on these communities and languages e.g. Pandit (2014) mentions the following nomadic communities of Delhi: Bahelia; Banjara; Bawaria; Bedia; Bhedkut; Gadia Lohar; Kalander; Kanjar; Nat; Ode; Perna; Rai Sikh; Sansi; Sapera; Singhi. Most of these communities, if not all have their own languages in which they interact amongst themselves. These languages act as sources of socialization, cultural continuity and identity for them. However the twin processes mentioned below, in line with the colonial thinking of racial and ethnic profiling, might have lost their steam, but not existence. The twin processes initiated during the colonial period in the history of India, were, firstly of classifying communities according to colonial whims, conveniences and political ends into arbitrary categories like martial classes and non-martial classes; they implicitly accepted ruling classes and castes, and perhaps the category of criminal tribes was an innovation of the colonial rulers, and they went ahead to the extent of enacting the criminal tribes act of 1871. The ensuing social ostracism and need to hide their identity these communities can be imagined. Secondly the colonial rule was a part of a process of globalization and its philosophy and practice lead to increased assimilation. This is reflected in the assertion made by Malone

(2008) 'As "globalization" increases, so does the loss of human languages.' and also in when Donkor. (2005) calls Colonization and Globalization two sides of the same coin.

Colonial rule in India believed in hierarchies, ethnic profiling and inequalities and as a corollary some languages were higher up than the others, and the 'inferior' languages were supposed to emulate and adopt the 'superior' languages. This might not have always been an active process, but the loss of self-image and esteem by underprivileged groups would also have induced them to shift towards high prestige languages. All this was not just incidental or consequential, as serious scholars of Linguistics like Grierson were working on the languages of India. This process of assimilation and language endangerment and loss as a colonial legacy, and part of the global phenomena and national reality is ongoing.

However the government of India has realized the need to tackle the problem of endangered languages. One of the latest efforts in this regard is the award of significant funding support of up to a million US Dollars each, by the UGC, supported by the Human Resources Ministry of the Government of India. To make the work of these isolated groups more effective informal and formal collaborations should be established by them on a voluntary basis, without compromising their autonomy and freedom of fresh and independent approaches, however bodies like UGC should provide support and infrastructure for the implementation of such cooperation. for the Study and Research in Indigenous and Endangered languages to seven state universities to cover practically all parts of India. Hopefully this and other efforts would not only be able to identify, list, and document endangered languages, but would retard and possibly reverse the process of extinction. The following state universities have been awarded the financial support for study and research in endangered languages: Dravidian university, Kuppam, AP; Punjabi university, Patiala, Punjab; Jadhavpur university, WB; NLUD, Delhi; University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala; Berhampur university, Orissa; and Bharathiyar university, TN. Likewise the following Central Universities have also been getting financial

support towards this goal: Visva-Bharti, Santiniketan, Bolpur, W.B.; Central University of Karnataka, Gulbarga, Karnataka; Central University of Kerala, Kasargod, Kerala; Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, M.P.; Guru Ghasi Das University, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh; Central University of Jharkhand, Ranchi, Jharkhand; Tezpur University, Sonitpur, Assam; Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh; Sikkim University, Gangtok, Sikkim. However there are critics who are not convinced by the government efforts, e.g. Ali (2009) considers that India has won the dubious distinction of being the county with the maximum number of endangered languages in the world due to government apathy.

Endangerment of language works at several levels, we can see such effects in our present survey: Hindi is spoken by an overwhelming majority of people in Delhi; still several of its dialects show very weak presence as the Mother Tongues in the 2001 census report. Wolfram, and Schilling-Estes (1995) have explored this neglected aspect of language endangerment, i.e. of the endangerment of the dialects of a language that otherwise may not be considered endangered. These authors have also drawn our attention towards the difficulty in differentiating between languages and dialects, which is a theoretically contentious issue in linguistics.

Hale (1992) considers language loss to be a part of a 'much larger process of loss of cultural and intellectual diversity in which politically dominant languages and cultures simply overwhelm indigenous local languages and cultures, placing them in a condition which can only be described as embattled.' Likewise UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003) says 'The extinction of each language results in the irrecoverable loss of unique cultural, historical, and ecological knowledge.' Krauss (1992) sees language endangerment as similar to animal or plant species endangerment. He goes on to label the languages that are not passed on as a Mother Tongue to the next generation as 'moribund'.

Pandit (2014) has listed some of the nomadic communities of Delhi as: Bahelia; Banjara;

Bawaria; Bedia; Bhedkut; Gadia Lohar; Kalander; Kanjar; Nat; Ode; Perna; Rai Sikh; Sansi; Sapera; Singhi.

A preliminary survey shows that many of these communities have their own languages, which are used by them while interacting amongst themselves. However, these languages have a doubtful present and a bleak future owing to the small numbers of these communities. The situation is aggravated by the pressures of assimilation into the larger linguistic communities, and dominant social groups. These communities face not only the economic and social challenges, but they also bear the greatest brunt of illiteracy. Needless to say that these ills bind them in a vicious circle of poverty, deprivation, illiteracy, ignorance and susceptibility to exploitation.

There is an urgent need for the study and recording of these languages as Krauss (1992) has rightly noted: 'Obviously, for scientific purposes, it is most urgent to document languages before they disappear. The urgency increases with the proximity to extinction. And, within that framework, the more isolated a given language is genetically or typologically,

the more urgent is the need for its documentation. By documentation I mean grammar, lexicon, and corpus of texts.' To further understand the importance of documenting an endangered language it is worth noting what UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003) says 'without adequate documentation, a language that is extinct can never be revived.'

The above list is not exhaustive, and there are many more tribes and communities in and around Delhi, which have their own languages that are in peril of extinction. Some of them are settled, e.g. Regars, while others are mobile or nomadic communities e.g. Gadarias. The need for a detailed study is felt to establish the presence and exact numbers of the speakers of marginal, non-scheduled, and tribal and nomadic languages, in and around Delhi.

Out of the languages listed above the following have a language other than the dominant/major language of Delhi. As can be seen in the table below, the 2001 survey reflects a very poor and alarming picture of their state.

Srl No.	Tribe or community	Traditional Language	Self-reported Mother-Tongue speakers (as per 2001 census.)
1	Gadia Lohar also known as Gaduliya Lohars	Marwari ( <a href="http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/bringing-alive-the-lifestyle-of-almostforgotten-gadia-lohars/article1169577.ece">http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/bringing-alive-the-lifestyle-of-almostforgotten-gadia-lohars/article1169577.ece</a> )	12911
2	Banjara	<b>Banjari</b> , or <b>Lambadi</b>	274
3	Bahelia	Harauti	7
4	Bawaria	Bawari / (perhaps same as Baori)	6
5	Bedia	Kudmali	0
6	Kalander	Domari / Domaki and Wogri-Boli	0
7	Nat	Nati language	0
8	Sansi or Bhedkut	Their language is Sansiboli, Sansi or Bhilki which is a highly endangered Indo-Aryan language.	0

Source for the traditional language of tribes or communities: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nomads\\_of\\_India#cite\\_ref-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nomads_of_India#cite_ref-7) accessed on 26 Feb 2014

Schedule II [see section 3 (2)] of the amendments to the Indian Constitution (scheduled castes), (part c states) order, 1951 in its "part IV—Delhi lists the following: Throughout the State:--1. Adi-Dharmi; 2. Agria; 3. Aheria; 4. Balai; 5. Banjara; 6.

Bawaria; 7. Bazigar; 8. Bhangi; 9. Bhil; 10. Chamar, Chanwar Chamar, Jatya or Jatav Chamar,; Mochi, Ramdasia, Ravidasi, Raidasi, Rehgarh or; Raigar; 11. Chohra (Sweeper); 12. Chuhra (Balmiki); 13. Dhanak or Dhanuk; 14. Dhobi; 15. Dom; 16. Gharrami; 17. Julaha (Weaver); 18.

Kabirpanthi; 19. Kachhandha; 20. Kanjar or Giarah; 21. Khatik; 22. Koli; 23. Lalbegi; 24. Madari; 25. Mallah; 26. Mazhabi; 27. Meghwal; 28. Naribut; 29. Nat (Rana); 30. Pasi; 31. Perna; 32. Sansi or Bhedkut; 33. Sapera; 34. Sikligar; 35. Singiwala or Kalbelia; 36. Sirkiband". Some of the 'castes' listed above have their distinct language and given the weight of the dominant languages and cultures these languages are highly threatened. It is important to note that these castes and communities are defined to be found in Delhi or are natives of Delhi. This will also go on to show the relationship between language endangerment on the one hand, and caste and socially underprivileged communities on the other.

However, most of the castes are not restricted to Delhi, and secondary sources describe different languages spoken by them outside Delhi, for example Naik (2007) claims that Laria language which is on the verge of extinction is spoken by the Agria caste of Western Orissa. However, this remains to be explored whether the linguistic profile of this case is constant over geographical differences.

Some of the castes and their corresponding languages are listed below in the following order: Caste/ Community in Delhi--Language spoken by the caste/community in Delhi or in other parts of India—(number of Mother Tongue speakers, based upon the 2001 census given within parentheses.): Agria--Laria (4 ); Aheria--Harauti amongst 17 others (7); Balai--Braj Bhasha (5085); Banjara--Banjari (32); Lamani/Lambadi (274) and (6 Baori); Bawaria--Bawari / (perhaps same as Baori) (677) Bhili/Bhilodi and 3 Wagdi; Bazigar--bazigar boli(0); Bhil--Bhil languages (Bauria; Wagdi; Bhilori (Noiri, Dungra); Magari (Magra ki Boli); Bhili proper (Patelia), Bhilodi, Adiwasa & Rajput Garasia; Bhilali (Rathawi); Chodri; Dhodia; Dhanki; Dubli; Eastern Bhil (Bareli); Palya Bareli; Pauri Bareli; Rathwi Bareli; Pardhi; Kalto, AKA Nahali,; The Vasavi language;(0); Dom--Domaki(0);

Kanjar or Giarah--Narsi-Parsi, Kanjari language (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanjar>)(0); Nat (Rana)--Nati language(0); Sansi or Bhedkut--Their language is Sansiboli, Sansi or Bhilki which is a highly endangered Indo-Aryan language (0). This again shows a grim picture of language endangerment.

The latest census data of 2001 census on Mother Tongues in Delhi was analyzed, and the following facts emerged: 64,221 speakers listed their Mother Tongues as 'Others'. This is a very large number of people and it can potentially represent dozens if not hundreds of languages not mentioned in the list below. There are speakers of more than 173 Mother-Tongues in Delhi. There are 93 Mother Tongues that have less than 100, or ( 53.76 %) speakers; There are 130 Mother Tongues that have less than 1000, or ( 75.14 %) speakers; There are 146 Mother Tongues that have less than 10000, or ( 84.39 %) speakers; There are 160 Mother Tongues that have less than 100000, or ( 92.49 %) speakers; There are 13 Mother Tongues that have more than 100,000, or (7.51 %) speakers; There are 3 Mother Tongues that have more than 10,00,000, or ( 1.73 %) speakers; There is only 1 Mother Tongue (viz., Hindi) that has more than 100,00,000, or ( 0.58 %) speakers. The picture, sadly look similar to what the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003) has claimed: 'about 97% of the world's people speak about 4% of the world's languages; and conversely, about 96% of the world's languages are spoken by about 3% of the world's people'. This data is more than a decade old, and the latest census figures when available may show a change in the number of languages and their relative numbers. The languages with very few speakers might have disappeared from Delhi in this decade and the shift towards the major languages, especially Hindi might have taken place.

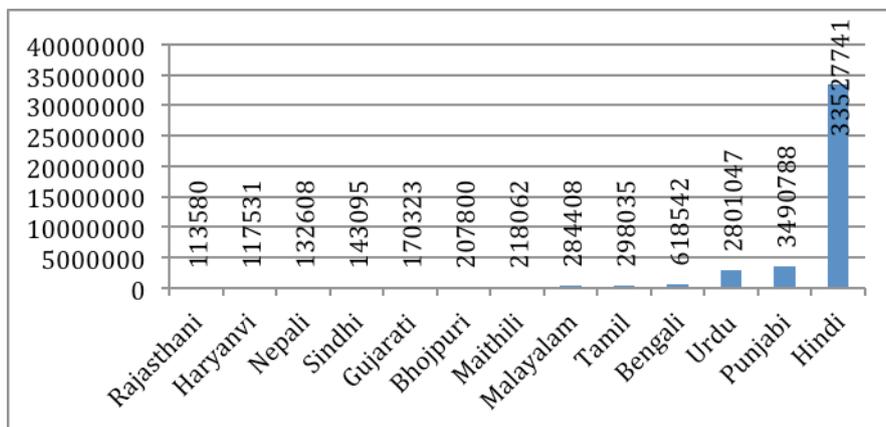


Figure 1 Major Languages (Over one lakh speakers) of Delhi based upon 2001 census on Mother tongues in Delhi

Based upon the data derived from the UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (Moseley, 2010), and comparing it with the figures available in the census data regarding languages spoken in Delhi a few facts emerge (see Appendix).

### Discussion

Delhi, NCR is a microcosmic picture of India, and it can act as a test crucible for languages. If a particular community is present in this region and it is showing the signs of weakening of its language then we can try to correlate this with the health of the language of the linguistic community as a whole.

It can easily be seen that several of the languages in Delhi can be accounted for due to migration. Delhi being the capital of the country, a metropolitan city which attracts people from all parts of the country and several parts of the world for various reasons, prominently including the jobs and livelihoods that Delhi can provide. Despite of this there are many linguistic groups that have traditionally been living in or visiting Delhi in pursuit of their nomadic way of life. The data shows the effect of Hindi as the dominant language of the area and also what centripetal and assimilative effect it has the potential to exert on smaller and less dominant linguistic communities.

If the proportion of people losing their Mother Tongue can be calculated it can again be a reflection on the larger linguistic community. However, these hypotheses cannot be fully reliable as several factors including the isolated community's size shall play a role in the

extinction of a given language, under the influence of various sociological forces and factors.

### Status of Endangered Language Research:

A large corpus of research and writing is growing internationally, but at the national level it is still a largely neglected area in India. Although, a few prominent Indian researchers can be identified. This is a rich area of interdisciplinary research. Still, the studies focusing upon the area of Delhi are rare if any, and rarer still is the work on the relationship between endangered languages and socially underprivileged groups like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

**Some Recommendations:** The field of study of endangered languages is still nascent in India inspite of the fact that it needs urgent attention and growth. Some basic steps can help towards this: establishment of centres of research on endangered languages; establishing associated or independent libraries, databases, and museums for different types of media generated and made available on endangered languages. The need of the hour is to produce more doctoral, and postdoctoral research, train more researchers, workers and educators; establish journals, and conferences; census, map and document endangered languages using the available audio-visual and GIS technology; publish scholarly monographs and books, as also journalistic articles and reports; produce grammars, dictionaries, primers and work towards development of scripts where required. Further, starting academic teaching and training programmes in such languages and cultures, for archiving,

field work in linguistics, lexicography, statistical analysis, etc. would go a long way towards establishing research and intervention in the field of endangered languages.

Advisory groups to advise the governments should also be formed. Similarly, information bureaus for dissemination of information on endangered languages should also be established either under the government bodies or in association with the research centres. There is also a role of websites and online databases for the language and dialect databases, and collected oral and folk literatures..

An interdisciplinary approach need be followed, including from the fields of linguistics, sociology, law, anthropology, culture studies, and Information Communication Technology.

The focus should remain on the social groups whose languages are under the threat of extinction and they should also be involved in the efforts as stakeholders in maintaining language vitality.

### Conclusion

Language is an integral part of the social identity and ethnicity of a group. To preserve a social group's, or tribe's cultural identity it is essential to help them preserve their language. It can easily be seen that towards this the first step remains identification of the languages and their status of being endangered or not.

In summary, knowing the status of different Mother Tongues spoken in an area, and intervening to preserve and promote those languages has great social relevance and has the potential of helping improve literacy rates and stopping the alienation of youth and communities from the mainstream. Academic programmes need to be established in India. Social justice and academics may be promoted this way. That, in turn may help in expanding the horizons of research and application of linguistics to the field of social planning and welfare.

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## Appendix:

I		
	Number of Speakers in Delhi according to the 2001 census (Based upon the 2001 census on Mother Tongues in Delhi)	Moseley (2010) in UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger Lists A total of 197 languages as  <u>Vulnerable, definitely endangered, severely endangered, critically endangered, and extinct.</u> Out of these the following are found in the descending order of numbers in Delhi:
1	92224	Garhwali
2	708	Gondi
3	706	Ladakhi
4	649	Bodo
5	632	Tulu
6	538	Paite
7	490	Tangkhul
8	426	Kharia
9	384	Mundari
10	304	Thado
11	280	Ao
12	163	Kinnauri
13	142	Adi
14	104	Gangte
15	101	Kabui
16	82	Angami
17	82	Hmar
18	68	Anal
19	68	Mandeali
20	57	Bangni
21	56	Maring
22	54	Dimasa
23	48	Tamang
24	44	Sangtam
25	36	Lepcha
26	32	Maram

27	28	Deori
28	28	Kom
29	24	Apatani
30	22	Konyak
31	20	Sherpa
32	16	Karbi
33	14	Jaunsari
34	14	Korwa
35	12	Nocte
36	12	Tagin
37	10	Korku
38	8	Ho
39	8	Kui
40	8	Malto
41	6	Balti
42	6	Gadaba
43	6	Konda
44	6	Limbu
45	6	Wancho
46	5	Badaga
47	4	Phom
48	3	Chambeali
49	2	Chang
50	2	Tangsa

II		
Moseley (2010) in UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger lists A total of 81 languages that are classified as 'vulnerable' in India and Out of these the following are found in the descending order of numbers in Delhi:		
Srl no.	Name of the Mother Tongues classified as 'vulnerable'	Number of Speakers in Delhi according to the 2001 census (Based upon the 2001 census on Mother Tongues in Delhi)
1	Garhwali	92224
2	Gondi	708
3	Ladakhi	706

4	Bodo	649
5	Tulu	632
6	Paite	538
7	Tangkhul	490
8	Kharia	426
9	Mundari	384
10	Thado	304
11	Ao	280
12	Adi	142
13	Kabui	101
14	Angami	82
15	Hmar	82
16	Anal	68
17	Bangni	57
18	Maring	56
19	Dimasa	54
20	Tamang	48
21	Sangtam	44
22	Maram	32
23	Apatani	24
24	Konyak	22
25	Sherpa	20
26	Karbi	16
27	Korwa	14
28	Nocte	12
29	Tagin	12
30	Korku	10
31	Ho	8
32	Kui	8
33	Balti	6
34	Wancho	6
35	Phom	4
36	Chang	2
37	Tangsa	2

### III

**Moseley (2010) in UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger Lists A total of 62 languages that are classified as 'Definitely Endangered' in India and Out of these the following are found in the descending order of numbers in Delhi:**

Srl no.	Name of the Mother Tongue	Number of Speakers in Delhi according to the 2001 census (Based upon the 2001 census on Mother Tongues in Delhi)
69	Kinnauri	163
79	Gangte	104
91	Mandeali	68
108	Lepcha	36
114	Deori	28
115	Kom	28
127	Jaunsari	14
143	Malto	8
149	Konda	6
150	Limbu	6
156	Badaga	5
163	Chambeali	3

**IV -- Moseley (2010) in UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger Lists A total of 7 languages that are classified as 'Severely Endangered' in India and out of these no speakers of these languages are found in Delhi.**

**V – He further lists a total of 42 languages that are classified as 'Critically Endangered' in India and out of these only 'Gadaba' language was found to be spoken by 6 people in Delhi.**

**VI –and lists a total of 5 languages that are classified as 'Extinct' in India and, as expected, no speakers of these languages are found in Delhi.**

# Place Names in the United States and the Colonial Past

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## Abstract

This paper provides the results of a study on names of bodies of water in several states in the U.S.A. We demonstrate that the patterns of naming are sensitive to the size of the body of water. We further show that there is variation in the relative degree to which Native American names have been preserved. We argue that this difference stems from distinct attitudes about Native Americans in the waves of Europeans who settled in northeast states versus those in the mid-Atlantic region.

## Introduction

In older countries the story of the naming was lost in the ancient darkness. But in the land between the two oceans [i.e. America] much of the record could still be read—who gave the names and when. (Stewart 1967).

So writes George Stewart in his classic toponymy of the United States. His insightful statement is, of course, not strictly true. The vast majority of place names in America have been lost to history since the indigenous people who created them never wrote these names down. During the colonial period in America, and particularly when the mapping of the terrain began, some of the existing names became codified, while colonizing empires introduced far more names than they preserved. Still, Stewart was right to observe that this period of naming is well documented in the historical record, at least relative to many places in the world. What is immediately clear from this record in retrospect is how undirected the nomenclature that now persists into our time was. Some Native American names were maintained; some were ignored. In some cases, colonizers co-opted indigenous tribes' names to label regions or landmarks. In most cases non-indigenous names were used. Some of those were descriptive. Some were selected to honor a Christian saint, or to make a biblical allusion, while still others honored a king or an explorer. Some simply named a landowner. Despite the apparent randomness in the toponyms, however, it is possible to decipher some patterns that correlate to regions of the country, which suggests that variations in the nature of colonization in different parts of the United States may be reflected in place names. In this paper, we explore this hypothesis by examining the maintenance of indigenous names in reference to bodies of water — specifically rivers and lakes. After we demonstrate certain similarities and differences in these distinct regions of the country, we propose some explanations for the patterns that we have identified.

## Background Information

The colonization of what is now called the United States of America was a complex affair. The simple narrative is one of northern Europeans, primarily the English, arriving on the eastern coast of the continent, establishing settlements, rebelling from the British empire, forming a nation and then slowly expanding westward. What is lost in this quick rendering is that British migration to America came in several waves, and these different waves were composed of different populations from England with different motivations for arriving in the so-called New World. Mixed in with these waves of English immigrants also came a notable German population. Even more significantly, England was not the only colonial power that established a presence in America. The Spanish, in particular, were the dominant colonial power in much of the southwest and in Florida for centuries. The French (not to mention the Russians in Alaska and the Dutch in Manhattan), though ultimately with far less success, also had aspirations for empire building in North America. Each of these colonial powers, and each of the waves of migrants in the period of colonization had varied relationships with the native people they encountered.

This variegated colonialism is striking to anyone who travels around the United States and is exposed to the names of cities and towns, but it is equally well evinced the names of the 50 states. Two of them are French (Louisiana and Vermont), six of them are Spanish (California, Colorado, Florida, Montana, Nevada, and New Mexico), and sixteen are English. The remaining twenty-six are of Native American origin. This final number is somewhat surprising given the aggressive policies of the U.S. government to assimilate or exterminate its Native Indian population well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the persistence of Native American names reflects the reality that there has been little centralized control over toponyms in U.S. history. Most names were established by tradition, and to the degree that an official body was involved, this happened at a local or regional level.

While this decentralized, and often informal, development of place names requires us to be careful in identifying any characteristics of nomenclature that transcend all regions of the United States. With that caution in mind, we find four that should be mentioned as likely candidates. First, by and large, colonizing populations gave their own names to the settlements that they formed rather than borrowing an existing name for the place (if one existed). There are many counter-examples to this, of course, e.g. Chicago, Minneapolis, Taos, Wichita and so on, but the usual pattern was for settlers to create a name. Stewart (1967) suggests that this was, in part, because many Native American populations were nomadic. The European settler, then, were not taking over existing permanent settlements, but founding new ones, albeit on territory that a particular tribe may have used for hunting.

Second, mountains were quite susceptible to being named by settlers. Again, there are exceptions, but the pattern points to a strong predilection by explorers and settlers to have named mountains after dignitaries (e.g. Mount Washington, Pike's Peak) or to give them a descriptive name (e.g. Mount Massive, Blanca Peak).

Third, when indigenous names became standard labels for a place, they were often applied in ways that differed from how those terms were used by native peoples. Often, the name of a tribe was given to a landmark or a region, even though that particular landmark was identified by a different name (or names) by Native Americans. Most obviously, this is true of the names of the states. For example, the state of Utah draws its name from the Ute Indian tribe. Their name had originally been given to a lake, and then to a river that flowed out of it, and then eventually to a bounded territory of land (which would eventually become the state).<sup>1</sup> Equally common was the tendency for synecdoche. The colonizing population would take a term from a Native American language that was specific, say, to a portion of a river and apply it to the whole. For example, the Pequot word *quinetucket* 'on the tidal river,' which was originally used to identify a place where a large New England river empties into the Atlantic Ocean. Early in the colonial period, "Connecticut" became a designation used for the entire 660 kilometers of this body of water.

Finally, and not surprisingly, when Native American words were used for place names, they were Anglicized (or first Hispanicized/Gallicized, and later Anglicized). The significant mismatches in the phonology and morphology between Native American languages and European languages led to much variety in how the Native names were rendered. For example, initial efforts

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<sup>1</sup> There is another useful layer of history in the naming of this state. When the Mormons, an American religious sect, came to settle in Utah, they wanted to name it Deseret (a word that means 'honeybee' in their sacred book). The U.S. congress disagreed and kept Utah as the designation.

at "Connecticut" include, among other spellings *Quinetucquet* and *Quenticutt*. Over time, a single spelling emerges as the formal appellation, but the process itself is a kind of colonial co-option of the name, both because the original designation and the original meaning become obscured.

## Methodological Considerations

As the previous section implies, deciphering patterns in U.S. toponyms may be obscured by various factors. Most significantly, different kinds of place names will present different patterns. Settlement names follow one pattern, region names a different one, mountains yet another, and so on. For this reason, we restrict the current study to names of rivers and lakes. The logic behind this choice is that bodies of water are of particular importance to human society as boundaries, as sources of food/water and as means of transport, particularly before a motorized age. As such, they carry a significance that is likely to cross cultural lines, even if different cultures exploit water resources in somewhat different ways. Because of this fact, they may reflect colonizing tendencies in ways that other toponyms do not.

Our research questions were: 1) does the size of a body of water correlate with its likelihood of being labeled with a Native American name? and 2) do the relative likelihoods correlate with different regions of the country? Within these two questions lurk three issues that need to be made explicit.

First, what counts as a Native American name? As mentioned in the previous section, few, if any, Native American names accurately reflect their pronunciation in the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries when they became conventionalized. In some cases, the actual origin is no longer known because of the Anglicization or the lack of an historical account. Take the name of the state of Idaho, which has murky origins. It may very well be a Comanche or Shoshone word, but there is a strong suspicion that it was the invention of a white man who claimed it to be a Shoshone word meaning "Gem of the Mountains." For our study, we took any name suspected to be of Native American origin to be so. Though Anglicization not infrequently obscures precise etymologies, there are relatively few instances like that of Idaho, so in general it is likely that the supposed Native American names reflect labels in use at the time that Europeans began to settle in indigenous regions.

Second, how does one understand synecdoche in onomastics? As mentioned earlier, it was common for European settlers to assign a highly localized Native American term to a broader region, mountain/mountain range or body of water. This was a re-appropriation of native terms, which obscured a more detailed labeling of an area by the indigenous population or alternate labels

by different Native American groups. For our purposes, however, we will consider any Native American name to be “original” if it was borrowed into English (or another European language) by the colonizing population. Even so, we recognize that some of the synecdochical uses of terms may have reflected different conceptualizations of the landscape, especially in the European focus on ownership and legal boundaries versus the Native focus on use of and interaction with the environment. A related problem is whether an English translation of a Native American term might still be considered an indigenous word. When we encountered possible instances of this in our research, it was difficult to determine how much influence that Native American term actually had in the development of the English name. For example, the Abenaki called Salmon Falls in New Hampshire *Newichawannock* ‘river with many falls.’ Already by 1771 the river is appears on maps exclusively with the English name. While it is possible the name Salmon Falls was influenced by the original Abenaki, it is equally likely that the settlers independently arrived at a descriptive label for the river. For the purposes of our research, we consider these terms to be non-indigenous.

Third, how does one determine the “size” of a body of water? With lakes, there is a potential difference between surface area and volume. We assumed that surface area would have had the more immediate impact in an individual’s and a group’s perspective on size. Therefore, we took that to be the more important measure in determining size. Rivers are far more problematic. In modern times, rivers tend to be classified either in terms of length or in terms of their watershed drainage. Arguably, the latter is a better indicator of what should be considered a singular entity in terms of ecosystems, environmental impact, and water policies. No one in the colonial period seems to have thought in these terms.

Length as a measure of the importance of rivers seems to be an artifact of cartography. In the pre-modern era, for populations living on and using rivers, individualized sections were significant in a way that the length is not (What is navigable? What is crossable? Where is the wildlife? Where are the rapids and falls? Where do floods occur?). Beyond this are ontological questions of what constitutes the main body of a river and what constitutes its branches and tributaries. The metaphor of a river being a tree with a trunk and branches is something that the European colonial population brought with them to America. Even so, we have chosen to use river length as a measure of size for convenience. With obvious exceptions in specific locations, the labels that became associated with stretches of rivers in the U.S. correlate with the more immediate ways that humans experience them in terms of width, strength of current, navigability and so on.

## Lake and River Names In New Hampshire

New Hampshire is in the northeast of the U.S. and was one of the thirteen original British colonies. The earliest settlers were Puritans who had left England to have a greater degree of religious freedom. By the 1740s, less than 100 years from the founding of the colony, most of the Native American population had been killed or driven out of the region. Despite this fact, there is a clear preference for maintaining names that pre-date European settlement. As can be seen in Table 1, 7 of the 10 largest lakes follow this pattern.

Name	Size (acres)	Native name
Lake Winnepesaukee	44,586	Y
Squam Lake	6,764	Y
Umbagog	4,532	Y
Winnisquam Lake	4,264	Y
Newfound Lake	4,106	N
Lake Sunapee	4,090	Y
Moore Reservoir	3,490	N
Ossipee	3,091	Y
Wentworth Lake	3,017	N
Massabesic Lake	2,900	Y

Table 1: New Hampshire’s Largest Lakes

The rivers of New Hampshire contain an even greater percentage of native names. Nine out of ten of the largest rivers maintained pre-colonial names as is shown in Table 2. The one non-indigenous name, Salmon Falls, was briefly discussed in the previous section where it was noted that even in this case, there might have been some Abenaki influence on its formation.

Name	Length (km)	Native name
Connecticut	660	Y
Androscoggin	264	Y
Saco	219	Y
Merrimack	187	Y
Contoocook	114	Y
Pemigewasset	113	Y
Ashuelot	103	Y
Ammonoosuc	88.5	Y
Salmon Falls	61	N
Suncook	57	Y

Table 2: New Hampshire’s Longest Rivers

When one examines smaller bodies of water, the proportion of indigenous names drops significantly. For example, the ten smallest lakes in New Hampshire (as defined by being larger than 30 acres), only two have non-English names: Winona Lake and Wakondah Pond.

Similarly, shorter rivers are far more likely to carry English names than Native American names. As a point

of comparison to Table 2, all four of the rivers that flow out Ossipee Lake have English names (Pine River, Lovell River, Bearcamp River, and West Branch). There are ten rivers that branch of these four, and of those only two have Native American names (Chocorua River and Wonalancet River). It should be noted that all four Native American names associated with the smaller bodies of water discussed here are names of individuals, something that is not true of the indigenous terms for larger bodies of water. The many very small bodies of water in New Hampshire, the ponds, short rivers and brooks, nearly always have English names.

The correlation between the size of a body of water and the likelihood that a pre-colonial name has been maintained for it is quite striking. We propose that this arose largely out of convenience. Since larger bodies of water served as significant geographical markers for movement and were frequented by Native American populations, they were common points of interaction with the encroaching settler population. Therefore, their names were widely known and widely used, and significantly, became codified on early maps. This was less true for smaller bodies of water. Furthermore, as permanent British settlements arose, these typical were on or close to water. Smaller bodies of water, which had less widely recognized names, took on the names of these settlements or names given to them by the settler. In coining names, the settlers rarely selected in an indigenous name, both because they typically did not know the local Native American language(s) and because of the growing animosity between the settlers and those whose land they were now occupying. The very smallest bodies of water took on names of local landholders on whose land they were or for notable citizens.

We now turn to the question of whether similar naming patters arise in different regions of the United States.

### Naming Patterns in Other Regions

As our first point of comparison for the findings in the previous section, we examine bodies of water in the mid-Atlantic state of Virginia. Though, like New Hampshire, Virginia was one of the original thirteen English colonies, its settlement was distinct from the New England colonies. The first waves of settlers primarily came for economic reasons, were Anglicans, generally of a higher socio-economic status and tended to be more favorably disposed to the English monarchy.

None of the ten largest lakes in Virginia has an indigenous name. However, this is misleading since all ten of them are reservoirs that were created in the damming of rivers for flood control and hydroelectric power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In general, the American practice has not to use Native American terms for reservoirs (see Table 1 for an example from New

Hampshire), though there are exceptions such as the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts, which took the name of the lake that became the basis for the reservoir. For this reason, lakes do not provide a useful basis of comparison overall.

When looking at the larger rivers in the entire state, one finds a weaker tendency to maintain Native American names as compared to New Hampshire (Table 3).

Name	Length (km)	Native Name
Roanoke River	660	Y
James River	560	N
New River	510	N
Potomac River	486	Y
Clinch River	480	N
Dan River	344	N
Rappahannock River	314	Y
Levisa Fork	264	N
Tug Fork	256	N
Appomattox River	253	Y

Table 3: Virginia's Longest Rivers

In the case of Virginia, just 4 out of the 10 major rivers are now known by indigenous names. However, when the names of small rivers are analyzed, there is similarity to what is found in New Hampshire, an increasingly likelihood of the use of an English name. For example, of Fairfax County's (a 653 sq. km northern portion of the state), 29 small rivers (alternatively called creeks, runs, branches or rivers) only four have Native American names: Accotink Creek (40km), Dogue Creek (14km), the Occoquan River (40km) and Pohick Creek (22.5km). Within the context of Fairfax County, these are on the longer size of the rivers.

Our non-systematic examination of the other original 13 British colonies suggests similar patterns to what has been observed about New Hampshire and Virginia. The patterns that arose after the American revolt against the British and the formation of the United States is similar. Northern states have a high number of large rivers and lakes with indigenous names (e.g. in the state of Ohio seven of the ten longest rivers have Native names). Central states tend to have a lower percentage than the north, but also follow the pattern of maintaining native names more commonly for large bodies of water relative to smaller bodies of water (e.g. Tennessee uses indigenous terms for four of its ten longest rivers, but a lower percentage for smaller bodies of water).

As mentioned in the introduction, other colonial powers had designs on North America, so it is useful to examine regions in which there was active colonization. We turn first to Louisiana, which is located in the southern United States where the Mississippi River enters into the Gulf of Mexico. The French colonized the state in 1682. 80 years later it was put under Spanish control for four

decades until the territory was purchased by the United States in 1803. Notably, migration of French speakers to Louisiana continued even during Spanish rule.

The names now attached to the ten longest rivers are provided in Table 4.

Name	Length (km)	Native Name
Mississippi River	3,730	Y
Red River	2,190	N
Ouachita River	882	Y
Sabine River	820	N
Pearl River	715	N
Bayou Bartholomew	586	N
Bayou Macon	351	N
Boeuf River	348	N
Calcasieu River	320	Y
Tensas River	285	Y

Table 4: Louisiana’s Longest Rivers

The relative percentage of Native American names (40%) is consistent with one finds in other non-northern states. Not surprisingly, given the European immigration patterns into Louisiana, the remaining are a mixture of Spanish (Sabine), French (Bayou Bartholomew, Boeuff River) and English.<sup>2</sup>

As was the case for Virginia, Louisiana does not have enough natural lakes to make a meaningful comparison to other states. However, of the three natural lakes, one is French (Lake Pontchartrain), one Native American (Lake Caddo) and one English (Lake Claiborne and Cross Lake).

Consistent with the findings for other states, the relative percentage of indigenous names for smaller rivers is much lower. For example, if one considers the eleven rivers that branch off of the Atchafalaya River (220 km), which itself has a Choctaw name meaning ‘long river,’ only two have indigenous names. The remaining names are split between English and French origins.

Finally, we briefly consider New Mexico, a state in the American southwest. Spain began exploring the region in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, establishing its first settlement in 1598. Spanish colonization had a more explicit goal of exploiting the Native Americans populations than occurred in French and British colonies. This more oppositional stance appears to be reflected in patterns of place names. As Table 5 reveals, all ten of the longest river names in New Mexico are Spanish.

Name	Length (km)	Native Name
Rio Grande	3,051	N
Pecos River	1,490	N
Canadian River	1,458	N
Cimarron River	1,123	N
Gila River	1,050	N
San Juan River	616	N
Rio Puerco	370	N
Puerco River	269	N
San Francisco River	256	N
Carrizo Creek	233	N

Table 5: New Mexico’s Longest Rivers

This pattern is less pronounced with the names of the largest lakes.

Name	Size (acres)	Native Name
Elephant Butte Lake	36,500	N
Navajo Lake	15,610	Y
Caballo Lake	11,500	N
Conchas Lake	9,600	N
Abiquiu Lake	5,200	Y
Brantley Lake	4,000	N
Santa Rosa Lake	3,544	N
El Vado Lake	3,544	N
Cochiti Lake	1,200	Y

Table 6: New Mexico’s Largest Lakes

However, none of the lakes listed in Table 6 are natural. They were created in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and consequently, their names are derived from conventionalized geographic names. For example, Navajo Lake was created for irrigation purposes on the Navajo Indian reservation. Cochiti Lake, similarly was constructed as a water source for the Cochiti reservation. Abiquiu Lake is named after a nearby city, which maintains its pre-colonial Tewa name.

Smaller rivers in New Mexico nearly all have Spanish. The few outliers are English (e.g. Black River, Red River) with the exception of Rio Pueblo de Taos, which is a Hispanicized Tewa word.

Our initial research on other regions of Spanish colonization gives similar results. The longest rivers in Arizona and California, for example dominantly possess Spanish names, and have only one with a Native American name.

## Conclusions

We have shown that larger bodies of water are more likely to have names of Native American origin than smaller bodies of water. This fact likely reflects the fact that smaller bodies of water were quickly associated with particular European settlements or landowners.

<sup>2</sup> The Pearl River was named by French explorers, but the name *perle* was Anglicized

The names that arose because of this association became conventionalized rather than the pre-existing indigenous terminology that either identified now displaced populations or reflected interactions with the landscape that differed from that of the European settlers. Larger bodies of water differed in that they spanned territory that went beyond a single settlement. Furthermore, their indigenous names had become widely known during periods of exploration that arose before settlement. For that reason, many of them became conventionalized on the earliest maps.

We have also shown that this pattern had variations for different colonizing populations. The likelihood was strongest in the northeast and continued as their expansion continued westward to the Mississippi river. The British settlers in the mid-Atlantic and the French settlers were less likely to maintain nomenclature given to bodies of water by Native Americans. The Spanish colonizers did not adhere to the pattern, largely eschewing the use of Native American names. We suggested some possible explanations for this variation. Most likely, attitudes towards co-existence and interaction with Native American peoples differed and this influenced whether the colonizers pragmatically retained names or created new ones. There were also differences in the socio-economic organization of the settlements. In general, the northeastern settlers favored manufacturing and farmed on a smaller scale than in the mid-Atlantic where settlers favored agriculture and developed large plantations. This, too, may have subtly influenced the choices in preserving indigenous place names. Finally, there were religious differences in the colonizing populations. This clearly had an effect on the naming practices for settlements (see Stolz et al 2016) with the Spanish frequently using the names of saints, the mid-Atlantic British settlers honoring the monarchy and the Puritans invoking Biblical names. However, it is also reasonable to conjecture that religious differences had an influence on other naming practices as well.

While the results of this research have unearthed some intriguing patterns, there are obvious gaps. Most obviously, we have here ignored the states of the Great Plains. Given the later colonization of this area and the overt efforts that accompanied them to contain, relocate or exterminate Native American peoples, they may not adhere to the patterns discussed so far. On the one hand, many Native American names would have been known to the trappers, explorers and small number of early settlers before the larger wave of settlers arrived. This might suggest a codification of indigenous names prior to the arrival of the mass of settlers. On the other hand, the poor relations between the American government and the Native American peoples might suggest a greater desire to scrub the landscape of indigenous terms.

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# Mapping Linguistic diversity in colonial Bengal

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## Abstract

The erstwhile Bengal (present day Eastern India including parts of north-Eastern India) despite its difficult ecology remained a center of attraction for the Mughals, the Portuguese as well as the British. Several Medieval trade routes crossed the vast landscape, and Bay of Bengal connected the region with the maritime trade networks. Bengal has been linguistically and culturally highly heterogeneous; the relationship between the presence of high linguistic diversity index and the geographic position along the trade routes has been observed by scholars. As spaces are constantly evolving entities shaped by a number of economic, political developments, Bengal too has seen numerous changes as a result of various factors one of which was the colonization itself. The tea activity in the region, the industrialization, the road and railway networks, the use of Bengali as the language of the presidency (including Assamese, later), and the printing press had far reaching consequences for the colonial Bengal as well as the post-colonial geographies of the region. These developments altered and shaped the linguistic landscape of the region. The present study maps the outcomes of some of these developments and provides a macro level analysis.

## Introduction

Colonization has had varied outcomes in different locations. However, one of the major long term impact was the introduction of new language(s) which altered the relationship between the introduced language(s) and the pre-existing languages on the colony. This is especially true of European colonization on relatively smaller colonies such as Guyana, Fiji, Suriname, Mauritius (see Holm, 1989). In a place like India, with its long and varied past and numerous multifaceted small and big communities, varied geographies, the impact of colonization, however, cannot be looked at in isolation of other developments including those that took effect in the post-colonial period. Many of the post-colonial developments were also somehow rooted in the colonial period. Similarly, the policies of colonizers to an extent were shaped by the pre-existing ground realities of the earlier-pre-colonial period. The present study revisits linguistic diversity in Bengal and assesses the impact of various factors including British colonization that affected the linguistic ecologies of the region over the past few hundred years. The study also locates the issue of linguistic diversity and endangerment amid larger discourses on linguistic continuity and change; language contact and its outcomes; and linguistic landscaping (see Labov, 2007; 2014.).

Bengal as referred to in the present study includes the two deltas of Bay of Bengal covering the eastern and the northeastern states of India including Bangladesh and northern Burma. This is the erstwhile Bengal (as it existed in 1765) which has seen several political

divisions and subdivisions over time (see Breton 1997, Banthia, 2004, Satyanath, 2012). However, Bihar and Orissa are not discussed here. Some of the important political events that affected Bengal include (a) creation of a new province of Assam and East Bengal in 1905; (b) rise of the west Bengal—Calcutta emerging as an important British establishment and the new commercial center (starting around 1700) together with the decline of the east Bengal—earlier the most prosperous region of Bengal; and (c) tea activity resulting in internal population mobility (Satyanath, 1998, Griffiths, 1967). In the following, I would discuss some of these important developments that affected the linguistic landscape of the region and left its impact for many years to come. The discussion, though not exhaustive, it highlights the varied outcomes, difficulties inherent in mapping diversity and some of the troubling issues—theoretical and methodological—those need to be addressed.

## Linguistic diversity of Bengal

How does one map linguistic diversity of a region in time and space in the absence of systematic surveys and comparable methodologies? Statistics provided in Census reports are often fraught with difficulties and understandably so. So should one map languages or should one map communities and their ethnolinguistic profiles? How does one measure the impact of mobility, —communities scattered in space (not uncommon)— to assess the vitality of the ancestral languages amid changing (if any) linguistic practices? A region where a majority of the languages have existed in orality and lack long history of writing traditions, mapping

linguistic diversity is even more challenging due to the absence of any direct evidence of the documented past of the local languages.

The earliest documented evidence on linguistic situation on the region of Bengal comes from Grierson (1903-1928) who undertook the first linguistic survey of the region (LSI) and the Census reports (1881-2011). The region as we know today is home to numerous communities. It is predominantly home to Tibeto-Burman languages which form a contiguous linguistic region with Burma, Bhutan, Nepal, Tibet (earlier) and China. The region has a long history of continuous settlement as evident in studies of maritime trade history (Mukherjee, 2011). Bengal formed the epicenter of maritime trade networks which connected it to the region of South East Asia both through sea and land routes. The presence of several Shan and Austroasiatic languages (Mon-Khmer) in the region are further testimony of the contact in the region. There is further evidence of movement of Buddhism, Hinduism and Vaishnavism through the region. Such movements are not imaginable without the presence of trade routes passing through the region (see Chakravarti, n.d; Malcolm 1839/2004; Mukherjee, 2011; Satyanath and Laskar, 2008; Wise, 1883;).

### **How many languages?**

Counting languages could be challenging as reported in the LSI:

'There were scores of languages for which no one could be found who knew any of them and at the same time English. ....There are parts of India which seem to have had each a special Tower of Babel of its own. From the little province of Assam, with its population of only six and a half million...[81] Indian languages were returned at the Census of 1911, and it contained others that were not specifically returned.' (Grierson, 1927, p. 21).

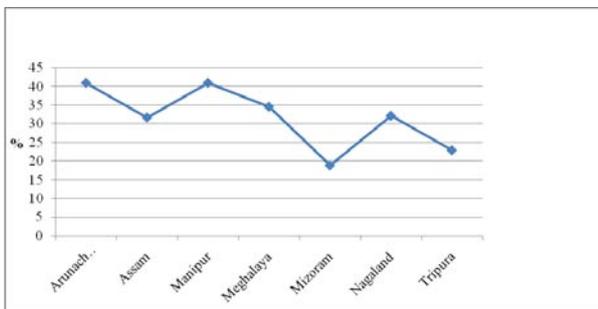
The LSI recorded 179 distinct languages and 544 dialects as opposed to 190 enumerated in 1921 census (Grierson, 1927, pp. 26-27) and over 1500 mother tongues recorded in 1961 Census (Banthia, 2004). I would confine the discussion only to Tibeto-Burman languages as these are mainly concentrated in the region under discussion. The total Tibeto-Burman languages recorded in LSI included 113 distinct languages and 82 dialects languages, which included Tibeto-Himalayan (32 languages +31 dialects); North Assam (5 languages) and Assam-Burmese branch (76 languages and 51 dialects) (LSI 1927, pp. 26-27). The number of scheduled languages returned in 1971-1991 census is 96 of which about 61 are Tibeto-Burmese (62, including Meitei). The number went up to 100 in 2001-2011 and 70 in the case of Tibeto-Burman (71, including Manipuri). Apart from differences in numbers there are five new languages not listed earlier, similarly two languages listed earlier are not included, as they moved

to the list of scheduled languages. The huge difference in the number of Tibeto-Burman languages between 1921 and 2011 is not surprising given the fact that the census area changed in the independent India. Also, the numbers include only those languages whose speakers strength is more than 10,000. Subsequent stability in the census surveys including changes in number and names of languages counted only underscores the fact that mapping diversity over a linguistically dense and huge landscape is a challenging task and is equally likely to under report diversity. The latest figures available from People's Linguistic Survey of India [PLSI] also reveal 100 scheduled language spoken by more than 10,000 people and a total of 780 distinct languages and 66 scripts, again with changes in the names of the languages reported earlier (Singh, 2016). There are other factors which affect the enumeration. Processes of identity formation can result in realignment of communities to forge a single larger unified identity resulting in increased speaker strength (Bodo, Kokborok). Similarly, a single identity could be fragmented under several names, just as multiple identities can be assumed under a single name affecting the count. It should be mentioned that a majority of the Tibeto-Burman communities have been traditionally organized in cluster of villages (and continue to be so to a large extent) where each village has its own language with varying degrees of intelligibility across the continuum, even when united under a single cultural term such as Angami, for instance. A direct comparison of number of languages over the years (as reflected in census surveys) is therefore not a reliable indicator of rise or loss of diversity. Also the definition and criteria for deciding what counts as language/dialect/mother tongue etc. has not been the same across time. However, a comparison of the individual languages during 1971-2001 (Census 2001) shows a consistent increase in number of speakers. The increase ranges from less than 10% (five languages including Mogh, Nocte, Gangte) to as high as 90% (Lotha, Chang, Anal). A majority of the languages show an increase of above 25%. This comparison of specific languages is perhaps more reliable than then the absolute number of languages. The positive growth of these languages in terms of number of speakers suggests linguistic continuities and vitality. The major downside is that overall numbers do not tell anything about language in space and the effect of mobility on outcomes.

### **Impact of Language policies and urbanization**

The British adopted Bengali as the language of Bengal presidency, and later Assamese as the language of newly created province of Assam (1911). However, Bengali and Assamese, (especially Bengali) have a long history of presence in the region especially in the plains, valleys and deltas. Their large number is also because of the fact that a majority of them perhaps have been settled agrarian communities. In contrast, the Tibeto-Burman communities which live on the higher

plains and mountains have been traditionally mobile (as opposed to settled agrarians) and are much smaller in size (Also see Lewis, 2009 on linguistic density and trade routes). British policies only contributed to the spread of Bengali and Assamese in the region as languages of administration, education and writing. How did the region predominantly non-Indo-Aryan, respond to the spread of official recognition to Bengali and Assamese in the region? How did it alter the power relationship between the state sponsored languages and the numerous languages of the local communities that were much smaller in size? The linguistic organization of the independent India further added new state languages (Manipuri, Khasi, English) and provided state recognition for many more languages). However, there existed in each state a generation that was educated in Bengali or Assamese. Bengali continued as the state official language in Tripura even after independence. Assam has two state official languages—Assamese in Brahmaputra Valley, and Bengali in Barak Valley. I have suggested elsewhere (Satyanath, 2015) that unlike the western experience, the relationship among languages in the Indian context is rather horizontal and not hierarchical. The presence of numerically large languages despite their institutional status do not threaten diversity so long as these languages are tied to their communities, and serve as in-group languages as well as sources of cultural identity. Bilingualism data as in **Figure 1** suggests that bilingualism has not even

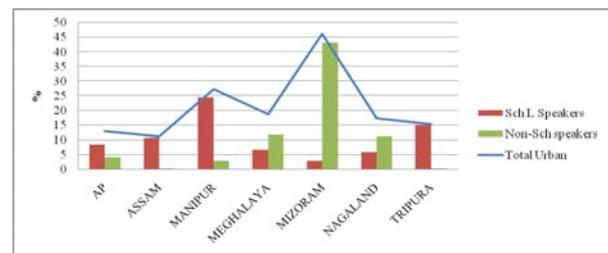


**Figure 1.** Bilingualism in North-Eastern states (Based on Language Atlas of India, 1991, Table 60, p.132. See Banthia, 2004)

breached the 50% mark across the seven states where Tibeto-Burman speaking population is concentrated. Tripura has the lowest rate of bilingualism despite huge disparity between the Bengali speaking population and the speakers of the local languages. Even in Nagaland the Naga language continue to be strong despite the presence of English (the current state language of Nagaland), Assamese (the earlier state language) and now Nagamese (a link language). Even in Assam, not everyone is bilingual. It does not mean that losses have not occurred or smaller segments of populations might not have undergone acculturation with Assamese/Bengali or other state languages. The limited acculturation is generally more expected and is attested in larger urban areas (see Das, 2015 on Mising in Assam). Though one is more likely to be bilingual with

the state language, bilingualism is commonly attested between local languages as well (Satyanath, 2016 on Nagas in Kohima town). One of the reasons is that communities are important sources of cultural identities. Sonowal Kacharis in Assam, for instance, might have lost their ancestral language but not their cultural identity. Similarly, Bodo, Angami are both linguistic and cultural representations.

Urbanization is generally seen as a force that contributes to both presence as well as erosion of linguistic diversity by altering the traditional/village kinship based ties (Kerswill and Williams, 2000; Kerswill, 2010). The emergence of modern nation states (Anderson, 1983) and the consequent rise of national standard languages (Foley, 1997) had similar effects. Although India has undergone rapid urbanization, the overall rate of urbanization in India is still less than 35% (CSO, 2011). The lower rate of urbanization for speakers of scheduled languages (State official languages) and non-scheduled languages in Figure 2 suggests that much of the population still lives in rural areas which promotes strong community ties and hence languages as well.



**Figure 2.** Urbanization for speakers of scheduled and non-scheduled languages (Based on Language Atlas of India, 1991, Table 7, p.20. See Banthia, 2004))

Interestingly, despite higher urbanization, Mizoram has much lower bilingualism suggesting the strength of Mizo/Lushai. This suggest that there is no pressure on communities to acculturate to the state languages. Instead, the state policies and longstanding pluralistic ecologies provide favourable environment for maintaining linguistic continuities. Therefore, high linguistic density and small community size do not necessarily have a negative impact on diversity.

### Rise of new linguistic identities

In this section I would discuss two related developments. One refers to the impact of the tea plantation activities in the region and the other, the rise of Calcutta. Both resulted in huge population mobility bringing people from diverse languages and dialects together.

#### Plantation agriculture

It is a widely acknowledged that the new languages, called pidgins, creoles and koines that developed in various parts of the world were the direct consequence of European plantations (Sankoff, 1980). In Bengal too

the tea plantations (1835-1960) attracted labour population from various parts of Bengal and elsewhere within the country. The language policies followed on the plantations introduced Hindustani and Bengali. A majority of the population came knowing various dialects of Bengali and other languages spoken in the tribal belts of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. The province of Assam alone received more than 16,19,128 migrants during 1859-1960 of which about 12,38,170 were from undivided Bengal (see Satyanath, 1997). The plantation language policy resulted in new distinct varieties of Bengali as discussed in Dey (2010) through variation and intergenerational change as in Silchar (Barak Valley, Assam). In addition, many who came from Hindi belts acquired Bengali but continued to use their new Hindustani Koine. In addition, the Munda speakers introduced Sadari (a contact language known by various names—Bagani Hindi Deshwal etc.) on plantations (see Satyanath, 1997). The Mundas serving as seasonal migrants on tea plantations continue to maintain Munda languages. In fact it is the plantation activity that brought many Munda languages into Assam.

#### The rise of Calcutta

The prosperity of the eastern delta of Bengal (because of trade) is evident from the fact that the Mughals were already in control of the region by 16th century. The region also attracted various European powers including the British who remained in control of the region till India's independence. However, with the British intervention, rise of Calcutta as an important British settlement and a port city on Hooghly, the east Bengal rapidly declined. It was reduced to a region producing raw materials (agriculture) which were then shipped out through Calcutta. The new found prosperity of the west Bengal and industrialization attracted people towards western Bengal. This is evident from the fact that the population of Calcutta increased from a meager 22,000 in 1706 to 100,000 in 1735, and it had crossed 10,00,000 by 1911 and was 4,513,496 in 1950 which was higher than the population of Bombay and Delhi (Nag, 2010). The migrants came largely from east Bengal speaking numerous Bengali dialects and other languages. However, unlike new urban towns in the west where contact among regional dialects resulted in new urban koines through leveling of regional marked features (Kerswill and Williams, 2000; Kerswill, 2010; but see Cheshire, Kerswill, Fox & Torgersen, 2011) the continued migration made Calcutta speech multidialectal as reported in Bhattacharya, (2016). Bhattacharya (2016) has shown that the dialects brought by the incoming populations are still alive and are actively used in families in Calcutta, making family itself heterogeneous. This is true even for families who have been in Calcutta for several generations. It has been pointed out that the rural–urban migration in India is not strictly unilinear and it does not easily erase

family ties with the places of origin (McGee, 1977; Satyanath, 1991). The migrants coming to Calcutta also have not severed ties with their homelands in east Bengal. This is not an isolated case as similar trends are recorded among the migrant groups in Assam (Das, 2015), Nagaland (Satyanath, 2016) and in Delhi (Satyanath and Bhattacharya 2011).

#### From Assamese to Nagamese

I now discuss the case of Nagaland where the impact of language policies, urbanization and language contact can be seen all at one place. Nagaland was a part of Assam until it became an independent state in 1963-63. Though the independent state of Nagaland opted for English, Assamese emerged as a useful inter-group language given the presence of several distinct mutually unintelligible Naga languages. Assamese has transformed slowly into Nagamese (a new linguistic and cultural identity) as a result of contact with the Naga speakers. In Kohima town where a large number of Naga languages are present, Nagamese serves as a useful language of inter-group communication. The Naga languages continue as the sole languages of in-group communication. In the case of intermarriages (across Naga groups), bilingualism in Naga languages is common— children grow up speaking languages of both the parents as well as Nagamese (see Satyanath , 2016).

#### Bengal: The east and the west

Despite so many transformations that the erstwhile Bengal has undergone, the feeling of distinct identities is still strong. The east signifies culturally a distinct identity uniting Bengali, Assamese and all Tibeto-Burman languages of the east. The construction of the region as a single unit is evident in the sound shifts (Satyanath 2011, 2012) that affected the entire eastern delta cutting across Bengali, Assamese and several Tibeto-Burman languages. The isoglosses of these shifts weaken as one moves towards the west and are confined to the eastern delta. The outward diffusion of palatal sibilant originating in the west (and a new symbol of western Bengal identity), on the contrary hasn't been able to replace the alveolar sibilants of the east. The two sound shifts serve as strong identity markers, which still separate the east from the west. The diffusion of the sound shifts across the eastern delta further suggests that various communities in the east were not as isolated or marginalized as it would seem today. Instead the various communities interacted and participated in the trade networks that they were part of.

#### Conclusions

What can be learned from the above discussion? What I have shown is that mapping linguistic diversity in linguistically dense landscapes such as Bengal could be challenging. Enumeration is useful, but it is likely to either under report or over report diversity given the varied spatiality of languages. When viewed in the

larger perspective, language transmission across generations, acquisitions of local dialects/ languages by children whose parents are born elsewhere are all socially conditioned. Continuities and changes are both part of language dynamics, which over time result in new linguistic identities, and often without the conscious knowledge of their speakers. Even when a language is continued, it is not without change. Further, models that tend to view relations among languages in terms of power, domination and hierarchy, and view smaller language as disadvantaged do not work everywhere, and are certainly inadequate in the Indian context. Colonization, the rise of modern nation states, the forces of mobility, urbanization and globalization have been instrumental in the rise of newer speech varieties and accents worldwide (even if helping in diffusion of certain languages). The fact that such forces of mobility have always been active and are even more so today, one can only expect more diversity (even as some are eliminated) and many more accents than we hear today.

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# Internal Colonialism: The cases of Italy and Malaysia

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## Abstract

Italy and Malaysia are two very different realities. The first is a so-called 'developed' country located in the Southern part of the European continent, the second is a 'developing' country located in Southeast Asia. The first was colonized several times over the centuries by external powers, but since its unification in 1861 it slowly became a colonizing country itself. Malaysia on the other hand was 'colonized' by Indonesia-based empires in the distant past, and then in more recent times by Portugal, the Netherlands, Thailand and finally Great Britain, which gave independence to the country in 1957. However, both countries have one thing in common: a history of what can be referred to as internal colonialism that took the form of a strong linguistic colonialism; this process started in the second half of the 19th century in Italy and at the end of the 1960s in Malaysia. This paper aims to analyze how this form of internal colonialism developed in both countries, with Italian slowly replacing the over 40 languages that were widely spoken before Unification, and Malay having become the only official language in Malaysia in spite of the 140 languages currently spoken. This paper will also look at how English, from being a colonial language in Malaysia, has now become a language perceived as 'neutral', with very high prestige.

## Introduction

Italy and Malaysia are two very different realities. The first is a so-called 'developed' country located in the Southern part of the European continent, the second is a 'developing' country located in Southeast Asia. The first (or more precisely the territory that was later to become Italy) was colonized several times over the centuries by external powers (Greeks, Arabs, Normans, French, Spaniards, Austro-Hungarians, etc.);<sup>1</sup> since its unification in 1861, however, it slowly became a colonial power itself, even if to a much more limited extent than other European countries such as Spain, Portugal, Great Britain or France, all of which can boast a much longer history as unified countries. Malaysia on the other hand was 'colonized' by Indonesia-based empires in the distant past, and then, starting from the beginning of the XVI century, by Portugal, the Netherlands, Thailand and finally Great Britain, which granted the country its independence in 1957. However, both countries have one thing in common (together with most other countries in the world): a history of internal colonialism (see next section for a definition) that took the form of a strong linguistic colonialism, which started in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Italy and at the end of the 1960s in Malaysia. In Italy internal colonialism was the outcome of an out-and-out military

conquest carried out by the Piedmontese Army and armed groups linked to it, but in a way the fight between the Malaysian Government, supported by the British and other Commonwealth countries, and the Communist guerrilla from 1948 to the 1960's also showed some features of an internal colonial struggle.

This paper aims to analyse how this form of internal colonialism developed in both countries, with Italian slowly replacing the over 40 languages that were widely spoken before Unification (Coluzzi, 2009), and Malay having become the only official language in Malaysia in spite of the approximately 140 languages currently spoken (Ethnologue). It is noteworthy that one of these languages, namely Chinese (Mandarin and its so-called 'dialects'), is spoken by a third of the whole Malaysian population. This paper will also look at how English, from being a colonial language, has now become a language perceived as 'neutral', with very high prestige, that somehow has to 'fight' against the hegemony of Malay. In short, Italian from being a language of culture and literature turned into the main language of the country (up to the end of the 1990s only German, French and Slovene were recognized as co-official languages in the areas where a sizeable part of the population spoke them), whereas Malay from being a dominated minority language in colonial times has become a dominant (and dominating) majority language. The big difference between the two countries is that Italian has succeeded in being perceived as a common neutral language for all Italians, irrespective of their ethnic, social or religious background, whereas

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<sup>1</sup> Obviously colonialism before the XVIII century and colonialism after that, i.e. after the ideology of nationalism was born, show quite different features, for example the much stronger emphasis on linguistic and cultural uniformity in the latter (see Coluzzi, 2007).

Malay is still seen by most non-Malays as the imposed language of the Malays. Both languages, however, in addition to English in Malaysia, are slowly but steadily replacing the other minority and regional languages found in the two countries.

### **Internal colonialism**

Internal colonialism is the kind of colonialism that is carried out within the borders of many independent states, with the 'core' (the capital and surrounding area) exploiting a periphery that usually displays different linguistic and cultural features from the core. Exploitation of natural/human resources is usually accompanied by cultural and linguistic assimilation, with the state language slowly replacing the local languages/dialects. Fishman (1989: 116) explains that 'economic changes generally tended to favor one region of such states over others', and that consequently the favoured region 'controlled newly necessary human and natural resources and tended to exploit, submerge, or displace those about them that did not'. Hechter compares the situation in stateless nations with that of overseas colonies (1977: 32–34):

Some aspects of internal colonialism [...] bear many similarities to descriptions of the overseas colonial situations. Commerce and trade among members of the periphery tend to be monopolized by members of the core. Credit is similarly monopolized. When commercial prospects emerge, bankers, managers, and entrepreneurs tend to be recruited from the core. The peripheral economy is forced into complementary development to the core, and thus becomes dependent on external markets. Generally, this economy rests on a single primary export, either agricultural or mineral. The movement of peripheral labour is determined largely by forces exogenous to the periphery. Typically there is great migration and mobility of peripheral workers in response to price fluctuations of exported primary products. Economic dependence is reinforced through juridical, political, and military measures. There is a relative lack of services, lower standard of living and higher level of frustration, measured by such indicators as alcoholism, among members of the peripheral group. There is national discrimination on the basis of language, religion or other cultural forms. Thus the aggregate economic differences between core and periphery are causally linked to their cultural differences.

Obviously the relative closeness, both geographical and cultural, between core and periphery in the European case makes the situation of internally colonized regions

overall less hard and extreme (particularly in the last thirty years or so) than in overseas colonies; at least people living in the periphery of a nation state have always been given the 'choice' to assimilate and to migrate to the core area.

### **Italy**

Before Unification, the Italian peninsula was divided into several states (seven to be precise), with Sardinia being part of the Kingdom of Sardinia which included Piedmont as well, and Sicily being included in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. In each of these states one or more local languages were spoken, Italian only being used by some people of letters and intellectuals, in administration and for most publications (which were anyway limited in number), having replaced Latin as the language of culture. The spoken languages were in any case the local regional and minority languages, which were very close to modern Italian only in Tuscany, where the national standard originally came from. The Italian linguist Tullio de Mauro calculated that only about 2.5% of the Italian population could speak Italian at the time of Unification (De Mauro, 1963: 41). However, little by little Italian started to spread through the mass media, education, internal migration and military service until it became, but only quite recently, the first language of the majority of Italians. According to the latest ISTAT survey (2006) on Italian 'dialects' (which is the way Italian regional languages are still officially called in spite of being independent Romance languages deriving directly from Latin, just like the Florentine variety which later became Italian), 48.5% of Italians above 6 years of age can speak one of them.<sup>2</sup> This means that over 30 million Italians are bilingual (or even multilingual) with at least their local variety (a regional or minority language) in addition to a regional variety of Italian.<sup>3</sup>

All Italian local languages are therefore endangered to a higher or lesser degree, with fewer and fewer younger speakers being able to use them. Perhaps at least 1/4 of all speakers of these languages are lost with every successive generation (Coluzzi, 2007; 2009), and bilingualism/diglossia Italian-local variety is being replaced with bilingualism Italian-English, even though the percentage of people who are fluent in the latter is still quite low. This is definitely a big loss if we

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<sup>2</sup> The percentage of people speaking mainly the local dialect added to those speaking both Italian and the local dialect within the family. At the time of the first ISTAT survey on the use of dialects in 1987/88 this percentage was 56.9%.

<sup>3</sup> Almost 28,500,000 dialect speakers plus about 2 million minority language speakers, out of a total population of 58,751,711 in 2006 (ISTAT).

consider that most Italians could be perfectly trilingual with their local variety, standard Italian and English.

Even though there is a growing interest in the preservation of regional and minority languages, lack of official status for most of them and very limited strategies of language planning carried out largely by only a small number of associations and activists do not bode well for the future of Italian multilingualism.

### Malaysia

While the Italian case may be seen as rather typical in the Western context, the case of Malaysia is in some ways unique. Under the British, until 1957, English was the official language whereas Malay, Chinese and Tamil, in addition to a handful of other indigenous languages, were considered vernacular languages and were taught to the respective ethnic groups only at primary-school level. After Independence and until the infamous 1969 racial riots, both Malay and English were official, even though the last was supposed to maintain its official status for only ten years after Independence. However, after nationalistic issues began dominating local politics and the Government placed the Malay ethnic group at the centre of its social and linguistic policies, the Malay language started to replace the other languages, particularly English, as the sole official language in the country. The only concession was for Chinese and Tamil to be taught at primary-school level in National-type schools. This exception had nothing to do with open-mindedness or good will towards the Chinese and the Indians, but it was basically aimed at securing political support from these sizable communities (Coluzzi, forthcoming). All other language minorities, even the indigenous ones, were considered too small to represent any threat and they had to bend to the Government Malayization programme, at least as far as the language was concerned.

However, English retained its prestige as an international and economically useful language and even as the lingua franca among educated people, particularly non-Malays (Asmah Haji Omar, 1987; Azirah Hashim, 2008). Nevertheless while general standards were going down (as English was now only taught as a second language at school), English began to be perceived more and more as a 'neutral' and useful lingua franca, quickly losing its colonial connotations. Nowadays English in Malaysia enjoys a presence and visibility that in some domains even surpass those of Malay. English now has a similar or higher presence than Malay in the media, in the linguistic landscape and

in higher education (see for example Coluzzi, 2015; forthcoming).

What is interesting to notice is that most non Malays, and that means more than one third of the whole population, do not identify with Malay, often speak the language rather poorly and use it only when absolutely necessary. This is a peculiar situation for a national language, which by definition should be perceived by its speakers as neutral and inclusive and as a symbol of identity and national unity. Compared to Italian<sup>4</sup> and many other languages in the Southeast Asian region, like Thai or Indonesian, Malay is a clear exception.

The main reason for that must be looked for in the pro-Malay nationalistic attitude of the Government and the kind of authoritarian language policies that it has carried out over the last forty years. Whereas on the front of corpus planning a reasonably good work was carried out (Asmah Hj Omar, 1979), the process of status planning was fraught with too many mistakes. Like many other national languages, Italian included, Malay was imposed on people, but the problem in Malaysia was that it was imposed not as a common and prestigious lingua franca, a neutral language for everybody that could lead to all sorts of economic and cultural benefits, but as the language of the 'masters', the Malays; in addition, its association with Islam, the religion of the Malays, was never severed (Coluzzi, forthcoming).

It would suffice to watch television and see that most programmes in Malay only feature Malay actors/guests and make frequent reference to their religion, the programmes where the different ethnic groups interact – not so many actually – being mostly in English. A quick visit to any bookstore in Malaysia will show that nearly all books in Malay, which are always small in number, are love stories, books on Malay issues and on Islam, nothing that might appeal to non-Malay readers (see Coluzzi, forthcoming). Even the widely circulated newspapers in Malay such as *Utusan Malaysia* are strongly nationalistic, sometimes with racist overtones. However, perhaps a more serious problem is that English and not Malay is seen, particularly by non-Malays, as the language leading to economic advancement. For non-Malays, proficiency in Malay has few economic benefits and in the public sector, for example, only a very limited number of jobs where Malay is required are open to non-Malays, due to the protective and discriminatory policies of the Government.

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<sup>4</sup> With the exception perhaps of the German-speaking South Tyrol in the Trentino-Alto Adige region.

Summing up, language policy in Malaysia could be seen as an example of what should *not* be done to increase the status of a language; in short, a bad example of language planning, which we may say it has worked well only for the Malays and, to some extent, for most other indigenous groups. At the same time, minority languages are slowly losing ground (apart from Mandarin Chinese), even though at a slower pace than in Italy. The tenacity of minority languages in Malaysia, especially the smaller ones,<sup>5</sup> may be due to various factors such as more widespread endogamy and less mobility comparing to Europe, added to a stronger familiarity with and acceptance of multilingualism that has not been weakened yet, or only in part, by the ideologies of modernity and nationalism (see Coluzzi, 2016).

### Discussion

We have mentioned internal colonialism with reference to these two countries, but we now need to specify how such form of colonialism was carried out in Italy and Malaysia. As for Italy, it was basically the Kingdom of Sardinia that ‘conquered’ the rest of the Italian peninsula – even though it was helped and supported by many ‘patriots’ from the other states – and in fact the king of this pre-unification state, Victor Emmanuel II, became the first king of Italy. However, neither Piedmontese (the language of the royal house) nor Sardinian were chosen to be the languages of the new Kingdom. Though both were the two main historical languages of the Kingdom of Sardinia, the choice fell on Italian, the language deriving from XIV century Florentine. As already pointed out, a good part of the intelligentsia of the pre-unification states had chosen Italian to be the language of culture of the peninsula as early as the XVI century, in spite of the limited number of those who could master it.

With regards to Malaysia, a similar process to that of Italy occurred within the Malay community, as the standard chosen based on the Southern variety is quite different from other Malay varieties, especially those spoken in the Northern states (however, the differences are not as pronounced as in the Italian case). In this case internal colonialism may refer to what the government has tried to do particularly since the end of the 1960’s, i.e. imposing a language and to some extent a culture on the large non-Malay population. This is especially clear in the case of Malaysia’s most peripheral states, Sabah and Sarawak, located on the Island of Borneo. It is true

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<sup>5</sup> The bigger ones can of course also count on their large pool of speakers, vernacular education and media, and the link to their respective overseas communities.

that these two states – or rather the elites in these two states – chose voluntarily to join Malaya (as Malaysia was called before) in 1963, possibly more for fears of annexation on the part of neighbouring Indonesia than for any other reasons, and it is also true that they were allowed a certain degree of autonomy. However, the reality is that the Malay language and Malay privileges replaced English and the privileges that an English speaking middle class used to enjoy; and to suffer was not English alone but many of the indigenous languages as well. In fact, the Malays nowadays enjoy the same rights as on the peninsula in spite of being only the third ethnic group in size in the two Eastern regions, i.e. a fourth of the whole population. At the same time the most widespread indigenous languages, Iban (Sarawak) and Kadazandusun (Sabah), spoken by the indigenous groups of the same name, are now only taught as POLs (Pupils’ Own Language) in some schools, whereas all the other subjects are taught in standard Malay. Iban and Kadazandusun in the written form can only be found in a few publications and local newspaper articles. By contrast, the other indigenous languages have basically no presence in education and only a very limited one in some media (for the Bidayus, see for example Coluzzi, Riget & Wang, 2013).

### Conclusions

As has been shown, the nationalistic policies of both Italy and Malaysia have been responsible for the marginalization of their local heritage languages, and in Malaysia also for the ‘covert’ rejection of Malay on the part of the non-Bumiputras.<sup>6</sup> If there is any way to reverse all this, I believe this could be done by granting official status to all the historical minority and regional languages of the two countries. In the case of Italy, this would apply to the regional languages as minority languages are already protected by Law 482/1999. Official status should go hand in hand with proper strategies of language planning to ensure adequate protection and promotion. As far as Malaysia is concerned, Malay should be made into a neutral common language, the language of all Malaysians, not of the Bumiputras only. While Malays could go on using the Malay language the way they wish, other Malaysians should have access to high quality and non-biased newspapers and magazines in Malay. The same applies to books, which should include volumes on every kind of subjects that may attract also the non-

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<sup>6</sup> The term “bumiputra” (‘sons of the soil’) refers to the ethnic groups considered the original inhabitants of Malaysia. In addition to the Malays, these include the various Dayak tribal groups of Borneo, the Orang Asli (the aboriginals of the peninsula), plus other groups like the Eurasians of Portuguese origin, the Thai of the Northern states, etc.

Malay readership, such as books on philosophy and other religions for example, and Malay translations of high quality literature from other languages. Most TV and radio programmes in Malay should include all ethnic groups, and avoid reference to the State religion. Perhaps more importantly, policies that favour Malays for public jobs should be dropped so that mastering Malay could be a key not only to interesting cultural and entertainment products, but also to jobs in public administration and related areas. Nobody wants to learn and identify with a language that is not seen as useful and prestigious. Mastering Italian does give access to jobs and interesting cultural and entertainment products, Malay for the time being does not.

As far as English is concerned, its diffusion and usefulness cannot be denied and it should be taught properly and skilfully anywhere. However, it should perhaps not be 'idolized' as the language that necessarily leads to economic prosperity, considering among other things that most strong economies in the world such as the German, Korean or the Japanese ones only use English marginally and mostly for international liaison. This is partly because there is an awareness that English brings a culture with it that tends to 'swallow up' other smaller cultures, both those related to national languages and even more those related to small minority and regional languages, as it is happening in Malaysia.

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# **A Historiographical Approach to the Study of Language Endangerment: Case Studies Of Bodo, Rabha And Tiwa**

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## **Abstract**

Bodo, Rabha and Tiwa are the three endangered languages of North-East India mainly spoken in the state of Assam and also in the states of Meghalaya, Manipur and West Bengal. UNESCO identifies all the three languages as endangered belonging to different categories of endangerment. Whether a language is "maintained" or "dying" depends upon the change in process due to other-language interference across the time period. The socio-political phases through which a community passes are reflected in the linguistic manifestation of the community. Linguistic historiography, a 'principled manner of dealing with our linguistic past' is the informed awareness which enables us to understand the history of the language and the speech community. Therefore, with a view to understand the issue of endangerment the present study traces the developmental status of the three languages across the time period--- from pre-colonial to post-colonial in the backdrop of the its social history. This will reveal three different scenarios for the three languages, evident in each of the three phases of pre- colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. Thus the paper examines how far and to what extent language endangerment can be related to colonization especially in the context of North-East India.

## **Introduction**

The study of 'language endangerment' and the notion of 'revitalization' have captured the attention of the social scientists, especially the linguists for last three decades (approx.). This brings into light the question whether a language is "maintained" or "dying". The change in the process due to other-language interference has been traced to be the factor behind language 'maintenance' and shift'. The social hegemony of the competing linguistic groups in the environment of a minority community determines inequality and domination of specific groups. Such a situation often leads to marginalization of a speech community, which in course of time leads to language endangerment. As language maintenance and shift are 'long-term consequences of consistent patterns of language choice throughout the speech community' the study proposes to delve into the socio-political history of a speech community in order to understand the present linguistic manifestations of a community. Linguistic historiography, a 'principled manner of dealing with our linguistic past' is the knowledge or the informed awareness which enables us to understand the history of the language and the speech community. Therefore, with a view to understand the issue of language endangerment the present study traces the developmental status of the three languages--- Bodo, Rabha and Tiwa (spoken in North-Eastern part of India) across the time

period, from pre-colonial to post-colonial. The status of these languages vis-à-vis language endangerment will be examined in the backdrop of their individual social history in particular and the history of the Brahmaputra valley in general. Koerner (2004:10-11) states, "...historiography of linguistics is indeed a 'therapeutic discipline' because it presents the scientific study of language as 'an unstable equilibrium between changing argumentation and undeniable historical roots'." It is argued by the scholars that the wealth of history resides in the wealth of possibilities that lies in the by ways of social progression rather than in the reconstruction of the main road.

Genealogically, Bodo, Rabha and Tiwa are the three languages which are classified under Bodo sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman group belonging to the Sino-Tibetan language family (Grierson, 1903). As cases of language endangerment, the developmental status of each of these three languages will be dealt with individually in the following sections.

## **Bodo**

Bodo is the language spoken in Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, West Bengal in India and also in Nepal and in Bangladesh. The speakers' strength of the Bodo language is 13,50,478 (2001 census). Bodo is the associate official language of Assam and is one

of the scheduled languages of India. Before delving into the discussion of endangerment of the Bodo language, it is essential to understand the socio-political status of the speech community and the language along with the milestones of its development. The term Bodo was equated with the term Kachāri which is actually a cover term for the different varieties of the language spoken in the Brahmaputra valley. Gait(1905: 248) mentions that “There are no written records of Kachāri rule... the Kachāris of North Cachar believe that they once ruled in Kāmarupa, ...The only trustworthy information regarding their past history is contained in the Buranjis which deal primarily with the history of the Ahoms.” It is said that the Bodos had a script known as ‘Deodhai Hangkho’ which used to serve the purpose of the then Bodo royal court. Baro(1990:40) says, “ The specimens of these scripts are available till now in the inscriptions of stone pillar wreckages and main gate of the Royal palace of the Boro (Kachari) kings in Dimapur, now in Nagaland, a state of India.” As an instance, the domination of the Bodo language in the whole of Brahmaputra valley is evident in the widespread occurrence of the river names (Dibru, Dikhu, Dihing, Dihong, Dibong, etc.) of the Brahmaputra valley with prefix *di* or *ti* meaning ‘water’ in Tibeto-Burman speeches, particularly Bodo (Cunningham, 1878-1879). Historical accounts reveal that the arrival of the Ahoms (1228 A.D.) in the Brahmaputra valley was followed by repeated aggression to the Kachari(Bodo) kingdom and ultimately in 1531 A.D. the Ahoms captured the whole of the Kachari(Bodo) kingdom including Dimapur, the Kachari capital. As a result this Bodo group of people retreated and settled further south at Maibong. Hinduisation of the Ahoms in course of their gaining power and rule (till 1824) over the Bodo resulted in the loss of language and identity on the part of both Ahom and Bodo. This ultimately resulted into the merger of both the communities with the Indo-Aryan speakers of Assam and the Indo-Aryan language, Assamese. The Bodo language was marginalized and lost its grip on its own community to such an extent that in course of time the Bodo kings started encouraging Assamese due to its royal patronage. The historical development is reflected in the context of the discussion on ‘lingua franca’ of this region (present-day Assam) in the post colonial period. Citing Suniti Kumar Chatterji Baro (1990:46) states, “Boro language had great prospect of becoming lingua franca of Assam in place of Assamese if the Boro kings and their people would have tried a millennium years ago to do it.”

The need for documentation of the Bodo language was felt only in the middle of the nineteenth century and was taken up with the initiative of the

British administrators and Christian missionaries. The earliest document to pay attention to the Bodo language was Hodgson (1847) where the vocabulary of Bodo is compared with Koch and Dhimal languages. A comparative grammatical account was accomplished in order to establish the common origin of the languages of this region. The purpose of the grammatical sketch of the Bodo language as attested in Rev. Sidney Endle (1884) transparently enumerates that the objective of such a linguistic study was basically pedagogical meant for the colonial administrators to gain sufficient control over the people of the region. The student of such grammars is mentioned to be the colonial masters who were in need to learn the language of the employees---the indigenous people of the region for better administration. Regarding this, Endle(1884:ii-iii) in his preface states, “A further reason for at once publishing the following outline Grammar, in spite of its many shortcomings, is supplied by the desire to have a Manual of this kind for the use of managers of tea-factories, &c. The manager of any factory on which Kachāri labourers are employed in large numbers, will certainly find it to his interest to learn something of their language; .... And undoubtedly one of the most powerful influences which their employer can bring to bear upon them, is to be found in a command of their national form of speech, to which (as to all else that is national or clannish) they are very strongly attached.” Endle (1911) revealed the agglutinative structure of Bodo. The traces of inflexion as an influence of language contact with Assamese and Bengali did not escape his notice. J.D. Anderson while writing the introduction of Endle (1911:xix) mentions, “Their picturesque agglutinative verb is plainly a survival of days when the language was as monosyllabic as Chinese. But the general structure of the language is now governed by inflections obviously borrowed from Bengali and Assamese.”

In the context of the domination of Assamese and Bengali speech communities in every sphere of life across the time period, the upsurge for linguistic identity for the Bodo speech community proved inevitable. In the post colonial period the need for documentation of the Bodo language was felt and so the necessity of script surfaced. Bodo had no standard form of writing system before the foundation of *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* - a Bodo literary body, in 1952. However, under the influence of Christian missionaries Bodo was written in Roman script and later in Assamese /Bengali scripts also. With the initiation of mother tongue education at the primary level in 1960, the selection and standardization of a script became the need of the hour. The demand for Roman script started in 1968 with the support of *Bodo Sahitya Sabha*. This was followed by struggle and many people lost their

lives in the struggle of Roman script movement during 1974 to 1975. In spite of many advantages of Roman script, ultimately with the interference of Central Government, Devanagari script was accepted from 1976. In 1985 Bodo became the associate official language of Assam and is considered as one of the scheduled languages from 2003. The language presently finds its place in the educational curriculum provided by the Government from the primary level to the university level.

Bilingual dictionaries of Bodo with equivalents in Assamese, Hindi and English attested in the later part of the twentieth century, were done keeping in view the practical purpose of communication with the dominant languages like Assamese, English and Hindi. The rendition of Assamese and Hindi equivalents proves the socio-political impact of these dominant languages on Bodo. The English rendition stands as evidence of the continued colonial impact and also of globalization, especially in respect to wider communication.

## Rabha

Rabha is the language spoken in the states of Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya and also in Bangladesh. The speakers' strength of Rabha in India is 1,64,770 (2001 census). At the very onset it is necessary to mention that the community is called 'Koch' in some areas and 'Rabha' in other areas. It is significant to note that 'Kochá' is the original and traditional name of this community but presently they are generally known as 'Rabha'. In many areas of Assam they call themselves 'Koch-Rabha' (Saha, 2015). Contact situations of Koch-Rabha with Assamese and Bengali languages have made the language vulnerable to language shift. The speech community has no script for their language, so Assamese script has been adopted to write the language. The Koch-Rabha community also identified themselves as 'Rajbanshi' (belonging to royal lineage), a title that enabled the Koch community to distinguish themselves as original and superior to other neighbouring communities which were undergoing assimilation with the Koch community. Regarding the uncertain status of Rabha identity Grierson (1903: 102) cites the census report of Gait (1892) which states, "In lower Assam it is asserted that they are an offshoot of the Gāros, while in Kamrup and Darrang, it is thought that they are Kachāris on the road to Hinduism." Historical accounts reveal that during fifth century the Koches gained strength and by the middle of the tenth century A.D. they overthrew the Pala rulers from Gauda and established them as ruler of northern part of Bengal. The Hinduised or semi-Hinduised Koches in course of time abandoned

their Tibeto-Burman language and shifted to the northern speech variety of the Bengali language. They consciously adopted Hindu religion and culture and claimed themselves as 'Rajbangshis'. Taking cue from the Persian history also it is believed that the Koches were the dominant power in the region for five to six hundred years. They not only rose against the Palas and Senas but also fiercely resisted the Muslim aggression which started in thirteenth century. As the Koch kings were considered to be lower class Hindu, they were unable to promulgate their names in the coins or foundation stones, in spite of being a powerful Hindu king during the Muslim period of Bengal (Saha, 2015). A mass of Koch people were also converted to Islam. There is a section of Koches who were far from the capital town and the then political life, inhabiting in remote forests or hills. This group of Koches could retain their Tibeto-Burman language, culture and religious practice. At a much later period this group changed their identity from Koch to Rabha. Scenario changed in the post-independence period, especially with the formation of linguistic state boundary. Census reports and records of Assam, Meghalaya and West Bengal revealed the status of Koches as scheduled caste and Rabhas as scheduled tribe. This resulted into the change of title of the Koch people into Rabha, confirming their identity as scheduled tribe to avail the social and political benefits. Though the Koches of the Garo hills of Meghalaya consider themselves to have higher status than the Rabhas, it was in 1973 convention the Rabha and Koch people from Assam, Meghalaya and West Bengal formed a consensus and declared that they are the one and the same community. Therefore, the slogan was "The Koch is Rabha, the Rabha is Koch." With this the Koches who had the history to be the rulers of the whole region of Assam, North-East and Southern part of Bengal and part of Orissa, gave up their glorious identity in order to gain the scheduled tribe status.

The history of documentation of the Koch-Rabha language can be traced as early as 1800 in the manuscript (preserved in the British Museum of London) entitled "Comparative Vocabulary" written by Francis Buchanan Hamilton who came to India in 1794 as Assistant Surgeon. In *Eassy the First on the Kocch, Bódo and Dhimál Tribes* B.H. Hodgson (1847: 137) states, "That the Kocch were originally an affiliated race, very closely connected with the Bodo and entirely distinct from the Hindoos, (Arian immigrant population using the Prákrits,) I have no hesitation in saying. But since the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century of our æra, the Kocch have very gradually abandoned their own, in favour of the Hindoos (and Moslem), speech and customs, though there be still a small section called

Páni or Bábu Kocch, retaining them. I failed to obtain access to the Páni Kocch so that my Kocch vocabulary exhibits little more than mass of corrupted Prákrits.” Williamson (1869) in his comparative study of Koch and Garo provides English equivalents to fulfill the purpose of language learning for the British administrators. Short lists of Koch and Rabha (Maitori variety) words are available in Damant (1880:254) for the same purpose of comparison with other languages of the region. The early twentieth century witnessed the morpho-phonological studies by G.A. Grierson (1903) where Koch and Rabha languages are dealt with separately.

With the initiative of the Christian missionaries and the colonial administrators the tradition of writing the Rabha language started by using the Bengali script. The impact of the Bengali intelligentsia in the socio-cultural field is attested with the publication of the biblical literature *Jisuni Nemkai Markni Saikai Katha* (1909), a gospel translated into the Rongdani dialect of the Rabha language, written in the Bengali script. Later in 1930 a Rabha Grammar was written by Rajen Rongkho using the Assamese script (Koch, 2014:3). The scientific enquiry of the language at the lexical level is observed in the Rabha dictionary by Sarma (1960) though written in the Assamese language. With the effort of *Bebak Rabha Kraurang Runchum* (All Rabha Sahitya Sabha) the enquiry into the Rabha language gained momentum. Saha (1981) while comparing the Koch-Rabha language with the Bengali language represents the Rabha speech sounds in Assamese-Bengali script and establishes the sound value of the Rabha speech sounds by using equivalent or near equivalent sound symbols of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The teaching of the language from structural view point is demonstrated in the Rabha language Reader *Chag Pidan* (compiled and edited by Navakanta Barua and Gaurikanta Bhuyan) published in 1989. This was written in the Assamese script. A departure from the existing model of linguistic enquiry of the language is attested in *Sewaikai Baraikai* (Rabha Prayers and hymns) translated and edited by U.V. Jose in 1993. In order to avoid arbitrary and external imposition of other languages, an attempt is being made here to develop an orthographic system of Rabha, based on the phonetic, phonemic and grammatical structure of the language. Tone in the language is identified as phonemic for the first time. The Pocket Rabha Lexicon by Jogendra Nath Bantho in 1996 observes the phonological features of Rabha and points out some Assamese alphabets as redundant for representing the Rabha language. Thus the limitation of representing the Rabha speech sounds

with the script of Assamese/ Bengali became transparent with more objective enquiries of the phonological structure of the language. A more pronounced approach of linguistic enquiry is evident in the study of Rabha by U.V. Jose in his *Rabha-English Dictionary, Khúrangnala* published in 2000. It is significant to note that regarding the use of Roman script in dictionary Jose (2000:xiv) opines, “ The spelling system as has been used in this work is the result of having experimentally used the Roman Orthography with necessary modifications, over the last eight years in different publications. Effort has been made to make the orthography phonemic. Some conventions will have to be accepted to make it practical and easy.”

### **Tiwa(Lalung)**

Tiwa (which is traditionally mentioned as Lalung in the retrospective literature as well as in the Indian census reports) is the language spoken in the states of Assam and Meghalaya. The speakers' strength of Tiwa in India is 27,072 (2001 census). According to existing records the speech community is divided into two subgroups --- Hill Tiwas and the Plain Tiwas. The hill Tiwas are the inhabitants of the westernmost areas of Karbi-Anglong district of Assam and Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya. Plain Tiwas live in Morigaon and Nagaon districts. Tiwa speakers are bilinguals in Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Hindi, Manipuri, Nepali, English, Karbi/Mikir and Khasi. Tiwa is declared a scheduled tribe of Assam. Regarding the origin of Tiwa, Grierson (1903: 49) states, “How the Lálungs came to their present site, or when, is not known. They are not mentioned by the Ahom historians, nor in the accounts of the Kōch kingdom.” Grierson mentions that the language is closely related to Hōjai and Dīmāsā and exhibits a filial resemblance to Bārā. The Ahom chronicles (*Buranji*) mention the presence of the independent states of the ‘Kacharis’ which is presently recognized as the place of Dimasa and the Tiwa communities. These communities were not mentioned separately in the earlier chronicles due to their cultural and linguistic affinities. Historical evidence reveals the presence of independent Lalung principality like Dimorua in the southwest of Nowgong till the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The other areas of Tiwa chiefdoms like Gova, Nelli, Baropujia and Khola came under the domination of the Ahom or Jaintia kings in the later period. Shyamchaudhuri and Das (1973:13) mentions, “Since then the suzerainty of the Jaintia kings over the Lalung chiefdoms in the plain appears to have continued till 1707, when the Ahoms began to dominate the scene.” But with the decline of the Ahom power the Tiwa inhabiting areas like Nagaon again came

under the Jaintia kingdom. In 1835 the Tiwa inhabiting areas were annexed by the British Government but subjugation of these hill people was never possible by the British imperialists. Liberal terms had to be adopted by the British regarding revenue and other administrative issues in order to keep the situation under control. Therefore, in spite of being a small community, the Tiwas could maintain their separate tribal identity although they could never make a powerful state of their own. They continued to co-exist with the Ahoms, Koches, Dimasa and Jaintias, the powerful tribal communities.

Tiwa being a lesser known language, much attention was not paid for the documentation of the linguistic enquiries even in the first half of the twentieth century except Grierson (1903). A significant observation on the linguistic status of the Tiwa language has been made by Sharma Thakur (1985:119) by stating, "Majority of the Lalungs living in the plains of Assam, particularly the younger section, cannot speak their language. For education as well as for day to day exchange of thoughts they use Assamese language. The Lalungs residing in the hilly regions, however, are maintaining their language intact." The activities of the Christian missionaries for the Tiwa language are evident in Karbi Anglong hills of Assam by Don Bosco school of Umswai church only in the second half of the twentieth century. Records reveal that the first Tiwa dictionary was published in 1965 followed by *Tiwa Mat* and *Sikai*, the two primers by Father Michael Balwan. The Tiwa language structure was studied keeping in view the pedagogical purpose. In the foreword of *Lalung – English Translation (with Khasi)* (1968) Balwan states, "After publishing the First Lalung Dictionary in 1965...I have published two small Lalung Readers, *Tiwa Mat* and *Sikai* for the Lalung children, who may learn there from how to read and write, and form sentences in their own languages, before learning the official, and any other language of Assam, more importantly for them, should they wish to go ahead in education." The missionaries enriched these minor communities with their understanding of the importance of learning mother tongue formally for their advancement in the sphere of education. The *Lalung –English Translation (with Khasi)* (1968) dealt with the basic syntactic structures of Tiwa in the model of traditional Latin grammar for the purpose of business communication both for the Tiwa community and for the other speakers involved therein. The Khasi rendition of the sentences was employed for the ease of learning the English language as Tiwa speech community was observed to be more proficient in Khasi, the socio-

politically dominant language of their neighbourhood. Thus the platform for a very preliminary traditional grammar of Tiwa was prepared which is attested in *Outlines of Lalung Grammar* by M. Balwan in 1974. The grammatical study starts with the case-endings and deals with morpho-syntactic structures of the language under different word classes. Rendition of equivalent English sentences is evident throughout the study. This proves that the scientific enquiry of the Tiwa language, till that date, did not even reach to a level where basic phonological account can be provided in a grammatical sketch. It is pertinent to mention here that as Tiwa has no script, Roman alphabets were used to write the language and its grammar. *A Tiwa-English and English-Tiwa Dictionary (with Khasi)* was published by M. Balwan in 1982 which attests the same objective and approach discussed earlier. A marginal change in the attitude is found in the work of V. Lenkholar in *Tiwa Matpadi* (A Tri-lingual Dictionary– Tiwa-Tiwa-Assamese-English) published in 1995. The change of language from Khasi to Assamese as one of the two languages while writing a Tiwa dictionary marks the change regarding the impact of the socio-politically dominant language, which can be explained both in terms of time and space. In the post independence period with the implementation of the linguistic state boundary, Assamese language gradually became the *lingua franca* of all the speech communities of the state. Assamese is found to replace the Tiwa language in different domains of Tiwa life especially in the plains of Morigaon and Nagaon districts of Assam (Dattamajumdar, 2015). The end of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty first century witnessed the linguistic enquiries of the language with rendition of Assamese equivalents throughout and the script employed in these studies is Assamese.

## Observation

The account of linguistic historiography of the three endangered languages discussed in a nutshell reveals the following facts.

1. The marginalization of all the three languages is primarily due to the influence of the dominant neighbouring communities, which can be traced in the socio-political history of the region.
2. The three languages---Bodo, Rabha and Tiwa spoken in the Brahmaputra valley, witnessed the socio-political domination of Ahom rule in the pre-colonial period (for six hundred years) and the impact of British administration (starting from 1826 till independence) in the colonial period. But their individual socio-political history and its impact on their developmental status are different.

The marginalization of Bodo and Rabha actually started with the loss of their political power and due to the impact of the Indo-Aryan languages and culture --- all started taking place in the pre-colonial period.

3. Though Bodo and Rabha had royal traditions, none of their languages are represented by any script of their own (though Bodos claim an indigenous script available in Deodhai inscription). Both the cases attest the use of Assamese and Bengali scripts. Tiwa, which was ever a minor community, had no script. Roman and Assamese scripts are used to write the language.
4. Documentation of Bodo and Koch started from the nineteenth century with the initiative of the colonial administrators, whereas the history of documentation of the Tiwa language is a matter of post-colonial period, i.e., later part of the twentieth century.
5. Even in the post colonial period the dominance of Assamese, the state language, and Hindi, the *lingua franca* and the language of mass media of the country can be traced to be the reason behind language shift/loss and language convergence of these tribal languages.

## Conclusion

Nineteenth and twentieth century witnessed language documentation with the production of grammars and dictionaries by the colonial administrators. These administrators realized that the only means left to control the autochthones of the land is to understand their language. Thus with the help of the Christian missionaries such an endeavour of documentation of the lesser known languages of North-East India gained ground. English was introduced for the documentation of the linguistic enquiries of these languages. The target readers/learners in most cases were the British administrators especially in case of Bodo and Rabha (discussed earlier). But the impact of English, the language of the colonial masters is found to be marginal among these communities, even today in the era of 'globalization'. Thus the historiographical account of the linguistic studies once again reveals the fact that unlike rest of the India, the colonial administration was never been able to bring the tribal communities of North-East India under its complete suzerainty.

In spite of the fact that the need for documentation as a measure for revitalization was felt essential in the post-colonial period, it took another fifty years to activate the program meant for revivalism of these endangered languages. However, viewing from this perspective also we find three different scenarios for three different languages. Bodo has

been able to achieve language standardization and accomplish the status of associate official language and the status of scheduled language. But this is not the case either with Rabha or Tiwa. Though awareness for revitalization of the mother tongue is evident in both the speech communities the movement is more pronounced in case of Rabha than Tiwa.

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# Why Not Simply Speak Ottoman Turkish? Assyrian Language Retention in the Ottoman Colonial Empire

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## Abstract

Empires impose the language of the ruling elite in conjunction with administrative rule. Latin, Aramaic, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, French and English have had far reaching and lasting effects on culture and civilization. In contrast, Ottoman Turkish, the language of a colonial empire that lasted for nearly 1000 years, has left little impact on the languages spoken in its former colonies nor the global community. Even small languages like Aramaic survived this rule to re-emerge with varying strength once more after 1922 in the post-Ottoman Middle East. The factors entailed in the survival of one language and the collapse of the other relate to training institutions, scriptural prestige, the millet system of minority rule, and the depth of penetration of the colonizing civilization. Patterns of Aramaic language survival form the analytical structural basis of this study. Such an approach may be instructive in analysis of Russian as a language of communication in the post-colonial Soviet Russian Empire.

## Language in the Ottoman Empire

From its humble origins as a tribal confederacy settled in Anatolia after a centuries old trek from Central Asia, by 1566, the Oghuz Turks (related to the inhabitants of present-day Turkmenistan) managed to colonize, organize and rule on three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. Even today, Istanbul, the chief city of Turkey, the rump state forged as a successor to the Ottoman Empire, straddles Asia and Europe. Within three centuries of its start in Anatolia, Ottoman rulers had forged an empire comparable to the Roman Empire in its breadth, military prowess, and administrative sophistication.<sup>1</sup>

But not in its language influence.

Latin, the language that spread with the Roman Empire, lasted as a language of culture, science and political administration through until its gradual displacement by European languages beginning in about the 10th century CE. Its rich body of literature continues to be taught in Europe and the Americas in part because it is the basis of the Romance languages, and important in medicine, law, and the humanities.<sup>2</sup> Until 1966, Latin formed

the liturgical language of the Roman Catholic Church.

Nowhere in the contemporary world does Ottoman Turkish survive, not even in Turkey, despite the long and extended history of Ottoman colonization, despite the ideology of the WWI era of "Turan," and the newly revived pride in the popular fictionalized presentations of the Ottoman past.<sup>3</sup>

The language of the Ottoman Turkish Empire neither survives in its vast former Empire, officially ended in 1922, nor is its language studied anywhere unless by specialized education for those preparing to enter historical, or linguistic research until a revival of the language in Turkey itself as part of a return to its perceived Ottoman regional power position.<sup>4</sup> At the height of the Ottoman Empire, the language of the rulers did not pervade business transactions throughout the Empire, nor other fields of daily life, outside administrative governance records, especially in the Levant. Nor, importantly, did it become a liturgical language for Islam, the primary impetus for the acquiescence of much of the areas it colonized in its heyday, spreading Sunni

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1966 when the Nineveh Choir won prizes for its performance of a Bach Motet. "Issabey, Nebu Youel," *Encyclopedia Iranica* 2016)

<sup>3</sup> Turkey's nostalgia for its Ottoman past, is represented in TV series and popular revival of *Misak-e Milli*, the Ottoman claim to Mosul, Cyprus and parts of Greece.

<sup>4</sup> An expansion of Ottoman Turkish education at the secondary school level has been instituted in Turkey since 2014 as a dictate by the ruling AKP party.

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<sup>1</sup> For a grounding in the role of languages in empires, see Nicholas Ostler's *Empires of the word : a language history of the world*, London : HarperCollins, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> In choral music, Latin survives and was even the mainstay of the first choral ensemble in Tehran, Iran in

Islam by coercion, population displacement, and economic pressure. In this respect it differed from the Aramaic spread throughout the ancient Assyrian (and Achaemenid) Empires, from Latin, and going farther afield, from Chinese.

The reasons for the relative brevity of Ottoman Turkish language influence lies at the heart of the survival of minority languages such as the Aramaic spoken by Assyrians who nearly all fell within the Ottoman political sphere.

Just as (Ghilzai) Pashtun rule of the Delhi Sultanate (Lodhi Dynasty – 1451-1526) became part of a Persianate administrative culture of northern India, so too the Ottoman Empire – even if it extended for 600 years and over territory twenty times the size of that ruled by Pashtuns in northern India, it did not leave a linguistic impact. Similarly, Ottoman Turkish colonizers left little linguistic or even cultural impact on Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, north Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Caucasus. Why? Why did the language of politically subservient groups, even the weakest Christian minorities, survive? And what does this survival teach about the source of the endangerment of small languages and their persistence?

These are the questions I explore in this presentation, with specific reference to the roles of writing, liturgy, geographic isolation, and especially emigration.

This presentation will use geographic visuals, alphabets to demonstrate the system loosely called *garshoni*, and other demonstrations of auditory and visual representation of modern Aramaic as used during the 20th-21st centuries by Assyrians in the former Ottoman Empire and as refugees in Europe, the Americas, Australia and the Former Soviet Union.

### **Liturgical language among Assyrians**

Aramaic became the chief language of the Assyrian Empire from the 8th century BCE having been borrowed from the Aramaeans, located west of the Assyrian Empire, after they were conquered and included in the vast Assyrian Empire. Traders and migrating nomads, the Aramaeans had adopted an alphabetically written language, and by virtue of its continuity, it has become the oldest continuously written and spoken language of the Middle East. Until the 1740s, its sole written form was Syriac, the liturgical language of all the Assyrian patriarchal churches: Church of the East, Chaldean, Syrian Orthodox, and Syrian Catholic.<sup>5</sup> But gradually it

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<sup>5</sup> For the definitive settlement of the terms Assyria and Syria as referring to the same people and geographic area,

left the realm of the church to become a means of writing the vernacular language of the Christian Assyrians whose use of the language was re-enforced by the two millennia of use of the alphabet in church chants, sermons and commentaries.<sup>6</sup>

The impetus for committing the vernacular to writing (books, schools, periodicals soon followed) came from missionaries, mainly American, who from 1834-1934 worked among Assyrians in Iran, and rarely had much success in the Ottoman Empire where most of the Assyrian population had survived for millennia. It is easy to see why Assyrians in Iran, since the 19th century, developed, a written culture, extending into plays, poetry, translations from European languages, and even novels and histories. This trend, though diminished by genocide, continued even after the institution of Iranian state schools when Persian spread rapidly in an effort to raise literacy for all.

The Assyrians under Ottoman rule rarely took such cultural steps to enforce their language. Yet, the language survived as a spoken language for centuries. Adoption of Ottoman or local Turkish as a primary language has been unknown until the post-Ottoman period of the 20th century. In diaspora outside Turkey, Assyrians speak, sing, and compose poetry in Aramaic, without the hindrance to schools and publications seen in Turkey.

### **Ottoman Method of Rule of Minorities like Assyrians**

The Ottoman adoption of the patterns of empire evident in the Near East from the Assyrian empire forward, adopted in part into Islamic governance, can be summarized as the rule of conquered communities through their own leadership. During the ancient period – these rulers did not hold any religious position: they were kings who became satraps.<sup>7</sup> But with the installation of universalist religions, like Judaism, Christianity and Islam, gradually the community leadership shifted to the head of religion under the system known as “millet” in the Ottoman Empire.

Thus under Ottoman rule, Assyrians too were ruled by patriarchs, the heads of their various Christian branches. Unlike the Ottoman Armenians who belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Church (with a

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see Robert Rollinger, “The Terms “Assyria” And “Syria” Again,” *Journal of Near East Studies* pp. 283-287

<sup>6</sup> The Aramaic used by the Misrahi Jews (indigenous to ME, not from Spain) was written in the Hebrew alphabet, not the continuously written Aramaic alphabet.

<sup>7</sup> Even the well studied “resh galuta” (head of exile) of Babylon was a secular leader descended from the house of David.

separate Catholic branch in Cilicia dating to the 11th century) Assyrians since the 4th century were divided into two branches along Christological and territorial lines: the miaphysites (Syrian Orthodox church) and dyophysites (the Church of the East or Nestorian church). Therefore, the relationship of these communities with the Ottoman state went through the respective patriarchs. These patriarchs rules on matters of family law (such as inheritance, the validity of marriages etc.,) and conveyed community taxes to the Ottoman state.

By the mid-19th century Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire had four patriarchates plus Protestants whose taxes went directly to the Ottoman coffers rather than through a patriarch. The power of the patriarchs, and by extension their bishops, became, therefore, both ecclesiastical and temporal.

And they determined language education and literacy.

### **Purpose of Language Education among Ottoman Assyrians**

All but the Protestant Assyrian churches held services in Syriac, the language of scriptures, chants, sacraments, and among the high clergy, the language of communication. Some have even described Syriac loosely as “a holy language” though not the sense that for Moslems Koranic Arabic is the language of sacred communication between God and Muhammad.

Still, Assyrian patriarchates taught boys (only) Syriac as they were groomed to be deacons, priests and community leaders. Common people could speak whatever Aramaic dialect existed in their remote clusters of villages. But they did not speak Syriac, the rarified language of the church.

In this respect, Syriac was to the Assyrians of the Ottoman Empire what Arabic was to Turkic speaking Moslems in Central Asia, or Latin was before the writing of Romance languages. Literacy was not for the masses.

The fatal step that the Syriac Orthodox Church took to avert the writing of the vernacular Aramaic was to forbid the writing of the vernacular in the Syriac alphabet that boys were taught in parish schools.

As the pressure for literacy grew in the 19th century, and trade outside the confines of their villages required keeping business, land and other records, Assyrians turned to two language alphabets in their geographic proximity: Ottoman Turkish and Armenian.

### **Enter the concept of Garshoni**

The term simply means the writing of one language in the writing system of another when the language has its own writing system. So writing Kurdish, which has no native alphabet, in Syriac letters (as was done in Urmia in the late 19th century) is not garshoni. But writing Persian in the Syriac alphabet (as was sometimes done in the same time and place), is garshoni because Persian has a long history of its own alphabet.

In the case of the Assyrians of the Ottoman Empire, particularly in Tur Abdin, the hills and plains of southeast Turkey today which was the base of the Assyrians belonging to the Syriac Orthodox Church, they turned to Ottoman Turkish letters and Armenian letters to write their spoken language. Or, they used Syriac letters to write Ottoman Turkish. There are many examples from the early 20th century from towns like Kharput, Diyarbeker, and even Boston.

The use of garshoni appears mainly in the periodical press. On those rare occasions when secular books were composed, even by Church leaders, they were written in Arabic or Syriac., not in Ottoman Turkish.

There is little question that the presence of American missionaries in market centers like Mardin, Diyarbeker, Aintab, and Kharput allowed a greater literacy among Assyrian men, and sometimes women. But in Kharput especially, where many Assyrians lived in villages adjoining Armenian ones, and intermarried, the language of instruction in the missionary schools was Armenian, with a good deal of English as well and very limited Ottoman Turkish. The latter language was taught but was not the language of instruction.

The Cilician Armenian community, mostly Catholic, became Turkish speaking under apparent threat to have their tongues cut out if they spoke Armenian. Few Assyrians lived in Cilician towns like Mersin and Adana, located along the northern Mediterranean coast. Interestingly these Armenians wrote Ottoman Turkish in Armenian characters, in a language called Armeno-Turkish, a garshoni type of writing.

In eastern Turkey (Western Armenia) Assyrians in Tur Abdin, were exposed to Armenians who spoke and wrote Armenians in their own alphabet. Because American missionary schools so widespread at all levels in this region, and concerned mainly with the Armenian community, printed school books in Armenian, Assyrians who increasingly attended these schools were exposed to both the language and writing of Armenian, together with English. In fact, one of the Assyrian leaders of his day, Ashur (b. Abraham) Yousif (1858-1915) who had studied at the missionary school in Aintab but taught at

Euphrates College in Kharput, specialized in classical Armenian, the liturgical language of the Armenian Apostolic Church. In 1910 he began publishing *Murshid d atur* (Spiritual Guide for Assyrians) that ran for four years. The content was in Ottoman Turkish, written in Syriac letters. The same system applies to the bimonthly periodical originating in Diyarbeker called *Kaukab al-shaq* (Star of the East). Published by Naum Elias Fauk (1868-1929) this too illustrates that educated men could speak Ottoman Turkish but wrote that language in their own Syriac letters, learned through church schooling.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, Assyrians in large Eastern towns like Kharput, Mardin and Diyarbeker rarely used the Ottoman Turkish alphabet to write even when they knew Ottoman Turkish speech: they used the Armenian or Syriac alphabet. This pattern carried through when émigrés to the United States revived their ability to publish. The first Assyrian periodical published in the United States was *Al-intebah* (News 1909-1914) and appeared in Arabic language written in the Syriac alphabet. The reason was that in southeastern Turkey Arabic speakers among Assyrians outnumbered those who spoke Turkish. But again, the alphabet learned came through the Church and so Syriac was used to write Arabic.<sup>9</sup>

Use of both the Armenian language and the Armenian alphabet also spread to the émigré colonies in diaspora. In Boston, where Assyrians and Armenians from Kharput immigrated, the periodical *Babylon* (1919-1921) appeared in Armenian letters, and carried Armenian language articles. Even when an article is written in Ottoman Turkish, the alphabet is Armenian<sup>10</sup>

Conclusions that one can draw from the heavy use of *garshoni* among Assyrians living in Ottoman Turkey are the following:

The Church proscription on the use of Syriac letters to write the native language led in part to the adoption of Armenian letters for writing Ottoman Turkish when the language was known.

In heavily Armenian towns, Assyrians tended to assimilate to Armenian although they kept their Assyrian identity.

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<sup>8</sup> Gabriele Yonan, *Journalismus bei den Assyern : ein Überblick von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Augsburg : 1985 , p 34-37

<sup>9</sup> Yonan, p. 39

<sup>10</sup> Aram Akopian, "Babylon, An Armenian-Language Syriac Periodical: Some Remarks On Milieu, Structure and Language ," *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 10 (2010) p. 88

The presence of missionary schools that taught Armenian, and used Armenian as a language of instruction, as in Kharput, made Armenian the dominant language and writing system, even when educated men knew Ottoman Turkish speech.

### Isolation of Aramaic Speakers

The Assyrians living in the large towns of eastern Turkey that had a significant foreign missionary presence at the end of the 19th and start of the 20th centuries were not the only Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire. They were heavily influenced by Armenians in the towns but retained their own church affiliation where Syriac was learned and chanted. Of these, only about 20,000 remain, mostly living in Istanbul.

But the other significant Assyrian presence in Turkey was that of the mountain Assyrians of the Hakkari. These represent the core Assyrian community, probably the closest remnants of the ancient Assyrian colonies.<sup>11</sup> Divided into tribes governed by chiefs (maliks) but united under the Patriarch of the Church of the East, these Assyrians lived in radically isolated mountain villages, exclusively composed of their co-ethnics, in fact co-tribals. Their closest linguistic contacts were Kurds, their neighbors and predators. After the genocide of WWI, no Assyrians remain in the Hakkari, although their tumbled down churches remain. Their homes belong to Moslems – the Kurds

For these Assyrians, the closest co-ethnics lived in what is now northern Iraq, on the Nineveh Plain and in the eastern foothills of the Zagros in places like Gawar, Margawar, Targawar and further east to Urmiah and its surrounding villages. When the genocide occurred, they fled to these neighboring areas. None of these areas used Ottoman Turkish. So this very influential group of Assyrians living in Ottoman Turkey and paying tribute through the patriarch to the Sultan, lived in such isolation that they had little contact with Ottoman Turkey. Even during the genocide: their attackers were Kurds, surrogates for the Turkish army.

As they fled south into neighboring Assyrian areas, they gradually acquired Arabic as a second language but have retained their spoken Aramaic language better than most Assyrian communities of the Middle East. Isolation, strong family and tribal relations, and relative unity within the structure of the Church of the East have held them together. The church, fierce in its insistence on the use of

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<sup>11</sup> *The provincial archaeology of the Assyrian Empire*  
Cambridge, UK : McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, [2016]

Aramaic, willing to use the vernacular speech for writing and education, has withstood language pressures and continues to produce poets, if not novels and plays.

### **Arab areas where Ottoman Turkish had no presence**

The final large group of Assyrians under Ottoman rule lived in Mesopotamia where Ottoman Turkish simply did not penetrate the society at large. That region, made up of three Ottoman vilayats (provinces) Basra, Baghdad and Mosul. The struggle over the last province, Mosul, between the British mandate (Iraq) and the Kemalist Turkish government was settled by the 1928 League of Nations commission in which Assyrians swayed the decision at the behest of the British. The refugees joined with the local Assyrians (made up of Chaldeans and Syriac Catholic natives as well as members of the Syriac Orthodox Church) to oppose the Turkish position.

In Europe where most of the Assyrians from Turkey who had lived on the plains of the southeast have emigrated, particularly since the 1960s, a revival of both the classical Syriac and the spoken Aramaic is taking place in settlements located in Sweden (Södertälje), Germany (Augsburg) and Netherlands (Hengelo & Enschede). The new immigrants occasionally converse in Turkish, the modern language taught in the public schools since the 1920s, but increasingly, the second generation happily adapt to European languages and strive to retain their Aramaic.

# Hindi in Colonial Bihar: Implications Then and Now

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## Abstract

The Hindi movement is often discussed with regard to the old administrative area of NWP&O (North Western Provinces & Oudh), but in this paper I outline the trajectory followed in Bihar of the movement to make Hindi the vernacular medium of education, courts and administration. The paper gives a socio-political account of Hindi in Bihar and discusses the various actors in the Hindi movement and the effects that they had on the outcome. The paper further discusses the marginalization of indigenous languages in Bihar as Hindi became the state official language and default mother tongue of all Hindus, a status which it retains. The paper further discusses the evolution of contact Hindi of Bihar (CHB) and few variations between standard Hindi (SH) and CHB. Further it discusses about the marginalization of speakers of indigenous languages of Bihar and Jharkhand in terms of education, and employment as they do not have access to mother tongue education and being poor they also have no access to good quality Hindi and English education. The paper concludes by suggesting some measures to address this situation.

## Bihar: an introduction

Bihar is a state in Eastern India, its capital being Patna. In the year 2000 south Bihar was separated from Bihar to carve out the state of Jharkhand. Bihar is the 12th largest state of India and has a population of 103,804,637 (census 2011) which makes it 3rd most populated state of India. It has a literacy rate of 63.82% (census of India 2011).

Bihar is one of the states in Hindi belt: i.e. it is one of the Indian states which have Hindi as state official language. Apart from Hindi, Urdu is the second state official language of Bihar. Other languages spoken in Bihar are Magahi, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Angika, Bajjika and various dialects of these languages. All these languages belong to the Indo-Aryan language family and all these languages except Maithili are listed as varieties of Hindi in Indian census. According to the 2001 census there are 33,099,497 speakers of Bhojpuri, 12,179,122 speakers of Maithili and 13,978,565 speakers of Magahi, out of these Maithili got the status of schedule language in the year 2003 talks to include Bhojpuri in the eighth schedule started in December 2012. Magahi even with such huge population base is yet to find a place in this list. Angika and Bajjika are not listed in the census. Bihar has a history of people migrating to and from Bihar, Bengalis, Marwaris, and Punjabis (refugees who came after partition of India) form a large chunk of Bihari population today. The Muslim population in the state is 17% of the total population.

## The Hindi Movement in North India

In a simplistic manner we can say that modern nationalism is usually based on a group's actual or mythological common ethnic past and a perceived unity of purpose and need. In countries which are homogenous in ethnic terms, national languages are easily developed for the use of entire population, as it is deemed necessary for development and sustenance of loyalty to the political entity, which the elites want to be established.

A commonly shared tongue, ideally one which is different from one's neighboring nations, is seen as a vehicle for maintenance of the nation as one unit against outward influences, which are often considered to be dangerous, and corrupting. But in new nation states that have multi-ethnic and multi-lingual population and a civilization of multiculturalism, it is very difficult to achieve linguistic uniformity as efforts to create a unilingual society often results in linguistic and ethnic conflicts.

Therefore the campaign to make Hindi the national language of independent India which was premised on the western idea of nation state i.e. one nation, one language and one people, caught the imagination of people in North India more than any other part of India. It was linked to Hindi, Hinduism and pristine culture of ancient India, which got corrupted under the rule and influence of outsiders. If one can imagine about a shared past real or imagined, one can imagine of a future together too. The modern tools of identity formation, identity construction and propagation

i.e. census, print technology and maps were used in British India by standardizing languages and establishing their links with specific religious and ethnic communities, and they were helpful in consolidating Hindu identity in Bihar as elsewhere in North India and in establishing Hindi as the state official language of the state.

### **Hindi Movement in Bihar**

Grierson in his linguistic survey of India has grouped the languages spoken in Bihar (for which he uses the umbrella term Bihari, on the basis of close affiliations with each other) with the languages he has classified as eastern group i.e. Bengali, Oriya and Assamese. But he has mentioned that the people of Bihar are closer in terms of familial ties, ritual, traditions and customs to people of U.P than with Bengali people<sup>1</sup>.

These familial, social and traditional ties may be the ground for the rise in consciousness of Hindu intelligentsia and Hindi movement in U.P to spread rapidly though differently in Bihar.

The basic difference being the role of British government in the movement, which although started as the movement for the 'real vernacular' of the region but actually nobody except Grierson put up a case for languages of Bihar.

Hindi movement in Bihar had three undertones, it was a movement for establishing Hindi as the court language, language of education, language of public discourse and the language of the emerging identity of the upper caste Hindus of Bihar, who started gaining communal consciousness much later than Hindus in united provinces and Bengal. It was a movement to replace Urdu and through it the dominance that Muslim (and Kayasthas) had in government services, courts and education. At the same time it was a movement against the dominance of Bengalis in Bihar in all spheres of public life, government services, education, and culture and more importantly, their domination over the rights of the indigenous people of Bihar. It was a movement for cultural, social and political reassertion and self determination of upper caste Hindus of Bihar (earlier upper caste Muslims of Bihar were also a part of it, as it started as a movement against the dominance of Bengalis in Bihar) through linguistic self-determination. Hindi was the only language which could serve the purpose as it was acceptable to the intelligentsia, who spoke different regional languages of Bihar as mother tongues.

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<sup>1</sup> Grierson, 1904:1 LSI, Vol-5 part-2:1

The remarkable feature of the movement was that all the development stated above was taking place almost simultaneously and under the patronage and support of the British government. The elites and emerging middle classes of Bihar supported and endorsed the moves of the government and from there side created a public sphere for Hindi in Bihar by propagating the standard Hindi created by the Hindi movement stalwarts of NWP&O with aid of newspapers, books, libraries and establishing the discourse of Hindi as the original mother tongue of the people of Bihar, with all other Bihari languages being its varieties<sup>2</sup>.

### **Hindi movement anti-Bengali stance**

The Hindi movement in Bihar started with Bihar for Biharis claims made by Muslim elites first and then taken up by the emerging Hindu middle class and intelligentsia. But the most important factor here was support given by the colonial government to the cause of Bihar for Biharis and anti-Bengali sentiments expressed openly by the government officials. Policies were made to include more Biharis in the government offices and posts in Bihar and restrictions were placed on recruitment of Bengalis in Bihar.

As early as 1861, W.S. Atkinson director of Public instruction in Bengal traced the educational backwardness of Bihar to the lack of employment opportunities. It was due to his efforts that Patna College was established and later raised to degree level in 1865. Even Patna College was so dominated by immigrant Bengalis that in 1871-72 during the convocation held at Calcutta, the then Lt. Governor of Bengal George Campbell observed that due to overwhelming Bengali presence it seems that the college is kept for immigrant Bengalis only<sup>3</sup>. He proposed to close down Patna College as the people of Bihar were not interested in education but the move was averted due to intervention of Bihari elites. The government officials<sup>4</sup> in Bihar and important members of

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<sup>2</sup> All the activities from standardization to writing of books and publications in standard Hindi gained force after the British government made Hindi the vernacular language of courts and education in chotanagpur in 1860s. See Hiten Patel (2011).

<sup>3</sup> Bengal general education department: A preceeding (March 1872), no.63, cited in H.Patel (2011:63)

<sup>4</sup> In the annual report for 1870-71 on education in Patna division, the Commissioner of the division R.P Jenkins, observed that Bihari boys were not showing adequate interest in education because the Bengalis excluded the Biharis from Public services in their own province "of late years", he added, "it has become the practice in all district offices to appoint Bengalis as much as possible,

Bihar's elite society also emphasized that Bihari boys will only take up education if they are given some preference in government jobs at least in Bihar (Aditya Prasad Jha, Political History of Bihar pp. 219). Due to this even if the English educated Bengalis were more suitable for the British government to employ, some jobs in Bihar were reserved for Biharis in Bihar<sup>5</sup>.

We can find many such instances where the British government was partial towards Biharis against Bengalis and due to this we can find strong anti Bengali sentiments in some of the Hindi and Urdu newspapers<sup>6</sup> published at the times, which also lauded the efforts of the government to do justice with Biharis.

### **Hindi in Bihar: antagonism towards Muslims and Urdu**

If we look at the Hindi-Urdu antagonism in Bihar, we find it much less than that in NWP&O. As Hindi that was being propagated as 'standard Hindi' was nobody's mother tongue in Bihar and even Urdu could hardly be claimed as mother tongue of any native of Bihar. Therefore the mass base which was available to the Hindi movement in NWP&O was not present in Bihar. The support for Hindi gained ground in Bihar due to influence of the Hindi intelligentsia of NWP&O on the emerging Bihari intelligentsia, landlords and Hindu middle classes, but it was the support of the British government that actually made Hindi with Nagari script the vernacular of Bihar in place of Urdu with Persian script.

The anti Urdu stance was one of the policies of colonial government and it started as early as 1860s. Lohardagga (which is now in Jharkhand and has sizable tribal population) became the first district in Bihar to get Hindi as the language of court and vernacular education in 1862.

The first serious official effort to introduce Hindi was made in 1862 by E.T. Dalton, the commissioner of Chotanagpur (now part of Jharkhand). He proposed an outright substitution of Hindi either written in Nagari or Kaithi script in

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similarly partiality has been observed in appointment of Bengalis as judges and deputy magistrates in local courts."

<sup>5</sup> Commissioner of Patna division R.P. Jenkins recommended that "a certain number of appointments in the subordinate judicial and executive services be annually reserved for natives of Bihar" see Aditya Pratap Jha, Political history of Bihar pp 220-221.

<sup>6</sup> *Murgh-ae-Sulaiman* published from Monghyr, in the 7th Feb. 1876 issue and *Al-Panch and Bihar Bandhu* cited in Hiten Patel (2011:66)

place of Urdu in Persian script, as the native language of the courts in the district of Lohardagga and Hazaribagh. It was clearly laid down by the government in 1862 that Hindi was the language of courts. A circular followed these orders from the High court on the civil and criminal side dated 3rd June 1864 to the effect that all complaints, pleadings and proceedings should be in the vernacular of the district and not in Persian, Persianized Urdu or any other foreign language. But rest of Bihar remained under the former system till G. Campbell became the Lt. Governor. His tenure (1871-1874) saw a lot of changes in the attitude of the government of Bengal towards Bihar; he was the one who tried to change the attitude of non-interference and brought the 'distinctive peculiarities of Bihar and Biharis' in focus of the government. He observed that the people of Bihar were Hindustani just like 40-50 million Hindustanis in NWP&O, Central province and Rajputana and spoke Hindi while Hindustani (Urdu) was only used by the city dwelling educated elite<sup>7</sup>.

Writing about one of the visits that Campbell had of schools in Bihar, C. Bernard officiating Secretary to the government of Bengal wrote to the director of public instruction: "during the Lt. Governor's tour in Bihar, it has seemed to him that the real vernacular of the province is neglected in government's school, as Hindustani (Urdu) was being taught instead of Hindi. "The Lt. Governor desires it to be an invariable rule in every government school in Bihar of every degree that first and foremost Hindi has to be taught. No Hindu lad is to be taught Hindustani in any government school till he has acquired complete facility in Hindi, and no Hindu from any aided or private school is to be admitted to any government scholarship, stipend or other reward unless he is similarly qualified. "In all schools of Bihar classed as primary schools no other character than Hindi is to be taught under any pretext, except in case of Muslim makhtabs. "In middle classes and modern schools all instructions are to be given in general subjects up to the vernacular scholarship standard in the Hindi character. Muslims only who have not been able to learn the Nagari character being allowed to use the Persian script. "As classical language in such schools Persian, and not Arabic should be taught where there is sufficient demand for it." "The Lt. Governor desires me to take this opportunity to remark that while in Bengal, where Muslim population is preponderate, they have scarcely any share in educational appointments. In

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<sup>7</sup> Report on the administration of Bengal, 1871-72, p.31, cited in Aditya Prasad Jha, 'Political History of Bihar', pg. 210.

Bihar, where they are in a small minority they have a very large share<sup>8</sup>,

Thus by the orders of Lt. Governor, the govt. of Bengal instructed the commissioners of Patna and Bhagalpur divisions, to introduce Hindi as medium of instruction in schools. By 1880s Standard Hindi became the vernacular language of courts, administration and education in Bihar.

### Voices for and against Hindi in Bihar

Another feature of Hindi movement in Bihar was the support that the Bengali intelligentsia gave to Hindi just the way they supported Hindi in NWP&O. Although in Bihar the Hindi movement was a movement for self determination of the non Bengali i.e. Hindi speaking areas of the Bengal province and also against the hegemony of Bengalis in government jobs as well as educational institutions in Bihar. Many Bengali officials posted in Bihar supported the move of colonial government to make Hindi the vernacular language of courts, administration and education in Bihar.

The Bengali intelligentsia in Bihar not only favoured the adoption of 'Hindi' they were also very critical of Grierson's<sup>9</sup> thinking on language issues and especially his theory of Bihari group of languages being separate from 'Hindi'. On the basis of linguistic differences Grierson argued for the separateness of Bihari languages on various occasion, in his view 'the whole genius of Hindi' was 'different from the Bihari dialects', and they could never, by any possibility assimilate to it. Grierson maintained that just because the dialects of Bihar shared lots of words with Hindi, it did not make them the same language (he was also opposed to referring at languages of Bihar as dialects<sup>10</sup>, which he himself had to do, as they were

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<sup>8</sup> It just shows how the colonial govt. was pitting one community against other in Bihar, at times it was Bengalis Vs Biharis at times Bihari Hindus Vs Bihari Muslims, on the basis of educational and economic advancement.

<sup>9</sup> Grierson arrived in Bihar in 1877 from then he decided to specialize in studying the regional languages of Bihar. Transferred to Patna in 1880 where he first served as the inspector of schools and then as Joint Magistrate of Patna. There he got the opportunity to tour Bihar extensively and study its local village school study system. He was asked by the Government of Bengal to write the grammars of the dialects of Bihar in 1881. See A. Kumar (2013).

<sup>10</sup> Eastern Hindi dialects; but the name is liable to objection on the score that it suggests the fact that they are mere dialectic forms of the so-called Hindi language which one meets in Bagh-o-Bahar and Prem-Sagar, and which is a modified form of Braj Bhasha or dialects of the Doab. This is not the fact; for though, doubtless,

not recognized as languages by the colonial Government).

Other than Bihari intelligentsia, Babu Radhika Prassana Mukherjee, Bhudev Mukherjee and Bireshver Chakraborty were the prominent Bengalis in Bihar who contributed to the cause of Hindi in Bihar. Bireshver Chakraborty<sup>11</sup> even wrote a text book in Hindi for schools in Bihar. Bhudev Mukherjee came to Bihar as inspector of schools in 1877 and The rise in the number of school textbooks in 'Hindi' which played a critical role in dissemination of standardized 'Hindi' in Bihar, was to a significant level due to Mukherjee's efforts.

On the other hand Grierson collected, compiled and published the oral traditional songs and tales of Bihar in regional languages of Bihar, in order to make it clear to everyone that Bihar has its own culture and traditions and languages separate from North India. He also collected samples of 'ungrammatical Hindi' written by Bihari clerks, petitioners and lawyers and sent them to governor of Bengal in order to make it clear to him that Hindi was not the vernacular of Bihar-

"The numerous gross grammatical blunders in documents, most of which are written by fairly

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Hindi and the dialects herein treated of may ultimately be traced up to a common parentage, this point of departure is so extensively distant, and the stems of these languages have developed and branched off so luxuriantly in different directions, that they have nothing in common but their roots."

Proceeding to give a second reason for his objection to the word dialect, Grierson wrote-"Besides this there is this other grave objection to the word 'dialect', that this term, as popularly (though not scientifically) accepted, necessarily presupposes the existence of someone closely related form of speech to which the dialect can be referred as standard. Thus there are Yorkshire and Somersetshire dialects of literary English and Provencal and Norman dialects of literary French. But there is no standard language of which, Tirhuti or Bhagalpuri can be called dialects, for there is no standard of Eastern Hindi language." (Cited in Aishwarj Kumar 2013: 1732).

<sup>11</sup> He made his views amply clear in the introduction of his book, he wrote: "Along with the spread of education in Bihar and the other Hindi-speaking tracts under the Governor of Bengal, and with the replacement of the Urdu by the Hindi language, in courts, a most healthy impetus has been given to the cultivation of the real vernacular of the country. This has resulted in the publication of a large number of Hindi books and periodicals, which, in combination with the splendid classics that already exists, bids fair to raise the status of the language to a very high pitch, before long." Chakravarti, Babu Biresvar (1886). *Sahitya Sangraha*, Bankipore: The Bihar Bandhu Press. Cited in A. Kumar (2013:1718).

educated men, may surprise those who do not know that book Hindi and *Fortiori* court Hindi is a foreign language to all those who use it in Bihar.

. “Unless the ungrammatical jargon of these petitions can be called Hindi or Urdu, Hindi is no more in possession than Norman-French was in possession as the language of England, at a time when the lawyers spoke what they called Norman-French in the law Courts. The matter, no doubt, is different in the North-West Provinces, West of Banaras; for there, Hindi may fairly claim to be the vernacular of the country; but it is not, never was, and never could be, the vernacular of Bihar<sup>12</sup>.”

As inspector of schools in Bihar he maintained that the Hindi which is being taught in the schools is not the mother tongue of anybody in Bihar and also that it was imposition<sup>13</sup> on the minds of young pupils. He disapproved of the Government’s policies in the schools in Bihar especially primary schools. In a note that he wrote to the Indian Education Commission regarding primary education in 1885, he stated that-

Hindi, as the medium of primary instruction in the primary schools of Bihar, was said to be a language not understood by boys at all in many parts of the province, & but ‘little understood even by their teachers’. He further said that he knew from his experience that the student is most of the time unable to understand the text without it being translated in local language by the teacher. (G.A. Grierson 1885, cited in A. Kumar 2013: 1738)

Replying to Grierson’s article ‘A Plea for people’s tongue’ (1880)<sup>14</sup> in which he argued for local

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<sup>12</sup> Grierson, *Seven Grammars*, preface to the first edition (Cited from Aishwarj Kumar 2013:1730-1735). Emphasis mine.

<sup>13</sup> More than once Grierson referred to the fact that Biharis, no matter what their caste, class or age, spoke their own local Bihari dialect at home. With only a very small section of educated in Bihar being able to converse in Hindi, and that too after having learnt it especially in addition to their mother tongue. Thus, for example the Kayasthas who initially opposed the adoption of kaithi script in court and the introduction of Bihari languages in Bihar, because they along with the Muslims had traditionally been dependent on the government service for livelihood, wherein for quite a while the Persian language and Persian characters were used, continued to speak in their mother tongue (some Bihari language) at home and village. Even such elite families such as the Raja of Darbhanga spoke to their relatives in one of the regional languages of Bihar. See Grierson testimony in report by the Bengal provincial committee, p-273. Also Grierson (1899), preface to the first edition of ‘A Handbook of Kaithi Characters’. Cited in A. Kumar 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Cited in A. Kumar (2013).

languages to be made the official vernacular of Bihar, Babu Radhika Prassana Mukherjee wrote a long article saying that people like Grierson want to stamp the street trash with authority and do away with literary traditions of *Bidyapati*, *Tulsidas* and *Surdas*. There was no need for any change as the language spoken and understood by ten percent (Hindi) was not organically different from that of ninety percent (regional languages) and that in name of people we cannot lower down the literary and academic standards by bring them to the level of day labourer<sup>15</sup>.

### Hindi as Language of Bihar: Present Scenario

As a result of the above developments Hindi was established as the language of court, vernacular medium of education and administration in Bihar by 1880. Hindi also became the major language of print in Bihar. Even after independence Hindi remained the official language of the state of Bihar<sup>16</sup>, later Urdu became associate official language of the state in 1980. In Jharkhand also Hindi is the SOL and Oriya, Bangla, Urdu and Santhali are other state recognized official languages for specific purposes. As a result of prolong contact between Standard Hindi (SH) and the regional languages of Bihar in various spheres Contact Hindi of Bihar (CHB) evolved. All the major regional Indo-Aryan languages spoken in Bihar (namely Bhojpuri, Magahi, and Maithili) and Jharkhand (namely Sadri/Nagpuria, Panchparganiya Khortha/ Khotta along with Magahi, Bhojpuri and Maithili) are closely related to each other and also to Hindi<sup>17</sup>, they are all listed

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<sup>15</sup> Mukherjee, Radhika Prasanna (1880). A Few Notes on Hindi, J.G. Chatterjea & Co’s press, Calcutta. (Cited from Aishwarj Kumar 2013:1719).

<sup>16</sup> This space was never given to any of the indigenous languages of Bihar, apart from this the politico-social circumstances made the indigenous languages of Bihar subsumed by Hindi, Hindi was the original language and MT of all Hindus and all other languages spoken at home were varieties or ‘types’ of Hindi (this is one of the prime reasons behind failure of language movements in Bihar).

<sup>17</sup> See Dhanesh Jain & George Cardona (ed) 2014 Indo Aryan Languages (pp 523, 547, 566) for details of Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri. Also see Ethnologue pages of Sadri/ Nagpuria, Panchparganiya and Khortha/Khotta (the major Indo-Aryan languages of Jharkhand), which states that these languages share considerable amount of lexicon with IA languages of Bihar, Bangla and Hindi. G.A Grierson at times referred to Magahi, Maithili and Bhojpuri as ‘Bihari languages’ and at times as three forms of Bihari language and at times as Eastern Hindui Languages. By this he meant the languages spoken in the area known as Bihar and not the

as varieties of Hindi in the census 2001, except Maithili which is now a scheduled language<sup>18</sup>. Though these languages have huge population of native speakers but due to social and official position that Hindi has they have a diglossic relation with Hindi. All administrative work is carried out in SH but the spoken language mostly used in offices, markets, talking to friends, neighbours etc. and even at home in urban settings is contact Hindi.

According to me it is a Koine' and it shares many grammatical features of regional languages of Bihar and also of various Koinés that developed amongst indentured laborers from North India on plantations<sup>19</sup>. Some of these features are as following-

The Contact Hindi of Bihar lacks grammatical gender, though it has semantic gender<sup>20</sup>, which has grammatical realization. In standard Hindi<sup>21</sup> all nouns are classified as male or female.

e.g. *a:j ba:riʃ hogi* (SH)

today rain be-FUT.F.SG.

It will rain today.

*a:j ba:ris hoga* (CHB)

today rain be-FUT.M.SG.

It will rain today.

The Contact Hindi of Bihar lacks ergative perfective construction found in SH.

*Səb ləʃka ba:t*  
All-QNT. Boy-M.SG. Talk

*kiya*

forms of some pre-existing standardized Bihari Language, he clubbed them together as he considered them to be closely related (see Linguistic Survey of India (1904) Vol. V, Part-II, Specimen of Bihari and Oriya Languages).

<sup>18</sup> Eighth Schedule of Indian constitution lists important regional languages of India.

<sup>19</sup> Siegel (1987, 1988) give good account of how koineization took place between closely related languages of North India (Mainly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh) in plantations in Fiji. We can find some structural similarities between CHB&J and Fiji Hindi

<sup>20</sup> Biological male and female genders

<sup>21</sup> Here we have taken the *Khari boli* variety of Hindi from Western Uttar Pradesh which was developed into Modern Standard Hindi (MSH) as the standard for comparison (For details see Y. Kachru 2006).

do-PERF.M.SG

'The boys talked.'

*ləʃkō ne ba:t ki* (SH)

Boy-PL.OBL ERG talk do-PERF. F.SG

'The boys talked.'

*səb log khana khaye* (CHB)

All-QNT people food eat-PERF.HON

'All people ate.'

*səb logō ne* (SH)

All-QNT people-PL.OBL. ERG

*khana khaya*

food eat-PERF. M.SG

'All people ate.'

Plurals are formed by attaching /log/ 'people' to the [+human] animate nouns. With inanimate nouns and [-human] animate nouns /log/ is not attached<sup>22</sup>. /səb/ 'all', /sara/ 'all', /kul/ 'all' and /-ən/ suffix is attached with both animates and inanimates to form plurals.

*acc<sup>h</sup>a ləʃka log esa kəʃta he?* (CHB)

good boy qnt such do-impf.m.sg be

pres.sg?

'(Do) good boys do such things?'

<sup>22</sup> In Contact Hindi of Jharkhand some speakers might use it with [-human], contact Hindi in Bihar and Jharkhand varies a lot on the basis of education, socio-economic conditions, location (urban-rural) and exposure to SH in text and media. For details see Hashami. S (2015) Contact Hindi in Bihar and Jharkhand: Structure and Use. PhD. Thesis Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Unpublished.

acc<sup>h</sup>e ləʃke esa kəʃte hɛ~? (SH)

Good-pl boy-pl such do-impf.m.pl be-pres.pl?

‘(Do) good boys do such things?’

Contact Hindi of Bihar and Jharkhand has numeral classifiers /go/ and /ʃho/, which occur between numeral and the noun. Standard Hindi does not have numeral classifiers. E.g.

11 ʃho baccha hɛ uska,

eleven cl kid be-pres.sg. his/her-3p.sg.gen, 8 go laʃka ɔ:r 3 go laʃki

eight cl boy and three cl girl

‘He/She has eleven children, eight boys and three girls’.

Nouns in CHB&J are often affixed with /-wa/, /-ya/ or /iya/, the latter two ending are mostly used with feminine nouns, or to mark diminutive. According to Grierson they are redundant forms of nouns used in the regional languages of Bihar. Now these also work as specifiers. E.g.

rameʃ kya bola? (SH)

Ramesh what say-PERF.M.SG

What did Ramesh say?

rameswa ka bola? (CHB&J)

Ramesh what say-PERF.M.SG

What did Ramesh say?

ɔ:rət gori hɛ (SH)

woman fair aux-PRES

The woman is fair.

ɔ:rətiya gori hɛ (CHB&J)

woman fair aux-PRES

The woman is fair.

Verbs: Verbs of CHB&J<sup>23</sup> in speech of less educated, elderly speakers, or speakers with little exposure to standard Hindi, sides more with the dominant regional languages of Bihar and Jharkhand-

/e/ is used to mark verbs in imperfective and infinitive aspect. In SH imperfective and infinitive aspects are marked by affixing /-ta/ and /-na/ at the end of the verbs respectively. E.g.

laʃki dekhne me kesi hɛ? (SH)

girl see-INF in how-F.SG aux-PRES

How is the girl to look at (How the girl looks?)

laʃki dekhe me kesi hɛ? (CHB&J)

girl see-INF in how-F.SG aux-PRES

How is the girl to look at (How the girl looks?)

ghoʃa tez dəʃta hɛ (SH)

Horse fast run-IMF.M.SG aux-PRES

Horse runs fast

ghoʃa tej dəʃe hɛ (CHB&J)

Horse fast run-IMF.SG aux-PRES

Horse runs fast

/hɛ/ is the present tense copula. CHB&J has two past tense copulas /tʰa/ and /rəh/, SH has only /tʰa/.

mɛ baza:r gaya tha (SH)

I-PR. Market go-PERF.M.SG. aux-PST

I had gone to the market.

<sup>23</sup> Contact Hindi of Bihar and Jharkhand

*həm bajar gaye rəhe* (CHB&J)

i-PR Market go-PERF.M.SG. aux-PST

I had gone to the market.

Transitive verbs<sup>24</sup> in third person perfective aspects take */-is/* and */-in/* ending, in speech of some Muslim speakers of CHB due to influence of Awadhi<sup>25</sup>. This can be rarely observed in speech of Muslims in Jharkhand (only elderly above 50 years with close connections and familial ties in Bihar).

*Sa:s ne kya-kya diya?* (SH)

Mother-in-law EGR what-REDUP give-3P.PERF.

What all did (your) Mother-in-law give?

*Sa:s ka-ka di?* (CHB general)

Mother-in-law what-REDUP give-F.3P.PERF.

What all did (your) Mother-in-law give?

*Sa:s ka-ka dihis?*<sup>26</sup>

Mother-in-law what-REDUP give-3P.PERF.

What all did (your) Mother-in-law give?

(CHB as spoken by some Muslims)

The CHB has many more features which are different from SH and shared with contributing varieties i.e. regional languages of Bihar<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> We can find */-is/* and */-in/* endings in other Hindi Koine's like Fiji Hindi (see Siegel 1988) in both transitive and intransitive verbs, In CHB we find that Muslim speakers who conventionally belong to upper strata of society have it only in transitive verbs, whereas those who belong to lower strata might have it in both transitive and intransitive, though now very few speakers use it as it reflects social backwardness. The reason for this distinction being maintained in CHB is its traditional hierarchical social settings which is very different from settings of a new colony.

<sup>25</sup> Awadhi is the regional language spoken in and around Oudh, a region in present day Uttar Pradesh. It is a neighbor state of Bihar. Oudh was seat of power of Nawabs of Oudh and elite, educated Muslims of Patna were much influenced by Oudh and Its Culture. Awadhi was spoken due to this influence, as has also been stated by Grierson. (See G.A. Grierson (1904) Linguistic survey of India Vol.V, part-II).

<sup>26</sup> */dihis/-give-3p.perf* can become */dihin/-3p.perf* if honorificity is marked.

As we can see from the above examples the Hindi which is used as the language of contact and everyday communication is different from the SH that is used for the administrative work, text book writings, examinations, printing of notices, circulars, newspapers etc. The same is true of Hindi in the classroom the Hindi which is spoken and understood by majority of children and which is used by the teachers to instruct.

Due to effects of urbanization, migration, and globalized economy, interaction with people who do not speak the same language has increased many fold and so has the demand for people who know languages of wider use like Hindi in India or English in India as well as globally. As learning Hindi, English or other foreign languages becomes more lucrative, people want to learn these languages and people in Bihar are no exception. Parents want the children to speak good English and Hindi instead of their mother tongue.

Because of these developments stated above CHB has taken up many domains which were earlier the domains of the MT. Out of 209 respondents in Bihar and Jharkhand 59 claimed Hindi as MT, while 42 claimed Urdu as MT that brings the tally of Hindi-Urdu to 101. 108 respondents claimed other regional languages and tribal languages as MT. Out of these 108 only 7 respondents used only MT as the language of the house hold (HH), 101 respondents used Hindi (which is contact Hindi of Bihar and Jharkhand) along with MT and at times regional link language (LL). Though the CHB&J is not a codified language, but even the educated respondents like Lokesh Kumar (36, Banker) say that 'it is our way of speaking Hindi'. Uneducated speakers like Brajesh (39, Security Guard) say that.... 'It is Hindi only, though it might not be the fancy Hindi they speak in Delhi that is how we speak in Bihar'. So for the speakers in Bihar and Jharkhand the Hindi that they speak is the Hindi though it is different from SH.

### Hindi and Marginalization of Bihar

The regional languages which are the mother tongue of the students are mostly not used in the school and they are not used as medium of instruction in any government or government aided schools, even at the primary level for children

<sup>27</sup> See for details Hashami, S. (2015) 'Hindi as a contact language in Bihar and Jharkhand: Structure and Use'. PhD. Thesis. Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru Library. Unpublished.

using it at home as MT<sup>28</sup>. The problem which is faced by children in terms of difficulty in learning and understanding the text can be understood, as Bihar stands last in terms of literacy and have very high dropout rates<sup>29</sup>. According to census 2011 effective literacy rates for SCs and STs stand at 49.6% and 51.1% respectively in Bihar, against the state average of 63.80%. In Jharkhand effective literacy rates for SCs and STs stand at 55.9% and 57.1% respectively, against the state average of 67.63%. The dropout rates for marginalised population or the children who do not have access to private schools and tutors are higher than other children. Among the literates, 39.7 per cent of SCs in Bihar are either without any educational level or have attained education below primary level. The proportion of literates who have attained education up to primary and middle levels constitute 28.4 per cent & 13.1 per cent respectively. Only 15.1 per cent SC literates are educated up to matric/secondary/higher secondary etc. Only 3.6% of SCs are able to attain Graduate & above level while only 0.1 are able to achieve non-technical & technical Diplomas. Similarly, among ST literates in Bihar, 37 per cent are either without any educational level or have attained education below primary level. The proportion of literates who have attained education up to primary and middle levels constitute 28.2 per cent & 14.4 per cent respectively. As many as 16.3 per cent ST literates are educated up to metric/secondary/higher secondary etc.

Graduates & above are 3.8 per cent while non-technical & technical diploma holders constitute a meager 0.2 per cent only. The latest Economic Survey published by the Government of Bihar, points at a high drop-out rate among students from

<sup>28</sup> According to Seventh All India School Education survey report, published by NCERT in 2007, apart from Hindi, English, Urdu and Sanskrit use of other languages at primary level is less than 5% in Bihar. In Jharkhand use of minority and tribal languages at primary stage of schooling is also less than 5%. (Seventh All India school Education survey report pp 82-84).

<sup>29</sup> What children here face is complex diglossia, the language that they speak at home is either one of the regional languages of Bihar or CHB the language which is used with classmates and teachers in the classroom is also a variety of contact Hindi, The scare of school Hindi that Alok Rai mentions in 'Hindi nationalism' (2001) is very real for students of Bihar and Jharkhand. Even the children from privileged classes find it difficult as SH is actually nobody's MT in Bihar and Jharkhand. Hindi which is taught in most of the schools also has many features of CHB, though the text is in SH, the pronunciation is as per CHB&J. Children learn SH more from TV, media channels, movies and songs than schools.

SC and ST communities at primary, upper-primary and secondary levels of schooling. It is evident that the dropout rates of SC & ST Children are relatively higher in the higher classes. It is also a fact that only about 19 SC and 35 ST students out of 100 students enrolled in class I are able to reach Class – X in the year 2009-10, indicating very high dropout rate. Only half of the SC students enrolled in class I are able to go beyond class V during same period<sup>30</sup>. Access to higher education for all the disadvantaged social groups is substantially below national average which is 23.6% for all India; it is 12.9% for Bihar and 13.4% for Jharkhand. For SC and STs of Bihar it is 8.3% and 12.1% respectively. For SCs and STs of Jharkhand it is 9.5% and 9.0% respectively<sup>31</sup>.

Thus we can very well imagine the discrimination and hardships faced by marginalized communities one of the major reasons for low educational level and bad socio-economic condition is non-availability of quality education in mother tongue. It makes higher education and employment less accessible.

### The Road Ahead

In order to address the issue the most important thing to focus on is justice. We need to understand that just implementing mother tongue education in some government schools will not help the cause of literacy, education and social justice in Bihar and Jharkhand. First and foremost when few languages are economically more lucrative than others why will any one study less rewarding options? Education should empower people not put them in disadvantage. The state needs to recognize these languages and make them available as an option in all schools, if there has to be mother tongue education it should be for all not only for students in government schools. Educationally and economically weaker sections should not be left behind in learning of English or other languages which are used in global economy. Then only sense of deprivation and indignity related to most of the regional languages of Bihar will go away and people will be encouraged to use them at home as well as in public sphere. Another important point to be discussed at policy level is that can we give Hindi of Bihar status of a language (it is a language but since it is judged on basis of SH which is Government's Hindi, it is not acceptable) so that people are not penalized for speaking and writing the language they naturally speak and identify with.

<sup>30</sup> Economic survey report, dept. of education 2012, Govt. of Bihar.

<sup>31</sup> All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) 2014-15 (provisional report).

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# Restriction of the Use of Tamil in Administrative and Trade Domains in Pondicherry during French Rule, as revealed in Ananda Ranga Pillai's Private Diary

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## Abstract

Western colonists, in order to develop their business initially and later to rule the people of India, largely depended on translators and intermediaries. The intermediaries were called *duvib<sup>h</sup>a:s<sup>h</sup>i*, which literally meant 'one who is proficient in two languages'. The *duvib<sup>h</sup>a:s<sup>h</sup>i*s were acting as the interpreters and middle men between the ruler/trader and the customer/public. Ananda Ranga Pillai (1709-1761) was one such intermediary and well known for his much acclaimed private diary written in Tamil during 1736 to 1761 which is available in 12 volumes both in Tamil and English. The diary is a rich source of socio-politico-cultural scenario of that period in Pondicherry from Ananda Ranga Pillai's point of view. The prose style is different from the modern standard Tamil prose and contains many French words and expressions. The present paper looks into the use of trade and administrative expressions in Ananda Ranga Pillai's diary and attempts to find out how those domains were restricted to a kind of language use exclusively meant for bilinguals in French and Tamil, or the elites familiar with that kind of expression.

## Introduction

One of the intricate challenges the western colonists encountered while they started grounding their business companies in the colonial countries was the communication with the locals. The problem was magnified in India by its natural multilingual character that had existed for centuries. The French East India Company (*Compagnie des Indes Orientales*) established at Pondicherry in 1664, in order to communicate with locals and develop their business initially and later to rule the people, followed the then established practice in the sub-continent of appointing interpreters and translators. The interpreters were then called as *duvib<sup>h</sup>a:s<sup>h</sup>i*<sup>1</sup>, a term which literally meant one who knew two languages: one being the language of western colonists, and the other being the common language of the people of the colonized region. The present paper looks into the use of trade and administrative expressions as found in the private diary recorded by the

famous *duvib<sup>h</sup>a:s<sup>h</sup>i*, Ananda Rang Pillai during the period 1736-1761.

## French East India Company in Pondicherry and the Intermediaries

The French East India Company established in 1664 at Surat made Pondicherry its main Centre in 1674. Pondicherry, from 1674 to Independence from France in 1954, became the major colony of French rule (Arokianathan 1999; Verma 2015). As pointed out in the introduction, the French Company also depended on intermediaries. These intermediaries played an important connecting link between the western traders and the local merchants. The necessity for intermediaries and their role are explained in the following lines:

In both commercial and political spheres, therefore, Europeans in general and French newcomers in particular, needed to negotiate a place for themselves in densely populated and often confusing realms. To do so, they relied on the services of local

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<sup>1</sup> In Calcutta they were referred to as *banyans*. See Nield-Basu (1984) for a detailed account of the intermediaries of Madras.

intermediaries, who either introduced them into new markets or acted on their behalf (Agmon 2011:33).

The three hundred years of French presence in Pondicherry and the political activity in other parts of Tamil Nadu left behind the cultural traits among the people of Pondicherry and linguistic influences on the Tamil language (Meenakshisundaran, 1965; Arokiyanathan, 1999). The private diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai (henceforth A R Pillai) is one of the main sources for the trading strategies of the French, their political manoeuvres, cultural exposure, religious practice etc. The current borrowings *ekol* “school”, *natto:r* “notary public”, *pa:nayam* “pension” etc. are testimony to this influence at linguistic level.

### **Ananda Ranga Pillai and his Private Diary**

Ananda Ranga Pillai (1709-1761) moved to Pondicherry from his birth place Perambur, near Chennai along with his father, who wanted to develop his business in Pondicherry. When his father passed away, A R Pillai, aged 17, started managing the business. Subsequently, he was also employed to supervise the employees at Port Nova. He slowly acquired prominence in the French company’s affairs as evidenced from his own diary notes, and became Courtier of the French East India Company. He was appointed as the Chief *duvib<sup>h</sup>a:s<sup>h</sup>i* in 1747 by the French Governor-General, Joseph François Dupleix (from 14 January 1742 to 15 October 1754), a role which A R Pillai filled till his death in 1761. He had also been the principal broker mediating the French East India Company’s relations with local merchants.

A R Pillai recorded the events that took place around him, and whatever he heard through others about the developments for the world, on a regular basis (not every day) from 6 September 1736 to 22 April 1761: 25 years continuously till his last day. The diary which was preserved by his descendants, was ‘unearthed’ in 1846 by M. Gallois Montburn, the then Mayor of Pondicherry. The English translation of the first three

volumes was carried out by J. Frederic Price and K.Rangachari, the other nine volumes were translated by H. Dodwell along with S. Kuppaswamy Ayyar and B. Vekatramana Ayyar and was published in 1904 (Pillai, 1904: Vol. I General Introduction; Alalasundaram, 1998). The Tamil edition of the diary appeared in 1948.

The diarist wrote the diary in a mixed style, with spoken and written varieties of Tamil, a known diglossic language.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the prose in Tamil was in a transition stage from a ‘scholarly’ type prose predominant among the commentators of the ancient literature. This style was accessible and understandable only to elites who were interested in literature. On the other hand the prose used in documents such as bills, inscriptions was in a kind of spoken Tamil prevalent at the time.

The Europeans were aware that an effective prose style could be one based on spoken Tamil words used in grammatically acceptable sentences. This new style was used to propagate Christianity through creative literature (Selvanayagam, 2000/1957). Fr. Robert de Nobille, Fr. Constantine Joseph Beschi, Fr. Ziegenbalg and Dr. G.U. Pope, to mention a few, are some European scholars notable for their initiatives to write in the Tamil prose style which became the model for usage in the 19th Century. In this context, A R Pillai’s prose style used in the diary is also important in the overall development of modern prose in Tamil. The diary is also a valid (but not a complete) record of some features of the spoken Tamil of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

A R Pillai’s diary had been the subject of study from different perspectives such as history, trade, political and economic scenario, culture, etc. There are a few studies on the language aspect of the diary ( Ramasamy 1991; Srinivasan 1992). K. Ramasamy (1991: 23) analyzed the linguistic characteristics of the language used in the diary and made a general observation:

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<sup>2</sup> Tamil exhibits two functionally different varieties, namely *uyar vaḷakku* ‘high variety’ and *pəccu vaḷakku* ‘spoken variety’. This is characteristic of a diglossic language, as defined by C. A. Ferguson (1959).

The way A R Pillai quoted Thirukkural<sup>3</sup>, employing popular Tamil proverbs and adopting certain nouns into Tamil phonology all indicate that he was a lover of Tamil language. In this diary, one can see the continuation of the style of Tamil used in inscription and the beginning of the modern spoken Tamil. This diary is written in a mixed style of spoken and written Tamil. (literal translation from Tamil).

R. Srinivasan (1992) attempted grammatical analysis of select pages and also prepared a glossary of the selected pages.

### **A R Pillai's Language Attitude**

The attitudes of a speaker may influence the pattern of his/her language use. Hence, it is necessary to understand the attitude of A R Pillai on language or languages. He was a multilingual with proficiency in Tamil, Telugu, Hindustani, French (both spoken and written) Portuguese and English (? – probably spoken only) as evident from his diary. One cannot find fault with the diarist for the mixing of French and other language words while referring to administrative or trade-related subject matter since he was just recording information from practical life. However, he used Tamil phonology as far as possible while writing proper names of other languages the sounds of which were not available in Tamil (Ramasamay, 1991).

The following are some examples:

Madam- *mada:me* (3: 131)<sup>4</sup>

Mahe<sup>5</sup>- *ma:ye* (1:57)

Report- *jappo:duti* (8: 37)

*Persian-parici* (2:63)

He refers to the other languages throughout his diary without any negative connotation, though he mentions the Telugu-speaking people as *vadugar* probably with some dislike. One of his opinions about a kind of Telugu spoken in Tamil Nadu then is a testimony to his attitude on dialectical variations<sup>6</sup>. A Christian pastor from Karaikkal spoke in Telugu with A R Pillai about Jesus. The Governor who was also present during the discourse commented that the Telugu spoken by him was Tamilized. The diarist observed that since the Telugu (variety) was spoken in Tamil Nadu it had to be like that. It is notable that he accepted dialect variation as a natural phenomenon.

One discussion<sup>7</sup> between the Governor Charles Godehu and A R Pillai regarding the honorifics to be prefixed while writing letters, reveals how meticulous A R Pillai was in using the language. The Governor asked A R Pillai why he had not properly used the honorific titles including his degrees and position. A R Pillai explained to him how the system was different in Persian compared to French. This is another proof that A R Pillai was very particular about such minute etiquette in using the language.

### **A R Pillai's Public Contacts and Language Use**

The diary, to a larger extent is in the style of narration. A R Pillai recorded the discourses in which he was a participant or he was witness in the direct or indirect

<sup>3</sup> *Thirukkural* believed to have been written around 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD. It consists of 1330 couplets divided into parts dealing with virtues and moralities.

<sup>4</sup> The first number indicates the Volume number of the diary (Tamil) and the second number after the semi colon indicates the page number.

<sup>5</sup> Formerly a French town in Kerala.

<sup>6</sup> See Vol.8, Part-2 P.86 of the diary (1753, May 8)

<sup>7</sup> See Vol.9, P.86 of the diary (1754, September 14).

speeches. Majority of such discourses was in fact his meeting with the Governor and other higher officials in the French administration. A few contexts are available where A R Pillai had recorded the interaction that had taken place with public or lower cadre employees. He actually reproduced the discourse on many occasions. It is presumable that while A R Pillai interacted with Government officials in Tamil, he would have mixed many French expressions. But it would be interesting to know about the kind of language used while interacting with public or lower cadre employees and vice-versa. In the pages of the diary, differences were noticed in the use of other language words depending on the contexts and persons involved. Here six public interactional contexts are looked into closely with a small description followed by the list of words from other languages (other than Sanskrit<sup>8</sup>). Tamil equivalents then existed or coined by A R Pillai are not included here.

### Context-1<sup>9</sup>

People gathered after knowing about a bad incident that took place around 11 p.m. on the previous night. Two unknown persons had poured liquid filth on the Hindu idol. In the gathering one person was beaten. A R Pillai was directed to settle the issue amicably.

No other language word was noticed in the entire discourse noted in two pages.

### Context-2<sup>10</sup>

A R Pillai recorded a casual conversation with one French official. Following are French and other language words:

*guvə:ɾnam* “headquarters”

*guvə:ɾato:ɾ* “governor”

*ko:ntro:lar jənaral* “comptroller general”

<sup>8</sup> Rules for Sanskrit borrowings are given in Tolkaappiyam, the earliest extant Tamil Grammar believed to have been written in 300 B.C. Sanskrit borrowings can be seen throughout the 2000 years literary history of Tamil.

<sup>9</sup> See Vol.1 PP. 261-263 of the diary (1746, March 17)

<sup>10</sup> See Vol.2, PP. 79-80 of the diary (1746, July 12)

*tɪrakdar* “director”

*ə:y* “crown”

*kommisə:ɾ* “commissioners”

### Context-3<sup>11</sup>

Dispute between one Vandavasi Thiruvenkatam Pillai (a lower-level officer) and the wife of one Kasturi Rangayyan (a subordinate chief of peons at Thiruchirappalli) regarding a certain money dispute. A R Pillai was present while the parties proceeded to the temple to take their oath along with the deputed witnesses. There was some interaction among all. Following are French and other language words:

*kumbɪɾ* “Company authorities”

*nə:ɾstə:n* “offender”

*konsalka:ɾar* “Councillors”

*pəttɪsɪyɔ* “petition”

*tuvnikkiti* “disturbed”

### Context-4<sup>12</sup>

As per the directions of the Governor, instructions were given to the merchants to supply essentials during war time. Following are French and other language words:

*ɾə:sikam* “compensation”

*du:šyɪlla:mɪ* “lack of availability”

*kə:nsə:liyarhar* “Councillors”

### Context-5<sup>13</sup>

An argument took place between the diarist and another employee regarding tax due. The employee questions the authority of A R Pillai.

*kaɪɾa:ɾɪ* “dagger”

*kasə:tti* “prison”

<sup>11</sup> See Vol.1, PP. 302-303 of the diary (1746, April 13)

<sup>12</sup> See Vol.5, PP. 238- 239 of the diary (1748, August 26)

<sup>13</sup> See Vol.9, PP. 226 (1755, April 13)

## Context-6<sup>14</sup>

In war time, the Government demanded exorbitant tax from the citizens. The citizens express their inability to pay. The following are French other language words:

*kumbini* “company”

*kasotti* “prison”

## Conclusion

Based on the brief details given above on language use during the French East India Company’s rule in Pondicherry, the following general remarks can be made. The contexts 2 and 3 stand differently from the other contexts obviously due to the subject matter and the participants.

In the contexts where the subject matter had not been administrative or commercial, the usage of French and other language words were not used, or used minimally.

By contrast, if the subject matter of the discourse had been administrative or commercial, and the participants were not professionals or officials, the use of French and other language words was minimal.

In contexts where administration or trade had been the subject matter of the discourse, and if the participants were officials or professionals, French and other language expressions were more frequently used than in the above two.

At a time of transition in prose style in Tamil, French colonialism unconsciously infused many administrative and trade related terminologies through the intermediaries. It is evident that this tendency prevailed throughout India, wherever the colonial power. Since the British East India Company and British rule prevailed in the subcontinent, the sustained French influence became negligible; English linguistic hegemony continues to dominate even now.

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<sup>14</sup> See Vol.12, PP. 121-122 (1755, June 13) & PP. 128-129 (1760, June 19)

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# Rabha Speech Community in the Colonial and Post-Colonial Eras

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## Abstract

Rabha, one of the endangered Mongolian Linguistic communities migrated to India long before the establishment of British colonial empire. This Sino-Tibetan group of people migrated to North-Eastern part of India and occupied especially in North Bengal, the history of which is associated with the Kirata civilization.

The present study will look back to the gradual shifting status of this speech community in different socio-economical and political era in this land of multilingual hub.

## Introduction

Long before the pre-colonial era the Rabhas had come to North Bengal. They were here even before the 'Koch' empire was established. They arrived at the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam from Tibet along with other Mongolian groups. From here one group migrated towards the far eastern part of India moving towards south and another group moved towards Dooars and Cochbihar, on the opposite side of the river Brahmaputra (Sudhir Bishnu 2009).

Rabha adopted the socio-cultural life of the Indian multilingual, cultural, and ethnological environment in the pre-colonial, colonial and even in the post-colonial era. Initially they were associated with agriculture and an adventurous forest life. But when the British introduced new local laws and restrictions regarding forest and wild life, the Rabha communities of North Bengal encountered a unique problem. They used to live their forest life and had to move towards the new professions by the rules of the British. The British noticed the Rabhas' partiality towards forests and wild life and so recruited the Rabhas as plantation labors and forest wardens' assistants. They started to compromise their identity and livelihood in order to survive and settle in this era under the British Empire. They received beneficial effects from the then masters in form of education, living lessons, and even religious lessons which in turn influenced their own language.

## Rabhas of North Bengal in pre-colonial era

Rabha is a well known and renowned community of the north-east and eastern parts of this country, there is a

greater confusion regarding the origination and social identity of this community. And this is because there is not much history of the tribe recorded.

The name Rabha itself is not original. They believed that others or outsiders had given them that name. They believe that they are 'Koch'. From research we can find that "Kocha is the silenced muted identification and publically recognized identity of the community" (Karlson 1997). We can draw a conclusion that both Rabha and Koch are same by comparing the exact similarities of their anthropological characteristics, religious beliefs, social customs and traditions etc.

## Conversion of Rabha name in colonial era

Now the question arises of how the Koch became the Rabha. The Rabha themselves feel proud to introduce themselves as Koch. Even from field survey I can clearly see that they believe and identifies themselves as Koch. Evidently it can be found in their own daily life progression. They introduce their

language as - Kocha-crau (crau- language)

song as - kocha-chaе (chaе-song)

culture as - kocha- alekachar (alekachar-art)

dance form as - kocha-baumani (baumani- dance)

And evidently a lot of their social forms are named as Kocha which is strongly and proudly associated with every possible thing. Now the name 'kocha' means 'ancient'. The name 'Rabha' means 'invited person'. A folkloric story about the name Rabha is that, when Garo

community was ruling this part of India, King Huiseng of Garo invited the Koch community to their kingdom to cultivate their land for the Garo as they were not versed in cultivation. On the other hand, the Koch were well-known and trained cultivators. King Huiseng was very impressed with the Koch as they were pretty successful in their venture of cultivation. Thus the wise king invited some Koch people to stay with them permanently so that they could learn the process of cultivation from Koch. This invitation in Garo language is called as 'Raba'. This is how Rabha was migrated to Someswari valley from lowlands of Garo hill and Brahmaputra valley. Raba means invited. And later on 'Raba' became 'Rabha' because of the evolution of utterance. This was in the period 1450-1460 AD. The above folk story is strong historical evidence that the name Rabha was given to them by others.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Parsi writer Mirjanathan in his book *Baharistan-E-Ghaibi* (B. Majumder, 1990) mentioned the name Rabha. This signifies the change in Raba to Rabha. In pre-colonial era this is probably how Koch of low Brahmaputra Valley and North Bengal became Raba, and Raba became Rabha.

### **Change of monolingual Rabha life to multilingual complex life in colonial era**

When The British came to India, they implemented new laws and regulations across the territory. First they started counts of the population from 1872. When the result came out before 1901 we could not find any Rabha there. But in 1911 British India the census report shows 722 Rabha which is significantly the first time Rabha name was mentioned in a government official document. This is how the Pre-British Indian Koch became Rabha in colonial era.

Since independence the Rabha have been identified as a Scheduled Tribe in Plain in West Bengal and Assam and as a Scheduled Tribe in Hills in Meghalaya, on the basis of IPC 275 of our constitution. In the 1961 census report of Goalpara the Rabha are identified as Hill and Forest Tribes. But the Koch were identified as a Scheduled Cast in the same report. Thus the division between these Rabha and Koch were created in the colonial era itself by identifying them separately and in post-colonial era their identities separated. But institutionally the Koch themselves wanted to be identified as Rabha. This is to enjoy the government facilities associated with being a Scheduled Tribe. This is why now a day we can find that though the Father is named as Koch the Son has taken the surname Rabha.

**Change in Social outcast** The Rabha community underwent a drastic change in the colonial period. Basically the Rabha people were forest dwellers in North Bengal. They used to live in the forest and earn their living by agriculture.

When the British came to this part of India, they recognised its scope for tea planting. They identified that the soil and land is best for the Industry to grow. Thus they designated the area to operate as cultivation land. When they started to implement their plan, they also introduced new laws aiming to protect their interest. They introduced new forest laws and cultivation laws such as the Tea Plantation Law, under which cutting trees and cultivation of other sorts were banned. This way the Rabha people were the first affected, as they were inhabitants of this area and they were dependent on it. They were restricted from cutting the trees as well as cultivating other crops and even Tea.

The autochthonous people of the Dooars such as the Koch-Rajbanshi, the Bodo, the Lepcha and specially the Rabha were well dependent on their traditional economic system. They showed repugnance in responding to the invitation to work as labourers in the growing British tea gardens. The British then had no other option but to bring labourers from outside. The majority people of southern and eastern Nepal were very poor; and after the treaty of Sagauli in 1816 the Gorkhas were recruited in the British Indian Army; in the same way, when the question of labour came out in the burgeoning Tea industry, the British authority identified the poor half-fed people of southern and eastern Nepal. After the treaty of Sinchula in 1865 the British government also encouraged the immigration of Nepalese in order to populate the sparsely inhabited zones of the Dooars down the Bhutan hill country. But as the Nepalese were not enough to satisfy the demand for labourers in the Tea industry in the Dooars, the British decided to bring labourers from the Santal Parganas and Chhotanogpur plateau of Bihar where large number of tribal as well as poor people, namely Santal and Oraon, lived without fixed and settled economy. Thus the Rabha people were one of the most affected communities as traditionally they used to live on forest skills, but British rule and their laws prohibiting felling trees in reserved forests, declared punishable by law, deprived them of their traditional ways of living in the forest enclaves.

The British established the Forest law in 1865. Rabhas lost their livelihood in forest and were forced to work as buffer or 'Faltu' labor for the The British. But most of these people moved towards villages to live along with other tribes and localities. One interesting thing is that there are no villages or places found where it can be said that Rabha live in a dense population. It is always seen that some number of Rabha families live with people of other tribes or communities.

**Change in religious front** When the foreign rulers established their colonial roots, they brought trade, invention, social justice and even legislation. But they also brought Christianity with them. The church was made responsible to educate local inhabitants of these places. The Christian missionary church introduced

English and started to educate the remote places of North Bengal. It had an enormous impact on the Rabha language as they had to learn the religious language of the Church. The main aim was to bring back this tribal society to the main stream, but they ended up losing their own originality.

One of the major impacts of colonization in India is the establishment of a missionary Church of Christianity. Forest dwellers Rabha were greatly impacted by this. Even in my field survey it was evident that Christianity had a great impact. Basically the Rabha are worshippers of nature gods. But in colonial and post colonial era it is evident that they are more in Churches than their own temples.

Traditionally Rabha was a society where a woman was seen as the leader of a family. The maternal influence was greater in a Rabha family. But this may be because of the introduction of Christianity it gradually changed.

Based on the Tea Industry there was already a partition in the Rabha society in North Bengal one of which stayed in forest by agreeing to the condition brought forward by the colonial empire and second moved towards plains of north Bengal for Cultivation and agricultural life. The forest dwellers could have protected their heritage and culture and norms as they were in the deep into the forest which was completely protected by the forest itself, if not they were identified by the Christian church. Though the church gave them education, importance and even social values, but what they also did is changed the originality of the tribal group. The strong western culture was introduced to the Rabha society because of which a lot of religious migration took place in Rabha forest dwellers.

On the other hand the Rabhas who were involved in agriculture, had a strong association with Hindus in the plains of North Bengal. This also made them to speak other language like Bengali. Thus the way of life made these Rabha speakers as bi-lingual/multi-lingual. Rajbanshi are the major reason for these changes.

For many reasons these Rabha society had become a male-dominated society. But the colonial era was the main reason of which their society got divided in the first place. Now this partition, even the change in the occupation, these all occurred because the colonial empire came to this part of India to establish the Tea industry. A lot of other factors may be contributing to the fact that Rabha is an endangered language and society, but it seems very clear that the colonial rule does have a greater responsibility for this result.

### **Effect of the Colonial Era in Rabha Life**

In the post-colonial era the impact of British colonial raj was quite evident in every aspect, just as the way they used to build their home has changed in multilingual culture. They used to build houses facing east or west

only. Bamboo, grass, leaves and other materials were used to build them. But colonization and its effects actually abolished this process of house building. Now even the grandson has never seen such a house as the one in which the great grandfather once lived.

In north Bengal though the clothing got a drastic change in the community, it has a modern touch to it. Not too long ago the Rabha women used to make their own traditional clothing which covers from knee to neck. The lower part of which used to be called as 'Loufun' and the upper part was called 'Kambangh'. An additional cloth they used to rap in their west which was called 'Fakchek'. The men used to wear clothing named 'Sakok'. But now the men wears shirt, pants, dhoti, kurta and the women sari, churidar etc..The forest dwellers Rabhas still wears their traditional clothing but the village Rabha have left their tradition.

The Rabha community was unable to take any formal education in post British era till 1986-87. There can be many reasons to this. Even government inefficiency is also one of the reasons. But even till today the literacy problem is more in Rabha compare to other community, especially in forest dwellers. It was seen that the forest dwellers were very hard to convince regarding formal education. The colonial empire actually failed to establish the quality of life among them, even the wish to aspire to it.

The Koch and Rabha identity crisis is also one of the results of the colonial era. The Rabhas are identified as Scheduled Tribe whereas the Koch as Scheduled Cast. Now for beneficial effects in government exam, job interview and other government facilities Koch of this area is naming themselves as Rabha. From the Census reports it is also seen that there is confusion between the names of 'Koch' and 'Rabha'. The Census Report of 1961 shows that the population of Rabhas in West Bengal was 6053 and in 1971 the report showed 2466. Accordingly the 1961 census showed that the Koch population was 3522. In 1971 which was increased to 17257. This unnatural growth leads to a confusion of identifying the community. Probably the counting has been done for the same tribe twice. Now, to lead on from this point I discovered that from the social-cultural anthropological side both Koch and Rabha are from the same origin. And this is because it is found that both the community worships same God, they have the same food habit, same basic social fundamental value regarding rituals, festivals and marriages. Both the community has similar social value where women are considered as head of the family.

Both Koch and Rabha community decided to come together to overcome political and social differences and emerge as one. Both the communities came together in 1973 in the month of January when in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of January they gathered in Dhubri

District of Assam and subsequently in March 8th, 9th, and 10th in Konkrajhar district of Assam. Leaders, socially recognized, teachers and representatives from both the community of Koch and Rabha came together to resolve all differences and made the first attempt to emerge as one big community to overcome social and political backdrops. They announced that both Koch and Rabha are same and uttered 'kouchan rabha, rabhaun kouch' means Koch is Rabha and Rabha is Koch. They tried to coalesce Koch Rabha and give them one name as Rabha. In this pursuit they formed "Bebak Rabha Crourang Rouchum" means "Nikhil Rabha sahitya sabha".

There is bi-lingualism, tri-lingualism or rather multi-lingual effects on Rabha. Here we observed how socio-political aspect has actually influenced this group of people to leave their own language, cultures and even surroundings. The multi-lingual surrounding (Bengali, Ranjbanshi, Sandri) dominated the use of 'Kochacrau' which is the mother tongue of the Rabhas and that is very much evident till now. Another reason for the endangerment of this language, according to Dr. A. S. Koch of Assam, is the civilized regarded 'Kochacrau' as uncivilized, uncultured and vaguer language to speak for. The superstratum or civilized people of north Bengal marginalized them as speakers of a Slang language, which is very unfortunate and has deepened their endangerment.

I have done some linguistic analysis of their language: it can be used to preserve the Rabha language. My findings are based on field survey. The discussion is as follows

### Descriptive properties of Rabha language

The descriptive properties of the Rabha Language are available sporadically here and there, but there is no such study do on the Kochcru community of the Rabha Sub Groups. The present study will try to provide that along with the common tendency of the population towards their mother tongue.

**A) Phonology:** The study will gather the minimal pair and phonemic identification will be made following the phonemic contrast.

Example: /e:/ /u/ ening - /e/ning (this)  
 uning - /u/ning (that)  
 /p/ : / ph/ par - /p/ar (flower) phar -  
 /ph/ar (night) etc...

**B) Morphology:** Like other languages Rabha has also derivational and inflectional systems. The vocabulary shows that it has monomorph and derivational words. The mono-morph words which are free in use are known also as simple

words. There is also the derivational process. Therefore the words from both these groups can be noted considerably. Words in compound structure are also there. Therefore the words in Rabha language can be categorised structurally as **Simple, Derivational and Compound Word.**

**i) Simple word :** Consists of one morpheme and those are free in use.

Eg: dan - bed  
 phang - tree  
 mik- man

### ii) Derived Word or Derivational Morphology

Several derived words are having derivational inflections like following i.e. words containing a free morph + bound morph.

Eg. (by adding derivational inflection)  
 pir (free morph) + ae (bound morph) >  
 pirae ( up)  
 nam (free morph)+ sha bound morph) >  
 namsha (daughter in law )

Like this Noun + suffix = New word

Eg. nam + sa = namsa (daughter in law)  
 coplak + sa = coplaksa (handle)  
 micik + sa = miciksa ( female child)  
 cham + i = chami (be wounded)

Derivational word (by adding prefixes) i.e Prefix + Base = complex word.

'nang' means relatives; related with husband or wife's family.

E.g. a - nang + sa = anangsa (brother of wife)  
 au - nang + sa = aunangsa (sister of husband).

Here prefix like use of 'a' represents wife's family and 'au' represents husband's family.

The words are also formed by adding a suffix to the root forms i.e. root + suffix = new word

E.g. √tan + lao = tanlao ( keeping on behalf)  
 √tak + lao = taklao (doing on behalf)

**iii) Compound Word:** Besides the derived forms Rabha has also the compound words which are consisted of more than one free morph. These are compound in structure to generate a new word.

E.g. chika + baulang = chikabaulang (white water, local liquor)  
 chika + tungtung = chikatungtung (hot water)

**iv.) Inflectional Morphology:** The inflectional system is little different which has new

development after the migration. Some inflectional feature can be noted.

Eg. Root + suffix= complex word

fai + ta = feita (come)

fai + auno = faiauno (should come)

fai + rauno = fairauno (will come) etc.

**C) Syntax :** In Rabha language the word order is very important. The tendency of Kochacru in simple sentence is towards SOV pattern.

Subject comes first then object and then verb...

Eg.        tepsi    mae    saya  
              S        O        v  
              tepsi    mae    saya  
              tepsi    rice    eat  
              tepsi    eats    rice.

In Rabha sentence there are two parts, which are the Subject and the Predicate, though the absence of subjects can be noted in the sentences.

Eg: Interrogative sentence (Imperative)

biyoug loa – ‘where are (you) going?’

The subject is absent here which is also similar to Bengali.

### **i) Simple sentence of Rabha language :**

Saksa haboi-marapni mik bri swa toya.

A farmer male four children had.

A farmer had four male children.

Like this the compound and complex sentences of Rabha language will be described.

#### **i) Compound sentence of Rabha language:**

a. lai **nateng** cheia.

Give **nither** die.

b. u gasa duphu nekei tana sa:m taukau tana.

He a snake saw and killed.

He saw a snake and killed it.

### **Conclusion**

The Rabha community people of north Bengal migrated to India and to this particular part of West Bengal in 2000 BC. This Sino-Mongoloid group of people was one of the first to establish their empire and rule this part of the world. They still bear a

strong ethnical heritage of culture and customs. In the pre-colonial era, they were settled in their forest life and were building a strong social life.

In colonial era the the British could not gave them the necessary social upbringing and even the required social justice.

The division of the original Koch community into Rabha and Koch, then the division of forest dwellers Rabha into Forest Dwellers and Village Dwellers happened in this colonial era and because of colonial laws.

The migration of forest Rabha people into planes of Brahmaputra and north Bengal happened in this era, which eventually forced these people to live with a muti-lingual, multi-ethnic culture. This eventually forced them to lose their purity as community.

And the language of Rabha, ‘kochakru’ itself is now endangered as Rabha and Koch both are dominated by strong communities surrounding them.

The Bengali and Rajbanshi languages have a large influence on the Rabha language. Especially in the village this influence works more prominently. But now this influence is found among the forest dweller’s language also as they are moving towards the villages for better social life. As a result their language is getting changed owing to language contact with Bengali, Rajbanshi etc. The feature of pure Rabha is disappearing. Because of speaking many other languages their mother tongue is becoming obsolete gradually. The new generations are unfamiliar with their mother tongue. Inter-caste marriage with Rajbanshi also has become one of the causes of infiltration by other languages. The existence of the language is now in danger because of all these infiltrations.

Once the characteristics of Rabha language was in organism, which means that there was no inflection in their language. But now they are adopting inflectional system. Thus the ethnicity of Rabha language is getting obsolete day by day.

Thus it is strongly evident that colonial era had great impact on social, geographical, occupational, religious, and even literary deep effect on Rabha community and Rabha language.

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# Language Endangerment and Language Revitalization in a minority (post)colonial setting: the Galician case

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## Abstract

Galician is a minority Romance language, which is currently spoken in Northwestern Spain and which has been sharing space with Spanish, the majority language, since the Middle Ages. The proximity between both language systems has historically facilitated communication, but also language shift from Galician towards Spanish. The issue of language endangerment has long been discussed in Galicia, and its vitality and status have been subject to long and diverse discussions. In the hopes of becoming part of mainstream Spanish society, traditional Galician speakers have adopted this majority language and thus abandoned Galician. The colonial situation that led the Galician aristocracy and elites to be historically replaced by Castilian-speaking ones was a determining factor for regular citizens to believe that maintaining Galician was advantageous. Later, sociopolitical factors made the overall population believe that a condition for social advancement was to adopt Spanish instead of Galician in their daily lives. This contribution will review the scope and interpretation of language shift and revitalization in Galicia, considering also contemporary language policies and debates in this country.

## 1. Introduction

The impact of the Castilian language over Galician in the northwest was limited for an extended period of time despite the efforts of Spain's political dominance from the early Middle Ages onwards as well as the nation-state's strategies to undermine the status of languages other than Castilian in the modern era (Monteagudo, 1999). However, this changed when the development of urban areas as well as the expansion of the school system took place and affected the majority of the Galician population (Rei-Doval, 2007). For this reason, Galician continued to be the language of more than 90 percent of the population until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and language endangerment was more of a potential threat than a practical concern.

In the case of Galicia, revitalization efforts only started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as part of the process that Galician historiography has called *Rexurdimento* ("revival") of its language and culture: a form of cultural vindication of the Galician identity and culture that made Galician visible as a formal written language after three centuries of casual oral usage only (Hermida Gulías, 1992).

## 2. Galicia as a (post)colonial setting

Galicia's colonial status was significantly debated in the 1970s and 1980s. Its early incorporation, in particular once Spain became a modern nation-state, allowed for differing interpretations. There have been claims that Spain treated Galicia as a marginal periphery deserving limited space in the configuration of the Spanish kingdom and identity, and therefore Galicia could be

considered and analyzed by comparison with other African and Asian countries. An alternative opinion believes that Galicia is not technically a colony, while other authors consider it to be in a post-colonial situation.

This debate became popular upon the publication of *O atraso económico de Galicia* [Galicia's economic backwardness] in 1972, where the economist and professor Xosé Manuel Beiras affirmed that Galicia had historically been and still was an "internal colony" in Spain. This line of argument had been previously used by Robert Lafont for French Brittany or Occitania and Harold Wolpe for apartheid in South Africa. In addition, Maurice Dobb and Paul Baran had used the concept and simile for some historical stages in the UK and Japan. The debate on Galicia's colonial status was recovered by Carlos Casares in a newspaper article and responded to by Xosé M. Beiras in 1988 as part of the political debate previous to the 1989 Galician national election, giving rise to popular jokes on cosmetics: the Galician word *colonia* is equivalent to both *colony* and *cologne* in Galician and Spanish, and thus Casares' article on "colonia o champú" was responded by Beiras as "Ni colonia ni champú: desodorante" [Neither colony/cologne nor shampoo: deodorant]. The introduction of post-colonial theory to Galicia brought a new revival to this debate in a slightly different shape, and different authors in Galician Studies discussed the possibility for Galicia to be analyzed under post-colonial theory (Hooper, 2011).

### 3. The demolinguistics of Galician

As research on the social history of Galicia has shown (Seminario de Sociolingüística RAG, 1995), at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Galician language was spoken by over 90% of its population (see table 1). At that time, the percentage of monolinguals in Galicia was around 80%, while the number of bilinguals with predominant Galician usage was higher.

	1877	1897	1917	1924	1947	1967	1974	2013
only Galician	88,5%	84,7%	79,0%	71,6%	32,4%	30,8%	17,7%	30,84%
more Galician	7,3%	8,9%	10,2%	18,0%	38,5%	29,1%	22,0%	20,06%
more Spanish	1,4%	2,6%	5,0%	4,6%	20,1%	26,9%	39,8%	22,00%
only Spanish	2,9%	3,8%	5,8%	5,7%	9,0%	13,0%	20,5%	25,95%

Source: compiled from Seminario de Sociolingüística RAG (1995) and Instituto Galego de Estatística (2013)

Table 1. Evolution of habitual language 1877 - 2013

A substantial process of language shift in informal usage was triggered by a series of factors. These included a particularly intense urbanization process in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the imposition of Spanish as the dominant language in schools, and the linguistic and political repression of the fascist Franco dictatorship between 1936-1975. However, the resistance and organized efforts of sociopolitical and cultural groups to this imposition of Spanish from the 1950s onwards counterbalanced the situation to help maintain Galician even if in a minority situation. Since the democratic restoration that started in 1975 this process to maintain and recover Galician has been strengthened by its institutionalization, including the incorporation of the language in the school system, its presence in the media and in the appearance of new public formal oral and written usage (Mariño, 1998). However these actions did not prevent language shift towards Spanish in private usage.

The endangered status of the Galician language has raised substantial discussion. The percentage of monolingual Galician speakers has decreased, in part favored by the easy transition from Spanish and also by the fact that the urbanization process in Galicia has led to the disappearance of the cultural references and habits that had favored the continued use of Galician in rural areas over the centuries. In the absence of a Galician-speaking middle class, urbanization in Spanish was also effective as social features associated with prestige were in many cases contributing to newer generations who adopted Spanish (Rei-Doval, 2007). The school system, the media and the economy related to the tertiary sector (industry, services, etc.) have historically functioned in the language of the dominant nation-state. As a result, this has helped to shape language behavior and practices, promoting the usage of Spanish in these settings.

	None	Poor	Good	Very good
Listening	0,46%	3,70%	25,87%	69,96%
Speaking	2,84%	10,23%	29,62%	57,31%
Reading	2,52%	12,71%	31,81%	52,96%
Writing	16,67%	24,15%	29,77%	29,40%

Source: Compiled from Instituto Galego de Estatística (2013)

Table 2. Language skills in Galician

At the moment, we can appreciate the intensity of bilingualism through the data provided by the official Statistics Institute of Galicia. According to this (see table 2), Galician is understood by almost all the Galician population, and can be spoken fluently by almost 9 in 10 of its citizens. Only 15 percent of its population cannot read it fluently and 40 percent of its population does not feel confident writing the local language. Demolinguistic data therefore show an important vitality of this language in its territory as far as language skills are concerned.

As for its actual usage and status as a mother tongue, table 3 demonstrates that two thirds of the population were raised in Galician only or in combination with Spanish, while the other third grew up in Spanish only or in a different language. The existence of a very limited number of foreign population is another feature of Galician demography, as compared to other Iberian territories, in particular in big metropolitan areas such as Madrid or Barcelona.

	Galician	Spanish	Both	Other
First language	40,9%	30,8%	25,3%	3,0%
Habitual language	30,8%	25,9%	42,1%	1,2%

Source: Compiled from Instituto Galego de Estatística (2013)

Table 3. First language and habitual language in Galicia

The consideration of habitual language shows a slightly higher proportion of Galician speakers as well as the importance of bilingualism as a behavioral pattern: over 40 percent of the population declares using both languages in their daily life. A comparison with data from previous surveys seems to indicate a strengthening of monolingual usage, both in Galician and in Spanish. This might be explained by the fact that both languages are mutually comprehensible and therefore using one's language with someone who speaks the other does not prevent communication and could be becoming increasingly acceptable for many speakers. As mentioned before, the daily usage of languages other than Galician and Spanish is a rare occurrence.

Language attitudes as represented in quantitative surveys demonstrate the acceptance and willingness of the Galician population to see their language present in

daily and social life. However, the more active the role of the individual is in language promotion, the less favorable the attitudes are to Galician.

There seems to exist a consensus (9 in 10 individuals) that all Galicians should have sufficient language skills to speak and write in Galician. A similar proportion agrees with showing language convergence with Galician speakers. Very high (80%) is the link between Galician language and tradition, and the belief that Galicians need the local language even if they can understand each other in Spanish (Observatorio da Cultura Galega, 2011).

The majority of citizens agree that the educational system should provide the resources to guarantee students to be able to use Galician correctly, and the population also overwhelmingly believes that regional politicians should have enough language skills and use Galician publicly.

The opposition to active policies to promote the Galician language seems to range between 5 and 10 percent of the Galician population, depending on the strength of the policies and the scope of the items investigated (Observatorio da Cultura Galega, 2011). Some issues related to strategies for active language revival are somewhat polarized, in particular when dealing with a school system predominantly in Galician or an active monolingual usage of Galician by the administrations that operate in the area.

#### **4. Some key issues in contemporary Galician language policy**

A somewhat confusing language discourse related to freedom to choose a language has been introduced in the last decade by a tiny, but vocal, minority group, which is very belligerent against an active promotion of the Galician language. According to this counter-elite group –paradoxically called *Galicía bilingüe*– public policies tried to impose Galician on the population, but they have ignored that historical and current policies impose Spanish throughout the whole of Spain. The strategy of this misleading group to twist reality acquired special visibility between 2005-09, when local policies facilitated more clear attempts to strengthen the presence of Galician in the educational system. The power of elites contrary to reversing language shift seems to indicate that their desire to practice social exclusion of Galician speakers is also an attempt to prevent any changes in the sociopolitical leadership in Galicia. This opposition is a clear indication that the social advantage enjoyed by Spanish-speaking elites in Galicia is still active and their reluctance to give away their privileges is remarkable, especially considering that they have been acquired through the imposition of their social behavior and their inherited power. Even if the steps taken to reverse language shift have not been very intense, recent changes in the status quo of the

language made them perceive their privileges to be at risk.

The Galician *laissez-faire* language policies that Lorenzo (2005) called “low intensity language planning” allowed and reinforced this paradoxical situation, where the overwhelming majority of the Galician speakers use this minority language and shows favorable attitudes to its presence and promotion, but a tiny minority of its sociopolitical elites practice short-circuiting of the process to reverse language shift. A weak social self-esteem and the scope of the influence of a social inner critic in the Galician population is catalyzed by saboteur-oriented elites and political elites serving interests that prevent the emergence and existence of strong local sociopolitical agents in Galicia (Rei-Doval, 2009). Language choice and promotion in Galicia is a clear example of how the language we speak and promote marks our individual, group and national identity. It is also a demonstration on how strategies established in colonial times, even if remote, can still be alive and be activated when the course of affairs consciously seems to be on the verge to change the situation.

#### **5. Language endangerment in Galicia**

The degree of language endangerment has been another major issue in contemporary Galician sociolinguistics. While some authors have emphasized the risk that the Galician language is on the verge of disappearance (Alonso Montero, 1973; Fernández, 1983), others (Ferro Ruibal, 2005) highlighted the undeniable overall vitality of this language as a whole and the myopia of quantitative language death analyses. This never-ending debate on the degree of endangerment that Galician holds shows dilemmas and trends that can be read in one direction or another, like a glass that can be half full or half empty depending on the perspective. It could perhaps be surprising for some scholars in language endangerment to accept that a language spoken by two thirds of its population is considered endangered; however the lower use of Galician as the age decreases is an indicator that cannot be forgotten, but should clearly be put in an appropriate perspective, in particular in an integrated perspective where different languages are compared to each other. Cases such as the Galician one are a reminder to use “endangerment” both wisely and critically, especially if “danger” and “death” could act as a way to disenfranchise speakers or to avoid deeper debates on strategies to reverse language shift. We could even wonder if the concept of language death is good enough as a metaphor or if we should replace it with other more suitable ones such as *dormant language* or perhaps *wounded language*.

#### **6. Conclusion**

Although at times we are perhaps running the risk of falling trapped in the metaphors we create ourselves, word formation is part of underlying psycho-

sociological and historical realities. “Colonial” might seem outdated to refer to situations such as the Galician one and “postcolonial” vague or even meaningless when analyzing the same reality. But it is undeniable that the Spanish and the Portuguese empires have been very prominent worldwide from the beginning of the modern era, as it is that the Galician language and culture have been shaped in conjunction with both empires. One of the current open questions is how this bridge between both the Spanish and Portuguese realities, can help to the reinterpretation of empires and also in healing the severe damage they have inflicted on human groups. If we want, we can try to modestly contribute to a better and fairer world by reconsidering these realities and proposing new alternatives.

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# **The Role and Status of the Sindhi Language Pre- (Sind, India) and Post-Independence (Sind, Pakistan)**

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## **Abstract**

Post-colonial writers argue that oppression relating to the colonial experience has, amongst many other things, resulted in the marginalization of minority languages and communities in post-colonial societies. Are such languages revitalised with independence? This paper focused on the Sindhi language, an Indo-Aryan language, in its historical site Sindh while attempting to trace the status and role of the language during the British Raj in Sind (India) and its use in the post-independence era in Sindh, Pakistan.

## **Introduction**

Language is an important part of a community. It not only helps to reflect the identity of a speech community it also provides some sense of social security to certain groups. When a language is used by a majority of the speech community, it could reflect the social status of the speakers using the language. Globalisation has had an impact on language use (Fairclough, 2006; Mar-Molinero, 2006) as seen in the case of English as a lingua franca in many countries and the increasing popularity of languages like Spanish, and Mandarin. Besides globalization, language change and language use can also be attributed to the historical impact of colonization (Matlani, 2016). For years when one country annexes another, the language of the colonial masters become increasingly important for apparent reasons and this can either minimize the use of the native or local languages or it may influence the structure of the native or local languages. History has shown that when colonial masters rule a country, the status of the languages spoken by local inhabitants becomes affected,

perhaps being prohibited from use, or less used in certain domains. This phenomenon can be observed in a number of countries such as Malaysia (Malaya then), India, West Africa (Nigeria) and Pakistan. Moreover, when countries become colonized, they also go through other linguistic changes such as borrowing words from a colonial master's language. Ultimately, this changes the linguistic landscape of colonized countries, even after independence, as compared to countries which have never been colonized such as Thailand, which uses only one language as a language of communication in important domains. Colonised countries tend to have more than one language for communication at any one time, with one remaining as a dominant language or a language of higher prestige, and the other as a less dominant or less prestigious language which may be used only for certain events or occasions. (Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial\\_Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial_Nigeria))

Colonized countries are countries that were once ruled by other powers, mainly European powers that have, over the years, exercised their demands

so much so that the population of the colonized countries, had no choice but to learn the language of the colonial masters and their cultures. Consequently, many countries develop bilingualism which may also contribute to the native or local languages being sidelined or becoming less used. Even if these languages are used, they tend to carry less prestige because the language is not considered as instrumental in helping the speakers to get a head start in life. On the contrary, as seen in some countries, the language of the colonial master becomes so dominant and powerful that it remains as a language of prestige such that other native or local languages become oppressed or less popular. For example, in the early 1960s, missionary schools did not allow local Malaysian students from various ethnic groups like the Chinese, Malays and Indians to use their native languages in English-medium schools (personal communication, August, 28, 2016). This kind of action by schools adds shame to speakers who are using their ethnic languages in school interactions, thereby reducing their usage even more.

Among the Asian countries annexed and colonized by European powers are Hong Kong, Malaysia, India and Pakistan. This paper focuses on Pakistan with specific reference to the Sindh province and its language, Sindhi. The paper especially discusses the Sindhi language in terms of historical evolution by making reference to what post-colonial writers argue as the marginalization of minority languages and communities in post-colonial societies due to oppression that was linked to colonial experiences. This paper focuses on the Sindhi language, an Indo-Aryan language, in its historical site of Sindh by attempting to trace the status and role of the language during the British Raj in Sind, then part of India, and its use in the post-independence era in Sindh, Pakistan.<sup>1</sup>

### Outline of paper

This paper is broken into two parts. The first part begins by looking at data extracted from historical sources. The second part provides some literature on the role of languages in Pakistan, post-independence and discusses a recent quantitative study that was conducted on the use of the Sindhi language in Sind, Pakistan.

## History of the Sindhi language

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<sup>1</sup> The spelling without an H was official in the British period. An Amendment of the Constitution of Sindh (2013) corrected the name of the Province to "Sindh" to reflect more accurately the actual pronunciation of the word by the people of the Province.

Sindhi's history dates back to long before colonial rule and the roots of the Sindhi language can be traced to as far back as 1500 BC. There are several theories about the origin of the language. Dr. Ernest Trumpp (1872) first pioneered the theory that Sindhi is a derivative of the Sanskrit language. He drew his conclusion from the basis of Sindhi's vocabulary and roots of verbs. However, this claim was contended by another theorist, Sibasis Mukherjee.

To summarize the issue, according to <https://www.alsintl.com/resources/languages/Sindhi/>, the roots of the Sindhi language can be traced very far back to the Old Indo-Aryan dialect known primarily as Prakrit, a language that is believed to have been spoken in the region of modern-day Sindh around 1500 to 1200 BC or earlier. The website mentions that the Sindhi language could have developed from the Virachada dialect of the Prakrit language. Evidence of this can be detected in certain passages of hymns found in the Rigveda. Endorsing the above, Matlani (2016) says that Sindhi is a language that has a solid base of Prakrit and Sanskrit.

However, Sibasis Mukherjee claims that the Sindhi language has evolved over a period of 2400 years with vocabulary that can be traced back to Arabic and Persian, and some from Dravidian descendants, with some containing influences of other races such as Greeks, Arabs, Turks, Mughals and so on.<sup>2</sup>

This seems to suggest that the Sindhi language, like most languages of the world, is not static, as it too has borrowed words from other languages. However, which aspect of these vocabularies were borrowed or even adjusted from other languages were not highlighted. Thus, the task may require a grammarian to locate and verify the claims.

## Sindhi during the British Raj

Sindh was conquered by the British in 1843. During its reign, the British government had declared Sindhi as an official language and the language of education. In fact, government employees were ordered to learn Sindhi and to qualify for examination in the Sindhi language (1857). The then Commissioner of Sind, Sir Bartle Frere, ordered Sindhi to be used in all official communication. A Seventh-grade education system known as Sindhi Final was also introduced and soon Sindhi Final became a prerequisite for employment for those interested in working in the revenue, police and education departments. The

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<sup>2</sup> (undated-  
[https://www.academia.edu/800843/Sindhi\\_language\\_and\\_its\\_history](https://www.academia.edu/800843/Sindhi_language_and_its_history))

reason for this practice was that the British colonial masters intended to use Sindhi as a language of direct communication with the populace (see Lighari, 2010). All job applications had to be written in Sindhi (circular was dated 1857-Sheikh, 2010). This suggests that the British government may have been attempting to use language as a means to unify the population. This rationale may be contested, as one may imagine the issues non-Sindhi speakers may have had with having to learn the language as it gained popularity, importance and prestige.

In addition to making Sindhi an official language during their reign, the British government also developed a new script for the Sindhi language which is in the form of the Perso-Arabic script (see Matlani, 2016). When the British conquered Sind, there were four different scripts, Devanagari, Arabic Sindhi, Brahmi and Gurumukhi, all used for the Sindhi language. It appears that Perso-Arabic characters were used in the field of education, literature and official correspondence (see Rohra, 2015). In fact, much research on the Sindhi language was carried out by Stack (1849) who looked at the grammar of the Sindhi language and dictionaries too while Trump (1878) studied the grammar of the Sindhi language. In the Linguistic Survey of India, Grierson (1919) attempts to look at the Sindhi language by discussing it in detail with reference to suffixes. After 1930 many Sindhi poets who had previously used Persian in their literary compositions began to revert to their mother tongue, Sindhi by responding to the contemporary socio-culture, a national and patriotic movement that had swept the country.

Based on this evolution, it can therefore, be said that the Sindhi language was given a prime role and status under British rule. First the Sindhi language was declared an official language which civil servants had to acquire or possess, then it was given the status of language of education and soon, it began to have its own alphabets with subsequent development of books on Sindhi grammar which were written as Sindhi-English dictionaries. All of these show that the status of the Sindhi language was one of importance, prestige and high status.

### **Sindhi in Post-Independence Pakistan**

As Pakistan was split from India to become independent, it also created many other administrative responsibilities for the British government as it was dealing with two separate nations. Consequently, to minimize problems, the British government declared Pakistan as one nation and made Urdu the official language as it declared

that for Pakistan to be seen as a state, it has to be seen as "one nation, one religion and one language" (Zaidi, 2011; Evaert, 2010). Thus, Urdu became the language binder for all.

Sindhi was powerful as a language of communication among Sindhi speakers in the first few years of independence (Rahman, 1999) but when the Muhajirs came (Muslim immigrants from India), the linguistic cultural landscape of Sind was altered. Urdu replaced Sindhi as the language of importance in the urban areas. Names of roads and streets were Islamized and Sindhi names were discarded. Things pertaining to the Sindhi culture were seen as a legacy of the Hindus and claims to using Sindhi was then perceived as being anti-Urdu. Development of patriotism was attempted through the use of Urdu. But this language was hardly spoken by the Bengalis in eastern Pakistan; and the language of western Pakistan was even more diverse and distinct, encompassing speakers of Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto and Balochi, but not Urdu. Suranjan Das (2001, p.112-3) states "...the founding fathers of Pakistan had failed to appreciate the rich legacy of the Sindhi culture and language when they adopted Urdu as the medium for cultural assimilation". In addition, to stifle the Sindhi language, the government resorted to strict press censorship (Das 2001, p. 114). This was one way of minimizing the importance of the Sindhi language.

Rahman (1999) adds that the One Unit Period (military regime) had also reduced the status of the Sindhi language to "a regional" hence "peripheral language". Sindhi became a language that was used just within certain boundaries (Rahman, 1999). When Karachi was declared the capital of Pakistan in 1951, Urdu was declared the official language in all government institutions and 1300 Sindhi schools in Karachi were closed and replaced with Urdu-medium institutions. In the period 1957-8, the University of Karachi prohibited students from taking examinations in Sindhi – with the exception of the Sindhi Department. In 1963, in the province of Sindh, Sindhi was replaced by Urdu as a medium of instruction from class 6 onwards.

According to the 1973 Constitution two types of schools (Sindhi- and Urdu-medium schools) were classified in Sindh Province. Even in Urdu medium schools the Sindhi language had to be taught as a subject and similarly in every Sindhi-medium school Urdu was to be taught as a compulsory subject.

Soon after gaining independence Urdu was declared Pakistan's national language and English became the official language of correspondence. The language policy created by the government privileges the languages of English and Urdu but

neglects other regional languages (Khan, 2013). While Urdu existed as important, the English language also evolved to gain importance through the parallel system of elitist schooling where parents resorted to using English and Urdu as the languages of prestige. Unhappy with this development, many Pakistanis revolted and a movement was developed to ask for language rights, launched by the Bengalis. Due to this, the Sindhis and even the Punjabis were further suppressed (Rahman, 1996).

Tariq Rahman (1999) states that the emphasis on English in Pakistan had led to a language shift in the environment. This seems true especially for the use of the Punjabi language (Mansoor, 1993; Rahman, 2007; Nawaz, Umer, Anjum & Ramzan, 2012) because the language was not generally used as a medium of instruction and official purposes. In his works, Rahman (2002) did not find a single Punjabi-medium school in Punjab as compared to the existence of 36,750 Sindhi-medium schools in Sindh. This was so because Punjabi was regarded as a low status language and also as a vulgar language that was not fit for serious functions (Mansoor, 1993, p.129; Rahman, 2002). Consequently, there was a shift from Punjabi to Urdu and English, especially in the more educated urban strata of Punjabi society. Zaidi (2011) notes that it is not just the objective ethnolinguistic vitality of Punjabi that was low but also its subjective vitality. Apparently, as English enjoys a high status in Pakistan, it also became entrenched in state institutions like the armed forces, the judiciary and bureaucracy and the corporate sector. As this was happening, indigenous languages like those mentioned above, began to lose popularity and they subsequently, were relegated to less prestigious status (Khan 2013, p.23).

During this time, it appears as if the Sindhi language had no scope of a good livelihood. It was hardly used in the courts, government offices, or commercial institutions. Das (2001, p. 115) states that as the indigenous speakers were inundated by Urduization, the Sindhi cultural spirit came to be embodied in the opening lines of a popular song - *Sindh amar rahe, Sindh Rahndi sada* (Sindh is immortal, Sind shall live forever). Nonetheless, through the works of some universities in Pakistan, research on the Sindhi language was revived. This seems to suggest that preserving the Sindhi language, culture, literature and the teaching of this language was the only way for Sindhis to stay united (Rohra, 2015).

Sindhis working hard to uphold and preserve the Sindhi language were often regarded as anti-Urdu (Accredited Language Services, n.d.) resulting in tension that climaxed in the language riots of 1972. Nonetheless, this made the Pakistani government

grant a special status to the Sindhi language. To this day, Sindhi remains the official district language of the Sindh district (Das, 2001).

## Methodology

A study focusing on the use of the Sindhi language in the domains of home, school, workplace transactions and media was developed. A questionnaire was designed and administered on 20 respondents who were from 16 of the 26 districts of Sindh, bringing the total respondents to 320 (for details see David, Ali and Gul, in press).

## Data Analysis

Data revealed that, notwithstanding the national language policy of Pakistan, which has resulted in language shift and death of many minority languages, the Sindhi language in Sind has a high ethnolinguistic vitality.

While only one third of the respondents regarded Sindhi as their dominant language, 89% of the respondents claimed to use Sindhi in the home domain. In schools, the majority of the respondents used Sindhi as the medium of instruction at the primary level. At the secondary level they shifted to Urdu/English. They appeared to be conscious of the instrumental role of the other languages. Incidentally, the Annual Report on the Status of Education also stated that 90% of the parents in Sindh want their children to be taught in Sindhi.

Analysis also showed that 29% of the respondents claimed to watch shows on Sindhi-language channels and 89.6% also read a number of Sindhi newspapers. There are 5 Sindhi media channels and 65 daily newspapers in Sindhi. According to the Information Department about 17 weekly or monthly magazines are published in different districts of Sindh province. This suggests that there is high ethnolinguistic vitality in the Sindhi language. It appears that majority of the respondents also used Sindhi with shopkeepers while non-Sindhi shopkeepers would also use Sindhi to accommodate to their Sindhi customers.

## Discussion and Conclusion

From the discussion of the role and status of Sindhi, it can be said that in Sind, the British government through its legislation, recognized and maintained the status and role of the Sindhi language. This is in sharp contrast, to many other colonized countries where the language of the colonial masters became the dominant language.

In contrast, with independence as a region of Pakistan, the English and Urdu languages played a primary role while to some extent, Sindhi was sidelined. This is taken as an example of internal colonialism.

It is the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Sindhis, of especially rural Sindh, which has helped the Sindhi language to be maintained and used in significant domains. Today, according to Matlani (2016), Sindhi speakers are proud speakers of Sindhi in their Province of Sindh. The Sindhi language serves as the major language of education in rural Sindh and is used as a language to signify power in various domains but mainly because speakers see it as an identity marker (Rahman, 2007).

Sindhi is still taught in respective districts of Sindh Province because of the strong language movement in these provinces although Urdu is gaining ascendancy as the medium of instruction. Given the desperate times for the local languages of Pakistan and the language shift among some ethnic groups, especially the Punjabis, it appears that the strong ethno-cultural and ethnolinguistic traditions embedded among the Sindhis appear to have kept the Sindhi language on a steady path of maintenance.

In sharp contrast, in terms of language shift, many diasporic Sindhis have failed to keep their Sindhi language, with most of them either fully or partly shifting towards the dominant language of the host country they reside in (see David, 1999 on Malaysian Sindhis, Detramani & Lock, 2003 on Sindhis in Hong Kong; and Dewan, 1987 on Sindhis in Metro Manila).

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# A Torrent of Tongues

## Asian and European Influences on Australian Indigenous Languages

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### Abstract

Colonization of Australia officially began in 1788 with the arrival of the First Fleet in Sydney. But there had been numerous encounters with outsiders before this. The so-called 'Macassans' are thought to have arrived on northern shores as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Much later, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, pearling brought Filipinos and Japanese to many sites across northern Australia while mining especially involved 'Chinese' labourers. From 1860 to the 1930s a vast area of the interior of Australia was serviced by so-called 'Afghans'. These were cameleers providing transport when there were few roads in the interior. While some may have come from Afghanistan many came from parts of north-west India so that potential linguistic influences include Balochi, Pashto and Punjabi.

In this paper we outline what is emerging about the range and depth of Asian and European influences on Australian Indigenous Languages. As yet this topic is under-researched with only a perfunctory understanding of the details of the linguistic varieties of the outsiders. Regarding Europe, it has been suggested that some Aboriginal people had sustained contact with Portuguese and this is reflected in their language. However it may be that such influences came indirectly, through Malacca Creole Portuguese.

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### Introduction

In Australia generations of schoolchildren have been told that Australia was 'discovered' by Captain James Cook in 1770. Less well-publicised is the claim that the first known documentation of an Australian language was undertaken by Cook and his distinguished companion, Joseph Banks, on the north Queensland language, Guugu Yimidhirr in 1770. Both these claims are untrue. According to McGregor the first known documentation of an Australian language was carried out by William Dampier (1651-1715) in what was to become Western Australia in 1688, albeit a minimal quantum of documentation:

The privateer William Dampier, who was careening his ship somewhere on the northern end of the Dampier Land peninsular in 1688, mentions in his journal that when some local Aborigines approached the ship threateningly, the ship's drum

was sounded, at which they 'ran away as fast as they could drive, crying "Gurri, gurri" deep in the throat' (as quoted in O'Grady 1971:782, citing from Stroven and Day 1949:588, quoting in turn from Dampier 1697). As Toby Metcalfe has observed, this is most likely the Bardi word *ngaarri*, the term for a malevolent spirit (Metcalfe 1979:197). (2008: 2)

The 'discovery' of Australia is a much more complicated story involving numerous forays by European mariners including French, Dutch and Portuguese (e.g. Gerritsen 2015) but also by Asian mariners going back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. In terms of colonization the English won out in the end but it might have been otherwise as is captured in the tellingly entitled: *Almost a French Australia: French - British Rivalry in the Southern Oceans* (Bloomfield, 2012).

## Asian Influences

In the late 1970s one of us (Walsh) investigated the linguistic impact of so-called Macassans on some of the languages of northern Australia. It was suspected that the linguistic impact of so-called ‘Macassans’ on local Aboriginal languages had been underestimated. The problem was that there was a need for an expert in north-east Arnhem Land languages *and* Austronesian. The solution came in the form of *two* such experts who were able to demonstrate a more extensive connection. For example:

du:mala ‘sail’ < Mkr sómbala ‘sail’; cf: Mal layar, PHN \*la:yaR ‘Id.’.  
 garay ‘lord, master’ < Mkr karáñ [with -ñ loss]; cf: Bug ma-raja, Mal raya ‘great, big, high’.  
 ju:ru? ‘cigar’ < Mkr surú? = sarú? ‘cigar’; cf : Mal sarutu, carutu, carut.  
 yimbiri ‘bucket’ < Mkr, Bug embere? ‘pail, bucket’ < Dutch emmer ‘Id.’; cf: Mal ember ‘Id.’<sup>1</sup>

There are at least two reasons for providing a range of examples. The first is that some of these correspondences would not be immediately obvious to the layperson with little or no background in Austronesian historical linguistics—let alone, a knowledge of north-east Arnhem Land languages. Particularly a person with the latter expertise would realise that none of these languages have sibilants so that any word coming from outside with such sounds will be modified to suit the phonological patterns of the accepting language. For example, an English word like ‘school’ is variously adapted into Australian languages as *kuulu*, or *jikul*. In the first case the ‘s’ is simply omitted but as many of these languages eschew monosyllabic words, an extra syllable is inserted. In the latter case ‘s’ is rendered as a lamino-palatal stop and an additional vowel is added lest an unacceptable consonant cluster result. The second reason for giving these few examples is to underline the fact that the personnel on the fleets of boats coming from Indonesia each season could aptly be described as a ‘motley crew’. Although often enough referred to as ‘Macassans’, the crews included Buginese, Makassarese and so-called ‘Malays’ (The term ‘Malay’ was also used rather indiscriminately by early recorders and, if anything, the sociolinguistic situation which underpins ‘Malays’ is a good deal more complicated than that of the ‘Macassans’. For some background, see, for example, Martínez (1999)). The loan *dapatuñ* ‘shoes’ < *sapatu* reminds one of Portuguese (cf. the English cognate ‘sabotage’) and there has been speculation about Portuguese mariners making contact with parts of Australia (e.g. Brandenstein, 1994), but much more

<sup>1</sup> where d = a lamino-dental stop; j [in the Australian languages] = a lamino-palatal stop; ñ = engma (i.e. [voiced] velar nasal); ? = glottal stop, Mkr = Makassarese; Mal = Malay; PHN = Proto Western Austronesian; Bug = Buginese.

likely, in our view, is that a Portuguese look-alike came not from Portuguese directly but through the contact variety known as Malacca Creole Portuguese. It is quite likely that multilingual crews in this part of the world would have known some of this contact variety.

We know that there were other potential Asian influences. For instance, we had known that there were substantial populations of Chinese workers engaged in mining in New South Wales and Victoria in the 1850s and in the Northern Territory in the 1880s. There had been Japanese involved in the pearling industry around Broome in Western Australia from the 1880s but mother-of-pearl shell grounds were much more widespread than this. The Torres Strait, the Top End of the Northern Territory and sizeable portion of the Western Australian coast from the Kimberley to Exmouth Gulf boasted such grounds (see, for example, the map in Bain, 1983: 24). It seemed likely that the extensive contact between Japanese and Australian Aborigines in connection with the pearling industry in Broome may have resulted in some contact variety, including some Japanese and some local Aboriginal linguistic input. In 1917 there were 1,569 Japanese employees of pearling companies and the cemetery in Broome tragically shows the high loss of life associated with the industry: some 919 Japanese diving fatalities are buried there. The problem was the need for someone with (near-)native fluency in Japanese *and* expertise in Broome-area Aboriginal languages. The solution was provided by Komei Hosokawa, who worked on the Yawuru language of the Broome area in the 1980s (2011). In the event, Komei came up with something far more intriguing than the 1981 speculation that there might have arisen some contact variety involving Japanese and some local Australian language(s). In fact, the lingua franca on the pearling boats was simplified Malay (M) with the inclusion of a little Japanese (J) and a large number of English (E) words:

bure:	masa	se:(-ya)
bread	cook	IMP
E M masak (cooked)		J (do it)
Bake the bread!		

po:rr	kotor -ya	tera	baiya
pearl	dirty	PRED NEG	buyer
E	M	J (be)	M tidak (not) E
The pearl is clouded. It won't sell. (Hosokawa, 2011: 288)			

But what of the language(s) used by the Chinese miners? The answers to such a question are not entirely clear but it is highly unlikely that they would have spoken what has become Standard Modern Chinese, also known as Putonghua or Mandarin. Typically these men came from the south so one should be looking to varieties of Cantonese or perhaps Hakka.

It seems to us that now is the time for re-assessment of the extent of Asian contact. In the past the focus has been fairly narrow, including ‘Macassan’ influence in

northern Australia and 'Malay' / Japanese contact in the Broome area of Western Australia. In fact the Asian contact was much more widespread than that and in some instances the time depth is much greater than we had previously thought. For instance, received wisdom about Macassan contact has been at least 1650 to 1906. However, recent archaeological work reported by Clarke (2000) indicates that the contact goes back at least to the fourteenth century and may have been earlier. However, it should be noted that there is some opposition to this view (e.g. Macknight, 2012). In 1981 (Wurm, Mühlhäusler & Tryon, 1996, esp. Vol. 1, Map 1). there were indications that the 'Chinese' greatly outnumbered any other group on the Victorian goldfields in 1861, that in the Torres Straits there were influences from Chinese Pidgin English from 1880, Lugger Malay from 1890, Malay, Japanese and Pacific Islander pearling crews from 1868. Also in Western Australia Lugger Malay was used around Carnarvon from the 1850s, around Cossack and Port Hedland from the 1870s to 1890s, and around Broome from the 1880s to 1940.12

There are numerous instances of Asian-Aboriginal families, particularly in northern Australia (Walsh, 2011: 7-12). Occasionally we see explicit accounts of linguistic exchange, for example:

Kitty, a Kamu woman from the Daly River area in the Northern Territory, had two husbands: Lukana, a Malak-Malak man from the same area, and Jimmy Pan Quee. Jimmy was born around 1889 and died around 1959. He took up a peanut farm on the Daly in 1929 but prior to that he had worked in Darwin. 'The police journals reveal that Ah Hoin and Charlie Ma On were living in Pan Quee's camp with Aboriginal women.' Later Pan Quee moved to Humpty Doo [outside Darwin] and had a daughter with a Larrakia woman called Hilda. It is said that he spoke the Brinkin language [Daly River area] (summarised from Ganter, 2006: 174-176)

Perhaps more tellingly is this account from an Aboriginal woman with 'Malay' connections:

When my parents first met my father did not speak English and my mother did not speak Malay although it was the official trade language of Broome. My mother taught my father to speak English using the first primer reader (c-a-t cat, m-a-t mat, d-o-g dog etc.) and he in turn taught her to speak Malay. She eventually was able to speak Malay without a foreign accent.

My mother was one of three Indigenous women in Broome married to Asian pearl divers in charge of their pearling luggers . . . Mum was the youngest and the most fashionable and the only one who danced. Consequently she and Dad held dances at our home for the Aboriginal community who at that time were not allowed to socialise with the non-Indigenous community.

There is an assumption in Australia that the construction of contemporary Aboriginal identity is based on classical Aboriginal cultures and classical European cultures. But this is certainly not the case in Broome and Darwin. Our cultures comprised influences from classical, Aboriginal, Asian and European cultures. Many of us prefer to holiday in Asia where we can understand the languages, like to eat Asian food and do not have to worry about racism. We feel at ease there and just blend into the crowd, so to speak. And we are proud of our Asian heritage. (summarised from Bin-Sallik, 2007: 117, 125)

In workplace encounters the Japanese were well regarded by Aboriginal people and this is likely to have meant closer contact than there might have been if the Japanese had proved to be objectionable employers:

[Japanese] are also remembered for treating Aboriginal workers fairly and being scrupulously honest in paying them. The Japanese also had a reputation for honouring work agreements by returning Aboriginal crews to their home countries after an agreed period of service . . . Chase suggests that Aborigines also preferred to work with the Japanese because they were not 'flash', that is, overly proud or pretentious. The Japanese crewmen ate and slept with the Aborigines and they respected Aboriginal knowledge of the sea, weather, coasts and bushfoods . . . The length and intimacy of the relationships forged by northern coastal Aborigines and Japanese pearlers can further be seen in the mutual exchange of foreign words, songs and eating habits. Japanese men learned some of the local Aboriginal dialects, and Aboriginal crew learned common Japanese phrases used on the pearling luggers including the words for 'trempang', 'turtle', 'we go', 'come back', 'hold course', 'big rain coming' and 'eat food'. (Stephenson, 2007: 110)

As can be seen this extended contact led to linguistic exchange. In this and other settings it seems likely that such exchanges may well have taken place even though they have not been documented or remain yet to be discovered in archival and specialist research repositories.

Another important source for linguistic input came from the 'Afghan' cameleers:

Known in Australia as 'Afghans', the cameleers came mainly from the arid hills and plains of Afghanistan and British India, today's Pakistan. They belonged to four main groups: Pashtun, Balochi, Punjabi, and Sindhi . . .

In Australia the cameleers spoke a mix of languages, reflecting their diverse origins. It is likely that Pashto, Dari (Persian), Balochi, Punjabi, Sindhi and Urdu were heard in the streets of

Kalgoorlie, Bourke and Marree. Some cameleers were literate, while others relied upon oral tradition, reciting poems or folk-tales at evening campfires and celebrations. Although the language of the Qur'an was not widely spoken in Central Asia, the cameleers uttered their prayers in Arabic. (Jones & Kenny, 2007: 27)

It has yet to be investigated how much linguistic exchange there might have been between 'Afghans' and the Aboriginal groups they encountered across a vast area of Australia (for one account of the geographical coverage, see Stevens, 1989). However, it has been established that the cameleers were 'pidgin carriers', that is, they were a vector for the spread of features of Australian Aboriginal pidgins and creoles (for another account of the geographical coverage, see Simpson, 2000).

### European Influences

Despite the considerable influence European languages have had on Australian Languages we can only provide a very cursory treatment here. Possibly the earliest confirmed encounter was with the Dutch in 1606 in western Cape York in Queensland (Gerritsen, 2015; Sutton, 2012). Gerritsen (1994) has suggested a considerable Dutch influence from ship-wrecked sailors on the Nhandu language of the Geraldton region of Western Australia but this is contested by a number of linguists, including Blevins (2001).

The French were also early arrivals and spent a significant period in Tasmania (Mulvaney, 2007, 2012; Plomley, 1990). Often it is unclear how much local Aboriginal people may have picked up a knowledge of the French language however we do know that some Aboriginal people learned from French Trappists (Zucker, 2005: 83). Around 1890 French Trappists set up a mission at Beagle Bay north of Broome in the Kimberley of Western Australia. One of these was Father Alphonse Tachon:

There are records of Fr Alphonse speaking and teaching in Nyul-Nyul, but there is also evidence that he took Bishop Gibney's remarkable advice – "teach the savages French instead of English" – because of his poor grasp of the English language. ... Remi/ Balagai [a local Aborigine] remembered that, "We learn in French and we were glad to be in school and make friends."

Catholic missionaries came from a number of European countries, including French, German, Italian and Spanish (Walsh, 2013). The Spaniards set up missions at New Norcia (Linage Conde, 1999) and Kalumburu (Zucker, 2005), both in Western Australia. Central to the New Norcia Abbey was Dom Rosendo Salvado, 1814-1900, (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/salvado-rosendo-2627>) who began there in 1846. Within a few years two Aboriginal youths, Francis Xavier Conaci, 7, and John Baptist Dirimera, 11, travelled with Salvado to Italy

arriving in 1849. They were well prepared as: The boys learnt, Italian, Latin, the Bible and the Rule (Ride, 2007: 150). All told five Aboriginal boys and one girl travelled to Italy for further study (O'Grady, 2016).

Conaci and Dirimera apparently developed basic skills in the Italian language within six months of arriving at the New Norcia monastery (Ride, 2007: 151). Salvado supposed this was due to:

[The Yuet language is] not at all harsh or guttural as is usually the case with Oriental languages nor does it have the unpleasant whistling that is observed in most Oceania/dialects. On the contrary, it is endowed with deep and sonorous sounds very similar to the harmonious ones of our language [Spanish] and as flexible and soft as the best Italian ones (Ride 2007: 151-2)

In the early years of settlement in Australia – from 1788 onwards - Irish in Sydney area formed a substantial proportion of the population of the newcomers. From 1791 to 1800 Irish convicts made up close to 16% of the total population of newcomers. The proportion rose to nearly a quarter by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Troy 1992: 462). We know that the Irish were in close contact with Aborigines during these early years of contact (Troy 1992: 463-466) but there is little definite evidence of the take up of Irish Gaelic by Aborigines although it seems two young Irishmen taught Aborigines near Bathurst a song in Gaelic (Troy 1992: 470). There is little doubt that Aborigines interacting with the Irish on a daily basis over decades would have picked up more of the Gaelic language than we have clear evidence for to date.

### Conclusion

We know little about the full extent of Asian and European linguistic influences on Australian Languages. There are occasional snippets of information in the literature but little in the way of systematic accounts although Macassan has received careful attention from Evans (1992) and Walker & Zorc (1981). Such accounts require a detailed knowledge of markedly different languages so the challenge for the future is to match a task to the right range of linguistic acumen. More recent migrations present intriguing possibilities for the future. We know that there has been intermarriage between Tongans and Aboriginal Australians and can anticipate unions between Sudanese and Aboriginal Australians. Following Salvado's fancy that Yuet and Italian shared linguistic properties making it easier to acquire the new language we might wonder whether the consonant system of Dinka that so harmonizes with most Australian Languages might assist future linguistic interchanges?!

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# Language Endangerment through Standardization: a Colonial Effect

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## Abstract

Language Endangerment is an issue that needs the immediate attention of all stakeholders, irrespective of whether it is a language, dialect or variety. In this paper, we identify three factors that contribute to the endangerment of the numerous dialects and varieties of Ao and Khasi, respectively spoken in the states of Nagaland and Meghalaya in India. Firstly, English being the official language of these states, there is a shift in attitude towards the regional languages, with English gaining in prestige and status. Secondly, the standard language, i.e Khasi and Chungli-Ao as a result of being codified, is a threat to the other dialects as the standard has gained status, leading to reduction in the level of prestige and status of the dialects. Thirdly, Nagamese in Nagaland has grown over the years as a lingua-franca and though it is not officially recognized, its usage in different spheres has affected the local languages. The beginnings for all these factors may be traced back to colonial India. The main focus of the paper will be on the second factor: how standardization has come to threaten the dialects and varieties in Nagaland and Meghalaya.

## Introduction

Northeast India has always been regarded as a treasure hold for researchers from different fields due to its linguistic and cultural diversity. It is home to more than 70% of the total languages of India and we find four language families in this area, namely, Indo-Aryan, Austro-Asiatic, Tai-Kadai and Tibeto-Burman. According to the Census of India (2001), Northeast India has a total population of about 45 million inhabiting eight different states. This population is less than 4% of the total population of India, which stands at around 1.2 billion. Thus, less than 4% of the Indian population speak 70% of the languages in India.

In this paper, we examine how standardization of tribal languages, which began in the colonial period, has led to the endangerment of numerous dialects and varieties of different languages. We also examine the effect of English and Nagamese on these languages. The focus of the paper is on the Khasis (1,128,575 speakers as per Census of India 2001) of Meghalaya and the Aos (261387 speakers, Census of India 2001) of Nagaland in Northeast India. In Meghalaya, Khasis villages are found across 6 districts while the Aos inhabit 107 villages (Census 2011) in the Mokokchung district of Nagaland (see Figure 1).

## The Language Situation

Nagaland and Meghalaya attained statehood in 1963 and 1972 respectively. Nagaland was the first state to be created on non-linguistic lines. Given that there are 16

recognized tribes, each with mutually unintelligible languages, English was declared as the official language in 1967 by the Nagaland assembly and is presently used as the medium of instruction in all schools. Likewise, Meghalaya, in 1973, declared English as the official language with Khasi and Garo as principal languages. Khasi and Garo are now known as associate official languages through the Meghalaya State Language Act, 2005.



Figure 1: Map of Northeast India. Shaded areas show the Ao and Khasi areas (map not to scale)

Among the Aos, two main dialects and one sub-dialect can be identified (Coupe 2007): Chungli, Mongsen and Changki. Chungli is spoken in around 60 villages,

Mongsen in around 40 and Changki in around 7 villages. In terms of population, an estimate would be to say that 50% speak Chungli, 40% speak Mongsen and the remaining 10 % speak Changki. Since Chungli-Ao is the standard, speakers of Mongsen and Changki are required to learn the standard. However, even within these dialects, variations can be found across the different villages (considered as varieties in this paper), or even within the village. As Coupe (2007: 17) notes “when working on Mongsen texts with a Longchang Mongsen speaker and a Mebongchukit Mongsen speaker I was astonished to hear them discussing the data in Nagamese”. The reason being that the two varieties are very different.

Meghalaya is home to two main tribes: The Khasi-Jaintias and the Garos. With respect to Khasi, various scholars have tried to identify the number of dialects and varieties. This has led to varied observations. For instance, Grierson (1904) identifies four major dialects: Khasi proper (standard), Synteng, Lyngam and War. Bareh (1977) identifies many more: Amwi, Jowai spoken in the Jaintia areas, Shella, Warding, Myriaw, Nongkhlaw, Nongspung, Maram, Mawiang, Cherra, Nongkrem, Myllem, Laitlyngkot, Lyniong, Bhoi, Manar, Nongwah, Jirang, Khatarblank, Nongstoin and Langrin spoken in the Khasi areas. He also notes that these dialects have sub-dialects which show phonological variations.

Scholars (Gruessner 2004, Ring 2011, Bareh 2014) have also shown that Khasi and Pnar, spoken by the Jaintias, may be distinct languages. According to Daladier (2011), Pnar alone has 14 dialect areas, namely, Nartiang, Nongjingi, Nongbah, Mynso, Shilliang Myntang, Shangpung, Raliang, Jowai, Rymbai, Sutnga, Nongkhlieh, Lakadong, Narpuh and Saipung. The earlier works (Grierson 1928, Pryse 1855, Gurdon 1907) done in Khasi always referred to Khasi as language and the other variety as its dialects. Diffloth (2005) uses the term *Khasian* to solve the confusing notions of language and dialects. According to him, there are four languages under this term *Khasian* but does not mention the names. Bareh (2014) considers Pnar as one of these languages along with Khasi, War and Lyngngam. Bareh (2016) further explains that Pnar and Khasi share more cognate words than to War and Lyngngam; and War differs from the other languages in terms of vocabulary.

Hence, we see that in both these regions, the language situation is very diverse and complex. In both the states, English is used in all official domains, including education. It is the medium of instruction and is also taught as a subject in schools and colleges. This has led to English being the language of social prestige and economic gain; a common phenomenon observed in many regions and which needs no elaboration. This has had a devastating effect on Ao and Khasi, with the younger generation often preferring the use of English.

It has also reduced the domain of these languages to homes, especially in urban areas. Outside the home, English is mostly used in both formal and informal settings. In formal settings, it is not only because the situation demands it, but also because a large number of speakers are unable to use their language in such formal contexts. Another result is the prevalence of code-mixing, where the mixing of English-Khasi and English-Nagamese-Ao has become very common.

## Standardization of Languages

A standard language may be defined as the variety that is used by a speech community “that serves the multiple and complex communicative needs of a speech community” (Garvin, 1993). As Haugen (1964; 1972) proposes, standardization of a language involves four stages: selection, acceptance, codification and elaboration. It can be assumed that native speakers had probably not much say in the selection and acceptance of a variety as the standard in the case of the Khasis and the Aos, because the place of settlement of the missionaries decided on the standard. The process of codification and elaboration are ongoing processes in these languages.

### Standardization of Khasi

It is to be noted that there were many attempts to put Khasi into writing, with a number of failures. The first attempt could be traced back to 1824 when Alexander Burgh Lish translated the Bible called *Khasee New Testament* in Shella dialect. This attempt proved to be a failure since not all Khasi speakers understood this variety. William Carey, the then British missionary and one of the co-founder of Serampore College, who was so enthused to translate the New Testament into Khasi, sent Alexander Burgh Lish to work for the Mission to Sohra / Cherrapunjee (the then Headquarter of the British Government). Lish arrived at Sohra in 1832 and started the mission work and this time made an attempt to translate the New Testament into Khasi in Bengali script. Again this was also not successful. Nevertheless, Lish was the first person to make an attempt to write in Khasi and also the first person to write about the structure of Khasi language (Lish 1838: 142-143).

Thomas Jones and his wife arrived at Sohra (Cherrapunjee) in 1841 and immediately started the linguistic field work and contributed to the development of the Khasi writing system by translating scriptures and religious literature books into Khasi. This is how Khasi language adopted its standardized form.

### Standardization of Chungli-Ao

As the Christian Missionaries came into the Naga Hills in 1872, one of the major concerns was to reduce the language to writing. With no script, the missionaries, Dr & Mrs Clark, decided on the use of the roman script

to translate the bible and hymns into Ao. As a result of the Clarks settling in Molung, the language spoken in this village became the language of the translations. According to Ao (2012:2), “The first American missionaries settled in a Chungli-speaking village and naturally that dialect was learnt and adopted for all subsequent communication and translation”. This is true, since the missionaries stayed at Molung from 1878 to 1894, and during this period, a number of gospels and hymns were published, along with a primer and grammar sketch. The dictionary by Clark, published in 1911 was compiled with the help of three speakers from Molung: Suponglemba, Idi and Kilep (Clark, 1907). The mission center shifted to Impur in 1894, and it could be said that the present standard form originated from here, where the Aos from other villages came into contact. The standard form of Chungli-Ao which is spoken and used today has moved away from the Molung variety, developing its own characteristics and can no longer be identified with one single variety. The standard is called Aoo, literally meaning, *the language of the Aos*. As Ben Wati (2011: 6) writes, “But the language we speak and write in this age is neither pure Chungli, Mongsen but Assamese, Hindi and English, all mixed together, forming Aoo... Aoo started at Impur Mission compound. This is not surprising, as in the Impur Mission Training School, people from the plains taught there. After that, the Angamis and Aos (Chungli, Mongsen and Changki people) taught in the school. At first, the different accents bewildered the Chungli students. However, through the use of the bible, hymnal, textbooks and American English, pure Chungli turned to Aoo. Hence, a majority of the words are from Chungli” (translated from Ben Wati, 2011).

## Endangered Languages

Today, there are various estimates on the number of languages considered endangered (Lewis, 2009; Moseley, 2010; Crystal, 2000; Krauss, 1992; to name a few). While the statistics may vary, there is no doubt among linguists that a large number of languages are at various levels of endangerment; and a number of projects have been initiated to document and revitalize these languages.

The factors/criteria on which levels of endangerment have been assessed also vary from method to method. The Graded Intergeneration Disruption (GID) scale (Fishman, 1991) has eight levels; UNESCO uses nine factors (Moseley 2010, UNESCO 2003); Krauss’ (2007) model has five levels; the Graded Intergeneration Disruption (EGID) scale (Lewis and Simons, 2010) with thirteen levels and the more recent Language Endangerment Index (LEI) (Lee, 2016) used in assessing levels of endangerment in the catalogue of Endangered languages. ([endangeredlanguages.com](http://endangeredlanguages.com)). In the next section, we assess standard Ao and its dialects

as well as standard Khasi and its dialects by using the nine factors proposed by UNESCO.

## Status of Chungli-Ao

In Nagaland, Ao is one of the 16 recognized tribes and hence the language, Chungli, is recognized to be taught in schools. Within the community, Chungli as the standard form, is used in all domains at present: all gatherings of the Church and traditional bodies, media (books, newspapers, radio), education (up to a bachelor’s degree) and so on.

Based on UNESCO’s document on language vitality and endangerment, we assess standard Chungli and its dialects against the nine factors (shown in tables 1, 2 and 3).

Intergenerational language transmission is a very common factor in assessing language vitality, and based on this factor, standard Chungli and its dialects may be considered to be safe yet threatened (score of 5-). The reason being that most Aos speak the standard and within the village, the dialect is used in most domains.

For absolute number of speakers, no grades are given. While the population of those who can speak Chungli may be estimated to be around 200,000 (based on Census 2001), speakers of a dialect are much less. Based on the 2011 census, Aonokpu has a population of 290 (89 families) while the largest village, Ungma has a population of 9443 (2294 families).

Considering the proportion of speakers within the total population, standard Chungli may be graded 4 as a majority of Aos speak the language. However, the dialects are graded 2 (severely endangered) or 1 (critically endangered) since very few speak the dialects (see previous factor).

For the fourth factor, Shifts in domains of language use, standard Chungli may be considered to be of universal use as it is the language that is used in most domains while the dialects have multilingual parity.

For factors 5 to 7, standard Chungli is graded 5 each since this is widely used in different domains and there is an established orthography with developing literature. Chungli is also the officially recognized language of the Aos by the state government and is offered in schools and colleges as a subject. However, the dialects score 0 for factors 5 and 6 as it is not used in new domains nor is there an orthography to develop literature. For factor 7, we grade the dialects with 1 as there is no official recognition or protection.

Attitude towards the language is also changing, with rising awareness on the need to preserve and speak one’s own language. However, this is true only for the standard language. Speakers of a dialect accord higher status to the standard, while many speakers are of the

Factors	<b>Intergenerational Language Transmission</b>	<b>Absolute number of speakers</b>	<b>Proportion of speakers within the total population</b>
Ao	5- : stable yet threatened	200,000	4: nearly all speak the language
Dialects /varieties	5- : stable yet threatened	200 to 10,000	2: severely endangered 1: critically endangered
Khasi	5- : stable yet threatened	1,128, 575	3: A majority speak the language
Dialects/varieties	5- : stable yet threatened	6,000 – 243,000	2: severely endangered 1: critically endangered

Table 1: Comparison of Ao, Khasi, its dialects and varieties for factors 1, 2 and 3.

Factors	<b>Shifts in domains of language use</b>	<b>Response to New Domains and Media</b>	<b>Availability of Materials for Language Education and Literacy</b>
Ao	5: universal use	5: Dynamic	5: There is an established orthography and a literacy tradition.
dialects /varieties	4: Multilingual parity	0: inactive	0: No orthography is available to the community.
Khasi	5: universal use	5: Dynamic	5: There is an established orthography and a literacy tradition.
Dialects/varieties	4: Multilingual parity	2: Coping 1: Minimal 0: Inactive	2: Written materials exist, but they may only be useful for some members of the community; 1: Some material being written 0: No orthography is available to the community.

Table 2: Comparison of Ao, Khasi, its dialects and varieties for factors 4, 5 and 6.

Factors	<b>Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, Including Official Status and Use</b>	<b>Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Own Language</b>	<b>Type and Quality of Documentation</b>
Ao	5: equal support	3: Many members support language maintenance.	5: superlative
Dialects /varieties	1: Forced assimilation	1: Only a few members support language maintenance	0: no material exists
Khasi	5: equal support	3: Many members support language maintenance	5: Superlative
Dialects/varieties	1: Forced assimilation	3: Many members support language maintenance	1: There are only a few grammatical sketches, short word-lists and fragmentary texts. 0: no material exists

Table 3: Comparison of Ao, Khasi, its dialects and varieties for factors 7, 8 and 9.

opinion that the code in which they speak is not a language.

For the last factor, dealing with the type and quality of documentation, standard Ao may be graded 5 'superlative' as there has been a constant flow of language materials. However, no materials exist for the dialects, except for a grammatical description of Mangmetong Mongsen (Coupe, 2007) and a phonetic analysis of Waromung Mongsen (Coupe, 2003).

Based on the above factors, it is clear that while standard Chungli-Ao is in a much better position in terms of language endangerment (declared vulnerable by UNESCO), its dialects are not. Except for intergenerational transmission, a look at the other factors shows that the dialects are critically endangered. The endangerment of dialects is further compounded by English, the official language of Nagaland and Nagamese, a lingua-franca used in many spheres of life.

### **Status of Khasi**

In 2012, UNESCO listed Khasi as an endangered language, and subsequently declared that Khasi language is no longer in danger and is considered as safe. The language is taught as a subject till post graduate and PhD programme. It is used in education, media, church services and meetings, gatherings of the indigenous bodies, traditional institutions and so on. Despite being surrounded by different Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman languages, the language continues to flourish. English is the only language that poses a threat to Khasi.

However, the focus is on the other Khasian varieties being endangered in the process of standardization as there are number of domains of language use which take place only in Standard Khasi. Below we briefly assess standard Khasi and its dialects/varieties using the UNESCO factors.

A look at tables 1, 2 and 3 will show that the situation of Khasi and its dialects/varieties is not very different from that of Ao. With respect to intergenerational transmission, Khasi and its dialects are considered as stable yet threatened with a score of '5-'.

Factors 2 and 3 are complicated given the language situation in this area. From the total number of Khasi speakers (1,128,575), we may assume that most speakers are able to use standard Khasi and hence is considered safe. However, the number of speakers of dialects and varieties varies. Pnar is spoken by 243000, War is spoken by 41900 and Lyngam is spoken by around 6000. However, note that scholars have also claimed that within these divisions, a number of dialects can be identified.

For factor 3, standard Khasi is graded 3, as it is spoken by the majority. However, the dialects are graded 1 or 2 as the proportion of speakers to the total is a minority or very few.

For factor 4, standard Khasi may be considered to be of universal use as it is the language that is used in most domains while the dialects have multilingual parity.

For factors 5 to 7, standard Khasi is graded 5 each since this is widely used in many old as well as new domains and there is an established orthography with developing literature. The dialects score 0 to 2 for factors 5 and 6 as some dialects, like Pnar, are used in new domains (newspaper) and are in the process of establishing orthography, resulting in written materials, while some dialects do not. For factor 7, we grade the dialects with 1 as there is no official recognition or protection.

With regard to attitudes, the situation is slightly different from Ao, with many members supporting language maintenance, whether it is the standard or a dialect.

For factor 9, standard Khasi is graded 5 while the dialects are graded 0 or 1 since some dialect have grammatical sketches. However most dialects are not documented and no materials exist.

We arrive at the conclusion that while the situation of Khasi and its dialects is slightly better than that of Ao, many Khasi dialects and varieties are in danger as it is the standard which has official recognition and hence, development is centered on the standard.

### **Effects of the Colonial Past**

The phenomenon of language endangerment through standardization is further compounded by English, which has official sanction in both the states of Meghalaya and Nagaland; and the growth of Nagamese in Nagaland.

A look at the colonial period will show that the British government had policies allowing for the use of regional languages. Benedikter (2013) mentions that "during the colonial rule English had been firmly established in the most important domains of life (public administration, business, higher education and science, armed forces, international communication)", but however, few Indian languages like Sanskrit, Urdu, Tamil even Persian were used for classical education up to a certain level. The rise of English can be traced to the British policy of having English as an official language in the colonial period, and the states implementing it in their government policies. While this was perhaps due to a lack of other options for the states, it has had a lasting effect on the local languages.

In the post-colonial era, the Indian government declared Hindi as the official language of India with English as an auxiliary official language. Directly or indirectly, English played an important role to unite India, the land of multi-cultural and diverse linguistic. The Constitution of India took a keen interest on other regional languages (Article 346) and also issued special provision relating to language spoken by a section of the population of a state (Article 347). However, the linguistic scenario of the North eastern states is complicated. Nagaland alone is home to more than 20 languages. Many of the minority languages of Northeast India are not listed in the list of languages of India. Even the 1968 National Policy Resolution of introducing the Three Language Formula does not guarantee the safeguarding of these minor languages due to implementation problems.

After the British annexation of the Khasi-Jaintia hills (1834, 1835) and the Ao region (1889), these areas became a part of the Assam province, where Bengali and later Assamese (1873) was the official language along with English. Hence, English and Assamese were predominantly used in the Khasi and Naga hills. Interpreters known as *Dobashi* were appointed to act as a channel of communication between the British government and the Naga people. These *Dobashis* were those who could speak Assamese and English. As Nag (2002: 39) notes "During British rule the Assamese language was introduced in the schools of Nagaland; this further helped to spread the Assamese language in Nagaland which soon emerged as a pidginised language"

While Nagamese was a possibility (as an official language) as it is spoken by all tribes and is widely used in different spheres of life, the attitude of the Naga people has always been negative towards it, till today. A number of reasons have been given for this: it has been called a bazaar language, a language with no grammar, it is not a language, etc. One other reason is that it belongs to no one; that it is not the mother tongue of anyone. However, situations have changed, as we see many families using Nagamese in the mother tongue sense. But, attitudes have not changed, it has only grown stronger in spite of the fact that the Bible and hymns have now been translated into Nagamese: the same way all tribal languages in Nagaland started its standardization process.

Hence, the promotion of English and Nagamese along with the standardized languages of Khasi and Chungli-Ao by the British during the colonial period and later by the state governments, have today resulted in the endangerment of the different dialects and varieties in this region.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to present a case of dialectal endangerment as a result of the standard language, taking the case of Khasi and Ao. Such a situation is by no means an exception as it is attested in many regions, particularly in Northeast India.

Sallabank (2010) lists four causes of language endangerment: natural catastrophes, war and genocide, overt repression and cultural/political/economic dominance. She further subdivides the last factor into five more: Economic, Cultural dominance, political, historical and Attitudinal. We will see that in the case of Khasi and Ao, these are relevant factors leading to endangerment of its dialects/varieties. And these are the factors that need to be addressed, if we want to protect these languages, dialects and varieties.

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# **When Size Doesn't Count: a Comparative Account of Language Endangerment in Australia and Pakistan**

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## **Abstract**

In this paper we the authors, Indigenous people from Australia and Pakistan, explore shared experiences of the 'colonisation' of our languages. We ask the question: is there a correlation between the resilience of a minority language and the size of its speaker community when the speaker communities are colonised by people who speak a different language? Our languages were subject to changes to their use and social value as a direct result of our countries being colonised by external invading forces. Jakelin Troy is Ngarigu from the Snowy Mountains region in south eastern Australia and Adnan Bhatti is Saraiki from the Multan area, Punjab, Pakistan. Both our countries were invaded by the British and subsequently colonised. Troy's language succumbed to English in the nineteenth century and Bhatti's language faces being overwhelmed by Urdu. Our communities have experienced the effects of population migrations and government policies that have adversely affected our capacity as Indigenous peoples to thrive in the use of our languages. The paper draws on the work we are beginning in developing a larger research project to compare the experiences of minority language speakers in Australia and Pakistan. We reflect on our own experiences and consider government policies and a range of community, education, business, health and media initiatives that variously support or hinder efforts to maintain and revive the use of our languages.

## **Why does size not count in language survival?**

We, the authors, are members of minority Indigenous communities from very different parts of the world, Pakistan and Australia. Troy has spent many years researching the languages of South Eastern Australia and is now collaborating with Bhatti to undertake a comparative study of the Indigenous languages in Pakistan and Australia. We have begun to consider a research question: is there a correlation between the resilience of a minority language and the size of its speaker community when the speaker communities are colonised by people who speak a different language? This research question grew out of us sharing, as friends do, anecdotal information about our own language experiences. We discovered that as Indigenous people we share many common experiences in the histories of our peoples and it was in thinking about the future of our peoples that we turned our discussion to what was the future our community languages. Ngariu, Troy's language of the alpine region in South Eastern Australia always had a tiny group of speakers maybe in the thousands,

Bhatti's Saraiki has more than twenty million speakers. But each shares an equally fragile future as a direct result of the devaluation of the language as the main means of communication for its people.

We share the common history of Indigenous people worldwide who have been affected by invasion and colonisation by people from outside our lands. Both our countries were invaded by England and subsequently colonised. The sovereign Countries of the Indigenous peoples of Australia were not recognised in English law at the time of invasion in 1788 nor at any time since and ultimately became what is now known as Australia. Australia remains a dominion of England with the Queen of England its constitutional monarch. In the case of Pakistan, it was partitioned from India in 1947 and is a now a republic with borders created between the largely Muslim population of Pakistan and the rest of their people who are now in India and Bangladesh. In both countries the territories of the Indigenous populations remain largely unrecognised with no legal standing. Aboriginal peoples in Australia refer

to their territories as ‘Countries’ and give them their local names, such as Troy’s Ngarigu Country but the wider population does not generally share this practice. In Pakistan there are movements to have the territories of Indigenous peoples recognised and Bhatti’s Saraikistan is one of these.<sup>1</sup>

In talking together about our experiences we were struck by the disturbing realisation that our Indigenous languages were both endangered for different reasons and the size of our speaker communities did not appear to play much part in their future. So, the tiny Australian language, Ngarigu, which does not currently have a community of speakers might have a brighter future than Saraiki of Pakistan with its estimated more than twenty million speakers (Ethnologue, 2016). We came to this conclusion because in language survival all the literature indicates that active community engagement with a language is what keeps it ‘awake’ or wakes it up again if it is ‘asleep’. We use the terms ‘asleep’ and ‘awake’ in this paper following the growing practice in Australia where it is no longer accepted that languages ‘die’. This is because Aboriginal communities in Australia have been able to ‘reawaken’ languages, some not spoken for decades, through sheer hard work and fuelled by the determination not to let their language go to sleep forever. The Kurna language of the Adelaide Plains in South Australia is a shining example of community effort paired with linguistic expertise. It was a language not spoken as a community language for nearly one hundred years as a direct result of government actions to stop the Kurna speaking their language and practicing their culture. It was woken up over a twenty year period beginning in the 1980s when linguist Rob Amery began working with Kurna people to reawaken the language and develop schools programs. It is now a thriving language with some community members raising their children in this language (Amery, 2010; Kurna Warra Pintyanthi, 2016).

Saraiki might well ‘fall asleep’ if its people do not take action to ensure its future. Ngarigu will have a future if the community is able to revive its use through research, language resource development and active measures to use the language again. Leanne Hinton’s Breath of Life Program in the United States of

America has demonstrated how successful this kind of community led effort can be and provided an early text on how to revive and maintain a language (Hinton et al, 2002). The size of a community of speakers is not necessarily a deciding factor in the ongoing use of a language. People who believe their language will continue indefinitely because it has a vast speaker community cannot take comfort in numbers alone. A language can decline dramatically over a short generation. As Nettle and Romaine point out

The pulse of a language clearly lies in the youngest generation. Languages are at risk when they are not longer transmitted naturally to children in the home by parents or other caretakers...Icelandic...has only 100,000 speakers but is in no danger of extinction. Other languages with much larger populations of speakers can be and are at risk. Some of the precarious languages of Central India such as Kurux...have over a million speakers.... Small population in and of itself does not tell us much without examining other indicators such as the status of the language (2000: 8-9).

### **The story of Ngarigu: a language begins to wake**

Troy’s language, Ngarigu, is one of the ‘sleeping beauties’ of the Aboriginal languages of Australia (Zuckerman, 2012). Ngarigu probably had a speaker population of some thousands in 1788 when the British invaded, however, this population is now reduced to only a few hundred (Gardner, 1992). The Ngarigu language is located in the Monaro district in South Eastern Australia (AIATSIS, 2016). The most detailed recent account of the Aboriginal people of the Monaro is in Young (2000). Flood’s work on the Monaro people was the earliest archaeological study of the ‘Moth Hunters’ that she coined to refer to the people because of the annual bogong moth feasts for which they were famous (Flood 1992).

Estimates of population size before 1788 in Australia are difficult to make but people grouped themselves into small family based clan units that in areas like the Monaro may have formed themselves into coalitions of clans (Gardner, 1992, p. 92-93). Into the mid twentieth century, Troy’s own clan, the Ngyamitjimitung, lived in the Snowy Mountains district, the alpine ‘High Country’,

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<sup>1</sup> Fandom wiki ‘Pakistan: Saraiki’ includes a map of Saraikistan: <http://pakistan.wikia.com/wiki/Saraiki>

on the New South Wales side of the Monaro district. This clan may have numbered as few as forty people for thousands of years. By the mid nineteenth century the population of Ngarigu speaking people was in severe decline, overrun by English speaking colonists and killed off by imported diseases. Troy's people married into the families of pastoralists who began to invade their Country from the 1830s onwards. These people established large pastoral holdings of cattle and sheep throughout the Monaro. Troy's people are no longer allowed to live in their own 'Country' (the term used by Aboriginal people for their traditional lands) as the whole area has become part of the Kosciusko National Park (NSW NPWS, 2016).

We can't tell you exactly what happened to the Ngarigu language. However, the fate of Kayardild, the Aboriginal language of Bentinck Island, Queensland, Australia explained by Evans (2010) could be the story of almost all the Australian languages that have 'gone to sleep'. It is a story of government policies that had a catastrophic effect on the ability of communities to thrive. The people of the Monaro were similarly displaced and there is also evidence of deliberate massacres of the population by pastoralists invading to take over land to graze stock (Gardner, 1992). Across Australia there was a planned extinction of people that was committed in accordance with government policies that sought to 'solve' the Aboriginal problem to remove the people from their land and their cultural and linguistic traditions.

Kayardild was never a large language. At its peak it probably counted no more than 150 speakers...in 1982 there were fewer than 40 left, all middle-aged or older. The fate of the language was sealed in the 1940s when missionaries evacuated the entire population of Bentinck Islanders from their ancestral territories, relocating them to the mission on Mornington Island, some 50 km to the northwest. At the time of their relocation the whole population were monolingual Kayardild speakers, but from that day on no new child would master the tribal language. The sibling link, by which one child passes on their language to another, was broken during the first years after the relocation, a dark decade from which no baby survived. A dormitory policy separated children from their parents for most of the day, and punished any child heard speaking an

Aboriginal language (Evans 2010: xv-xvi).

The most recent national survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages estimated that of the 250 or more Australian languages only 13 are still 'strong', that is being transmitted across all ages in their speech communities. However, these few are fragile because they are also in areas where schooling is largely in English and the language of government and most commerce is English. The uses of the languages are confined to their communities in remote and poorly serviced regions of Australia. People do value their languages but the only incentive for young people to continue to use these languages is if they remain in their communities.

Most of the languages of Australia are now severely endangered and this is recognised not only by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but also by the wider population. Many communities are taking immediate and very effective action to revive their languages through recovery programs, working with linguists and educators to develop materials to support these programs. The Commonwealth Government of Australia has embedded the learning of Australian languages within the national *Australian Curriculum – Languages* (ACARA 2016). *The Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* (ACARA 2015) is a vehicle for teaching any of the Indigenous languages of Australia in any of our schools to all students, whether Indigenous or not.

Troy did not grow up speaking her language but like many Ngarigu people now, she wants to see her language back in use. Ngarigu are beginning to work on its revival. It is in this context that although the language is fast asleep it has a potentially bright and wide awake future. Ngarigu people are using community memory of the language in conjunction with analysis of fragmentary historical documentation, some nineteenth century wordlists and mid twentieth century sound recordings, to reconstruct how the language worked. Ngarigu belongs to the large Pama Nyungan family of Australian languages and this means that aspects of the grammar and lexicon of the language are predictable.

The community effort is being supported by the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) and Ninde Ngujarn Ngarigo Monero Aboriginal Corporation. Sixteen people gathered at Lakes Entrance in Victoria, south eastern Australia in November

2015 to work with community members Doris Paton and Elder Aunty Rachel Mullett who is still strong in her knowledge of the language. The VACL website<sup>2</sup> contains a resource portal for the languages of Victoria which includes Ngarigu as it spans both NSW and Victoria. Bowe et al (2010, p. 315) have made information accessible about relevant historical resources and recent activities to help the community revive the language. The Gunnai language of Gippsland in Victoria is closely related to Ngarigu, as are many of the community members for both languages. It has been the subject of successful revival strategies for many years and can provide some guidance and modeling for the revival of Ngarigu. Lynnette Solomon-Dent is a community member who has been actively working on Gunnai for more than twenty years 'language teaching, interpretive signage and teaching materials are all well established in the community' (Eira & Solomon-Dent 2010, p. 31) and there are now specific projects to grow a more complex understanding of how the language works. For example, a project commenced in 2008 is developing the complexity of the pronoun set: 'on investigating the historical sources for the language it was found that the full range of pronouns was once more extensive, offering the expected range of meanings and distinctions' (ibid).

Many Indigenous languages of south eastern Australia share a similar ecology to Ngarigu. After more than 200 years of persecution, post British invasion of Australia in 1788, both the people and the languages are re-emerging. The new 'Australian Curriculum – Languages' includes a 'Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages'. The Framework heralds a new era in the Australian education system where the Indigenous languages of Australia once banned from all schooling are now valued and supported across the country. Troy was the lead writer for the Framework and hopes that introducing Australian languages into the education system more broadly will increase overall support for the maintenance and revival of the languages. Pakistan has paid lip service to support for 'minority' languages but is yet to even consider this kind of broader support.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://vaclang.org.au/item/219-community-gathers-in-lakes-entrance-for-ngarigo-monero-language-workshop.html> (last accessed 16 October 2016).

## **The story of Saraiki 'the sweetest language'**

In speaking of his language Bhatti expresses a commonly held sentiment amongst his community that 'Saraiki is the sweetest language of all'. Bhatti, growing up as a speaker and literate in Saraiki has a rich experience of his language not shared by Troy in her Ngarigu.

Saraiki is an Indigenous language of Pakistan, spoken in Pakistan and India and by diaspora communities elsewhere in the world. It has an estimated 20,068,000 million speakers (Ethnologue, 2016). However it is a threatened language facing rapid decline as its speakers shift into Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, and into other languages with higher social and economic value particularly northern dialects of Punjabi and to a lesser degree English. The shift is threatening the survival of Saraiki and if not halted Saraiki might 'go to sleep' as Ngarigu did in the early twentieth century. Fishman (2001) advocated for a scholarship devoted to studying language shift worldwide to consider ways in which to halt this assault on the world's linguistic diversity. We hope that this paper will help generate wider global interest in the minority Indigenous languages of the Indigenous peoples of Pakistan. It is clear that the case of Saraiki is complex and fuelled by a lack of recognition of the distinctiveness of its people as Indigenous people within a population complicated by multiple migrations of peoples across the region of what is now India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

Bhatti's own community is located in the Multan district of the Southern Punjab, Pakistan and identify as Indigenous Saraiki people. Although Saraiki is classified as a dialect of Punjabi Saraiki people of Bhatti's community do not accept this classification and make a clear linguistic and social distinction between themselves and Punjabis and also their neighbours the Sindhis. The determination of the Saraiki to be a distinctive group is reflected in a nationalist movement to create a separate state of 'Saraikistan' that developed in response to the partition and consequent subsuming of a large number of the previously separate communities into new political territories (see map of 'Saraikistan' footnote 1). The recent migration of large numbers of northern Punjabi people is having a major impact on Saraiki speakers who feel pressure to speak Punjabi rather than Saraiki

because it is the language of education and commerce spoken by successful urban business people and government officials. The Saraiki of Multan district make up most of the rural farming population.

In its own region Saraiki has its academic advocates at Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan that has a Department of Saraiki established in 2009 and includes a focus on the language.<sup>3</sup> It is also supported by popular media including Waseb television and Rohi Television.<sup>4</sup> 'Rohi is a Saraiki language hybrid channel, encompassing entertainment, news, documentary, infotainment, talk shows, music, four way interactive discussions on every issue ranging from agriculture to local bodies to health. Rohi's dominant feature is its news and current affairs programmes. Rohi brings forth the Pashto and Balochi shades of Saraiki in D.I Khan and D.G Khan and blends it with its cultural richness in Multan and Bahawalpur (ibid).' It was reported to us by Saraiki people now in Sydney that these stations struggle to remain viable because their main source of advertising income is from local agricultural companies, selling products such as fertiliser.

The Saraiki of Multan are not isolated in experiencing language shift. Across Pakistan Urdu and recently English are replacing regional languages as the vehicles of education, government and commerce. Raja Taseer (20.10.2016), a Putwari speaker of the Kashmir region told us that his language is also rapidly losing ground to other languages as the main form of communication for his people, it lacks research and development and is not the language of schooling or public life. Saraiki continues to be the language of Bhatti's community but is rapidly losing ground as the language of choice for young people. Bhatti was educated in Urdu and English and Saraiki had no place in his schooling. However, it was the language of his home and continues to be the language used within his own Bhatti clan of more than one thousand people. It is in the streets that he notices the greatest difference as the youngest generation are no longer using Saraiki as their default language, most speak Urdu or Punjabi.

In our research we are also drawing on the experiences of Saraiki people in Sydney and consider their responses to language

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[http://www.bzu.edu.pk/v2\\_department.php?cid=33](http://www.bzu.edu.pk/v2_department.php?cid=33)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.waseb.tv/> , <http://rohi.tv.com.pk/>

maintenance as part of the Pakistani diaspora in Australia. There is no support for Saraiki speakers to maintain their language in Australia. However, Urdu is offered in the 'Australian Curriculum – Languages'.

### **Bhatti: My language experience**

When I was growing up in the Multan area of Pakistan in the 1980s and 90s, most of my friends were Saraiki and some were Punjabi but most spoke Saraiki too. Most friends of my friends spoke Punjabi but this is a mix of Saraiki too. Saraiki is a mix of every language, Arabic, Urdu, Pashto, Marwari and Punjabi. There are five provinces in Pakistan in the north, Balochistan the Pishawa speak Pashto in the south west near Karachi there is a mix of all people and they mostly speak Urdu and there are Hindi speakers who have migrated from India. There is also a mix of Sindhi. Saraiki speakers can understand Sindhi and Urdu.

I mostly spoke Saraiki. In the city of Multan where I grew up my friends were mostly Saraiki. Those who were not, like Adnan and Manan, were Urdu speakers but also they also spoke Saraiki even though they were not Saraiki people. When we played street games, like cricket, they would speak Urdu and I could understand and then I would speak back in Saraiki. When I was growing up I usually heard Saraiki spoken in the streets and there were far fewer Urdu speakers. But now in the streets in my village in the Multan area I hear more Urdu. This was how it was when I went in January 2016, there are more children speaking Urdu.

Saraiki parents now think Saraiki is not a good language for their children. They believe that Saraiki is for uneducated people with poor 'etiquette'. They teach their children in Urdu. Punjabi and Urdu speakers call Saraiki people 'Jangely' literally 'the people who live in the jungle'. But the Punjabi came all the way from India after the Partition in 1947. We call them 'Mahaja' meaning 'the migrant people'. Punjabi Saraiki and Urdu speakers get along well, but not all the time. In most government and business offices the Urdu speakers will use or understand Saraiki, particularly in the Multan area.

Living in Sydney Bhatti is only able to speak Saraiki to a limited number of other Saraiki migrants. He has friends who sing and perform

in the language and who are trying to raise their children with the language but who struggles with the marginalisation of the language even within the Pakistani community in Australia.

### **Experiences of Saraiki people living in Sydney, Australia**

Bhatti's friend Nauman described his experiences to us in Pakistan and in Australia (personal commentary (1.9.2016).

Saraiki are agricultural and farming people. Now the population is being educated it is becoming more cosmopolitan. However, Saraiki are continue to be seen as backward. We feel a bit guilty that if we speak our Indigenous language, we will be seen as backward because we need to speak the language of the country the national language, Urdu. However we need to develop the local Saraiki area so that the people in the country can speak their own language. Local people want to be with local people and continue to speak their language and be themselves. Something needs to be done to improve and develop their background to give them a future as their own people.

Sometimes if you are capable of doing something you will be accepted for your abilities and not judged as inferior because you are Saraiki. Research and development of industries and businesses in the area of the Saraiki people is increasingly in English as well as Urdu and Chinese is also gaining influence the Chinese are having so much influence in Pakistan.

There is no point for me to speak African, I would not learn African. Similarly, there is no point speaking Saraiki no one is speaking it in the street. It is not the language of commerce or in the offices. The root cause for the decline in Saraiki is that there is no point to the language. It has no future unless the Saraiki region becomes developed. It is not used for any purpose that will help the people to get ahead. Without the development of industry and commerce in the Saraiki region the language will decrease in its usefulness and people won't speak it. They will learn and speak the languages of commerce, particularly Urdu and Punjabi.

Nauman's parents used to speak Saraiki but he did not speak it very often and does not speak it as well as his parents because he spoke the languages that were becoming more popular,

particularly Urdu, as it was the national language and encouraged as the language of commerce. Now in Australia he hardly speaks Saraiki because no one in the corporate sector speaks it. No one in the schools even in Pakistan are speaking Saraiki. No people in industry and no corporate people are speaking Saraiki. Bhatti is his first point of contact if he wants to speak Saraiki in Australia. When he wants to speak Saraiki he rings Bhatti. He said it gives him 'some sort of satisfaction to remember our parents. There is special flavour to that language and a satisfaction to be speaking to someone of your own kind.'

He said he and Bhatti are living examples of the struggle to keep Saraiki they are rare in the corporate sector. Saraiki marks you as someone from a rural area it creates a perception that you are poorly educated and unsophisticated, not someone who knows anything worth knowing. Now there is television channel with all programs in Saraiki in the Multan area but it has little support from advertising. The only thing that might be advertised on that channel is fertiliser and this won't bring the channel much revenue to support its programs. This is because there is not much industry in the area, only rural industries with low level funding. There is no government funding for the channel.

The survival of Saraiki all comes down to economics. The whole south is the Punjab. Punjabis dominate the corporate sector they are the ones on the national level who are driving the economy. I need to speak to Punjabis so I speak Punjabi not Saraiki.

Inam Khan and Riaz Shah also spoke to us about their attempts to maintain a Saraiki identity and to use their language in Sydney, Australia. Riaz is a musician who sings in Saraiki and composes as does Bhatti. He explained that one of the disadvantages of Saraiki is that its writing system is in development and is unstable so it is difficult to provide education in Saraiki. This contributes to its decreasing support from its speaker community. Inam Khan is an engineer who works at the University of New South Wales he has no opportunity to use Saraiki in his professional life in Australia. For both men Saraiki is the language of their small community in Sydney but there are few opportunities to use it widely and their children are likely to grow up with a hearer and partial speaker knowledge of the language.

## Conclusion

Saraiki is the victim of what Zuckerman (2013) has called 'glottophagy' or 'language eating' where a community itself begins to discourage the use of its own language and begins the shift into another language for range of reasons including all those described above. He contrasts this with 'linguicide' the deliberate 'killing of language' which is the typical experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in Australia. Ngarigu has been the victim of linguicide its people were victimised and persecuted for speaking their language. When considering the future of the languages if we only look at speaker numbers it would seem that the huge population of Saraiki speakers in comparison with the tiny population of people who identify with Ngarigu and are only just now beginning to reawaken their language it would seem that Saraiki is secure. However, when we consider that the percentage of children interested in speaking Saraiki is reportedly low, and decreasing rapidly over the lifetime of Bhatti, while the percentage of community support for Ngarigu, in the experience of Troy, is almost unanimous it would appear that Ngarigu has a better chance at revival and survival than does Saraiki. 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world'.<sup>5</sup> Maybe a coalition of the world's minority language speakers beginning with its smallest communities can as Indigenous people together can help reverse the language shifting that is threatening the wonderful diversity of the worlds languages.

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# On the current status and state of Juray in the Sora-Juray cluster

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## Abstract

Juray is an endangered language of the Sora-Gorum subgroup of Munda spoken in Gajapati district, Odisha, India. Juray stands at the bottom of a complex set of ethnolinguistic hierarchies and has suffered greatly in the post-independence period. All aspects of Juray structure, its lexicon, phonology and morphosyntax are showing effects of language contact and the increasing trends towards language shift. We discuss the current status and state of the Juray language and include demographic and sociolinguistic information. We present a brief overview of its structure, and offer some data on the verbal and nominal systems, and various syntactic features where contact-triggered restructuring appears to have been operative in Juray, based on comparisons with both other lects of the Sora-Juray cluster and with other Munda languages.

## 1 Introduction

In this short paper we introduce some sociolinguistic and grammatical features of Juray, a seriously endangered language of the Sora-Juray cluster of lects, a language-dialect cluster belonging to the Sora-Gorum branch of the Munda family of the Austroasiatic phylum spoken in Gajapati district, southern Odisha State, India.

Sora-Juray is one of the most important Munda language-dialect clusters from a comparative historical perspective. Based on the groundbreaking work of Gomango (2015: 4-5), the only native-speaker of a Sora lect with formal training in linguistics, there are seven traditional territorial lects of Sora-Juray. The seven lects are Juray-sor, Sarda-sor, Tenkala-sor, Arsid-sor (or Lanjia Sora), Kampu-sor, Kansid-sor and Emani-sor. The traditional territory of these ethnolinguistic groups roughly corresponds to a block division within contemporary Gajapati district, with overlaps. According to Gomango (2015) and A. Zide (1982, 1983), Juray stands apart from the other lects, but a full-scale comparison and internal classification of these lects has not yet been attempted.

In the following sections, we examine the background of endangerment of Juray, its sociolinguistic status and how the process of shift has affected the structure of Juray in its present state. Sections 2 and 3 discuss the processes of ethnic shame and ethnolinguistic hierarchy that has in part resulted from a process of internal neo-colonialism, and the current state of Juray sociolinguistically and demographically. In 4, some features distinguishing Juray from Sora are introduced. In 5 we summarize the complex system of verbal person indexing in Juray. In section 6 we examine the system of case marking in Juray that reflects various historical

forces and processes of change. In 7 we discuss variation in the Juray capability and in 8 the use of plural marking in quantified NPs in Juray that show differences from other Sora lects. Many of these features reflect processes of accommodation that the endangered Juray language is undergoing in its present state.

## 2 Internal neocolonialism and ethnolinguistic hierarchies in India

The modern nation state of India has pursued a policy of hegemony by Indo-Aryan languages and identity over the subordinated tribal languages of northern and central India. Such policies manifest themselves locally both covertly through a complete lack of access to educational materials at the primary, secondary or tertiary level in Juray, and overtly through the categorization of tribal communities such as the Juray and speakers of other lects in the cluster in Odisha as 'backwards and primitive'. As such, contemporary socio-political linguistic rhetoric recreates modes of expression inherited from the colonialist period, but manifested in a modern practice of *internal neo-colonialism*. This internal neo-colonialist praxis reproduces class and ethnic divisions and hierarchies now recast in a contemporary post-independence light. Such negative valuations are also reinforced and perpetuated by other divides that pre-date the traditional colonialist administration of the Subcontinent, these latter rooted in the differential evaluations of economic and religious practices associated with particular ethnolinguistic groups and castes (both expressed by the same Indo-Aryan term *jati*). Such attitudes come with all the expected differential valuations of the various speech varieties and their associated identities, whereby central or metropolitan-

urban/literate/prestigious/civilized/Indo-Aryan identities and languages or lects dominate peripheral-rural/illiterate/insignificant/primitive/*adivasi* or tribal ones. But it also applies between differently valorized groups of tribal groups, both across and within linguistically related tribal groups. The negative attitudes have had significant impacts on the demographics of the speaker base, and on the use and structure of Juray in its current state. While the impact of the British colonial period on the same languages was negligible, the effects of this internal neo-colonialism on the local lects in the region today are profound.

### 3 Ethnic shame and the ecology of Juray

As a whole the entire Sora-Juray complex exhibits a scenario best described as one of local language endangerment, ranging from threatened but stable to extinct, with all points in between. The various lects have not been equally subjected to the forces favoring shift to Oḍia (or Telugu), and consequently endangerment is not evenly distributed across them. While in some parts of Gajapati district, the local lect is still learned by children, in other areas the language has almost been completely replaced by local Oḍia varieties. In such areas the consequences of ethnic shame have been profound, with full-scale replacement of local identity.

In certain Juray communities in contact with speakers of intact lects like Arsid-sor or Kampu-sor, the negative and positive valuations are not rather between Indo-Aryan vs. Munda lects and identity, but rather between ‘illiterate’ and backwards Juray vs. higher status Sora lects. In urban areas like Parlakhemundi, in turn, these same higher valued Sora lects are subject to discrimination by Indo-Aryan Oḍia speakers and Dravidian Telugu speakers alike. Of course, although regionally dominant, both Oḍia and Telugu in turn are devalued at the national level by speakers of Hindi lects in northern and central parts of India, even though both are official Scheduled languages. And then there is the complicated status of English within the complex sociolinguistic multilingual milieu of contemporary India, standing as it does higher than Hindi in many contexts and sociolinguistic domains, see Figure-1. Thus, as in parts of Africa or the Pacific, there are complex local-regional-national-transnational level language hierarchies that have a range of effects on various communities of users. Juray stands at the bottom of all of these interlocking hierarchies, even while such fine-grained local distinctions that are key and very important at this degree of granularity, are nevertheless completely irrelevant the higher up one goes in this lectal valuation chain.

The total number of speakers of Juray may be under 25,000, but the actual number of regular users may be lower than this, and when Juray is used, it is often heavily mixed with Oḍia or with higher valued Sora lects. In terms of domains of use and speaker

demographics, Juray is mainly restricted to home use and to conversations between older adult members of the community.



Figure 1: India’s linguistic hierarchy and the ecology of Juray language endangerment

The total number of Juray speakers is difficult to gauge due to the local valuation differentials and the extent to which ethnic shame is associated with the markedly Juray linguistic features. Thus, many probable speakers or passive speakers deny that they know the language at all. Juray remains an unwritten language. At least five competing systems are available for such an attempt to develop a literary standard: an Oḍia-based one, a Telugu-based one, two Latin-based ones, and one called *Sorang Sompeng*, an indigenous orthography created by Mangei Gomango in 1936. None have gained traction, and each has significant drawbacks. Prior to our pilot survey, Juray was known mainly from a very brief text excerpt published in a journal article (A. Zide, 1983) and some lexical data in A. Zide’s (1982) University of Chicago PhD dissertation.

Juray has already begun to show some significant effects of language contact and attrition. This can be seen when comparing both the limited published data on the language, collected some forty years ago, and the corresponding data from its more robust sister lect, Arsid-sor, with the data on Juray we collected recently in our pilot survey. Even the basic lexicon such as numerals, kin-terms, basic verbs and adjectives and common natural phenomena now show significant impact from Indo-Aryan.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Santali, although a Scheduled language, is not higher than the locally dominant Indo-Aryan tribal *lingua franca* Sadri/Sadani in Jharkhand.

<sup>2</sup> Some brief comments on these forms are required. Juray clearly inserts a glottal coda into two of the loan words,

(1)	<u>Sora</u>	<u>Juray</u>	<u>Odia</u>	<u>gloss</u>
	<i>uaŋ</i>	<i>baʔpa</i>	<i>bapa</i>	‘father’
	<i>moʔa</i>	<i>mɛgo</i>	<i>mɛg<sup>h</sup>o</i>	‘cloud’
	<i>pajaʔi</i>	<i>noʔdija</i>	<i>noʔija</i>	‘coconut’
	<i>aŋgaj</i>	<i>punuŋen</i>	<i>punoja</i>	‘full moon’
	<i>su:su</i>	<i>ərambo</i>	<i>ərambo</i>	‘begin’
	<i>saʔkaij</i>	<i>sotɔ</i>	<i>soto</i>	‘right’
	<i>tabmɛ</i>	<i>nua</i>	<i>nua</i>	‘new’
	<i>maʔnoi</i>	<i>sarda</i>	<i>sorda</i>	‘happy’
	<i>majoŋ-jaŋ panjora-jaŋ panjora</i>			‘rib’

<i>əlibən</i>	<i>əlabən</i>	‘deer’
<i>idlai</i>	<i>adlai</i>	‘I have cut it’

Other words involve related lexemes, but in different structural configurations. So in the first example in (4) ‘bee’, one finds the same root *daŋ* in two different compound structures, one where it is in the left position (Sora) and the other in the right (Juray). In the second example, the Sora forms appears to have undergone metathesis, while the form meaning ‘wet’ shows stem reduplication in Juray but appears in a compound form in Sora. In ‘ear’, Sora uses the infix glottal stop and Juray prefixation of *ə-* to form the syntactically freestanding form of the noun from the bound combining form of the root.

#### 4 Sora and Juray are not the same language

As closely related languages, Sora and Juray naturally share many words in common. Many have identical form in the two lects. However in other sets of cognates, sound correspondences between the two suggest both languages need to be derived from a proto-Sora-Juray form that is not preserved in either. Thus, Sora /i/ corresponding to Juray /u/ suggests Proto-Sora-Juray \*i. Note that the Sora form for ‘remembrance’ has an infix –n- that commonly derives nouns from verbs that is lacking in the Juray cognate.

(2)	<u>Sora</u>	<u>Juray</u>	<u>English</u>
	<i>atagi</i>	<i>tagu</i>	‘heat’
	<i>kina</i>	<i>kuna</i>	‘sing’
	<i>anajimən</i>	<i>ejuman</i>	‘remembrance’

In other forms one finds Sora /i/ : Juray /a/. This suggest a reconstruction of Proto-Sora-Juray of \*ə or \*A perhaps. Note that many of these are old roots with a range of vowel realizations in the roots across the Munda languages.

(3)	<u>Sora</u>	<u>Juray</u>	<u>English</u>
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‘father’ and ‘coconut’, but how or why this glottal stop occurs in the lexemes it does, but not in others that (seem to) meet the same structural description is unclear in the present state of our understanding and requires further research and a larger data set before we can determine if these shifts (and their lack) are phonologically conditioned, and if so, what the determining factors are. The series of breathy voiced/‘voiced aspirate’ consonants so characteristic of many Indo-Aryan languages in this part of the Subcontinent, as seen in ‘cloud’, are replaced by their corresponding ‘normal’ voiced stops. The form for ‘rib’ in Juray is loan-blend: it borrows the Oḍia word but attaches the combining form for ‘bone’ *jaŋ* to it.

(4)	<u>Sora</u>	<u>Juray</u>	<u>English</u>
	<i>ədaŋ=bud</i>	<i>əjuŋ=daŋ</i>	‘bee’
	<i>ədəba=mər</i>	<i>əbuda=mar</i>	‘elder man’
	<i>ədza=miŋ</i>	<i>ada-ada</i>	‘wet’
	<i>luʔud</i>	<i>əlud</i>	‘ear’

Of course, a number of lexemes are entirely unrelated when comparing Sora with Juray. Thus one finds sets of forms like the following (5):

(5)	<u>Sora</u>	<u>Juray</u>	<u>English</u>
	<i>əmda</i>	<i>əmbɔra</i>	‘leave’
	<i>anəpsui</i>	<i>əkən-goʔ</i>	‘toward’
	<i>asorda</i>	<i>tabgoda:</i>	‘boil (water)’
	<i>ədakul</i>	<i>səŋne</i>	‘growl’

#### 5 Verbal person indexing in Juray

There are two sets of verb inflection or verbal person indexing series found in Juray, reflecting a type of split-S alignment. Thus one pattern encodes active subjects of both monovalent and bivalent verbs, and the other encodes experiencer subjects of monovalent verbs and undergoers of bivalent ones. In the following forms –*am* marks second singular undergoers, recipients or experiencers in (6), (7), –*ij* marks first person singular patients/themes, recipients or experiencers/undergoers in (8), (9), while –*ai* marks active first person subjects in (10)-(11).

(6)	Juray	
	<i>əman</i>	<i>ənin=adoʔŋ batəŋ-t-am</i>

you 3.PRON=OBJ fear=N.PST-2UND I  
 ‘you are scared of her’ (field notes)

(7) Juray

*nen aman gij-l-am*  
 I you see-PST-2UND  
 ‘I saw you’ (field notes)

(8) Juray

*nen anin=ado?ŋ baton-l-ij*  
 I 3.PRON=OBJ fear-PST-1UND  
 ‘I was scared of her’ (field notes)

(9) Juray

*aman nen gij-l-ij*  
 you I see-PST-1UND  
 ‘you saw me’ (field notes)

(10) Juray

*nen anin=ado?ŋ kan-əti tij-t-ai*  
 I 3PRON=OBJ this give-NSPT-1ACT  
 ‘I will give this to her’ (field notes)

(11) Juray

*nen je-t-ai*  
 I cry-NPST-1ACT  
 ‘I (will) cry’ (field notes)

## 6 Case marking on nouns

Connected with this head-marking system of actant or person indexing in monovalent, bivalent and trivalent verbs, is a system of dependent case marking of object NPs that in contrast to the verb agreement shows an accusative alignment patterning. Historically the Juray case marker *ado?ŋ*—which appears to be a noun meaning ‘body’<sup>3</sup>—occurs enclitic to object NPs and encodes patients, themes and recipients or addressees, that is, it functions as a primary object case marker. It. In the function of recipients or addressees, the use of *=ado?ŋ* is frequent, but it is never obligatory in Juray.

<sup>3</sup> The *a-* in the object case clitic *=ado?ŋ* may well be a retention of the older objective case form in *a-*.

In cognate Munda languages like Hill Gta? that lack non-subject person indexing in its verbal forms, this primary object case marking is obligatory with pronominal objects (Anderson in preparation-a). It is marked by the prefix *a-* (12)-(13) in Hill Gta?. As in Juray, its function is that of a primary object marker marking second arguments of bivalent verbs, but animate recipients, etc., with trivalent verbs.

(12) Hill Gta?

*kine hāwe a-na n-a-bi?*  
 this bow OBJ-you 1-NEG-give  
 ‘I will not give you this bow’ (field notes)

(13) Hill Gta?

*a-me kej n-læ?-te*  
 OBJ-3.PRON see 1-PRF-NPST  
 ‘I have seen her’ (field notes)

A similar case prefix or proclitic form is found in Juray’s sister language Gutob (Anderson, in preparation-b), spoken in Koraput district, Odisha as well:

(14) Gutob

*o-nij tʃa?tna ar-īde?*  
 OBJ-I basket NEG-give  
 ‘don’t give me the basket!’ (field notes)

However, with nominal NPs in these same functions in Hill Gta?, an endangered language spoken in Malkangiri district, Odisha, a different case marker is used, *-kə*, an enclitic case marker that was borrowed from the Indo-Aryan language Desia that all Hill Gta? now speak (Anderson and Jora, 2016ms-a).

(15) Hill Gta?

*gubug-kə bi?-wə*  
 pig-OBJ give-NPST  
 ‘(they) give (it) to the pig’ (field notes)

In Hill Gta? the pattern is thus as follows: a proclitic/prefix case marker with first and second person pronominal objects, but a case enclitic with nominal objects, albeit in the latter instance using a case marker that is borrowed from Indo-Aryan Desia. This same borrowed case enclitic is found in a number of

endangered Munda languages, like Bhumij (16) of Jharkhand, where the source language is rather Indo-Aryan Sadani or Sadri.

(16) Bhumij

*kula sukri=ke goi<sup>2</sup>=ke-d=i=a*  
 tiger pig=OBJ kill=PFV.TR-TR=3OBJ=FIN

‘he tiger killed the pig’ (Anderson and Jora, 2016ms-b)

Plains Gta? uses both case elements together with pronominal objects, that is the prefix *a-* and the enclitic *=ke* with pronouns, and so now all objects are marked by the enclitic case element.

(17) Plains Gta?

*a-næ=ke kmæ=hiŋ a-mia?*  
 OBJ-we=OBJ DEF3-PL NEG-know

‘they don’t know us’ (Anderson in preparation-c, Text 1: line 36)

Sora and Juray have not retained the old objective case marker *a-*, but rather than borrowing an element as many other Munda languages have, they replaced it with a new marker. Moreover, in Proto-Sora-Juray, the morphotactic distribution and functions of this case marker were both like those seen in Hill Gta?. This new objective case thus renewed the same set of functions as the older element had, and as seen in the pronominal objective case marker in Hill Gta?. That is, it functions as a ‘primary object’ case marker. It also renewed the same morphotactic distribution as the old case element did, that is, it appears as a proclitic (18) with first and second pronominal objects in Sora.

(18) Sora

*aman do?ŋ=nen a-gij-l-ijŋ*  
 you OBJ=I NEG-see-PST-1UND

‘you have not seen me’ [C38]<sup>4</sup> (field notes)

With nominal objects, the case marker is enclitic to the nominal object NP in Sora (19).

(19) Sora

*nen kəmbun=an=ado?ŋ tij-jum=t-ai*

<sup>4</sup>The alphanumeric code corresponds to a large grammatical questionnaire used by Living Tongues in the Munda Languages Initiative (Anderson and Gomango in preparation).

I pig=N.SFX=I:OBJ give-food=NPST-1ACT

‘I am giving food to the pig’ [C100] (field notes)

In Juray on the other hand, the objective case marker *always* appears after the noun it governs, whether it is a pronominal (20) or a nominal object NP (21), as in Plains Gta?.

(20) Juray

*aje maran nen=ado?ŋ giŋ-t-ijŋ*  
 woman-N.SFX I=OBJ see-NPST-1UND

‘the woman sees me’ [C378] (field notes)

(21) Juray

*nen tuqud=an manran=ado?ŋ tij-l-ai*

I basket=N.SFX man-N.SFX OBJ give-PST-1ACT

‘I gave the basket to the man’ [P2] (field notes)

However, as the reader might have noticed, actual use of the primary object case enclitic with pronominal and nominal NPs alike in Juray is subject to suppression, in part due to the possibility of expressing the pronominal object (recipient/addressee/undergoer) within the verb form. However, this variation appears to be subject to discourse factors that are currently under investigation, so we simply note the variation for the time being (22)-(23).

(22) Juray

*nen ənin=ji rundam=l-ai*  
 I 3.PRON-PL=OBJ push-PST-1ACT

‘I pushed them’ [C127] (field notes)

(23) Juray

*nen ənin-ji=ado?ŋ giŋ-l-ai*

I 3.PRON-PL=OBJ see-PST-1ACT

‘I saw them’ [C130] (field notes)

With experiencer subjects, verb agreement is with the experiencer subject and is marked in the undergoer slot

<sup>5</sup>Object agreement is possible in such forms in Juray with third plural objects.

(i) *nen kambun-an=ji a-sambab-l-ai-ji*

I pig-N.SFX=OBJ NEG-kill-PST-1ACT-PL

‘I did not kill the pigs’ [C116] (field notes).

in the verb, and thus no object agreement is possible. The case is usually overt on the syntactic object in these forms (24).

(24) Juray

*nen ənin-ji=adoʔŋ baton-t-ij*  
 I 3.PRON-PL=OBJ fear-NPST-1UND  
 ‘I will be scared of them’ [C136] (field notes)

The objective case proclitic in positive conjugations (25) can also optionally be replaced by a different case proclitic in negative forms, the adessive (26). This variation in both case marking on nouns and object agreement on verbs is subject to discourse constraints the details of which remain to be resolved by the future research.

(25) *nen doʔŋ=nam diʔdiʔ-ti-n-e*  
 I OBJ =2 RDPL~believe-NPST-RFLXV-1  
 ‘I believe you’ (field notes)

(26) *nen maŋə=nam ʔa=diʔdiʔ-n-e*  
 I ADESS =2 NEG=RDPL~believe- RFLXV-1  
 ‘I do not believe you’ (field notes)

This adessive case proclitic also shows a similar distribution to the primary object case marker insofar as it occurs proclitic with pronominal NPs (27), but enclitic with nominal NPs (28).

(27) Sora (Ramamurti 1938: 172) vs. (28) Sora

<i>maŋ[ba(n)]</i> =Pronoun	Noun= <i>maŋ</i>
<i>maŋ=nen</i> ~	<i>maŋba=nen bujan=əmaŋ</i>
ADESS=1 ADESS=1 ADESS-LINK-2	chief.priest=ADESS
‘near me’	‘near me’ ‘near the priest’

### 7 Capabilitive forms

Convergence or local accommodation in many domains clearly has been operative in Juray. The capabilitive element *rabti=* is another grammatical formative that varies between a position before or after the head (in this instance a verb). In Ramamurti, this was always preverbal and in a serial-like concatenation:

(29) Sora (Ramamurti 1938: 225)

*anin rapti=dij-t-e*  
 3PRON. CAP=cook=NPST  
 ‘he can cook’

In positive forms in Juray, this now occurs after the verb, which itself now appears in the converb form in *-le*, not the unmarked base form.

(30) Juray

*nen əman=adoʔŋ giʔle rabti=t-am*  
 I you=OBJ see-CV CAP=NPST-2UND  
 ‘I can see you’ [H48] (field notes)

In the negative however, it still occurs pre-verbally in Juray (31). Note that the nonpast marker is suppressed in negative conjugations across the Sora-Juray lects (and Munda languages more widely, Anderson and Jora, 2016ms-b).

(31) Juray

*nen əman=adoʔŋ rabti =a-gij-am*  
 I you=OBJ CAP =NEG-see-2UND  
 ‘I am not able to see you’ [H49] (field notes)

However, as the following form shows, the Juray negative form has undergone several structural rearrangements nevertheless. Thus, the case marker is no longer proclitic, nor does the negative scope operator attach to the lexical verb as it does in Juray above (31), but rather it attaches to the capabilitive marker itself in the other Sora lects (32).

(32) Arsid-sor

*nen doʔŋ=nam ad-rabti=gij-am*  
 I OBJ= you NEG-CAP=see-2UND  
 ‘I am not able to see you’ [H49] (field notes)

### 8 Plural marking in NPs with numerals

Another feature of Juray morphosyntax that differs from the more intact lects of the Sora-Juray cluster is the use of the plural marker on nouns in quantified NPs after numerals. This is true with simple NPs consisting of just NUM + N.

(33) Juray

*bagu kinsod=an=ji jagi kinsod=an=ji*  
 two dog=N.SFX=PL 3 dog=N.SFX=PL  
 ‘two dogs’ [Q4] ‘three dogs’ (field notes) [Q7]

(34) Juray

(35) Juray [Q24]                      (36) Juray [Q22]  
*jagi kinsod=nen=ji bagu kinsod=nen=ji*  
 three dog=1=PL two dog=1=PL  
 ‘my three dogs’ ‘my two dogs’ (field notes)

(37) Juray  
*akan jagi kinsod=an=ji*  
 DEIC.PROX three dog=N.SFX=PL  
 ‘these three dogs’ (field notes) [Q19]

(38) Juray  
*bagu sanna=sij=nen=ji*  
 two small=house.CF=1=PL  
 ‘my two small houses’ (field notes) [Q23]

Note however that body parts tend to suppress the plural marking with paired sets in Juray, as is found in the other Sora-Juray lects.

(39) Juray  
*bagu kapad=an*  
 two arm=N.SFX  
 ‘two arms’ (field notes) [Q5]

## 8 Summary

The endangered language Juray of Odisha stands at the bottom of a complex set of interconnected sociolinguistic and ethnolinguistic hierarchies. As a result it has started to undergo a range of structural changes effecting its lexicon and morphosyntax. In the latter domain, we find such changes as rearrangements in the system of case marking, in the position of certain verbal operators, and in the use of plural markers in quantified NPs. None of these features are typically found in the less endangered lects of the Sora-Juray cluster. Given the very low status of Juray, it is likely that more external features will be introduced and that further structural rearrangements will rapidly advance in the speech of the remaining community members who use it. At the same time language shift will continue to spread among the younger community members, and ultimately Juray will likely disappear in the not too distant future, but already morphed into something rather different than it started.

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# Odia Colonization of Dravidian Tribal Languages with Special Reference to Ollari Gadaba, an Endangered Tribal Dravidian Language

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## Abstract

When India got independence, major languages were promoted as official languages of the respective states, e.g. Odia and Telugu etc. When these languages became the administrative and official languages, they started colonizing or influencing the minor languages like tribal languages. Odisha is home to many tribal languages, viz. Dravidian, Austro Asiatic and Indo-Aryan languages for centuries. Among the twenty six Dravidian languages, nine languages are spoken in Odisha (Mohanty, 2013). Ollari Gadaba is one of them, which is severely endangered according to UNESCO criteria (2003). Ollari Gadaba which was a safe language once upon a time has become severely endangered due to Odia influence or dominance. Odia has entered in most of the domains of the Ollari Gadaba including home domain. The present paper investigates how Odia has colonized Ollari Gadaba and its subsequent consequences which led to its endangerment.

## 1. Linguistic Colonization

Odisha is one of the states in Indian Union. Culturally and linguistically it is a divergent state comparing to other states in India. It is a home land for many tribal-linguistic communities viz. Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and Austro-asiatic. Multilingualism, multiculturalism and multiethnicity can often be seen in the state. These multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic groups used to live in the interior forests by depending upon the forest products and practising shifting cultivation (Koraput District Gazetteer 1945). The field work reveals that, before the Independence and during the British period, these tribal people used to sell their products in their local markets and sometimes in other linguistic community markets. As they started meeting people belong to different linguistic backgrounds, there was a need for the link language for communication purpose. As a result, a link language has emerged i.e. Desia which exhibits a preponderance of Odia lexical items. This was the first step of Odia colonization of minor languages. Second step is small towns in which the tribal people once upon a time lived were slowly occupied by Odias in various ways such as government institutions, administrative offices, politics, etc. Most of the tribal people in the area and surrounding areas had to depend on Odia administrative staff for their agricultural, trading and for other personal benefits. This was where they ought to talk in Odia for the above purposes. Third step is most of the shop keepers in the hamlets of tribal communities are Odias. When these tribal people come for groceries to Odia shop keepers, they had to converse in the language of shop keepers i.e. Odia. The next major step is primary education. When Ollari Gadaba children join the school they were taught

in Odia, the official language of the state of Odisha. This is where children learn the Odia language. This is another foundation and major cause for Odia colonization of Ollari Gadaba. Those are the four steps where Odia started colonizing the minor languages of the area and entered in most of the domains of those languages. Ollari Gadaba is one of them which has become endangered due to Odia colonization. The above situation clearly shows that Ollari Gadabas who have less prestige and job opportunities in their language are slowly shifting to Odia which has prestige, job opportunities and power.

## 2. Earlier Works on the Ollari Gadaba Language

The Linguistic Survey of India, often abbreviated as LSI, is a complete linguistic survey during British India. The seventh chapter in volume one, and part two of fourth volume, discuss the geographical distribution of Dravidian languages where Ollari Gadaba language was neither mentioned nor discussed. Another bench mark in the history of Dravidian languages is *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian family of languages* (Caldwell, 1856). He has enumerated twelve Dravidian languages and not included Ollari Gadaba in this book. He thought that their speech is corrupt. For the first time it was Bell (1945) who mentioned Ollari Gadaba as a separate ethnic group in the Koraput district gazetteer and the author stated that the language of Ollari Gadaba is unknown. Next it is Battacharya (1956) who discovered it while working on Parji and wrote a small monograph on it. Later Burrow & Emeneau (1961); Subrahmanyam, (1983 and 2011) and

Krishnamurti (2003) have discussed about Ollari Gadaba in brief.

### 3. Ollari Gadaba: an Introduction

The time between 1950 and 1960 is the time for the search of new languages by many linguists and anthropologists all over India. In this particular decade many speeches were discovered belonging to different families of languages. Among them Gadaba is one. Before the year 1956, Gadaba was a generic name for many linguistic groups in Koraput district of Odisha. Though they were a conglomeration of different ethnic groups, they were treated as one group by looking at their cultural similarity. The linguistic groups under the generic name Gadaba are  $M\ddot{o}\ddot{r}$  or  $B\ddot{o}\ddot{r}$  Gadaba who are known among themselves as Gutob Gadaba, Ollari Gadaba and  $K\ddot{o}\ddot{n}\ddot{d}\ddot{e}\ddot{k}\ddot{o}\ddot{r}$  Gadaba constitute a bigger ethnic group. Bhattacharya (1956) discovered that these groups are linguistically divergent viz. Austro-asiatic and Dravidian. The former group speaks a Munda language and the latter speaks Dravidian languages, such as  $K\ddot{o}\ddot{n}\ddot{d}\ddot{e}\ddot{k}\ddot{o}\ddot{r}$  and Ollari Gadaba. The variety spoken in Koraput is known as Ollari Gadaba and the one spoken in Andhra Pradesh is called  $K\ddot{o}\ddot{n}\ddot{d}\ddot{e}\ddot{k}\ddot{o}\ddot{r}$  Gadaba. Burrow & Emeneau (1961) treat Ollari Gadaba and  $K\ddot{o}\ddot{n}\ddot{d}\ddot{e}\ddot{k}\ddot{o}\ddot{r}$  Gadaba as dialects of the same language, but Krishnamurti (2003) treats them as separate languages under the Proto-Central Dravidian languages according to their structures. According to Bhattacharya (1956), the origin of Ollari Gadaba is unknown, but gives the explanation that the word 'Ollari' is derived from the Gutob Gadaba word **Ola** which means leaf. The Ollari Gadaba has different names viz. Ollar, Ollaro, Hallari, Allar, and Hollar Gadbas. Ollari speakers live in the Lamtaput, Nandapur, Semiliguda and Pottangi blocks of Koraput District. Though the Munda Gadabas and Dravidian Gadabas are divergent linguistic groups, the Census of India does not mention their internal denominations. Only in 1931 census of Madras, 797 Hollar Gadbas were recorded. The language has no script.

### 4. Linguistic Situation and Bilingualism

Odisha which is the first linguistic state in the country before independence is said to be a convergence corridor (Mohanty, 2016) and is a micro linguistic area (Reddy, 2015). Large number of Dravidian languages and large number of Munda languages are spoken in Odisha than any other state in the country. Same thing can be seen in the undivided and divided Koraput district too because the district is the conglomeration of different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It is the place where many linguistic traits have migrated from one language family to another due to contact. The contact paved the way for bilingualism and multilingualism among the tribal groups. Most of the tribal people in the Koraput are bilinguals. Ollari Gadabas are also one among them. The Gadabas in

Odisha are conversant with Odia and Desia and they are fluent in Telugu in Andhra Pradesh along with their mother tongues. Bilingualism among Gadabas is very common and in some places they are trilingual too (Ramaiah & Reddy 2005, vol. VI, p-424). The direction of the bilingualism varies from language family to language family. In case of Ollari Gadaba bilingualism in most of the cases is unidirectional. The reason for this bilingual situation is socio-political dominance, economic control, education, recent technological developments, development of media and job opportunities in the dominant language i.e. Odia.

### 5. Methodology

For the present study two field studies were conducted to see the influence of Odia on Ollari Gadaba. In the first pilot study villages were identified according to the earlier literature available on Ollari Gadaba. Second field study was conducted to collect the data. While collecting data a new belt of Dravidian villages were found in Semiliguda, Nandapur and Pottangi blocks of Koraput district. Questionnaire was taken from the Central Institute of Indian languages (CIIL) designed especially by a group of experts for the Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered languages (SPPEL). The questionnaire consists of lexical and syntactic items belonging to different aspects of the language. Pipalguda from Pottangi, Girliguda from Nandapur and Tokkal from Lamtaput blocks were selected for collecting data.

### 6. Geographical Distribution of Ollari Gadaba Speaking Villages

According to the earlier literature available on Ollari Gadaba, they are geographically distributed in fifteen villages in Nandapur and Lamtaput blocks viz. Chuppa, Chondua, Nokkulapadar, Mudagadia, Muria, Tokkal, Leuja, Kappuguda, Charaguda, Litiput, Maddi, Kalaigada, Pami, Kadilipadar and Tentulipada. Recent field study shows that they are also spread in Pottangi and Semiliguda blocks viz. Hatguda, Pipalguda, Lekuja, Gugaguda, Pandriguda, Padarguda, Bhitarguda, Bilaiguda, Khemunduguda, Girliguda, Padapadar, Mirialapadu, Charaguda, Dumriguda, Karanjiguda, Rajuguda, Putapadu, Maliguda, Bedaguda, Baddeiguda, Jonamguda, Kirajolla, Kosamguda, Gutta, Moddeiguda, Solapaguda, Dokriguda, Haladiguda, Totaguda. All these villages start from Kunduli, a weekly market. Interestingly it is revealed in the field study that people above sixty years in Lamtaput and people above forty five years in Nandapur are able to speak the language but in Pottangi block all the generations including children are speaking the language. People in Lamtaput and Nandapur blocks are using more Desia and Odia even at home at the cost of their mother tongue. The reason for this variation has to be investigated in future.

Koraput District Map



Figure 1: Geographical distribution of Ollari Gadaba speaking villages

### 7. Change of Lexical Items in Different Domains

As already discussed due to the Odia linguistic colonization, there is a lot of influence of Odia on minor languages. When Ollari Gadaba had come in contact with Odia, it has borrowed many of the lexical words from Odia. Borrowed words in Ollari Gadaba are k<sup>h</sup>apal, lok, ʈo:ɽi, nilua, kalla, ɖanga, pho:l, paĩ, karab, accar, go:ɽa, makɖi, kumbir and badoɖi. When Ollari Gadaba borrowed these lexical items from Odia, it has affected certain phonological changes.

#### 7.1. Deretroflexion in Ollari

Odia	Ollari	Gloss
kɔpaɭ	k <sup>h</sup> apal	'fore head;
phɔɭ	pho:l	'fruit'
kɔɭa	kala	'black'
niɭa	nilua	'blue'

$$ɭ > l/V\_\_\_$$

When Ollari Gadaba borrowed these words, it has deretroflexed the retroflex lateral /ɭ/.

#### 7.2. Deaspiration

Odia	Ollari	Gloss
khɔrap	karab	'bad'
kumb <sup>h</sup> irɔ	kumbir	'crocodile'

$$C > C$$

$$[+asp] \quad [-asp]$$

Aspiration is absent in Ollari Gadaba but in Desia and Odia we can find aspiration. However some sporadic aspiration is found in some of the words. This could be

due to the hypercorrection. For example /k<sup>h</sup>apal/ of Ollari is corresponding to /kɔpaɭ/ of Odia.

### 7.3. Word Final Vowel Deletion

Odia	Ollari	Gloss
kɔpaɭ	k <sup>h</sup> apal	'fore head'
lokɔ	lok	'man'
phɔɭ	pho:l	'fruit'
kumb <sup>h</sup> irɔ	kumbir	'crocodile'

$$v > \Phi/\_\_\_ \#$$

Word final /ɔ/ is deleted in words borrowed from Odia.

### 8. Loss of Number System

The number system is one of the most central features of a grammar in a natural language. It is a very rigid system in any language (Mohanty, 2016). They will not change very easily. In most of the languages these number systems have evolved based on our hands and fingers. In some languages finger means hand. When a minor language is influenced by a major language, especially in number system it borrows the higher numerals. That is why in most of the languages higher numerals will be influenced first. Always the loss of numerals takes place from high to low. In Ollari Gadaba almost all the higher numbers are lost due to linguistic colonization of Odia. The language has preserved its number system up to three. In Telugu human and nonhuman distinction is maintained in the number system. For example **iddaru** 'two' is used for human and **reṇḍu** 'two' is used for non human.

- a) a:me-ku **iddaru** koduku-lu unnaru  
she-dat two son-pl has
- b) atani-ki **reṇḍu** gurra-lu unnai  
he-dat two horse-pl has

In Ollari Gadaba also human and nonhuman distinction is maintained but for human they are using their native number i.e. **iral/irul** and for nonhuman they are using the Odia word i.e. **jodek**. This difference can be seen in the following examples below.

Cardinal Numbers	Ollari Numbers
1	ukuɭ
2	iral/jodek
3	mundug
4	charigota
5	panchgota
20	kodegotta
30	thirisgota
60	saTegota

- 80                    asegota  
 99                    unis path  
 100000            ukuṭ lakya
- a) an **ukuṭ** aḍ-iṅ bai    sinan  
 mū one ta:-ku bahi deli  
 i gave him a book
- b) ond-uṅ **ḷodek** go:ṛa    mayāo  
 he-gen two    horse    has  
 He has two horses
- c) aḍ-iṅ **iral**    masir    mayāo  
 She-gen two daughters    has  
 She has two daughters
- d) ond **carigota**    maig-il    wiḍi    indrendḷ  
 he    four    mangoes    purchase brought  
 He brought four mangoes

By the above examples one can understand that, due to Odia colonization there was deep convergence and it led to the loss of its number system.

### 9. Inclusive and Exclusive Distinction of Pronouns

Inclusive and exclusive distinction of pronouns is not common in all the languages in India. It is found in Dravidian languages and some Munda languages. In Dravidian languages the distinction is found in the pronouns. For example we inclusive ‘**manamu**’ and we exclusive ‘**memu**’ are used in Telugu. In Ollari Gadaba inclusive and exclusive distinction is found on the verb. The reason for this variation may be Odia influence. This feature might have been gone to Odia at some point of time from Dravidian languages. When Odia received this distinction, it has been expressed it on verb instead of pronoun because pronominal systems are resistant to changes (Mohanty, 2011) This needs further study for proving the borrowing and change of this feature by Odia. When Odia started influencing Ollari Gadaba, it followed the Odia pattern of inclusive and exclusive distinction on verb. We can see some of the examples given below.

#### 9.1. Ollari

- a) am    **seniṅkar**  
 we    will go (+incl)  
 we will go
- b) am    **seyam**  
 we    will go (-incl)  
 we will go
- c) am    tonḍunuṅ aṭe    **seniṅkar**

- we    tomorrow    market    will go (+incl)  
 we will go to market tomorrow
- d) am    tonḍunuṅ aṭe    **seyam**  
 we    tomorrow    market    will go (-incl)  
 we will go to market tomorrow

#### 9.2. Odia

- a) ame    **jiba**  
 we    will go (+incl)  
 we will go
- b) ame    **jibu**  
 we    will go (-incl)  
 we will go
- c) ame    kali    bḷjarḷ-ku    **jiba**  
 we    kali    market-to    will go (+incl)  
 we will go to market tomorrow
- d) ame    kali    bḷjarḷ-ku    **jibu**  
 we    kali    market-to    will go (-incl)  
 we will go to market tomorrow

The influence of Odia on Ollari Gadaba at inclusive and exclusive level clearly shows that it has changed from pronoun to verb.

### 10. Conclusion

To sum up, the above study clearly shows that owing to Odia linguistic colonization Ollari Gadaba has lost its lexical items in most of the domains including the home domain. Based on the foregoing discussion from sections 7 to 9 one can conclude that Ollari Gadaba has come under the influence of Odia. This must have resulted in the changes that have taken place at the lexical, person number inflexion and at the inclusive/exclusive distinction of pronouns.

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# Subcolonization of a Tribal Language in Odisha A Case Study of So:ra:

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## Abstract

So:ra: is one of the endangered languages of Munda family spoken in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. The language has been in contact with local dominant languages such as Odia and Telugu for a long time. The current paper focuses on the So:ra: speaking communities of Odisha. The situation in Odisha is such that Odia has become the most dominant and powerful language that motivated the local tribal people to use Odia as their mother tongue. The current paper focuses on three things: 1) It describes the changes in sentence structure that So:ra: has undergone in recent times, 2) How social structure and multilingualism have played an important role resulting structural endangerment in So:ra: and 3) How badly language inter-transmission from older to younger generation has been affected? The data from So:ra: shows the degree of complexities of change and the grammatical effect of structural changes resulting in its endangerment.

## 1. Background

So:ra: is a Munda language spoken by more than 0.2 million people in Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Khurda, Koraput and Kandhamal districts of Odisha and northern parts of Andhra Pradesh. This language is also known as Saora, Saura, Savara, or Sora. The Savara are usually identified with the So:ra:s of Vedic and Sanskrit literature, a wild forest tribe supposed to be the same as the Suari and So:ra:e mentioned by Pliny and Ptolemy (Grierson 1967-68). Census of India (2001) holds that this language has 252,519 speakers, as bilingualism is a wide spread phenomenon among So:ra: speakers. These days one can also find multilingual speakers. For example, they speak So:ra:, Odia, Hindi and to some extent English also. This is due to their exposure to media and the outside world. It is considered as a potentially endangered language (Mosley: 2007: 342). There are regional variations in the language use of the So:ra: speakers. They have lived in a contact situation for long and the effect of this contact can be seen in terms of their endangered status. Their language is restricted mainly to home domain.

## 2. Earlier work Done in So:ra

This section deals with the existing body of research on So:ra: Ramamurthi (1931) pioneered an extensive work and published *A manual of So:ra:*. He has also compiled a dictionary of So:ra: namely *The So:ra:English dictionary* (1986). After that So:ra: has been briefly described in Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India* (Grierson 1967-68). Anderson, in his book *The Munda languages* (2008) has explained the linguistic features of So:ra:. Norman H. Zide has written a book on *Munda numerals* which studies on So:ra: numerical along with other Munda languages. There is also a PhD dissertation

by Starosta on *Sora syntax: a generative approach to Munda language* which was published in 2003.

## 3. Methodology:

This paper is an attempt to study the language endangerment situation keeping multilingualism and social structure in front. In order to investigate the structural endangerment in So:ra:, data have been collected from three districts of Odisha. They are Gumma block of Gajapati district and Banpur block of Khurda, Khallikote block of Ganjam district. In the present paper, data have been drawn mainly from questionnaires and interviews conducted in 2015-16. The focus of questionnaires and interviews were, on how the tribal language is being used and how it is passed onto next generation. The age group has been taken from Labov's (1972) paper with slight modification. Labov has taken five age groups from 14 to 30, 31 to 45, 45 to 60, 61 to 75 and 76 and above. It was really difficult to get speakers above 70, so the present paper restricted the last age group to 61 and above. Total 80 informants (40 each from Gajapati and Ganjam, Khurda) were interviewed during several field trips.

## 4. Structural Changes in So:ra:

So:ra: is a morphologically complex language. The word order in So:ra: is SOV. The following is a collection of sentences in So:ra:. The sentences are collected from the age group of 45 to 60 and 61 and above in older generation category and age group of 14 to 30 in younger generation category. The data have been collected from So:ra: speaking community in Gajapati, Ganjam, and Khurda.

- 1.
- a. aninsaīta-nei?te (OG)<sup>1</sup>  
he market-to goes  
He goes to market.
- b. aninbɔjarɔ-n ei?te (GSYG)<sup>2</sup>  
he market-to goes  
He goes to market.
- c. aninbɔjarɔ-kuei?te/jae(GKSYG)<sup>3</sup>  
he market-to goes  
He goes to market.
- He is on the roof
- c) se cat-upreɔci (GKSYG)  
he roof of house-on is  
He is on the roof
- 5.
- a. anindɔŋjenisuŋti / anindɔŋjentimjimti (OG)  
she me love  
She loves me.
- b. anindɔŋjentimjimti (GSYG)  
she me love  
She loves me
- c. Se mɔtebɔɔpae (GKSYG)  
she me love  
She loves me

In this set of sentences, we can see that the older generation in both communities speaks the same sentence (1.a) whereas young generation of Gajapati has replaced the word for market. They use Odia word for market which is *bɔjarɔ* in sentence (1.a). Now, if we look at (1.c) which is spoken by Ganjam and Khurda group, it is a code-mixing sentence.

- 2.
- a. ɔŋersijanganalamɔm (OG)  
girl intelligent  
The girl is intelligent
- b. ɔŋersijanbudiman (GSYG)  
girl intelligent  
The girl is intelligent
- c. jibudiman (GKSYG)  
girl intelligent  
The girl is intelligent
- 3.
- a. anindɔlaida?ti (OG)  
him hungry feeling  
He is hungry
- b. anindɔlaida?ti (GSYG)  
him hungry feeling  
He is hungry
- c. anin(ku) bokɔlaguci(GKSYG)  
him hungry feeling  
He is hungry
- 4.
- a) anintadɔŋsiŋ-liŋandaku? (OG)  
he roof of house-on is  
He is on the roof
- b) anintadɔŋsiŋ-upredaku? (GSYG)  
he roof of house-on is

If we look at sentences such as (2.a), (3.a), (4.a) and (5.a), we can see that older generation of both the communities has retained their language. The younger generation in Gajapati has somehow retained language but they have shifted their lexical items to Odia. For example, in sentence (2.b), the word for 'intelligent' is *budimanis* an Odia word. In sentence (4.b), the word for post-position 'on' is *upreis* an Odia word. Now, if we look at sentences such as (2.c), (4.c) and (5.c), we can see that the younger generation of Ganjam and Khurda has completely shifted their language to Odia.

This is a preliminary analysis of sentence structure. If different sentence categories will be taken into consideration, the results will be more interesting and surprising.

## 5. Role of Multilingualism and Social Structures

Language and culture are the products of age old human evolution. According to Fishman (1991), death of a language often leads to the death of the underlying culture to which it is linked. Therefore, it is important to identify the reason behind language endangerment situation and work towards a practical solution to preserve these languages. During the last few years with the development of technologies, smart phones and presence of social media, multilingualism has become a boon among So:ra: youngsters. During several field studies, it has been found out that most of the younger generation speaks more than two languages with low level of proficiency in So:ra:. They feel a sense of pride when they speak Odia or Hindi. Lexical items and sentence structures are basically affected due to the influence of Odia. Patrick (2007:125) says that new forms of language are constantly developing in increasingly complex social and cultural relations. So, the variety spoken by younger generation needs to be studied thoroughly and necessitates future research. Most of the young people below the age of 30 in Ganjam and Khurda have very limited proficiency in

1. <sup>1</sup>OG stands for old generation of both Gajapati and Ganjam, Khurda So:ra: speaking community.

2. <sup>2</sup>GSYG stands for Gajapati So:ra: young generation.

3. <sup>3</sup>GKSYG stands for Ganjam, Khurda So:ra: young generation.

So:ra: The young generation is shifting away from So:ra: and have shifted to Odia in many domains. Young speakers below the age of 30 in Gajapati are also not so successful in retaining their language in various domains except home. Multilingualism must play a positive role among these So:ra: young speakers otherwise within no time, the potentially endangered language will become a severely endangered language. This is why, So:ra: needs linguist’s attention and must be documented at the earliest.

### 6. Inter-generational transmission

It has been found out that in Banpur and Khallikote blocks of Khurda and Ganjam districts respectively, most of the fluent speakers are over the age of 55. They are mostly bilinguals. If we compare the older generation with the younger generation (below the age of 30), very few people speak So:ra: at home. The older generation showed repentance for the sorry state of So:ra: and they said that the younger generation does not want to speak So:ra: rather they are more interested in learning Odia. They allow their younger generation to speak Odia at home in order to be a fluent speaker in it because it brings more economic opportunities for them. Most of these older respondents have no idea that their language is dying gradually. They even have no idea, what are they going to lose if their language dies. Some people emphasized on primary school teaching, where they claimed that everything is being taught in Odia. Their children have been isolated from other students for various reasons. So eventually, they led their children learn Odia. In contrast to this, some youngsters claimed that, it’s their parents’ fault that they have not taught them So:ra:.

The situation differs slightly in So:ra: community of Gajapati districts though a vast amount of difference cannot be claimed. The older generation has shown a certain amount of dedication and emotion towards their language. Many people are educated and teachers in primary schools. They claim that they have taught So:ra: to their children. They are proud of their language. Most of the younger generation speak So:ra: at home but it is only restricted to home domain. When asked to translate some Odia sentences to So:ra:, they have taken more time to answer than their parents. These youngsters stay away from home for studies, work and other things which make it difficult for them to speak Sora: on daily basis.

The difference in attitude has led one So:ra: speaking community to become more endangered than the other. The reason could be argued to be a geographical one. Gajapati is surrounded by dense forests and is mostly a tribal populated area which has helped the So:ra: community to retain their language whereas Ganjam and Khurda are coastal areas mostly populated and dominated by Odias.



Figure 1: Geographical locations of So:ra: speaking Communities

Frequency of speaking in different domains in So:ra: speaking communities in Gajapati and Ganjam, Khurda have been compared below. It is clear from both Figure 2 and 3 that fluency is correlated to inter-generational transmission. The most frequent language transmission from one generation to another is being done good in amount in Gajapati So:ra: speaking community when compared to Ganjam and Khurda So:ra: speaking communities. The age group from 14 to 30 of Gajapati So:ra speaking community has retained their language in domestic domain whereas the same age group of Ganjam and Khurda So:ra: speaking communities has not been successful in retaining it. Thus, the group of active speakers in Ganjam and Khurda So:ra: speaking communities who mainly belongs to the age group 61 and above is lessening gradually.

Age Group	Home	Religious Place	Work Place
14 to 30	Yes	No	No
31 to 45	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
46 to 60	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
61 and above	Yes	Yes	Yes

Figure 2: Frequency of speaking compared across domains Gajapati So:ra: speaking community

Age Group	Home	Religious Place	Work Place
14 to 30	No	No	No

31 to 45	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
46 to 60	Sometimes	Yes	Sometimes
61 and above	Yes	Yes	Yes

Figure 3: Frequency of speaking compared across domains Ganjam and Khurda So:ra: speaking community

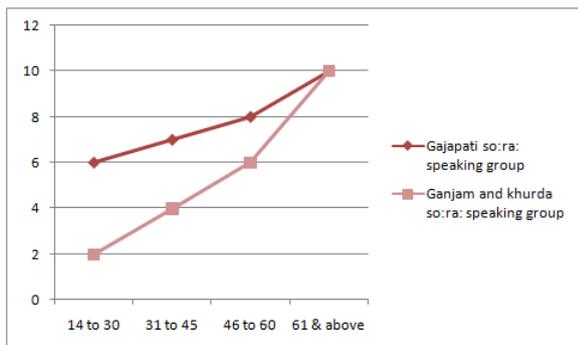


Figure 4: Age, language use, So:ra: speaking communities

Figure 4 compares the fluency of language use across generations between Gajapati and Ganjam, Khurda So:ra: speaking communities. In the age group from 14 to 30, out of 10 speakers each in Gajapati and Ganjam, Khurda, 6 and 2 speakers respectively are speaking So:ra: fluently. Likewise, we can see from the graph that Gajapati So:ra: speaking community has more fluent speakers when compared to Ganjam, Khurda So:ra: speaking communities across all age groups.

### 7. Proposed degree of complexities that fosters language endangerment in So:ra:

From the above discussion, the present study proposes a three tier complexity to describe the present So:ra: situation both in Gajapati and Ganjam, Khurda.

1. Level one (structural as well as social changes have happened but the visibility is less) and the language has been transferred to next generation successfully.
2. Level two (structural as well as social changes are happening rapidly and the language is in a transition phase) and the language has not been transferred to next generation successfully.
3. Level three (the language has already lost its identity socially) and the language has not been passed to the next generation at all.

From the present data, Gajapati So:ra: speaking community comes under Level two where it is in the transition phase and Ganjam and Khurda So:ra: speaking community comes under level three.

## 8. Conclusion

Fluency of language use, social structure and inter-generational transmission play a crucial role in language maintenance. So:ra: is not being systematically passed onto the educational system and younger generation. The increasing interest towards other languages and linguistic isolation of their own language among So:ra: youngsters are directly resulting in language endangerment. As we have discussed in the paper, attitudinal difference and geographical location are two major factors which had led one So:ra: speaking community more endangered than the other. So:ra: has not been properly passed onto the next generation in Ganjam and Khurda, as a result, it has become more endangered than the other. On the other hand, in Gajapati So:ra: speaking community, So:ra: has passed onto next generation but it is limited to home domain.

No systematic documentation of So:ra: has yet been carried out. Transmission of language from one generation to other through educational system would definitely enable the young speakers to retain their language. Linguists and the So:ra: community must work together to preserve So:ra:.

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# Marginalization and Endangerment - the case of *Birjia*

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## Abstract

Birjia, Brijia or Bijori is a lesser known language of India. It is spoken across the states of Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal. We get the first reference to Birjia in G. A. Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India, Vol IV* (1906:135-136). Grierson relates Birjia to the Munda family. Diffloth and Anderson include Birjia within the North Munda group of the Austro-Asiatic family of languages.

The present paper is based on a pilot survey on the status of the Birjia language in India especially in Jharkhand. It has been observed that even in the post-colonial period because of the policy undertaken in the choice of languages in different domains of language use, Hindi and Sadri, being dominant in the region, have been subjugating the Birjia language. The paper deals with the Gumla variety of Birjia and aims at showing how the dominant language including its varieties has affected its grammatical structure, semantic domain and also speakers' attitude towards the mother tongue. Thus the language has been marginalized in all respects leading to endangerment.

## Introduction

Birjia, Brijia or Bijori, a lesser known language is spoken across the states of Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal. According to the Census 2001 all India strength of the Birjia people is 12,784. The first reference to Birjia is available in G. A. Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India, Vol IV* (1906:135-136). Grierson reports that Brijia or Binjhia is one of the several sections of Asuras, a non-Aryan tribe of Chota Nagpur plateau and speaks the Asuri language belonging to the Munda family. Diffloth (1974) and Anderson (1999) include Birjia within the Kherwarian group of the North Munda branch of the Austro-Asiatic family of languages. Diffloth uses the term 'Bijori' as the language name. In this connection it can be mentioned that according to Grierson 'Binjhia' was another name of 'Brijia'. In the Census reports (1961 and 2001) 'Binjhia' is an alternative name of Birjia or Brijia. But from the speech samples Binjhia appears to be an Indo-Aryan speech form.

The present paper is the outcome of a pilot survey on the status of the Birjia language in India especially in Jharkhand. From the field work conducted in the Gumla district, Jharkhand it has been observed that as happened in the colonial period in relation to English and vernaculars, even in the post-colonial period also because of the policy undertaken in the choice of languages in different domains of language use, Hindi and Sadri have been subjugating the language in this area. Due to socio-economic reasons this smaller

community being surrounded by the larger communities is under language pressure. The paper deals with the Gumla variety of Birjia and aims at showing how the dominant language viz., Hindi including its varieties like Sadri especially, have affected its grammatical structure, semantic domain and speakers' attitude towards the mother tongue. Thus the language has been marginalized in all respects leading to endangerment.

## Position of Jharkhand as a State

Before we embark on discussing the position of the Birjia language in Jharkhand let us have a look into the position of Jharkhand in the colonial and post colonial era.

## In the Colonial Period

With the defeat of Siraj-ud-daulla at the battle of Plassey (1757) the Mughal period in India came to an end and after the battle of Buxar which was fought in the soil of Bihar in 1764 the British East India Company started to control the Presidency of Bengal. At that time this province comprised the present-day states of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa (now spelt as Odisha) and Bangladesh. In 1912 Bihar and Orissa were separated from Bengal. Again in 1936 the Bihar and Orissa province was divided into Bihar province and Orissa province. After independence Bihar and Orissa became constituent states of India. We should keep this in mind when we discuss the language policies followed in the colonial period.

## **In the Post Colonial Period**

After independence Bihar as a state formed a part of India. At that time the present - day Jharkhand was only a part of Bihar. Jharkhand came into existence as a state from 2000 only. So in the present context we are concerned with the language situation of Bihar in general and of Jharkhand in particular.

## **Language Policies**

### **In the Colonial Period**

The British followed two principles of 'isolation' and 'assimilation' for administering the backward areas like the Chotanagpur plateau in Central India (Bose, 2003: 381). By the policy of 'isolation' the people of these areas were not disturbed, but the forest areas were exploited. And by the policy of 'assimilation' the rulers wanted to capture the vast mineral wealth available here by opening up these isolated regions. So they constructed roads and railways and set up the post and telegraph systems. They wanted to spread Christianity, western life and culture. Initially some tribal people of Chotanagpur plateau accepted this trend, but ultimately occasional unrests grew up against the administration. As to the use of languages before and at the beginning of the British rule Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic were used at different levels. But as Dasgupta (1970: 40-43) writes the East India Company in association of the British parliament tried to maintain schools for Indian people introducing English as the medium of instruction. During Mountstuart Elphinstone's administration (1819-1827) public funds were invested in schools for vernacular education also. But the logic of mass education was not at all important to the rulers of the time. In the Minute of Thomas Babington Macaulay (1835) the first language education policy of India by the British rulers was made clear. It advocated English education for establishing colonial superiority and moral authority. To serve the immediate political as well as administrative interest the Minute (India, Government, 1960) says "we must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern ---- We need a class of persons, let them be Indians in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." In this connection we may refer to the Resolution of 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1835 passed by the government of Lord William Bentinck which announced that "all funds appropriated for purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone." Lord Auckland's Minute of 1839 was though in favour

of English, but expressed the need for giving facilities for oriental and vernacular instruction also. In fact, Auckland's "policy was to clear the road to higher education through the medium of English" (Dasgupta, 1970:43). The Woods Dispatch of 1854 recognized English as well as vernacular languages as medium of instruction for schools. Further, it is known (Husain, 1994: 171) that just before the outbreak of the movement of 1857-59 Mr. Tayler, Commissioner of the Patna Division recommended certain measures for spreading the vernacular education under Government control with the help of some land owners. As Dasgupta (1970: 43-44) says "Thus in both education and the law courts, language became a marker of two separate levels of social operation – the upper level reserved for English, the lower for the vernaculars." ----English was thus made "the most important medium of communication in the upper sector of national life." Further, it is needless to say that here 'vernacular' means 'major vernaculars'. In reality, the rulers did not pay attention to the development of major vernaculars, so what to talk about the minor tribal languages.

### **In the Post Colonial period**

After independence in 1950 the Indian Constitution was framed. The language policy of the Constitution is as follows: Hindi in the Devanagari script would be the official language of the Indian union and for fifteen years English would also be used for all official purposes (article 343). Later the status of English as the associate official language has been extended for an indefinite period. Moreover, in article 351 it was mentioned that measures should have to be taken for promoting the spread and use of Hindi. In 1950 and 1952 fourteen and fifteen major languages respectively were recognized in the Eighth Schedule as important with some privileges. And now the number of the Eighth scheduled languages is twenty two. In 1956 Indian states were established on linguistic basis. In India most of the state official languages are the languages of the majority of the people. So in Bihar Hindi is the state official language. The Constitution (article 350A) acknowledges language rights as fundamental rights. It is stated there that it is the duty of the state and of the local authority within the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary level of education to the children belonging to linguistic minority groups. Moreover, there is a provision (article 350B) for investigating all matters related to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities. But in reality how far the Constitutional promises are practicable that needs

to be explored. There are hundreds of minority languages struggling for their existence under the pressure of the dominant regional languages of the majority people. And very few are able to safeguard their linguistic identity.

### Dominant Languages in the Birjia-speaking areas

As mentioned earlier in India most of the state official languages are the languages of the majority of the people. The majority languages of the Birjia-speaking areas are Hindi (57, 29,643 i.e. 57.56 %) including the mother tongues grouped under it, like Sadri (403492 i.e. 1.50%), Panchparganiya (26945829 i.e. 0.72 %) and others like Khortha, Bhojpuri besides Bengali, Odia, Santali, Ho, Mundari Oraon etc. in Jharkhand; Bangla, Hindi, Mundari, Santhali etc. in Bihar, and Bangla, Hindi, Santhali etc. in West Bengal. Birjia has no script. Birjias use the script of the respective dominant languages of the region.

### The Present Status of Birjia

Grierson has mentioned that in the 1901 Census report 1423 speakers returned Birjia as their mother tongue. In the Census 1961 Birjia is considered a tribal language and 2395 speakers returned Birjia or Binjhia as their mother tongue. From 1971 onwards we do not get any speakers' strength of Birjia in the Census reports as the speaker's strength is less than 10,000.

As per K.S. Singh (1992:143) in both Bihar including Jharkhand and West Bengal Birjia is listed as a scheduled tribe. In Bihar and Jharkhand they are Hindu, Christian, Muslim and Tribal in religion. In West Bengal they are Hindu, Christian and Buddhist. Being a minority tribal language Birjia is obviously under the pressure of the neo-colonizing Hindi and its dialects. The other Indo-Aryan languages spoken in Jharkhand also appears to influence Birjia more or less. In the constitution of India all communities, be major or minor are treated equally. But unfortunately, inequality, dominance as well as exploitation are crude realities. Each community has its own identity, its own worldview and in many cases a strong sense of solidarity and distinctiveness. Again in many cases in context of the struggle of existence minority community accepts the dominant language and often becomes bilingual to compete with others. So also is the case of Birjia.

### Attitude and Domain of Use

The Birjia speakers are in general multilingual. They can speak, read and write Hindi, and Sadri

which is called the lingua franca in the area. From the data it is learnt that they return Hindi and not Birjia as their mother tongue. They think that their language has no use at the domains outside the home. They speak Birjia with their parents. With the spouse and children they speak Birjia, Sadri and sometimes Hindi. They want their children when grown up to learn Hindi and English to earn their livelihood. Though theoretically, Birjia children are supposed to get primary education in their mother tongue, but reality is far from the theory. As a result the dominant language viz., Hindi including its varieties like Sadri especially, have left significant impact on its grammatical structure as well as semantic domain, where loss of some basic vocabulary is visible. Below I substantiate my point:

### Impact on Grammatical structure

**Phonological** From the pilot survey it is evident that due to the close contact with Hindi and its dialects there are some changes in the grammatical structure of Birjia. In the five - vowel system of Birjia the new vowel [ə] is a loan from Hindi. In most cases it has been naturalized by /a/, for example, *Jawan* 'young' for Hindi *Jāwan*; *baṛe* 'big' for Hindi *bāre* etc. But sometimes [ə] is kept in an alternative pronunciation and in loan words only, for example, *mārcai* 'chili', *cəṛni* / *caṛni* 'chutney'; *rəs* / *ras* 'juice' etc. The vowel [ə] is also present in some words, for example, *māsija baba* 'step father', *bəḥuṛija* 'son's wife', etc. According to Bhattacharya (1975:48) the vowel is sporadically used in Birhor, Asuri etc. among the Kherwari group. The vowel [æ] is recorded in a very few English words, e.g., [pʰul pænt] 'full pant', [bjæŋk] 'bank' etc. Thus though at present the vowels [ə], [ɔ] and [æ] are not phonemes, they are gaining their ground. The presence of glottal stop is not stable, for example, *oʔʰ* / *oʰ* 'earth'; *uʔb* / *ub* 'hair'; *bohoʔ* / *boho*, cf. Ho *boʔ* (Bhattacharya, 1975:100) 'head', etc.

Voiced and voiceless aspirates are borrowed from the Indo-Aryan sound system. For example, *kʰand* 'shoulder', *kʰu* 'cough', *gʰas* 'grass', *ʃʰari* 'wine', *ʃʰarija* 'river', *ʈʰakur* 'barber', *dʱek* 'chest', *tʰu* 'spittle', *dʰobi* 'washer man' etc.

**Morphological** Form the limited data it is observed that the feminine suffixes /-i/ and /-n ~ -in/, attached to the human nouns are borrowed elements in the language. In most cases the whole word along with the morphological structure is borrowed, e.g., from father's side *baḍa* 'great grandfather': *baḍi* 'great grandmother', from mother's side *nana* 'great grandfather': *nani* 'great grandmother', *bʰagna* 'sister's son': *bʰagni* 'sister's daughter', *masʰar* 'teacher': *masʰar-in* 'female

teacher', *kumhar* 'potter': *kumhra-in* / *kumhre-in* etc.

### Impact on vocabulary

There is significant borrowing of basic vocabulary. Many words are observed to be borrowed from the dominant Indo-Aryan languages. Some examples are given below:

#### Kinship terms

Birjia	Gloss	Hindi
<i>baba</i>	'father'	<i>baba</i>
<i>nana</i>	'maternal grandfather'	<i>nana</i>
<i>nani</i>	'maternal grandmother'	<i>nani</i>
<i>kaka</i>	'father's younger brother'	<i>ka:ka:</i> cf.
Bengali <i>kaka</i> ,		
<i>dada</i>	'elder brother'	<i>da:da:</i> cf.
Bengali <i>dada</i>		
<i>didi</i>	'elder sister'	<i>di:di:</i> cf.
Bengali <i>didi</i>		

cf. Ho *haga* (Anderson et al, 2008:148)

**Numerals** Excluding the numerals for 'one' (*mieʔd* / *miaʔn*), 'two' (*barija*) and 'three' (*peja*) all other higher numerals are borrowed from Hindi and its dialects. For example, *car* 'four', *pāc* 'five', *cʰɔ* 'six', *sat* 'seven', *aʃ* 'eight', *nɔ* 'nine' and *dɔs* 'ten'; *ek sɔu* 'one hundred', etc.

**Body parts** Very few words are found to be borrowed from Hindi and its dialects. For example, Birjia *darhi* 'beard', cf. Hindi *daʃʰi*; Birjia *poʃa* 'belly', cf. Hindi *peʃ*; Birjia *Jib* 'tongue', cf. Hindi *Ji:bʰ*; Birjia *kʰand* 'shoulder', cf. Hindi *kəndʰa* etc.

**Natural objects** Many loan words are in use in the field of natural objects. For example, Birjia *pokʰra* 'pond', cf. Bengali *pukur*; Birjia *Jʰarna* / *Jʰərna* 'fountain', Hindi *Jʰərna*; Birjia *bund* 'drop', cf. Hindi *būd*; Birjia *daʔdin* / *bərkʰa* 'rain' cf. Hindi *bərsa* / *bərkʰa*, etc.

**Adjectives** In this domain also some loan words are found, for example, Birjia *Jawan* 'young', cf. Hindi *Jəwan*; Birjia *nawa* 'new', cf. Hindi *nəja*; Birjia *bəre* 'big', cf. Hindi *bəre*; Birjia *moʃ* 'fat, thick', cf. Hindi *moʃa*; Birjia *patla* / *putla* 'thin', cf. Hindi *patla*; Birjia *bokʰa* 'blunt', cf. Bengali *boka*; Birjia *kʰarab* 'bad', cf. Hindi *kʰərap*, etc.

**Some basic verbs** Examples of some basic verbs show how this domain is affected by the dominant languages. Birjia *socao* 'to think, imagine, doubt', cf. Hindi *socna*; Birjia *sudʰao* 'to ask', cf. Hindi *sudʰana*; Birjia *tʰu* 'to spit', cf. Hindi *tʰukna*; Birjia

*cirao* 'to tear', cf. Hindi *cirna*; Birjia *pəʃʰao* 'to read', cf. Hindi *pəʃʰna*, etc.

### Conclusion

From the above discussion it can be concluded that Birjia is moving towards language attrition as its functional domains have been reduced. The new generation is happened to accept the dominant language as their mother tongue is less functional compared to the other languages. This marginalized status of Birjia forecasts the possible extinction of it.

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# Surviving the tide: The status of Ateso in post-colonial East Africa

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## Abstract

While some 30 years ago, language endangerment and awareness raising on the threats to language diversity in Africa has been a major topic in linguistic discourse, scholars have moved on from there to documentation and development of different approaches to language use in the continent. Research activities directed towards revitalization, preservation, development and the promotion of ethnic languages are increasingly recognized, also by African governments. Notably, through national language policies, and as an aftermath of the history of colonialism, most African governments have – in the past – pushed the majority of the African languages to the periphery. In this article, I present an overview of the development of language policies in Kenya and Uganda since independence and argue that the realities of these policies have not had much impact on the use of Ateso, an Eastern Nilotic language spoken by the Iteso in both Kenya and Uganda, in formal sectors. The article is primarily based on the existing literature as well as data that I collected while writing a grammar of Ateso.

## Introduction

The Iteso<sup>1</sup> live in two countries with quite distinct language environments and specific language contact ecologies. Though English and Kiswahili are official languages in both Uganda and Kenya, there are differences between the use of these languages in Uganda and Kenya. The majority of people in Uganda's urban areas use English or Luganda as a *lingua franca* whereas in rural areas, English is scarcely understood and, despite Kiswahili being used by a number of people, its usage is limited (Kaji, 2013: 1). In Kenya, English comes in only as a third language (after the first language and Kiswahili) in the rural settings, while in urban areas it may be used as a second language (Barasa, 2016).

The current trends in migration, intermarriages and other socio-political forces have resulted in the presence of other non-Iteso groups in areas that were historically occupied by the Iteso only. To some extent, this has led to the formation of a multilingual generation of young and middle aged people that do not identify with a single language group. Consequently, there are very

few monolingual Ateso speakers<sup>2</sup>; most of these are old (roughly above 65 years) and live in remote areas (Barasa, 2016). The majority of young Ateso speakers grow up bilingually or multilingually, with Ateso and either English, Kiswahili or Luganda being present at home.

Ateso thus exists within a contact situation which has led to borrowings and mixed language patterns. The Iteso of Kenya use linguistic patterns that are different from those used by the Iteso of Uganda. Ateso speakers in Uganda switch much less and when they do they use English or Luganda phrases and lexical items which can be considered borrowings. In Kenya, code switching usually involves alternating use of Ateso and Kiswahili in the same conversation (Barasa, S. 2015). English, as is the case with many former British colonies, is used mainly for government activities and by the educated;

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<sup>1</sup>The Iteso currently reside in the Teso sub-region of Uganda, composed of ten districts (Tororo, Amuria, Soroti, Kumi, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Bukedea, Serere, Pallisa and Ngora) and in parts of Western Kenya. The great majority of Iteso live in the Soroti District and some of the adjacent areas in the North-Eastern part of Uganda (Webster et al. 1973; Karp, 1996). In Kenya, the Ateso-speaking people occupy parts of the counties of Busia and Bungoma.

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<sup>2</sup>According to the 2009 Kenyan population census, Ateso has an estimated number of 338,833 (0.009% of the total population) speakers in Kenya (KNBS, 2009). The population size of people who are ethnically Iteso in Uganda is estimated at 1.57 million people, which is about 6.1% of the total population. The figures are from the census conducted in Uganda in 2002. The current number of speakers of Ateso in Uganda and Kenya is estimated at 1.909 million people by Lewis et al. (2014) in the *Ethnologue*. Thus, the majority of Ateso speakers reside in Uganda. However, the count focuses on ethnic identity and does not necessarily reflect the ability to speak the language since the question asked in the census was about ethnic rather than language identification. The statistics are thus estimates only.

serving as a language of the people deemed to be influential and of high social class.

Though there is little evidence, in terms of publications, that multilingualism has resulted in attrition, it appears that some parents have consciously made a decision to give up their traditional lifestyle, including language, in order to emphasize a modern identity (Tembe & Norton, 2008). In some cases, I was informed by parents during fieldwork in Kenya that their children do not speak Ateso, and have either acquired Kiswahili or English, or both, as their medium of communication. Thus, one can assume that the numbers of fluent speakers of Ateso are lower than the ethnic projections made by both the Ugandan and Kenyan population census.

There are a number of publications<sup>3</sup> in Ateso (e.g. the *Etop* newspaper targeting the Iteso in Uganda and the Bible). Literacy, however, is mostly in English, as well as Kiswahili in Kenya (field notes, Barasa 2015). Those whose repertoire covers more than one language tend to prefer English, Kiswahili or other Bantu languages in written communication as these are deemed to have a higher standing within the social context (Barasa, 2016).

Although Ateso features in electronic and social media, English and Kiswahili are the most widespread in electronic media (see, e.g. Barasa, S. 2015). English, Kiswahili and Luganda languages are predominant in all public settings and have all but marginalized Ateso and other non-dominant languages (Barasa, 2016). This has been aggravated by language policies that do not reflect the linguistic diversity of both Uganda and Kenya. The next section will thus make a brief assessment of the language policies in the two countries.

### **Evaluating language policies in Kenya and Uganda**

More recent government policies in Uganda and Kenya are in favour of multilingual mother tongue education. These policies aim to ensure that first-languages are re-introduced into the education system and used as a medium of instruction at lower primary level. The guidelines - if implemented - will officially introduce African languages such as Ateso into the school system.

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<sup>3</sup>Major linguistic literature on Ateso consists of studies by Otaala (1981) and Barasa (2015).

Even though Ateso is not officially prohibited by either the Ugandan and Kenyan governments, most schools actively suppress the use of Ateso [with measures such as that outlined below], as an L1, on their premises (Gacheche, 2010: 6). Furthermore, despite the changes in government policies for both Uganda and Kenya that encourage the use of L1 in the first years of primary schooling, there are no clear guidelines on its implementation. During fieldwork, I visited two primary schools within the Teso region in Kenya where I observed that the use of Ateso was discouraged and learners who used it were punished either by the teachers or selected students who had been chosen to guard against 'mother tongue' speaking, a case of the violation of the government policy by those particular schools. The medium of instruction in both schools was either Kiswahili for lower primary, and Kiswahili or English for upper primary level. This may lead to a gradual decrease in the number of eventually Ateso speakers, indicating impeding lack of intergenerational transmission<sup>4</sup>.

At a broader level, the practicality of the language policies to education and other key sectors of government activities are discussed in two subsections below. The first subsection is an overview of Kenya's language policy and practice while the second one is a case of Uganda.

### **Language policy and practice in Kenya**

Kenya's language policy is based on the colonial language policy, which recognized English as the official language, that was adopted following the European scramble for power in Africa towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Kibui, 2014). In 1963, Kenya adopted English as the official language to be used in all formal sectors while Kiswahili served as the country's national language.

A number of changes on the language policy since 1963 follows recommendations of various commissions formed by the government. The different commissions recommended a trilingual system in education where African languages were to be used in non-formal communication in relevant locations where the languages were dominantly spoken. Kiswahili and English were proposed for use in urban areas.

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<sup>4</sup>Lack of intergenerational transmission is cited by UNESCO as one of the threats to the existence of a language.

The Ominde as well as the Gachathi commission in 1964 and 1976 respectively recommended the use of English from primary school to university level. Though Kiswahili and other African languages were to be emphasized in the education system at different levels, they still continued to receive inferior status compared to English (Kibui, 2014: 92). The Mackay Commission in 1981 made a favorable approval of Kiswahili. The commission recommended that Kiswahili becomes a compulsory and examinable language in both primary and secondary education (Kibui, 2014). This recommendation received approval from the government and was put in practice in Kenya's school curriculum and whence both languages have been subjects of examination at the end of primary and secondary school cycle. Nevertheless, English still maintained its top status as the main language of instruction in schools throughout the education cycle.

The continued marginalization of many African languages as spoken in Kenya has contributed to a linguistic shift. There is a widespread tendency for speakers of smaller languages such as the Ateso to shift towards Kiswahili and English. As a minority people in Kenya, the Iteso do not have numerical power and resources to exert their language; hence, like many other minority language speakers in Kenya, they are consistently excluded in the allocation of resources to develop and promote their language. And as pointed out earlier, some children born out of Iteso parents acquire either Kiswahili or English as their first language.

Kenya's constitution, (The Republic of Kenya 2010) provides an avenue for linguistic diversity by stipulating that the state shall develop, promote and protect the diversity of languages of the people of Kenya. Kiswahili is recognised as the national and official language whereas English is the official language. In addition to the two languages, the constitution also recognizes the more than 42 languages spoken in Kenya, sign language and braille. It is yet to be assessed as to whether these constitutional requirement has improved the status of the African languages spoken in Kenya.

### **Language policy and practice in Uganda**

In Uganda, the language policy since independence has been exoglossic, with English as the official language. In September 2005, Kiswahili was added as the second official language, and the language policy changed formally to a mixed one (Rosendal, 2010: 27).

According to Nakayiza (2012: 44), “[a]lthough Swahili has been accorded this [official; DB] status [in Uganda; DB], its official use is still highly symbolic, especially as a result of the formation of the East African Community in which Uganda is a member.” Luganda and English continue to be the dominant languages in Uganda. The dominance of English, a foreign language, is partly due to colonial heritage and also for reasons of global interaction and mobility. Nakayiza (2012: 43) further observes that “... English and to a certain extent the majority of languages such as Luganda, enjoy a special status in the country”. They are considered ‘prestigious’ by a majority of citizens who choose increasingly to bring up their children in these languages at the expense of their own.

Previously, various education review commissions set up by the government advocated for use of indigenous languages in schools. Out of the more than sixty indigenous languages, six languages (Luganda, Luo, Lugbra, Runyankole, Runyoro and Ateso) with a high number of speakers were selected for use as a medium of instruction in schools in their catchment areas. The implementation of this proposal remains a challenge despite subsequent recommendations by the other commissions that supported the use of indigenous languages in early years of schooling.

Apart from Kiswahili which is intended to facilitate the East African unity and trade, scholars in Uganda have argued that it is not possible to use any of the African languages as medium of instruction in schools at the national level because of the fear that it would fuel ethnic rivalry (see, e.g. Ssekamwa, 2000). A compromise to this fear, whether real or unknown, is to encourage multilingualism in all sectors of the government whenever it is possible. Multilingualism does not create differences but rather facilitates integration on multi-lingual and multi-cultural basis in line with principles of democracy, tolerance and cultural co-existence (Prah, 2010).

*The Government White Paper* (1992: 19) recommended first language instruction up to primary 4 in the rural areas while English was to be used for the same function for primary schools in urban areas. The choice of English for the whole cycle of primary schools in urban areas was due to multiplicity of languages in this setting (Kirunda, 2015). From primary 4 onwards, English was to be used as a medium of instruction. On the other hand, Kiswahili was

made a compulsory subject to be taught in primary schools both in rural and urban areas. Ateso was identified as one of the languages that should serve as a medium of instruction within the areas inhabited by the Iteso, mostly the Teso district. Just like Labwor, a Southern Lwoo language and many other indigenous languages, Ateso was proposed to become a medium of instruction in the first four years of primary education, even though there are, at this stage, no textbooks in the language (Barasa, 2016).

More recent literature indicates that insufficient resources have hampered implementation of first-language based education (see e.g. Heugh & Bwanika, 2015). Inadequate financial and intellectual support from governments has further hindered efforts directed at developing African languages. This has left languages such as Ateso to suffer from neglect within the government's operational language policy framework.

English, Kiswahili and Luganda are the most prominent languages in formal education, overshadowing over sixty African languages spoken in Uganda. English is prevalent not only in the formal education sector but it is also the language of the media.<sup>5</sup> Surveys conducted by Obondo (1997) and Piper (2010) suggest that the young generation is gradually shifting to English and other dominant African languages.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the language policies in both Kenya and Uganda are ad hoc declarations that have had negligible impact on the use of Ateso in schools and other formal settings. The policies greatly favor English following the logic of pre-colonial practices of assimilation and exclusion. The survival of Ateso and most of the languages spoken in the two countries is thus not entirely depended on legislation but on the speakers who value their language and their culture.

English continues to be used in classroom and formal settings even in areas where Ateso is

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<sup>5</sup> Though Ateso and Bantu languages such as Samia, Lugwere, Lunyuli, Lumasaba, and Lusoga are represented in schools, the languages most commonly used as *lingua francas* in Uganda's Teso region are Kiswahili and English (Tembe & Norton, 2008: 35-36). According to the headmaster of one of the primary schools that I visited in Kenya, Ateso is used as a medium of instruction for class 1-3 though it is not taught as a subject. Kiswahili and English are encouraged as a *lingua francas* while in school and they are also taught as subjects from class 1-8.

dominantly spoken. Those who advocate for the use of English view it as a language of science and technology and that which propels one to higher social status. English is also promoted as a language that helps to ease mobility within and beyond the East African region. In line with the dynamic world, a more convenient means of promoting the African languages is to encourage multilingualism where English, Kiswahili and Luganda are used side by side with other African languages. African language speakers in general and Ateso speakers in particular should be accorded the opportunity to learn and develop their language resources through operationalized language policies and financial support from their respective governments.

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# Language Colonisation and Endangerment: a Case study of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand

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## Abstract

The present paper focuses on the question of language colonisation and language endangerment in the states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Both the states were not formed on the basis of language criteria as Panjab was for Panjabi, Bengal for Bengali, Tamilnadu for Tamil etc. The state of Himachal Pradesh was formed in 1971 and the state of Uttarakhand was formed in 2000. In the absence of any one state language they adopted Hindi as their official state language. Uttarakhand also adopted Sanskrit as its second state language. Both the states have a number of indigenous languages belonging to Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman families of languages. The use of indigenous languages is restricted to in-group oral communication, whilst Hindi serves as the lingua franca, speaking to out-group people and in use for all official administration. The major languages such as Hindi, English and Nepali restrict the domains of local languages. The population which uses Indo-Aryan languages or dialects is larger than that for Tibeto-Burman languages: therefore, relatively, these Indo-Aryan languages are less endangered than the Tibeto-Burman ones. Migration from both the states to other major towns for employment, and the inflow of tourists, further restrict the use of native tongues and so contribute to language endangerment.

## 1. Introduction

Human languages play a predominant role in the social life of people as they are the most effective means of communication. In a multilingual country like India most often the dominant languages come to the forefront for extended use of language beyond oral discourse. This is so whether for written or electronic media, and in religious, educational or political context. Basically the dominant languages colonise the minor languages/dialects within a political unit such as a nation or a state. The formation of states, nations is not always based on languages but on social, political, religious and economic factors.

India has been well known as a multilingual, multi-ethnic, multi-religious country for many centuries. There are four major language families viz, Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austroasiatic and Tibeto-Burman; and Nahali, Andamanese, Onge, Jarwa Sentinalese and Tai-Kadai are the minor language families. If we include South Asia as a whole, we have to include Kusunda in Nepal and Burushaski in Pakistan as the other minor families. Linguists have termed these minor languages as isolates, as they have not been found to be related genetically to any other families. I would like to speculate that these minor languages must have been language families in distant past but with the influx of

other populations they were reduced to single languages.

Let us now move on to the present topic of language colonisation and language endangerment.

Language colonisation may be defined as the situation where a dominant (especially non-native) language is exceedingly used for administrative, educational and other mass media purposes in place of native or indigenous language(s).

An endangered language is a language that is at risk of falling out of use as its speakers die out or shift to speaking another language(s). There may be different degrees of endangerment depending on the kind of language use and other social, political, religious and demographic factors.

The present paper will focus on the question of language colonisation and language endangerment in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Both the states are not formed on the basis of language criteria like many other major Indian states like Panjab, (Panjabi) Bengal, (Bengali) Gujarat, (Gujarati) Tamilnadu (Tamil), Assam, (Assamese), etc. Some parts of Himachal Pradesh were under the state of Panjab and others were under union territory till 1971 when the state was

formed with Hindi as the state official language. The state of Uttarakhand was formed in 2000 from the state of Uttar Pradesh. In the absence of any one state language they also adopted Hindi as the official language and Sanskrit as the second state language.

Both the states have a number of indigenous languages belonging to Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman families of languages.

Historically we may tentatively divide the use of language into three periods. First there was the Hindu period i.e. Maurya Kings and Gupta Kings when Sanskrit being the language of religion was used mainly for religious discourse. It was followed by Prakrit and Pali for Jainism and Buddhism. Then during the Muslim period from 1192 AD to the eighteenth century Persian and then Urdu/Hindustani became the language of administration. During the British period English was introduced though in a limited way. But during the above periods the vernacular languages, Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Kannada and others also developed a huge amount of written literature and were used side by side with the official languages. I have not delved in detail of all these periods but just to mention by way of starting point. I will now deal the question of language endangerment and language colonisation in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand below.

## **2. Sociolinguistic Profile of Himachal Pradesh**

The state of Himachal Pradesh is divided into twelve districts, viz. Kangra (1,507,223), Mandi (999,518), Shimla (813,384), Solan (576,670), Sirmour (530,164), Una (521,057), Chamba (518,844), Hamirpur (454,293), Kullu (437,474), Bilaspur (382,056), Kinnaur (84,298), Lahaul and Spiti (31,528). (The population figures are from 2011 Census records) Almost each district has its own language/dialect. The districts of Lahaul Spiti and Kinnaur have Tibeto-Burman languages and all others have Indo-Aryan languages placed under Western Pahari group of languages except Kanashi spoken in an isolated village, Malana in Kullu district.

Indo-Aryan (IA) languages/dialects include Kangri, Chambyali, Curahi, Kulvi, Siraji, Sirmauri, Kotgarhi (Mahasui), Baghati, Mandyali, Bilaspuri, Pangwali, Bharmauri (Gaddi) and other minor dialects peculiar to some areas. Most of them are used in oral in-group communication and have not developed written forms. Only a few languages/dialects have some literary activity written in Devanāgarī Script. No census figures are recorded in census records and that is the reason I gave district population figures. However, these languages are not in small number as such. Since these Indo-Aryan languages/dialects are not markers of ethnic identity, therefore, these are not conflicting with Hindi as such. Moreover, these are well maintained in homes and within the social groups. Actually, there is a greater mutual intelligibility among Kangri, Chambyali, Bilaspuri, and Mandyali. But Kulvi, Sirmauri, and Mahasui are distinct and have no mutual intelligibility. I

have noted one interesting fact that the speakers of one dialect consider the other neighbouring dialect as sweeter than their own. Due to their restricted use and greater use of Hindi and English in all official domains they may be treated as endangered languages.

The Tibeto-Burman (TB) languages spoken along the Indo-Tibet border include, Manchnad, Bunan, Tinan, Tod Bhoti, Patnam Bhoti, Khoksar, Spiti, Kinnauri, Kanashi in Himachal Pradesh. The term Bhoti is used for the languages/dialects that are closer to standard Tibetan. In fact, these are treated as Tibetan dialects. The languages like Manchnad, Tinan, Bunan Kinnauri, Kanashi are not included under Tibetan dialects. Standard written Tibetan is considered highly prestigious as Tibetan is the language of Buddhism. Most TB speakers are Buddhists by religion. The languages like Manchnad, Tinan, Kinnauri are included under pronominalized languages as the person number categories are incorporated in the verb forms. All the TB languages are spoken by less than 10,000 speakers except Kinnauri and are most endangered as compared to IA languages due to their small populations. In such a state of affairs it was difficult for the state to choose any one of the indigenous languages as state language for the official or educational purposes. First of all none of them has well developed writings and literary activity and if one language is chosen the speakers of the others will object. Moreover, Hindi and English were already in use before the state was formed.

Hindi serves as the lingua franca while speaking to out-group people. The native languages have no official status. Increasing use of Hindi and English for written, official, educational and mass media purposes, renders native tongues as endangered. However, there is a daily radio broadcast devoted to social welfare, folk literature, and agriculture programs. Some languages like Kangri, Sirmauri and Kulvi are being written in Devanagari script producing literature of various kinds. The population of Indo-Aryan languages/dialects is larger than the Tibeto-Burman languages, therefore, relatively, less endangered than the Tibeto-Burman languages. Tourism, migration of populations to other states is also contributing to the endangerment of all the indigenous languages of both Himachal and Uttarakhand.

A special mention may be made of the district of Lahaul-Spiti from where the maximum migration has taken place. Many people who get various jobs get settled outside their native places due to their isolation as the valley remains cut off from the rest of the world due to snowfall from December to March. Many families from Lahaul are settled in Kullu valley. Therefore, their native tongues are most endangered.

## **3. Sociolinguistic Profile of Uttarakhand**

The state of Uttarakhand was formed in 2000 from the state of Uttar Pradesh. The areas of Kumaun and Garhwal along with some other hill districts were included in it. Now it includes 12 districts, viz., Almora

( 621,972), Bageshwar, (259,840), Chamoli (391,114), Champawat (259,315), Dehradun (1,695,860), Haridwar (1,927,029), Nainital (955,128), Pauri Garhwal (686,572), Pithauragarh (485,993), Rudraprayag (236,857), Tehri Garhwal (616,409), Uddham Singh Nagar (1,648,367) and Uttarkashi (329,686).

There are two major IA languages known as Kumauni spoken in the districts of Almora, Nainital, and Pithaurgarh and Garhwali in the districts of Dehradun, Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Tehri Garhwal, and in Pauri Garhwal. Apart from this There are some other IA dialects like Bangani, Jaunsari, and a few others. No census figures are available for these languages and there is little literary writings using Devanāgarī Script.

The TB languages are spoken in the districts of Pithauragarh, Chamoli and Uttarkashi along the Tibetan and Nepal borders. The TB languages include, Byangsi, Chaudangsi, Darma, Rongpo, Had and Raji, and now almost extinct language Rangkas. A good amount of linguistic descriptions are available on Byangsi (Sharma, S.R. 2007, 2001, Trivedi, G.M. 1991) Darma (Willis, 2007, Shree Krishan 2001) (Sharma, D.D. 1989, 1990) (Chaudangsi, & Raji, Shree Krishan 2001). (Rongpo Sharma, S.R. 2001, Zoller, C.P. 1983) (Grierson, G.A. 1909) All the TB languages of Uttarakhand are locally known under the cover term Rang or Bhutia except Raji (Regal). Their population is also found in Nepal just across the border. Their language is basically a TB language with a large number of borrowing from IA languages with whom they come in contact. Grierson (1909) called them Janggali as they were forest dwellers till recently. The Government of India named them as Raji and settled them in different villages in Champawat district. Among all the TB languages of Uttarakhand Raji is most endangered with a population of less than two thousand. Among all of them Byangsi, is now being written in Devanagari script. They have become aware of their linguistic identity after the linguists have worked on it.

Most TB speakers are bilingual as they learn their mother tongue at home and Kumauni or Garhwali just in their neighbourhood and Hindi and English at schools. Nepali is also spoken in Pithauragarh at the India-Nepal borders where there is a free movement of people for work and trade. A TB speaker in Dharchula town commands four to five languages, e.g., Byangsi, Kumauni, Hindi, Nepali and English if s/he is educated.

The linguistic situation is just similar to that of Himachal as there is no language that can be adopted as the state official language, however, most IA languages have large populations and have greater chances of survival. But much more is desirable to be done for using them for written discourse. Garhwali seems to be more dominant but Kumauni speakers don't learn it and resort to Hindi with Garhwali speakers.

Finally, I may list the languages that are most endangered in the order in which they may be lost for ever. Raji, Jad, Tinan, Patnam Bhoti, Khoksar Bhoti, Manchad, Tinan, Bunan, Kinnaur and Kanashi It is due to the fact that their number is very small, (less than 5000). Secondly they are in contact with other dominant languages. Thirdly with the spread of education they are fast switching over to Hindi and migrating to major towns for jobs and work. Among the TB languages all others mentioned above are also endangered to a lesser degree as their number is larger and they are much more aware of their linguistic identity.

Among the IA languages most of them are being invaded by Hindi in most domains of language use however, their number is large enough to survive for a longer period. But they need to be cultivated to written discourse otherwise over a considerable period of time they will be endangered.

The question of language colonisation need not be of imposing foreign languages in the present contexts but it is the dominant language that has occupied the place similar to that of the languages of the rulers. Moreover, native languages have not developed strong literary traditions as such. Basically, there is no language conflict between the native indigenous languages and the languages used for official purposes, i.e., Hindi in both the states. Bilingualism is practised as a matter of daily life of the people in a non-conflicting way.

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# Konkani in the Post-post-colonial Era

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## Abstract

Konkani is a language spoken mostly along the northern part of the western coast of India, known as the Konkan region. Spoken over a wide area and boasting of many regional varieties of the language, Konkani stands as an interesting example of how multiple colonialisms – Maratha, Portuguese and English – have impacted the status of the language in many ways, and how the same socio-politics of colonialism that has led to the geographical dispersion of Konkani and its denigration in multiple ways has simultaneously provided the language with the tools for its survival, and even revival, in various forms.

Konkani also depicts the case of endangered languages which are fractured in terms of the areas of their usage, which in turn gives rise to a complex narrative of the economic, political, cultural and personal positions of power a language enjoys in the various places it is spoken in. These positions are all unequal to each other, and interact with each other to form powerful undercurrents that impact the literary-cultural revival of the language on the one hand, while on the other, a powerful language (Marathi) dismisses its identity and attempts to subsume it under its own metanarrative.

Konkani stands at the odd position of an official language of a state that is struggling to regain and establish its identity even as the speakers of its many varieties are placed on various points of the spectrum in this linguistic battle, each battling its own cause. The questions to be asked are, what are the domains that require to be activated to revive a language? Is it necessary to be the same for every language? Must not the status of a language in terms of its endangerment be assessed with regard to the unique parameters that guide and have ensured its survival till date, especially if the language has thrived to different degrees of success in different regions? Or is uniformity of policy implementation the answer. In this paper, an analysis of the regional varieties of Konkani will be undertaken to arrive at the answers to the above questions.

## Introduction

The legacy of colonialism, as experienced by each country, region and people that has ever been colonized, is so powerful that its indelible traces can be detected in many folds of the socio-cultural, ideological and even emotional fabric of the places that have once been subjected to colonial rule, even after decades since its end there. One of the most enduring markers of this colonial legacy in any land would be encoded in the language of the place, both in terms of which languages have gained a status of prestige over others, and how the languages that lack that prestige quotient have negotiated and modified their forms so as to remain relevant and in use during that period, and later. After the end of the colonial period, the native languages of the land, by then devalued and denounced by the colonial masters, are subjected to

a process of rejuvenation and revival by its speakers and writers even as various other socio-political and linguistic undercurrents shape the canvas where it is to be eventually hung on, some in favour of the revival, some against the endeavour.

While one may attempt to chalk out such a generic pattern of fall and rise of the socio-political importance of native languages vis-à-vis colonialism, it is characteristic of the nature of post colonialism itself that even such broad graphs hold no narrative unity across colonized communities; each graph is unique to the geo-political, religious, cultural and economic concerns of that population. Broad graphs offer only a narrative blueprint; when the furnishings of the linguistic journey of different vernacular languages are unpacked, they will reveal that to have a unified theory that attempts to

understand linguistic colonization and its long term effects will be reductive and absolutist. Instead, they necessitate that we look at cases of individual languages that have been exposed to colonialist prejudices and their tangible ramifications, especially in (the end of) their use for educational and official purposes, and see how they have moulded and shifted their forms and functions over generations, even after the end of the colonial regime, becoming a creature quite unrecognizable to its centuries-old self and defying co-option by a singular theory of language revival in the post-colonial era.

This paper refers to the post-post-colonial era in order to address the reality of a linguistic situation where combating colonial remnants of language or thought or culture emerges as an utterly insignificant concern for many of the speakers of a language, whose engagements with and attitudes towards their native language derives from much more personal and situational motivations, and vary from region to region, given that the language occupies vastly different positions of prestige and importance in the different regions it is spoken in by a diverse set of people as a native language.

### **Why Konkani?**

Konkani evolved over a series of diverse dynasties until the Portuguese missionaries resolved to standardize the language to expedite their conversion processes. The Portuguese rulers incinerated all of the Konkani literature and eventually promulgated a law which banned the use of Konkani and Nagari scripts. The Romi Lipi script made an entry with the publication of *Doutrina Crista* by Thomas Stephens in the early 17th century. This was a catechism of the Christian Doctrine arranged in the form of a dialogue and prepared for teaching children. The Portuguese encouraged Marathi over Konkani, however Konkani ceased to ebb away. The Konkans who refused to embrace Christianity escaped the clutches of Portuguese rule and settled elsewhere, where they maintained their Hinduism and adopted the Devanagari script. The ongoing tussle between Konkani and Marathi and which is more deserving of official status began once the Indian Army seized Goa.

Konkani is still that pervasive whistle on the streets of Goa and hence in that context is nowhere on the road to extinction. And while it has official status in the state of Goa, it is a prominent language in parts of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala. Similar to the predicament of dialects across distances, these varieties are seldom mutually intelligible. In fact, even within the confines of

Goa, the Konkani spoken in one nook and corner varies from the other and sometimes leads to miscommunication. It is this fluctuating nature of Konkani, spread out in different states as a repercussion of multiple colonialisms that makes it an interesting subject of scrutiny. In Goa, it stands as the official and dominant language, failure to propagate Konkani is on the rise. Ironically, in regions like Mangalore and Chitrapur, in spite of Kannada reigning over most domains, Konkani has survived through generations.

The pressing need amongst several locals in Goa to revive Konkani arises out of the narrowing domains in which it is used. Parents equate a good education with that of an English-medium school upbringing. Majority of the primarily level schools are Marathi-medium, rendering Konkani more of a spoken language, thus doing very little to nurture literature in Konkani. The current generation millennials find it difficult to articulate their thoughts in Konkani without a perfunctory smattering of English. Konkani's rich lexicography remains hidden beneath the cloak of English supremacy.

This paper further probes into the two distinctive varieties of Konkani spoken within Goa that flourish in a post-colonial Goa only to announce the divide between the Hindus and the Catholics, the ones whose ancestors succumbed to the Portuguese Inquisition and the ones whose ancestors fled. This surreptitiously constructed divide is what stokes the wheel of electoral politics in Goa. The incessant squabbles over which script befits the language continues to be a bait in the larger scheme of Goan politics.

### **Language Endangerment**

A country as linguistically diverse as India boasts of a language situation where many languages are spoken in one region, but one or two are considered dominant while the others enjoy a minority status, may be considered dialects or corrupt variations of the standard language used in the region, and may sometimes also face the danger of extinction of usage. Even in a post-colonial situation where the revival of the native language is sought, what emerges is a situation where the designation of official status to one or two languages simultaneously creates a hierarchy that devalues the status of the other native languages spoken in that region or country. For instance, India, which implements the three language policy in schools, offers as languages of instruction/learning English, Hindi, and the dominant regional language (erroneously presumed to be the native language of the students of that region) or a foreign language to

students in their formative school years. For a student whose native language is not any of the above, a gap in their formal education appears, that relegates their native language to the backburner of individual progress, and ensures a diminishing of importance, usage, vitality and competence of speakers of that language. What that leads to is a reduction of the domains in which it is used by its speakers, which may eventually get endangered and even extinct.

The Ethnologue has, through extensive study of language data, come up with a list of factors which may be used to assess whether a language is endangered. They are:

- The speaker population
- The ethnic population; the number of those who connect their ethnic identity with the language (whether or not they speak it)
- The stability of and trends in that population size
- Residency and migration patterns of speakers
- The use of second languages
- The use of the language by others as a second language
- Language attitudes within the community
- The age range of the speakers
- The domains of use of the language
- Official recognition of languages within the nation or region
- Means of transmission (whether children are learning the language at home or being taught the language in schools)
- Non-linguistic factors such as economic opportunity or the lack thereof

The Ethnologue states that “Such factors interact within a society in dynamic ways that are not entirely predictable but which do follow recognizable patterns and trends. The general scholarly consensus, however, is that the key factor in gauging the relative safety of an endangered language is the degree to which intergenerational transmission of the language remains intact.”

In this paper, we will examine Konkani as a language spoken in many varieties and in many regions, and will interrogate the factors above vis-à-vis Konkani to introspect whether Konkani is in fact an endangered language as a consequence of its exposure to three kinds of linguistic colonialisms over the centuries. The question of the presence of a written script and literature of the language and how that influences the status of a language in the eyes of its speakers will also be explored in the sections below.

## **Konkani Findings and Analysis**

We designed an online survey targeted at people who live or have lived in Goa, irrespective of their Konkani proficiency levels. The objective was to analyze attitudes towards Konkani and to ultimately arrive at a synchronic conclusion as to where Konkani stands in the backdrop of endangerment.

When asked - “In a situation where you had to speak in Konkani with somebody who speaks a different variety of Konkani, what did you end up doing?”, 50 % answered- “Detect a few familiar words or phrases and assume what she/he is saying.” 38.46% of the responses answered- “Identify the difference in the Konkani dialect by noticing the borrowed vocabulary from another language. For example: Mhak Got instead of Zana (I know) or Ugdas instead of Yaad (Remember).” From conversations with Bengali and Assamese speakers who belong to much larger states (area and population-wise), geographical parameters have seldom been a constraint in maintaining conversations in their respective native tongues. This reflects a relatively more polarizing impact of colonialism on Konkani.

The next question was a corollary of the first, which asked them which language they would be most likely to switch in the event of not comprehending the speaker’s variety of Konkani. 77% would resort to English and 15% to Hindi, indicating that most Goans either conform to a class consciousness where English is only the language of the elite or latently reject the imposition of Hindi by the nation-state. A political speaker at a speech in Goa insisted on speaking in Hindi, leaving a whole bunch of Goan citizens clueless. Refusing to be appeased by his claim that he spoke in Hindi to reach out to the masses, Chenelle Rodrigues objected- “If it’s not Konkani, you can only appeal to the locals in English.”

Her reaction can be proved false as there does exist a population that would understand more Hindi than English, but her reaction represented the anti-Hindi sentiments prevalent amongst majority of the Goans. Rampant tourism soon heralded a transformation in the Goan identity. Hindi, in the present post-post-colonial era marked by the decline of the western influence, soon became a harbinger of chaos as domestic tourists garnered a bad reputation amongst the locals. However, in the scramble to make quick bucks, locals are beginning to integrate into the stereotypical Indian ecology as Goa’s post-colonial charm is slowly fading away and driving away foreign tourists.

Apart from the tourists, the proliferation of migrant labour has opened up a whole new domain where Hindi is the sole language of contact. This trend has overshadowed the dominance of English. However, on the other hand, swathes of locals aspire to migrate to Europe after registering for a Cartão Do Cidadão<sup>1</sup>. These aspirations demarcate a clear departure from habitually speaking Konkani in order to master English and succeed overseas. Madhavi Sardesai gingerly highlights this trend in Mother Tongue Blues- "There is a growing tendency among the 'practical' minded parents to give English medium education to their children right from the primary level, because they feel English is the actual pottaachi bhas, 'language of stomach', and that Konkani cannot get one any further. And while regular demands are made by Konkani protagonists to make Konkani the pottaachi bhas, at least at the official level, i.e., to make the active knowledge of Konkani a necessary prerequisite for obtaining government jobs, the government somehow seems to lack both inclination and will."

Revisiting the script imbroglio, the volatile politics isn't merely a farce that it's often made out to be because there seems to be a genuine rift between those who are more at ease reading Konkani in the Devanagari script (38.46%) and those reading in Romi Lipi(34.62%). What's interesting is that considering that Konkani is only taught in Devanāgarī script, many would rather choose a Konkani article in Romi Lipi. This hints at a subliminal aversion towards Sanskritization of Konkani.

A legitimate reason to cling on to Konkani pride, one that transcends the realm of identity politics, is that it conforms to neuter gender. "Chedu" which meant 'child' and now has come to mean 'girl'. It retains neuter agreements.<sup>2</sup> In the same online survey, more than 80% were ignorant of this property in Konkani. On another note, if Konkani is treated as less of a minor language and all of its loanwords are treated as synonyms for one another, its literature could be enhanced manifold. The ultimate result would be a more unifying code rather than one that segregates dispersed communities from one another.

Diasporas with roots in Chitrapur Math, Karnataka observe a ritualistic event exclusively for the youth. Teenagers brought up in multiple cities gather at

<sup>1</sup> It is the new National Identity Card issued by the Portuguese government to its citizens. The Portuguese Consulate at Goa now issues it to all Portuguese Nationals residing in Goa.

<sup>2</sup> Gender by Greville G Corbett

Shibirs (camps centred around prayer and socializing). Initially strangers, the youth forge relationships and find comfort in one another by striking conversations in Konkani. Similarly, the Siddi tribe in Yellapur, Karnataka (African slaves who escaped the Portuguese rule and settled down in various parts of India) have till now had no difficulty in propagating Konkani as the mother tongue. "Kannada is used in official domains but at home, it's only in Konkani that we speak," said Mohan Siddi, the head of the Siddhi Trust.

## Conclusion

When a language exists in so many varied forms as a direct result of colonisation, it develops a kind of resilience that ensures its survival in forms that may or may not be mutually unintelligible between speakers of its different varieties, yet sustains a unity of ethnic identification and cultural memory that connect that language with the speakers' historical roots. This chameleon-like existence of Konkani not only defies co-option under the rubric of one language, but also makes it difficult to quantitatively or qualitatively analyse its status as an endangered language based on the criteria mentioned in the Ethnologue. This leads us to the question of whether the categories listed there suffice to analyse the unique situation of languages like Konkani, or whether in order to have Konkani fit into the mould suggested by the Ethnologue, its different varieties should be identified individually as separate languages.

Finally, this brings us to the question of language and identity, and demonstrates a very post-post-colonial instance of a speech community identifying with each other as members of the same ethnic group across regional and linguistic borders, thus undercutting, in part, some of the ramifications of colonialism on the Konkani speaking community in India.

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# Documenting 125 Years of Kokni in South Africa

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## Abstract

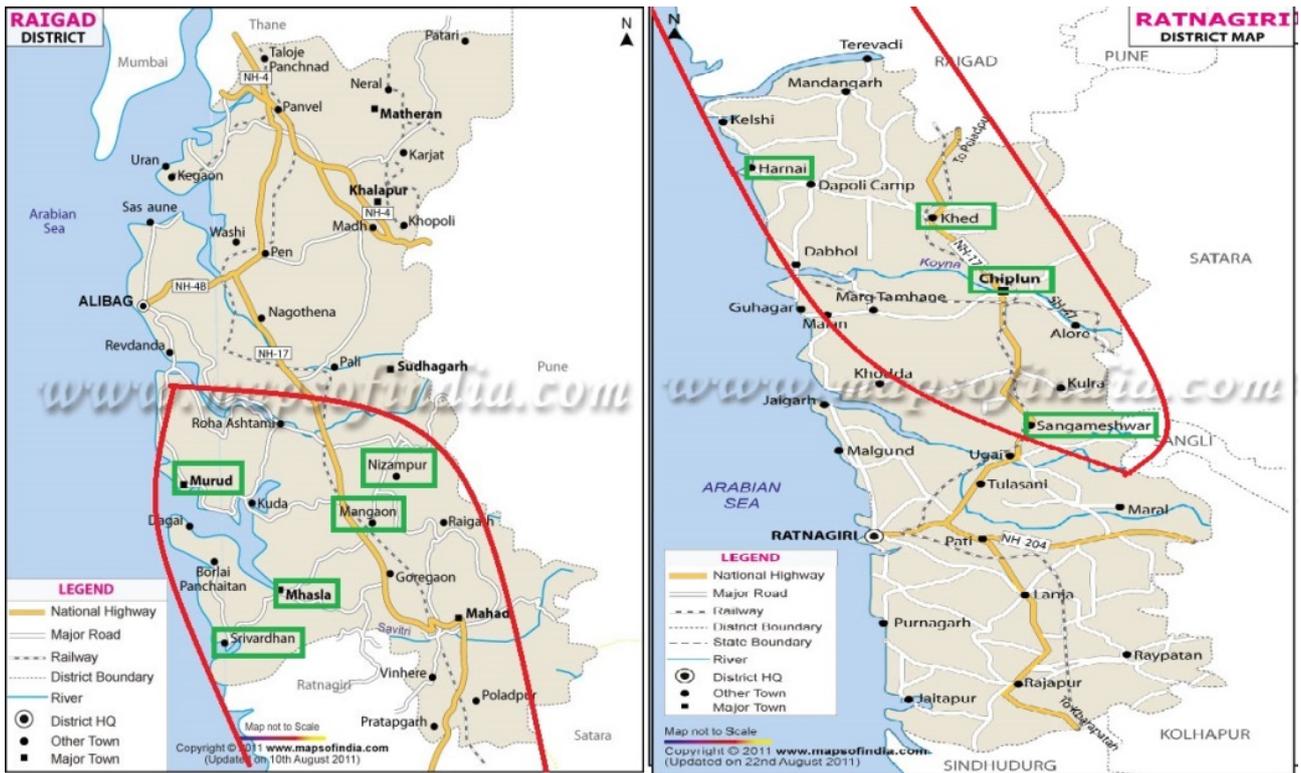
The paper will report on preliminary documentary work on Kokni, a language that has been in existence for 125 years in South Africa, with Cape Town as its main base. As there is no prior linguistic research to draw on, this project is interested in characterising the extent to which the language is still used, under what social circumstances. At the same time we are interested in ascertaining the dialect characteristics of the variety. The community of Kokni speakers in Cape Town is entirely Muslim and largely middle-class, with very strong awareness of their villages and districts of origin (almost exclusively from Ratnagiri and Raigarh). Attachment to Kokni remains high among older speakers, despite positive associations of Afrikaans, English, Urdu and Arabic as well. Among younger speakers shift is the norm today, despite strong community loyalties (which again do not appear to conflict with a wider socio-political South African identity). However, any attempts at a language policy that includes or promotes Kokni will have to keep in mind the broader South African socio-political context.

## 1. Introduction:

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century South Africa had the largest Indian community outside Asia (with a population of around a million). Its presence there was largely a consequence of the abolition of slavery, which saw the rise of indentured labour within the plantation systems of the world. The main Indian languages that survived since the initial migrations of 1860 to the colony of Natal were Bhojpuri (known locally simply as “Hindi”), Urdu, Tamil and Telugu. Some documentary work has been done on these “languages of indenture”, especially the Bhojpuri-Awadhi-Hindi continuum (Mesthrie 1991). Other languages were also taken to South Africa since 1875 by communities which originated as hawkers, miscellaneous workers, petty traders and, in a few cases, larger scale merchants. This time the main languages that survived with adaptation were Gujarati, Meman (a.k.a. Memon or Kacchi) and Kokni (so spelled and pronounced in South Africa). Little is known of the linguistic characteristics of the South African versions of Gujarati, Meman and Kokni.

The paper will report on preliminary work on Kokni in Cape Town (which in the 19<sup>th</sup> C belonged to a separate Cape Colony). The social context in Cape Town is very different from the original Indian context. It is also different from that of the indentured labour system of Natal, where people were cut off from India to a much greater extent.

The community of Kokni speakers in Cape Town is entirely Muslim, with very strong awareness of their villages and districts of origin, with fairly regular meetings of different village-based societies. Their main districts of origin are Ratnagiri and Raigarh, with other areas that feature strongly in family heritage being Karji, Mhasla, Janjira, Shrivardhan, Kalusta, Khed, Morba, Murud and Latvan (Map 1 indicates Taluks in which these villages are situated). Attachment to Kokni remains high among older speakers, in addition to positive associations of Afrikaans, English, Urdu and Arabic. Identity is a complex whole made from these parts: Afrikaans or English as colloquial and contact language; English as educational and business language; Urdu as cultural language (to be learnt); Arabic as learned religious language; Kokni as heritage language. An index of loyalty to Kokni is the keenness of older people to be interviewed and involved in language documentation (proverbs being currently high on their list of priorities). Among younger people (under 30) shift is the norm today despite strong community loyalties, which again do not appear to conflict with a wider socio-political South African identity. Many of these younger people have a receptive competence and continue to use basic Kokni terms in the spheres of kinship and cuisine. Finally, in keeping with the themes of the current conference, the paper will end with a discussion about the benefits of language policy and revitalisation in a highly complex case of nested language repertoires.



Map 1: Location of original villages of Cape Town Koknis in Ratnagiri and Raigarh districts



Map 2: Approximate location of Ratnagiri and Raigarh

## 2. Socio-historical background:

### 2.1 The Cape Colony and Indian languages.

There are many connecting strands between the Cape and India. The first concerns the little known connection with slavery in the Dutch period (1652 to 1834). It is one of the ironies of history that when slave labour was deemed necessary in Africa, the source should be mainly Asia. Descendants of the large slave population in the Cape are known as Cape Malay, if of Islamic background; otherwise they are known as “Coloured”. In the colour-conscious apartheid classification of people, Cape Malay was considered a sub-section of “Coloured”. Slaves originated mainly from what are now Indonesia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Angola, India and Sri Lanka. Slaves from India and Sri Lanka formed up to a third of all slaves, but no consciousness of India or Sri Lanka remains (despite many slaves prominent in the records of the time carrying surnames like van Bengalen, van Ceylon etc.)

Cape Malay identity today remains positive, rallying around its sense of history, Islam and (largely) eastern origins (Kaarsholm 2012). The Cape Malay community is of relevance to this study given the close links between it and later incoming Muslims from India. The second strand concerns the indentured workers in South Africa mentioned above, today the most numerous of the groups of arrivals from India. Although the Cape - in contrast to the colony of Natal – did not have formal agreements with indentured workers from India, some indentured workers made their way to the Cape (if they were rejected on medical grounds in Natal, or after serving out a term of indenture). It is the third strand that is of relevance to Kokni studies, viz. the arrival of Indians after 1875 as “passengers” We now turn to the early history of this community, before considering the state of Kokni in Cape Town today.

### 2.2 Early migrants in South Africa.

Two categories of Indian migrants are traditionally recognised in the diaspora - indentured Indians and ‘passenger Indians’. Indentured migration was a result of a triangular pact among three governments (Natal, India and Britain), while passenger Indians paid their own way, coming mainly as traders. Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2009:115) corrects the impression that passenger Indians were all established and well-off traders to begin with:

The vast majority of Cape Town’s [Indian] immigrants came from poor agricultural villages in India. Their migration is characterised by chain migration – many followed the example of others who had left from their villages and there was an extensive village and kin network. On landing many of the poor took to hawking – an activity that required little capital investment... [M]any became workers as well. Indian barbers, shoemakers, tailors, butchers, general dealers, hawkers and workers lived mainly around the city centre ... but they soon spread out towards the suburbs.

Cape Town was an important port in the Indian Ocean inter-regional area and Dhupelia-Mesthrie shows that the movement of individuals between Bombay and Cape Town from the 1890s on was more significant than historians have appreciated. Bradlow (1979) had earlier noted that Cape Indians almost without exception became traders and shopkeepers, with Muslims concentrating on wholesale and retail general dealers and butchers. Hindus set up as fruit and vegetable hawkers and shoemakers. Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2009) shows that this generalisation conceals the fact that many of these Indian immigrants started out as stonebreakers, bottle sorters (at the breweries), engine drivers, and ‘donkeymen’ operating machines that produced steam.

Compared to Natal, Indian immigration in the Cape was relatively small scale as the following figures show:<sup>1</sup>

Year	Total	Male	Female	% Female
1891	1,453	1065	388	26
1904	8,489	7648	841	10
1911	6,606	5590	1016	15
1921	6,498	4845	1653	25
1936	10,508	6677	3831	36

Table 1: *Statistics of Indians in the Cape Colony/Province, 1891–1936 (source: Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2014:638).*

<sup>1</sup> Note that the 1936 figures include 1000 people of Chinese origin.

Claude Markovits (2007) used the term 'circular migration' for the kind of migration characteristic of passenger Indians. He estimates that 90 per cent of such global departures from India between 1830 and 1950 could be classified as temporary and circular– the intention being to return and then leave once more.

Males left to improve the situation of their family at home, not because they were hoping to make a better life elsewhere. Their aspirations centred around plots of land and real estate in their home regions, better houses, better marriage prospects for their sisters. This was true of rich merchants as much as of poor agricultural workers (Markovits 2007:3).

Indians and other migrants faced many restrictions in the Cape Colony. The Immigration Act of 1902 aimed to restrict non-European immigration to the Cape by requiring migrants to have functional written proficiency in a European language ("write out an application or sign in the characters of any European language" – Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2009:118). Jurisdiction of Indian migrants fell under the office of the Commissioner for Immigration & Asiatic Affairs within the Ministry of the Interior after formation of the Union of South Africa in 1911. The D.I.91 form, devised by this office is a monument to the mobility of passenger Indians. It itemised name of migrant, names and ages of wife or wives and children, the individual's village of origin, full details of movements and places of residence in South Africa, prior movements back to India. Dates of marriage and births of children in India were tallied against the applicant's visit to India. Dhupelia-Mesthrie concludes that the state was driven by the need to prevent illegal entry of individuals, especially young boys, and the entry of more than one wife. Marriage to a local South African woman nullified any rights to wife or wives and children in India.

Yet India remained important to migrants at all times:

Even after several decades in the country, India beckoned – there were visits to wives and children were born during these visits. Some maintained wives and children in both India and South Africa while for others the

circle of mobility ended once they married local women in Cape Town. In the rare instance, the Cape-born wife was taken back to the village in India. Wives and children were only brought from India when workers were well established and had secured better positions. There are some instances [in this early period] of upward mobility and substantial material progress. (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2009:120)

As Dhupelia-Mesthrie remarks, setting up a household outside India would have involved large costs that would limited the number and total of remittances back home. She describes the phenomenon of split households (by continent) as follows:

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the number of Indian males who settled with Indian wives in Cape Town was miniscule. The split household was the dominant form. Some men maintained multiple families across the continents and married local Malay, Coloured or white women in Cape Town. Some local women found themselves in India, while their husbands returned to Cape Town, as migrants preferred having their children grow up in the village back home where they could be educated and could retain their culture. Migration has to take into account this mix of race and ethnicity and the variety of movements between India and South Africa. While men favoured the split-household, the evidence in this article is that many women themselves preferred not to travel, and when the law forced them to do so (as in having to accompany minors), they did so temporarily and returned when the minor had been settled. Yet, as has been shown, the split-household could lead to long periods of separation and, in some cases, abandonment, bringing untold suffering on such women. (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2014: 654-5)

On rare occasions a South African-born wife went to India. Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2011) cites the case of Kadija Badrodien, who went to Ratnagiri in 1927, staying till her death in 1938. One of our

older interviewees was born in Morba, but learnt some Afrikaans in India on account of her mother being from Cape Town. She was well prepared for life in Cape Town, arriving in the 1960s as a bride of a Cape-Town born Kokni speaker. One can almost feel the nostalgia in her mother's heart as she taught Afrikaans to her new-born child in India.

**2.3 Contemporary history:** The 20<sup>th</sup> C records the success of Indians in the Cape, despite the restrictions of a colonial and subsequent apartheid order. People moved up from menial work to ownership of small businesses and to investment in education that enabled a rise into the professions. The Indian corner shop was a regular feature of the Cape Town landscape, mostly run by Kokni and Gujarati families. What is quite striking is the extent to which Kokni families managed a dual citizenship, being immersed in South African as well as Indian life. Pride in one's village of origin is a striking feature of the community, with village-based societies still in existence today. The community maintains an interest in uplifting the villages they left behind in India, in the provision of schools and basic facilities like piped water. It would be a mistake to read this as a sign of lack of commitment to their adopted country. Many Kokni families of the Cape have been politically engaged, and themselves the victims of apartheid and the Group Areas Act. Such families made a ready connection between India's freedom struggle and that of South Africa, and provided local political leadership to the ANC (African National Congress) in the transition to democracy. The linguistic consequences of non-racialism in this instance will be considered in the final section on language policy.

### **3. Kokni maintenance and cultural vitality in a multilingual community**

There is currently a great deal of interest in documenting the family histories and contributions to society of the Kokni community. For a relatively small community there is an array of books, booklets and pamphlets brought out by community leaders. There are at least two Kokni cookbooks and a detailed 'popular' historical account of Kokni in the context of Islam in India and South Africa (Bazme Adab 2007). A local cricket tournament in Rylands was devised on the model of the IPL (Indian Premier League) to encourage younger people to play more sport in an era dominated by the electronic media. The

tournament ran over two weekends. Intriguingly, a hundred years into their history the teams were based on villages of origin: the teams being Kalusta Super Chargers, Latvan Lions, Sangameshwar Super Kings, Habsani Royals, Khed Badshahs, Morba Challengers, Karji Night Riders and Furus Phantoms. The tournament was a success in bringing women out of the households to support the cricket teams; and raise the level of competition among the male players. However, it drew criticism from those who felt it to be sectarian – excluding members of other communities, and apparently raising awkward issues over who actually qualified to play in the teams (in relation to the fuzziness of the boundary between Kokni, Malay and perhaps other groupings of Muslims). These dilemmas are relevant to language maintenance too.

The present project is motivated by the need to document the linguistic side of cultural maintenance. Funding under a joint BRICS-inspired, India-South Africa research grant has enabled the project leaders Rajend Mesthrie and Sonal Kulkarni-Joshi to bring over Ruta Paradkar as a PhD fellow to conduct interviews in Cape Town with a cross section of fluent speakers of Kokni today.

#### **3.1. Fieldwork experiences: Goan in Cape Town**

The fieldwork was carried out in September 2016 and involved interviews with 40 speakers. The sample was sub-divided into three age groups which we judged to reflect current degrees of usage and familiarity with the language: over 60 (n = 24), 40-60 (n = 10), and under 40 (n = 6). Each sub-group was balanced for gender. The interviewer's native language, Goan Konkani alone was not intelligible to most interviewees; for this reason a mixture of Goan Konkani and Ratnagiri Marathi (which the interviewer was also familiar with) was settled upon. Interviewees were most comfortable when they conversed in English and when occasional questions were initiated in English, they would invariably answer in this language.

According to the interviews, a non-Muslim in their original villages speaks Marathi and only a Muslim speaks Kokni. Therefore, a non-Muslim who speaks any form of Kokni was a novelty to many of them. Though the Perso-Arabic script is known to have been used for writing Konkani, Kokni Muslims in Cape Town that were interviewed have not tried writing Kokni in any script. Family letters

would always be written in Urdu in the old times, Kokni being exclusively the spoken home language fondly called *apli bat* ('our language').

The economic progress of the community is evident from the interviews. Older speakers still retain memories of working hard in the grocery shops that their parents'/grandparents' generation had started. The younger interviewees by contrast have had the chance of higher education and moving into the service sector.

There were different degrees of fluency in each age group; the most common factor determining fluency being whether an individual had a family member who almost exclusively spoke Kokni to them at some point in their life. The family member was usually a grandmother or mother, but in a few cases, also the mother-in-law of some of the married women interviewed. Some speakers recall that Kokni was their code language in shops, or was used by mothers for giving orders.

#### 4. Some linguistic characteristics of Kokni in Cape Town:

A noticeable feature is that for the most part people continue speaking their village variety, rather than converging towards a Cape Town variety of Kokni (see examples 4.a, 4.b and 4.c). Apart from speaking to grandmothers, they do not speak Kokni to each other in any other social context in Cape Town. On the other hand on trips to India they have to speak Kokni to their family members in the villages. The languages used outside the family context are Afrikaans and English in the older age groups and English in the younger age groups. Cape Town Koknis are fluent in English and Afrikaans, can read Arabic, can understand but may not always be able to speak Hindi-Urdu and Kokni.

Some preliminary observations about Kokni spoken in Cape Town, prior to full transcription of the data are given below (CK = Cape Town Kokni; GK = Goan Konkani; M = Marathi):

1. Cape Town Kokni has a retroflex flap like Hindi-Urdu, as in:
  - a. ghoɽo (CK), ghoɽo (GK), ghoɽa (M) 'horse'
  - b. zaɽ (CK), zaɽ (GK), zaɽ (M) 'tree'
  - c. kaɽ (CK), kaɽ (GK), kaɽ<sup>h</sup> (M) 'to draw'
  - d. pəɽ (CK), pəɽ (GK), pəɽ (M) 'to fall'

2. In the first person, gender is not encoded in the verb. Thus, both male and female speakers can say:

a. mi District Six-la r<sup>h</sup>e-ja-la ot-u  
I District Six-dat stay-inf-dat be-pst.1.sg

'I used to stay in District Six'

b. mi atta ejl-u  
I now come-pst.1.sg

'I came now/ I've now come'

3. When the subject of a transitive verb is marked with the ergative marker *n/ne/ni* in the perfective aspect, a phonetically similar *-n* suffix is also added to the verb:

a. tja-ne mulukh nai bag-l-a-n  
he-erg India not see-pft-3.m.sg-n

'He did not see Mulukh (India)'

b. kokni mansa-n dukana ik-l-i-n  
kokni people-erg shops sell-pft-3.n.pl-n

'Koknis have sold their shops'

4. The non-finite forms of the 'verb root+infinitive suffix+dative suffix' structure in the speech of the native Latvan village Kokni speakers, seem to have a fused double dative' *-ka* (Konkani) and *-la* (Marathi)

a. mə-la study kar-u-ka-la  
I-dat study do-inf-dat-dat

ɖza-u-ka-la həva hota  
go-inf-dat-dat want be-pst

'I wanted to go and study'

Speakers from other villages use the Marathi dative *-la*, or drop it in speech

b. ami try karto poran-ɸja sobat  
we try do children-gen with

bol-ja-la  
talk-inf-dat

'We try speaking to our children'

c. ti ɖzat-at bhair  
they go-prs.3.pl outside  
gawa-la kam kər-ja-la

village-dat          work    do-inf-dat  
'They go to other villages to find jobs'

## 5. Conclusion on family, community and official policy:

Some younger people expressed regret that their parents never spoke Kokni to them or that when they did, as young children they had not been fully responsive. However, there are no special community efforts to revive the language. Hardly anyone expressed a desire to introduce Kokni to their children. Amongst elders, for the most part Afrikaans within the same age group and English with young children is the pattern that can be seen. Kokni remains a 'grandmother's language' to many younger people.

In conclusion we ask whether language planning and policy are of relevance here. Kokni has survived for over a hundred years without any official recognition in South Africa. Its speakers appear to have quiet pride in maintaining the language, even as they acquired full proficiency in Afrikaans and English – the former official languages of the country – as well as some proficiency in Urdu and Arabic. Currently the acquisition of Xhosa- one of the country's 11 official languages - is an important issue for South Africans resident in the Western Cape. In this complex socio-political climate one has to ask what value there would be in attempting to promote maintenance of the Kokni language. In one of our fieldwork sessions a politically-engaged older professional seemed aggrieved that we would want to even study Kokni as a language. He argued that this was counter-productive, as it promoted sectarianism, worked against a sense of joint Islam, and even more against a South African commonality. Not many share this view, but South African politics is such that a view like this can be taken up vociferously. This might explain the pragmatism of the people we interviewed, for whom the language was part of their identity, but was one which they did not insist on their children acquiring. The few under-40s fluent in Kokni, as we have noted, tended to have learnt it from their grandmothers, rather than parents. Kokni is overall valued as a language of people born in India, or who have been sent to India for schooling, or for connecting with a part of India. It is not a working lingua franca any more - that role has long been usurped by first Afrikaans and then English. But as sociolinguists we are struck by the

enthusiastic efforts of older individuals who have written poems and staged plays in Kokni, who take pleasure in reciting village proverbs as rescaled to modern life, and keenly follow musical and cultural traditions of their ancestral land.

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# Searching for a Surrogate: Mother Tongue(s) and Identity in Post-Colonial Micronesia

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## Abstract

This paper considers the repercussions of colonialism as they occur in constructions of linguistic identity by considering the concept of the mother tongue. Although this term often describes an individual's first linguistic affiliation, the assumed correspondence of language, identity, and cultural affiliation underlying this usage is flawed. It reflects, among other things, the ideals of the nation-state; more problematic, however, is the implication that linguistic and cultural categories are clearly demarcated and unchanging throughout an individual's lifetime. A more contextualized approach is required, particularly in post-colonial contexts. Taking the author's work in Micronesia as its inspiration, this paper explores how concepts of the mother tongue can function in post-colonial states. Particular attention is given to the experiences of a consultant from the Ulithi atoll of Yap. Her mother tongue, traditionally defined, is Ulithian, but long-term stays elsewhere in Micronesia prompted the self-identification of two additional mother tongues – both related in some way to Ulithian – and a corresponding triality in her perceptions of her own identity that was readily accepted by individuals within her adopted communities. This pattern of contextually variable identity represents a practice that is described here as language coalescence; its definition and features are considered in detail.

## Introduction

This paper explores the repercussions of colonialism as they occur in constructions of linguistic identity by considering the concept of the mother tongue. Although this term often describes an individual's first linguistic affiliation, the assumed correspondence of language, identity, and cultural affiliation underlying this usage is flawed. It reflects, among other things, the ideals of the nation-state; more problematic, however, is the implication that linguistic and cultural categories are clearly demarcated and unchanging throughout an individual's lifetime. A more contextualized approach is required, particularly in post-colonial contexts. Taking the author's work in Micronesia as its inspiration, this paper explores how concepts of the mother tongue can function in post-colonial states whose borders fail to align with the linguistic and ethnographic affiliations of their constituent populations. Particular attention is given to the experiences of a consultant from the Ulithi atoll of Yap. Her mother tongue, traditionally defined, is Ulithian, but long-term stays elsewhere in Micronesia prompted the self-identification of two additional mother tongues – both related in some way to Ulithian – and a corresponding triality in her perceptions of her own identity that was readily accepted by members of her adopted communities.

This case study illustrates how multilingualism can interact with the concepts underlying the mother tongue category and challenges the notion that it is immutably fixed, particularly among speakers of endangered and minority languages. It also suggests that these

languages, when conceptualized as mother tongues, can function as agentive social constructions through which identities are developed (or imposed) and interactive networks at varying levels of complexity are established and maintained. The implication is that mother tongues must be reconsidered as constructive mechanisms used for the development and maintenance of linguistic identity rather than as imposed or inherited associations. They are also symptomatic of broader mechanisms of identity construction and place-making, particularly in post-colonial contexts where traditional linguistic and cultural identities are not easily asserted. In these situations, linguistic affiliation can be used to create and maintain identities by differentiating the colonized from the colonizers and allowing individuals and communities to maintain their distinctiveness. Broader levels of linguistic association may be called upon in these cases and assigned a significance that overrides more localized categorizations; the mother tongue thus becomes a tool used to perpetuate linguistic identity and construct contextually variable identities and sociocultural positions.

## Situating Identity: A Very Brief History of the Micronesian Islands

Any consideration of culture and/or language in Micronesia must be situated within the region's historical context and conducted with an awareness that, as Hanlon (1999) points out, such work is inextricably linked to a colonialist tradition that began with the writings of Antonio Pigafetta. Pigafetta's (1969) observations, made during Magellan's explorations of

the Pacific, described the violence of first contact between Europeans and Micronesians:

“we discovered a small island in the northwest direction, and two others lying to the southwest...The captain general wished to touch at the largest of these...but it was not possible because the people of these islands entered into ships and robbed us, in such a way that it was impossible to preserve oneself from them...they stole away with much address and diligence the small boat called the skiff...[the captain] was much irritated, and went on shore with forty armed men, burned forty or fifty houses, with several small boats, and killed seven men on the island; they recovered their skiff.”

This encounter, which likely occurred off the coast of Guam, marked the start of European activity in the region and set the stage for subsequent foreign endeavors. It also began a tradition of obscuring the region’s strikingly rich and diverse pre-colonial history in foreign accounts of the region that helped shape colonial and post-colonial policies.

Prior to European arrival, the Micronesian islands – which include Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and Palau as well as the Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap) – were home to an array of distinct cultural and linguistic groups (Figure 1).

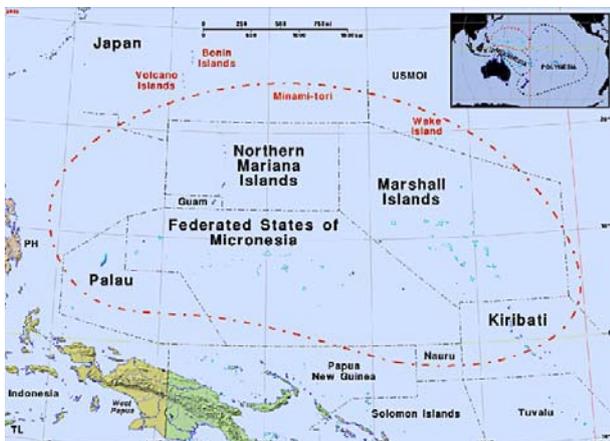


Figure 1: A PAT map of the Micronesian islands.

The westernmost islands of Palau and the Marianas were populated by 1500 BC as part of an Austronesian dispersal from the Philippines or the Molucca Islands, and subsequent waves of Oceanic-speaking settlers around 2,000 years ago – likely from the region between the Bismarck Islands of Papua New Guinea and the southeast Solomons-Vanuatu islands – pushed into the central and eastern islands (Kirch, 2000, 2009). Contemporary linguistic distributions reflect this settlement process, with Western Malayo-Polynesian languages existing in the western islands and languages belonging to the Oceanic subgroup occurring in the central and eastern regions, though considerable degrees

of contact-induced borrowing have occurred throughout the region (Kirch, 2000).

Archaeological evidence indicates the existence of complex and interacting societies throughout the region, some of which constructed elaborate architectural complexes. Perhaps the most famous of these are the megalithic settlements of Nan Madol and Sapwatakai on Pohnpei (see Athens, 1990; Ayres, 1992; Bryson, 1989; Hanbruch, 1911, 1936) and Lelu on Kosrae (see Cordy, 1993; Hanbruch, 1919); however, a range of other archaeological sites also attest to a robust pre-colonial world. These include the terraces of Ngerulmud (Liston et al., 1998) and megalithic constructions of Bairulchau (Osborne, 1966, 1979;) and Melekeok (Osborne, 1979; Van Tilburg, 1991) in Palau, the fortified hilltops of Tol in Chuuk (Takayama & Seki, 1973), the rock shelter at Laulau in Saipan (Spoehr, 1957), and an array of midden sites scattered across the islands; an extensive review of these and other archaeological locations in Micronesia can be found in Kirch (2000).

The colonial period began with the arrival of Magellan’s expedition in the western Pacific as part of his 1520-1521 circumnavigation of the globe and their encounters at Guam and the Mariana Islands. Historical records suggest that this was followed by a series of other early expeditions, including Diogo da Rocha’s multi-month visit to the Ulithi atoll in 1525 (Lessa, 1966; Rainbird, 2004) and Saavedra’s 1529 eight-day stay in the Marshall Islands (Campbell, 1989; Rainbird, 2004). In 1565, de Legazpi reported a series of violent encounters after entering the Chuuk Lagoon (Hezel, 1983; Rainbird, 2004). Mendaña arrived in the eastern Caroline Islands in 1595 and encountered people “who resemble those of the Ladrones [Marianas]” (Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, pilot for Mendaña’s expedition, as reported in Lévesque, 1993); the Dutch reported the first sighting of Yap in 1625 and noted how its inhabitants “seemed much like those on Guam” (Lévesque, 1993; Rainbird, 2004). European expeditions to these locations continued throughout the subsequent centuries, often in pursuit of trade and souls for conversion. However, the Spanish sought a more permanent presence and claimed Guam in 1565 before violently colonizing and missionizing the island and the Mariana Islands located to the north (Campbell, 1989).

The themes of colonization, commerce, and missionization continued to motivate European activities in Micronesia throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with devastating effect. By 1885, Kiribati – also known as the Gilbert Islands – was the only place in Micronesia that remained free from European control (Campbell, 1989). Depopulation occurred at a staggering rate, perhaps reaching 50% at a regional scale, and Campbell (1989) identifies a suite of interacting factors as responsible for this decline:

“disease was the main agent...but demoralization resulting loss of traditions and powerlessness in the face of externally-induced change was an indispensable, if immeasurable component.”



describing herself and other non-Yapese-speaking individuals from the outlying islands, she specifies that they all come from a common place: “from the outer islands of Yap.” No more specific point of origin is given or suggested, neither for herself nor for any other individual referenced in conversation; this homogenized homeland and the common identity it references overrides more island-specific categorizations. Correspondingly, Anna consistently describes herself as speaking the Outer Island language in these situations; no mention is made of Ulithian as distinct from the other languages that occur in Yap’s outer territories, and no more specific language names are used. In these contexts, her language is “Outer Island language.”

When Anna arrived in Palau after spending several years on the main islands of Yap, her categorization of her cultural and linguistic identities shifted once again. Much of her personal time was spent with individuals from the southwestern Palauan states of Sonsorol and Tobi (with whom the author has an ongoing project), and it was in this context of social interaction that her third identity category appeared. This new identification is apparent in her discussions of her time in Palau. Anna often commented on the fact that she was becoming a southwest islander and, when pressed about the reasons for this transformation, she said that – since arriving in Palau –

“I feel better when I came around here [the place where many people from the southwest islands live], just like I’m staying home, for the language and the way we all do [things]. We have the same thing of sharing things, and, but in, in here Palau, Palau proper, especially that we don’t really understand what they’re blah, blah, blah, blah.”

The role of language in this recategorization cannot be overstated. She specifically identifies language as a major reason for her affiliation with the southwest islanders by describing it as something that makes her feel like she is at her home. She also contrasts her adopted linguistic identity – and, by extension, the linguistic identities of the people with whom she is affiliating – with the language spoken by Palauans and thus asserts both its distinctiveness and its veracity.

This marks a radical reconceptualization that once again changes the identification of Anna’s mother tongue. During an early elicitation session in the home of a southwest islander, Anna responded to a question about her language by saying that she speaks the “same language [as the people from the southwest islands].” She consistently responded to subsequent questions, spread over the course of multiple fieldtrips, by noting that her language is “the same” as that of the southwest islanders – as a group – and describing how they speak the same language as she does. Interestingly, this assumption of linguistic identity and knowledge extended beyond the realm of discourse and percolated into actual practice. When consultants from within the southwest island community were asked about linguistic or cultural matters, it was not uncommon for Anna to answer immediately and assertively. It is significant that

these responses, though occasionally modified or corrected, were never directly challenged and never seemed to cause offense. Similarly, her association with the language and culture of the southwest islands was never criticized or countered but instead appeared to be readily accepted.

This categorization of her mother tongue and accompanying cultural identity continued even as she planned her return to the Ulithi atoll. However, in conversations about these plans her claimed linguistic identity shifted back to Ulithian. She once again described Ulithian as “my language” and the language of “my place,” though it should be noted that this categorization was limited to conversations focused explicitly on her plans to return to her natal atoll and/or on the things she hoped to after her arrival. In other, and sometimes concurrent, conversations about her ongoing activities in Palau, she continued to associate herself culturally and linguistically with the southwest islanders and identify her language as “the same” as theirs. The simultaneous existence of these two categorizations was never perceived as problematic

### Language, Identity, and Context

Anna’s pattern of shifting identity is representative of a practice that is described here as language coalescence. This phenomenon can be defined as the situational merging of linguistic – and, by extension, cultural – categories as a means of fortifying the identities of groups and individuals and/or preserving their distinctiveness. The label is inspired by the phonetic process of coalescence (fusion), in which features from two or more segments merge into a single segment that combines features of the original ones. The underlying notion of amalgamation is key, since the merger of identities during linguistic coalescence that produces a distinctive new category and, by extension, a new mother tongue. It is important to emphasize that this process operates at the conceptual level rather than at the level of acted linguistic practice. What changes in situations of coalescence is not linguistic behavior but rather the definitional categories of linguistic affiliation.

Language coalescence thus relates to – but is markedly distinct from – patterns of language crossing (Rampton, 1999) and language bending (Ellis, 2007, 2016). Language crossing describes an individual’s use of a language not thought to belong to them in a way that crosses social or ethnic boundaries, challenges legitimacy, and/or challenges inherited ethnic identity (Rampton, 1999). It thus involves temporary changes in linguistic *practice* that challenge or otherwise interact with identity categories but do not categorically remake them. Language bending occurs when a speaker modifies their speech to incorporate features from the language of the hearer so that communication can occur even when the interlocutors do not know each other’s language (Ellis, 2007). Like language crossing, bending is rooted in an individual’s modification of their linguistic behavior. It thus involves situational changes

in linguistic practice but does not affect the identity categories that underlie language use.

Individuals or groups involved in language coalescence, on the other hand, do not modify their linguistic practices or alter the language(s) that they use but instead shift the ways in which they conceptualize and categorize the parameters of their linguistic identity. This practice is particularly common in post-colonial contexts, where long-term control by foreign entities destabilized traditional cultural and social systems while simultaneously – and very often systematically – stigmatizing or devaluing traditional linguistic and cultural practices in a way that imposed essentialized identities (for an expanded discussion, see Broch-Due, 2007). For populations that survived this process, the post-colonial landscape is a quagmire in which identities and social positions must be renegotiated in light of a radically altered sociocultural and political environment. Linguistic identities – which relate closely to their cultural counterparts and, by extension, to the position of an individual and their community within broader multicultural systems – are necessarily the focus of many of these negotiations. Coalescence allows new categories of linguistic identity to be defined and redefined as individuals encounter various dimensions of the post-colonial world and, in this way, facilitates the assertion and preservation of linguistic and cultural distinctiveness. This contributes to the reclamation of identity within post-colonial contexts by reassigning agency to a language’s speakers; it also generates new affiliative networks that enable the construction of sociocultural and linguistic categories capable of helping an individual or community confront a complex post-colonial reality.

Coalesced linguistic identities thus function as agentive social constructions through which old identities are reasserted or new ones are developed. This is particularly significant in situations of language endangerment or threat, where various adverse factors – including the relative dearth of speakers, declining social currency, and changing language attitudes – often hinder the ability or desire of a speaker or speaker group to claim a particular mother tongue. In these situations, language coalescence can bolster a linguistic identity in ways that allow individuals and communities to maintain their distinctiveness. This often prompts a positive shift in language attitudes and in perceptions of a language’s sociocultural currency that can contribute to maintenance; it also aids in processes of place-making that can help to legitimize the position and significance of an individual or a particular linguistic or cultural group. Broader levels of association – such as Anna’s reference to an “Outer Island language” and affiliation with a generalized southwest islander identity, or the common use of the southwest islander category in place of island-specific references to Sonsorol or Tobi – are often called upon during these negotiations and assigned a significance that contextually overrides more localized categorizations. The mother tongue, when considered in association with these processes, thus becomes a tool used to preserve and perpetuate linguistic identities through the

construction of contextually variable identities and sociocultural positions.

The role of context in processes of language coalescence requires further consideration. Anna’s experiences suggest that coalescence generally occurs in tandem with changes in her geographic location. While this observation is true in its essentials, it is essential to note that the co-varying factor is the geographic or spatial *reference* that anchors a particular conversation or interaction rather than her physical location. These references situate a coalesced identity in a particular dimension of the post-colonial world and thus provide additional commentary on both its significance for speakers and its position within broader social and cultural networks. They also condition the nature of the coalescence itself and affect the identities that are selected for fusion. For example, when the author first inquired about where she was from, Anna answered with “Ulithi, I speak [the] Ulithian language” and noted that “I cannot speak, really speak their [the southwest islanders’] language.” These comments occurred in Palau but within a conversation focused on her place of origin and family history; consequently, it was Ulithi – which served as the geographic reference point that anchored the conversation – that conditioned her linguistic affiliation rather than her physical location. Similarly, in conversations focused on her activities or experiences in Palau, Anna claimed that her language is “the same as theirs [the southwest islanders].” This identity was also claimed in the context of the author’s discussions with members of the southwest island community for which she was present and, in both situations, subsequent comments on her knowledge of Ulithian were countered with assertions that she speaks “their language.” Her knowledge of Ulithian was never directly denied, but it also was not mentioned – even under questioning – and was thoroughly supplanted by a coalesced linguistic category that rendered Ulithian situationally irrelevant.

It is also necessary to consider the fact that Anna’s use of language coalescence was never challenged by other individuals subsumed within the categories she described. For example, although her initial claim that she speaks the “same language [as people from the southwest islands]” occurred simultaneously with the answer – given by a woman from one of the southwest islands – that she speaks Ulithian, no one corrected her or seemed at all uncomfortable with this assertion. Interestingly, this implied acceptance developed quickly into vocalized support, and Anna’s claim was soon followed by comments that supported the validity of this coalesced identity. For example, the woman who initially said that Anna spoke Ulithian subsequently observed that “she’s from outer island of Yap, and, uh...[o]ur language is kind of, uh, [the same] because we came from there.” This appeal to history as justification for – or proof of – the existence of a coalesced linguistic identity was echoed in an elicitation session with Anna that took place months after this initial exchange. In this conversation, which focused on her production of baskets to sell at a local market, she again asserted that her language and culture are the

same as those of people from the southwest islands and then added the following:

“[be]cause I heard a story about them that they came from our place, they sail out and reach over there [the southwest islands], so they made their own family.”

The implication is that a common history lends credibility to the modern claim for a common linguistic identity. This illustrates the contextual nature of language coalescence by situating the relevant referential contexts within broader narratives, thus articulating them with other dimensions of cultural identity and heritage.

### Concluding Remarks

Language coalescence refers to the situational merging of linguistic and cultural categories as a means of fortifying the identities of groups and individuals and/or preserving their distinctiveness, particularly in contexts where cultural and linguistic identities have been affected by colonialism, missionization, or other external forces. It thus relates to – but is distinct from – language crossing and language bending, which generate temporary changes in linguistic behavior but do not alter the identity categories associated language use. Anna’s experiences clearly illustrate this distinction and reveal how coalescence functions as an agentive social practice through which old linguistic identities can be reasserted and new ones are developed. These categories of identity reflect the geographic or spatial reference that anchors the relevant conversation or interaction; these points of reference, in turn, help to situate coalesced identities within broader narratives that connect with other aspects of a particular cultural tradition. The concept of the mother tongue can thus function as tool used to perpetuate linguistic identity and construct contextually variable identities and sociocultural positions. In this way, it can be recast as a surrogate, capable of nurturing and maintaining linguistic and cultural distinctiveness in situations where traditional identities are not easily asserted.

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# Growth of Nagamese in Relation to Indigenous Naga Languages

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## Abstract

Nagamese, the lingua franca of Nagaland, is today perceived to be a threat to indigenous languages and Naga culture itself. This fear, it is argued, is partly reflected in trends discerned from Census of India data. There has been a growth of multilingualism in Nagaland, with pidginised Assamese or Nagamese being reported as a subsidiary language by significantly larger proportions of people over time. It appears that there is a process underway that has relatively disadvantaged indigenous languages.

## Introduction

In Nagaland, with more and more young people preferring to, and having to converse in Nagamese (pidginised Assamese), there is a growing fear that the diverse indigenous tribal languages will soon no longer be used. Nagamese is an Indo-Aryan language with Assamese as the main lexical donor. Since Naga indigenous languages have oral literature, and no script, the preservation of these languages necessitates that people continue to speak the language. Even as some oral literature has been documented in the recent past using the roman script, the non-usage of a language is certainly not desirable. A language frames a people's mode of thinking, their history, their culture, and the way they see the world around them. Preliminary perusal of census of India data over the past few decades, show that along with English and Hindi, Nagamese (recorded as Assamese in the surveys) has been growing rather rapidly as second and third languages. This growth, reinforces what is seen in Nagaland today, where bilingualism and multilingualism is becoming essential for day-to-day living, more so in urban spaces. For a Naga of a particular tribe (or for that matter anybody) to move to an urban centre in Nagaland, to work or live, she/he cannot operate comfortably without the knowledge of Nagamese. However, English, the official language, enjoys a higher status and is considered essential for better quality employment, social and economic mobility, assuring a better future. Even as Nagamese (unlike English and Hindi) is not taught in schools and there exists no formal mode for its teaching, it is being used in state-run radio channels, in films, and even of late a newspaper (which of course uses the roman script). Further, Nagamese churches have also been established in recent times. It would be

instructive to note that no indigenous language is the medium of education in schools in Nagaland.

This paper traces the longer history of the growth of Nagamese from the early accounts of the language that go back to the pre-colonial period, to the present day where Nagamese is fast becoming the primary medium of communication for larger and larger numbers of people. What is most striking is the rather recent push to use Nagamese among Nagas who reside in Burma. I hope to discuss the various economic and socio-political influences that certainly played a role in the growth of Nagamese. For instance, the proximity with the Assam plains, the growing need to trade with the outside world, and the felt need for a unifying language among the Nagas, especially in post-independence India. In conclusion, an attempt is made to understand the ways in which indigenous language decline can be addressed.

## Nagamese

When there were reports about the Indian Prime Minister's Office wanting to "promote" Nagamese in December last year (nelive.in, 2015), it stirred a debate in Naga society. Groups articulated views against such a move, as it would adversely affect the culture and language of Nagas, while some others argued that Nagamese must be promoted as it has indeed been a unifying language for the Nagas.

As per the census of India 2011, Nagaland has a population of 19,80,602, and spans 16,579 square kilometres. The state is predominantly inhabited by a people that have come to be known as the Nagas. The Nagas comprise a large number of tribes that inhabited the hills of the region that go beyond present-day Nagaland state that was formed in 1963, into parts of bordering Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, and Myanmar (Burma). There are 17 major tribes that

comprise the Nagas in Nagaland with over 20 distinct unintelligible languages without scripts. However, over the last century (and more so in the last three decades), one language—Nagamese—has grown to become a lingua franca of the Nagas in Nagaland, especially in urban centres.

Nagamese is a language that is so widely used in Naga society today that the need for the use of indigenous languages has declined considerably. For instance, a Naga child growing up in an urban centre, there could possibly be no need to learn or use their “mother tongue.” For any interaction, except perhaps with family or other members of the particular tribe, Nagamese fulfils all communication needs for day-to-day functioning. This phenomenon is partly the motivation to understand how a language like Nagamese, even as it does “unite” Naga tribes in certain ways, is today being perceived as a threat to the language diversity of the Naga people.

The main lexical donor of Nagamese is Assamese, the language of the plains people in Assam. The Nagamese lexicon draws on words and expressions from Hindi, English and Naga languages as well. Nagamese is said to be an expanded pidgin<sup>1</sup> that is starting to creolise in some parts of Nagaland, and is already a creole<sup>2</sup> in Dimapur (Bhattacharjya, 1994), the state’s commercial centre located in the plains bordering Assam. Nagamese, as already mentioned, is pidginised Assamese or more or so imperfectly learned Assamese, with Assamese as the main lexical donor with words and expressions borrowed from English, Hindi and Naga languages.

Nagamese has served as a useful tool for communication amongst the Nagas and with those non-Nagas who migrate to Nagaland. Nagamese like any other pidgin has a very limited vocabulary with many Hindi and English words and a very simple language structure which makes it easy for even non-Nagas to understand and learn. Also, for Nagas who speak Nagamese, learning and understanding Hindi, Assamese and Bengali becomes easier.

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1 “A pidgin is a reduced language that results from extended contact between groups of people with no language in common; it evolves when they need some means of verbal communication” (Holm, 1988: 4).

2 “In contrast to a pidgin, a creole is often defined as a pidgin that has become the first language of a new generation of speakers. ‘Creoles arise when pidgins become mother tongues.’ A creole, therefore, is a ‘normal’ language in almost every sense (Aitchison, 1994). Holmes (1992 p 95) says that ‘A creole is a pidgin which has expanded in structure and vocabulary to express the range of meanings and serve the range of functions required of a first language’” (Wardhaugh, 2006: 59).

## History of Nagamese

A society such as the Nagas that had no languages with script and therefore no written literature necessitates a reliance on history that is largely written from the “outside”. The history and origin of Nagamese is therefore rather obscure with mentions of their existence arising from interactions with societies that have documented histories. The Nagas are indeed a hill people, located adjacent to predominantly rice-growing valley states of the Assamese (Ahoms, Kacharis, etc) and Meiteis. These historical interactions are important and certainly need to be acknowledged to understand cultural and indeed language influences.<sup>3</sup> It is through the recorded histories of these surrounding valley states, British military personnel, and travellers that some understanding of Naga history can be pieced together.

“The oldest of the reports about Nagas date from the thirteenth century, when Shukapha, the Ahom King, came with his army over the mountains from Burma. Passing through the land of the Nagas, he conquered many villages with the greatest cruelty” (cited in Record R90577). “The earliest known record of the [Nagamese] language can be found in Hutton (1921), who mentions “the ‘pigeon’ Assamese, which forms the lingua franca of the Naga Hills, and through the medium of which most of the information necessary for this monograph has been collected” (Hutton 1921: 327)” (cited in Velupillai, 2015: 266).

M V Sreedhar (1985) claims that one of the first references to Nagamese is in the 1841 tour diary of Lt. Bigges, who had met people from the Naga hills who spoke Assamese. This is often cited in works on Nagamese. It is faulty to assume that the language spoken was “Nagamese,” when it is stated in the diary as “Assamese.” It is possible that persons could probably speak both proper Assamese and their indigenous languages. Indeed, many Nagas from the older generation, at least of certain tribes, could speak Assamese fluently, and this certainly could have contributed towards the shaping of Nagamese.

Historical accounts have observed the relationship between the Ahoms and the Nagas since the 13th century.<sup>4</sup> These accounts mention records of various hostile as well as amicable relations among the Nagas and the Ahoms, indicating that the Naga’s were in constant contact with the people from the plains. The

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3 James C Scott’s *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (2009) puts forth a thought provoking case to understand the socio-political and economic dynamics of hill-valley interactions, orality and cultural influences.

<sup>4</sup> One of the earliest accounts can be found in E.A. Gait’s, *The History of Assam*. Alexander Mackenzie’s *North Eastern Frontier of India* and Furer-Haimendorf’s *The Naked Nagas* etc.

Ahoms who invaded Assam in 1228 A D (Gait, 1906) are said to be Tai language speaking people who later switched to Assamese. “Incidentally, literate Ahoms retained the Tai language and script well until the end of the 17th century. In that century of Ahom-Mughal conflicts, this language first coexisted with and then was progressively replaced by Assamese (Asamiya) at and outside the Court. After a phase of bilingualism, it finally died a natural death in Assam” (Guha, 1983: 9).

The Ahoms enforced some sort of control over the Naga hills, and granted barter trade and economic interactions with the Nagas on their insistence (Dube, 2010). One often finds mention of the Nagas providing shelter to the Ahoms at times of wars and there were even instances of inter-marriage. These tribes were expected to pay tribute to the rajas of Assam. The Nagas were known for supplying salt to the plains, and a mutual trading relationship existed. In 1839, according to Dube (2010) there was a substantial market for salt and also says that around 20 salt wells were controlled by the Assam raja. This is indicative of the long-standing interactions between the Nagas and the people of the Assam plains.

It was only by 1826 that the British annexed the Ahom kingdom, bringing an end to their centuries of rule. In 1832 the British are said to have come into such contact with the Naga tribes adjoining the Assam plains. The British non-interference policy failed which led to them taking over Angami controlled territories. The British established a district headquarters at Samaguting in 1866, which is today known as Chumukedima, which is almost indistinguishable from Dimapur, the commercial city of Nagaland that borders Assam state (Gait, 1906).

Through the 19<sup>th</sup> century the British led many expeditions to the Naga hills and by 1866 the British decided to take control of some Naga territories. In 1878, Kohima was chosen as the headquarters of the Naga Hill district, which is today the capital of Nagaland state. The Naga Hills district continued to exist post India’s Independence as part of Assam state.

Another development of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the coming of Western missionaries who were already by then operating in the Assam plains and were familiar with Assamese language, who gradually began work in the Naga hills. Further, the administrative officers and staff that the British were deploying in Naga territories under their control were at least in large part Assamese speaking people from the plains (Boruah 1993).

The American missionaries who came towards the end of the 19th century introduced writing through the Roman script. The missionaries who came to preach Christianity also played the role as linguists, translating the Bible into the local languages and teaching the locals the Roman alphabets and helped educate by opening education institutions.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was an influx of non-Nagas as well into Dimapur, which had railway connectivity from the early 1900s. The people who moved in were largely Hindi and Bengali speakers, a result of trading activities in the city, which continues to be the economic hub of Nagaland state today.

The changes that have occurred since the formation of Nagaland state will be discussed in a later section.

### Structure of Nagamese

As mentioned earlier the main lexical donor of Nagamese is Assamese. And like many other Pidgins, Nagamese is reduced in structure but not as much as pidgin languages. This section is aimed at providing a brief sketch of the structure of the language. Sreedhar (1985) lists twenty-one consonants, /p, b, ph, m, w, t, d, n, s, th, l, c, j, ch, ʃ, k, g, ŋ, kh, h, j/, and six vowels, /i, e, a, ə, o, u/ in Nagamese. The Assamese phoneme inventory also consists of twenty-one consonants but eight vowels.<sup>5</sup> According to Bhattacharjya (1994), Nagamese has seven case, it has two tense and three aspects. The language is SOV in structure just like its donor language. There is no gender (which Assamese has). Nagamese has no tones unlike the other Naga languages. All studies on Nagamese seem to categorise it as nominative- accusative but data suggest otherwise. (a more complex case marking like many of the Naga languages). Example 1-3 in which, 1 & 2 are transitive sentences and 3 an intransitive sentence show an ergative- absolutive system. Whereas example 5 & 7 shows a nominative system.

1. john para bhat pakai-she  
John (CM) rice  $\emptyset$  cook-pst  
John cooked the rice
2. John para moi ke mari -she  
John (CM) 1sg dat beat-past  
John hit me
3. John muri- she  
John  $\emptyset$  die-pst  
John died

For those interested, examples 4-7 are illustrative of the similarities between Nagamese and Assamese. The Assamese examples (4) and (6) are from Post (2004). The Nagamese data are self-contributed and is the kind spoken in Dimapur.

4. mOi likh -i kha-l -u Assamese  
1.NOM write-NF eat -PST-1.SUB  
'I wrote (and then) ate'

<sup>5</sup> Resource Centre for Indian Language Technology Solutions. Phase 2, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, <http://www.iitg.ernet.in/rcilts/assamese.html>.

- |    |   |          |
|----|---|----------|
| 5. | Moi likh-i kena kha-i she<br>I Nom. wrote and ate<br>'I wrote and ate'        | Nagamese |
| 6. | mOi xOhai kor -i di -l -u<br>1.NOM help do -NF give -PST -1.SUB<br>'I helped' | Assamese |
| 7. | Moi modot kori-di she<br>1sg. Nom help did-gave<br>'I helped'                 | Nagamese |

Nagamese is also going through a process of relexification. Over the years the language has changed lexically. Which can be a result of more language contact over the past few decades. The Nagamese spoken by the older generation was more like Assamese than the Nagamese spoken by today's generation. Drawing on a few words documented by Sreedhar (1985) and Bhattacharjya (2001), the relexified contemporary forms of the words are presented in the following list. The words in italics are relexified words and are my examples.

jontu→*janwar* (animals); bilak→*khan* (plural marker); bosa→*bacca* (child); suali→*maiki* (girl, female); lora→*mota* (boy, male); hui/huy→*ghuma* (sleep); bagisa→*bagan* (garden); pise→*khaise* (drink).

Many Naga, Hindi and English words have also found their way into the Nagamese lexicon. The indigenous food items of the Nagas have been incorporated into the Nagamese lexicon. Names of food like Axone, (fermented soya-beans) which is a word from the Sumi language (a food item indigenous to the Sema tribe). Anishi (made out of Yam leaves) is a Chungli word, which is an indigenous food item of the Ao tribes are commonly used and understood by most Nagamese speakers. Most of the Naga words found in Nagamese vary from region to region depending on which tribe resides in the region and which tribal language is spoken there. A lot of code-mixing also takes place depending on the domain of its use. Words like Sabji-vegetables, hawa- wind etc. are some Hindi words among many found in Nagamese. English words like, table, slipper, sofa, pant, skirt, window, morning, light are also commonly used in Nagamese. In the urban areas among the younger English speaking generation words from English are very commonly and widely used.

For more on language structure and grammar, refer, Bhattacharjya 1991, M V Sreedhar's *Standardized grammar of Naga Pidgin* (1985), and B K Boruah's *Nagamese, the language of Nagaland* (1993)

### Lingua Franca

The Nagas consist of many tribes and their territory extend beyond the present-day Nagaland as mentioned

earlier. They are located mostly in Nagaland, the hilly areas of Manipur, the North Cachar district of Assam, north-eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh and in Myanmar (earlier known as Burma) they are basically found in the Sagaing division and Kachin state. Nagamese is spoken pre-dominantly by the Nagas in Nagaland, while Nagas in Manipur residing in the Imphal valley use Meithei as the lingua franca. Also, Meithei is taught in the schools of Manipur. The Nagas in Burma usually use Burmese as a lingua franca. The Nagas in Arunachal Pradesh and Burma (though not all) can also understand and speak some Nagamese, mainly due to the insurgent movement, which took Nagamese to these parts. Recently, certain sections of the Nagas in Burma have proposed to make Nagamese their official language in Burma (although most Nagas in Burma do not speak Nagamese). Though, this push appears to be more a way of resisting the Burmese state by asserting their identity as Nagas. Quite contrary to the Nagas in Burma, the Nagas in Nagaland (though not all) hold the view that Nagamese should not be encouraged, and must be spoken only if unavoidable, as it limits the scope of an individual and it is increasingly considered the primary cause of indigenous language endangerment.

A few decades ago, Nagamese was used when one had to interact with someone from outside the tribe. Of late Nagamese has even found a place within homes, with some people using Nagamese at home and many preferring or choosing to speak in Nagamese with peers who speak the same indigenous language as well.

Pidgins and creoles are usually not the most sought after languages to learn, Likewise, Nagamese is always looked at with prejudice by large sections of the Naga society. Regardless of this prejudice, it managed to not only survive, but also thrived and garnered more numbers of speakers over the years. Very often the older generation discourage the younger generation to use Nagamese.

It is noteworthy that despite Nagamese being a language in flux, it has been for many years been used on state-radio channels and television programmes. There is indeed, a small, but blossoming film industry as well in Nagaland. There is also a newspaper that began publication in December 2013, written in Roman script (Kumar 2014). The need for a lingua franca in a multiple-language region like Nagaland is in many ways inevitable. If not Nagamese, Hindi (in a modified form) could have been the lingua franca (like in Arunachal Pradesh) or even English could have been one, which is partly the case within certain educated elites of Nagaland. Whichever the lingua franca, it will be perceived as a threat to the indigenous languages.

**Nagamese Today** It is highly unlikely to find someone living in the urban centres in Nagaland who do not

speak or understand Nagamese. This is an indication of where Nagamese is headed today.

There are mixed reactions to this widespread use of Nagamese and the reports of the Prime Minister's Office seeking to "promote" Nagamese. There are sections of Naga society, largely within Nagaland that fear that Naga languages and thereby the cultures are threatened by the increasing reliance on Nagamese. Angami Public Organization (APO) and three apex organizations of the Ao community expressed their disapproval towards the proposal made by the Prime Minister's office to promote Nagamese as the official language of Nagaland. This proposal not only exacerbated the fear among the Nagas that with a move like this, the already vulnerable indigenous Naga languages will soon be endangered but also raised the doubts of the people towards the intention of such a proposal.

In article by Hesheto Y Chishi (2016), Director, Indigenous Cultural Society (ICS), Nagaland, raises apprehensions about the growth of Nagamese. Though he acknowledges the benefits of multilingualism in garnering a broader world view, he is worried that Nagamese is putting Naga language and culture at risk. However, the Nagamese Baptist Churches Association (NBCA) welcomes this proposal and opines that Nagamese has helped bring the people together and one should work towards its development. The NBCA has produced a Nagamese dictionary, hymns and gospel song books, and is also currently working towards the translation of the New Testament into Nagamese.

### Census Data Trends

The growth of Nagamese, though apparent for those familiar with Naga society, is difficult to chart over time. One possible way is to use available Census of India data. To analyse this data, one key assumption is made. Nagamese is considered by this author to be pidginised Assamese for the purposes of the Census of India.<sup>6</sup> This is because any knowledge of Naga society will draw one to the conclusion that the growth in Assamese speakers, especially as subsidiary language speakers, must be seen as indicative of the growth of Nagamese (which is pidginised Assamese). Therefore, in Nagaland the growth in bi- and multi-lingualism with Assamese as at least one of the subsidiary languages spoken could be considered as an indication of the growth of Nagamese.

To begin with a perusal of data available from the Census of Assam from 1951 for the Naga Hills

<sup>6</sup> Mention of Nagamese was only found in the 2011 census. The data on language of this census is not yet available. Earlier censuses did not consider Nagamese a language. They recorded only Assamese.

District,<sup>7</sup> a part of what is modern-day Nagaland, gives us some idea of languages known at the time. From Table 1 it is clear that monolingualism was a distinctive feature of all speakers of Naga indigenous languages. A very small proportion of people spoke any language other than their tribe languages. Assamese (or its pidginized form) appeared to be more widely used than Hindi at the time. The Naga Hill District is the region right next to the Assam plains, in close contact with the plains people. The Angamis, Aos, and some others, traditionally lived in these regions. The data in Table 1 is indicative of which tribes resided in the region.

Table 1 indicates that most tribe language speakers tended to speak only one language, but some reported that they could speak Assamese (that probably included its pidginised form). Compare Table 1 with Table 2 and Table 3, and one can see that a lot has changed by the turn of the century.

Language	Total Speakers (TS)	Monolinguals (% of TS)	Subsidiary Language Assamese (% of TS)
English	16	31.3	25.0
Assamese	1,264	78.0	0.0
Angami	28,315	97.2	2.5
Ao	48,608	88.6	10.6
Chakhesang	25,688	99.2	0.6
Chakru	31	90.3	9.7
Chang	532	96.8	3.2
Konyak	8,814	95.0	4.8
Kuki	2,478	89.8	7.9
Lotha	22,392	71.9	27.1
Phom	1,003	77.9	22.1
Rengma	5,248	96.1	3.9
Sangtam	5,026	96.3	3.3
Sema	39,618	96.7	3.1
Yimchungre	39	97.4	2.6
Zeliang	6,602	97.6	2.0
Hindi	809	46.2	47.6

Table 1: Language use in 1951 in Naga Hill District. Assamese here could be considered at least in part to

<sup>7</sup> The district of the Naga Hills covers an area of 4,276.1 squares miles. To its north is Sibsagar district, on the west is United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, to the south is the State of Manipur, and on the east is the Naga Tribal Area. It has two subdivisions, Kohima and Mokokchung.

be Nagamese. Source: Naga Hills District Census Handbook, Census of Assam, 1951.

	Total Speakers (TS)	Mono- lingual % of TS	Also speak Assamese % of TS	Also speak English % of TS
English	198	48.0	24.2	0.0
Assamese	13,144	53.4	0.0	22.6
Angami	97,433	56.0	30.4	26.0
Ao	1,69,837	69.9	11.5	22.0
Chakhesang	85,873	80.5	44.9	43.1
Chakru/Chokri	48,083	72.8	14.1	14.6
Khezha	8,091	54.4	25.6	3.0
Chang	32,369	80.7	13.2	6.0
Khiemnungan	23,543	88.4	7.6	5.0
Konyak	1,37,539	79.3	14.1	10.6
Kuki	14,626	59.3	25.6	19.1
Lotha	84,384	63.3	20.0	25.1
Phom	65,336	70.2	18.1	11.2
Pochury	10,758	54.7	40.2	14.7
Rengma	32,811	79.0	17.0	11.0
Sangtam	47,447	72.3	17.6	9.6
Sema	1,52,123	70.5	14.5	18.5
Yimchungre	45,880	79.8	15.6	7.1
Zeliang	33,825	68.2	13.6	20.2
Zemi	4,881	64.3	13.5	18.6

Table 2: Language use and bi-and tri-lingualism from Census of India 1991. Note: This data is for all speakers of a language in Nagaland state. 'Also speak' indicates that these languages are either considered second or third languages by respondents to the census.

	Total Speakers (TS)	Mono- lingual % of TS	Also speak Assamese % of TS	Also speak English % of TS
English	413	53.8	14.8	0.0
Assamese	16,813	43.3	0.0	7.2
Angami	1,31,737	44.0	24.2	37.8
Ao	2,57,500	34.3	35.7	43.2
Chakhesang	1,53,837	63.0	38.3	41.6
Chakru/Chokri	83,506	55.3	26.2	26.8
Khezha	40,632	51.8	18.0	29.4
Chang	62,347	73.8	8.5	16.8
Khiemnungan	37,752	80.5	5.5	13.0
Konyak	2,48,002	69.2	16.8	18.6
Kuki	16,846	33.9	43.3	33.8
Lotha	1,68,356	40.2	32.7	40.5
Phom	1,22,454	59.1	28.4	19.6
Pochury	16,681	46.2	46.7	16.8
Rengma	58,590	40.8	40.7	31.8
Sangtam	84,150	63.4	8.4	26.6
Sema	92,884	39.4	25.2	42.4
Yimchungre	92,092	71.8	3.6	22.2
Zeliang	61,492	52.6	16.5	32.9
Zemi	10,642	53.4	25.8	28.0

Table 3: Language use and bi-and tri-lingualism from Census of India 2001. Note: same as Table 2.

Table 2 and Table 3 show first of all a decline in the proportion of people who speak only their tribe languages. This drop in monolingual speakers varies across tribes. The other trend that must be noted is that among the subsidiary languages spoken, Assamese (in its pidginised form) figures prominently. The growth of English and indeed Hindi (not shown in tables) is not unexpected, as these languages are taught in schools and will be expected to grow over time.

Between 1991 and 2001, every single tribe language shows a decline in proportion of those who speak only their tribe language. This in itself is not surprising, as English and Hindi (among other languages) being taught at school. This is apparent with the growth of English as either second or third language. All tribe language speakers except Chakhesang speakers, show an increased proportion of those reporting the knowledge of English. Over the same decade, those reporting the knowledge of Assamese (in its pidginised form) grew unevenly, but substantially. For instance, Ao and Rengma speakers reported a growth of nearly 24 percentage points. Six language speaker groups (Angami, Chakhesang, Khezha<sup>8</sup>, Chang, Khiemnungan, Sangtam and Yimchungre) showed a decline in proportion of persons reporting the use of Assamese. This however, does not indicate an absolute decline in numbers of those reporting themselves as speakers of the language (except for Sangtam and Yimchungre, which declined in absolute terms by 1,321 and 3,847 persons respectively). All other language speakers reported the knowledge of Assamese in larger numbers in 2001 than in 1991.

It is noteworthy to recognise that Ghosh and Kumar (2005) and Sreedhar (1985) were sceptical about Nagamese's appeal among the Nagas. They expected that Nagamese would eventually die out, unless concerted state support is provided. Sreedhar's (1976) Standardisation of Naga Pidgin was an attempt to ensure that Nagamese is spoken more widely and gains acceptance among Nagas. However, as the data shows, Nagamese is spoken more widely than ever before, and threatens the very existence of indigenous Naga languages.

### Naga Languages

Out of the 191 Indian languages that are classified as endangered or vulnerable, all the Naga languages fall under the vulnerable category. Vulnerable would mean there are (relatively few) speakers and the language is restricted within certain domains, and there is a likelihood of the language being endangered if

<sup>8</sup> Chakhesang tribe speak Khezha and Chakru/Chokri. It is unclear why the Census of India has recorded Chakhesang speakers separately from these two languages. I was unable to find out what was behind this choice of classification in the census at the time of writing.

conscious care is not taken. All Naga indigenous languages are considered vulnerable according to the *UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. Language endangerment can be due to various reasons. Naga languages are classified in such a way primarily due to the number of speakers, who are relatively few. Naga languages are not used formally for higher education and are limited even at the school level.<sup>9</sup> The languages are used only within a restricted domain (mostly within the household or community).

One should also note that even as indigenous languages are taught in the school curriculum, it is always the so-called standard variety. This standard variety is usually a result of western missionaries who translated the Bible into indigenous languages. For instance, The Aos have pre-dominantly two varieties of language, Chungli and Mongsen. The missionaries happened to translate the Bible into Chungli because the first village they happened to reside in or rather got accepted into, was a Chungli-speaking village. Thus, Chungli came to be considered the standard variety though the two varieties of Ao are not mutually intelligible. Mongsen speakers therefore need to learn the Chungli variety whereas Chungli speakers do not need a knowledge of Mongsen, as prayers and songs in the church are conducted in Chungli. This is a phenomenon seen in many Naga languages like Tenediye which is a language spoken by the Angamis but were used by other tribes like Chakesang as well (though now certain section of the Chakesangs have started to use their own language). Almost all the tribes of Nagaland have various dialects within its language, in some cases almost unintelligible but in almost all cases only one variety is used for all formal usage which side-lines the other variety and hence leaves them at a disadvantage. This is one part of the problem concerning language endangerment. These kinds of historical factors have also no doubt played a role in changing the relative significance of languages, their use, and proliferation. Though, this is an aspect that must be explored, it is not the purpose of this paper to delve into the relative significance of languages and the historical roots of such occurrences.

Creoles or pidgins are a product of language contact and especially so when there is contact with a dominant language group. There is, however, no such dominant Naga language in the context of Nagaland that could serve the purpose of communication amongst the different Naga tribes. Though, there are very limited local phenomenon of this kind, for instance persons of the Lotha tribe residing in an Ao area, where there is a real need to learn the language for day-to-day functioning may learn Ao.

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<sup>9</sup> Though, some indigenous languages are taught at the school level, this mostly in rural areas. In urban areas, the diversity of languages makes it impractical to teach in indigenous languages.

## Protection Policies

A language has words or expressions about one's culture, identity, ideas and symbols which "other" languages may not hold or express. Losing a language leads to loss of knowledge of history and culture and a particular kind of worldview and perspective. Especially so when a language has an oral tradition with no script and written literature. This is the case with all the Naga languages, which came into existence in the world of written literature only towards the end of the late nineteenth century. The Nagas have no records of any form about their history or origin other than the oral tradition of passing on information from one generation to the other in the forms of songs and folktales.

Most of the languages have been already documented but how does one ensure the people continue to speak the indigenous language? Language change is inevitable. But one can definitely frame policies to prevent language from going extinct. But being monolingual is not the only alternative, one can be bilingual or multilingual which in fact have proven advantages.

For a language to sustain one has to mainly target the youth because they are the future generation. One can only encourage the younger generation to speak the language by creating awareness about the importance of language and hoping they teach their children in the future. To ensure that the tribal languages continue to be spoken one can undertake various measures, although it can be quite taxing in the context of Nagaland, where there are several different tribal languages spoken with variations and varieties even within a language. Conscious effort has to be put in by all individuals and the state government has to come up with dedicated language preservation policies

One major step can be taken in terms of education. Mother-tongue education should be made mandatory across all schools. Though there are mother tongue subjects taught in the schools till 10th standard, (except for Tenediye which even has a department in the Nagaland University) which are mostly taught only in the rural areas and smaller towns of a particular region belonging to a particular tribe. The schools in the urban areas which host a mixture of children from different tribes do not find it feasible to keep a teacher each for all the languages which restricts the students to either opt for Hindi or "Alternative English" instead of indigenous mother tongues. However, of late, some schools in the state capital, Kohima, are making Tenediye a compulsory subject for students. Such a move should be an example for other schools too and not only Tenediye, but for all the other tribal languages as well. It is most important in the urban centres where the younger children speak Nagamese rather than their mother tongue. Also like the Tenediye department in

the Nagaland University, the government should establish departments for all the languages.

Other steps that one can take for the promotion of the tribal languages are making movies, documentaries, music videos in the indigenous languages that cater to the young people. Other international and national movies and TV shows can also be dubbed into the tribal languages.

Another vital step that can be taken to preserve the tribal languages is to conduct exchange programmes for students from urban and rural areas. Since the tribal languages are the primary language spoken in the villages, students from the urban areas could be sent to the rural areas and vice versa, to help learn the culture and the language more efficiently.

The UNESCO summarises succinctly what it takes to protect languages from going out of use.

The most important thing that can be done to keep a language from disappearing is to create favourable conditions for its speakers to speak the language and teach it to their children. This often requires national policies that recognize and protect minority languages, education systems that promote mother-tongue instruction, and creative collaboration between community members and linguists to develop a writing system and introduce formal instruction in the language. Since the most crucial factor is the attitude of the speaker community toward its own language, it is essential to create a social and political environment that encourages multilingualism and respect for minority languages so that speaking such a language is an asset rather than a liability.

Only such proactive efforts to promote language use and social engagement can perhaps lead to preservation, which here will have to necessarily mean an environment that will enable people continue to speak and hopefully think in their languages.

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# **A Pragmatic Study of ‘Parushi’ as a Linguistic Variety used by the Nath Panthi Dauri Gosavi People**

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## **Abstract**

A consequence of colonialism is the extensive classification of linguistic varieties, communities and peoples. In the 1871 Criminal Tribes Act entire communities were labelled as ‘criminals’ and ‘nomads’ leading to the state oppression of these people. The present paper is based on a study of one such group the Nath Panthi Dauri Gosavi (NPDG), a community classified as a nomadic tribe in Maharashtra. A large number of people belonging to this community are nomads and who sustain themselves through various forms of begging. Two linguistic varieties are used by NPDG for in-group communication: Dauri Gosavi Marathi (DGM) and Parushi. DGM is the mother tongue of NPDG people. Parushi is a variety which these people use for in-group communication in the presence of strangers, especially if they perceive some sort of danger due to their presence. The paper concerns itself with the pragmatics of use of Parushi. The paper presents Parushi as a special lexicon developed through a process of pidginization by the NPDG people within Marathi grammar. The paper argues that Parushi serves as a wall of defence which the NPDG people have developed to protect themselves from the unrelenting hostility of the state as well as sedentary peoples.

## **0. Introduction**

The paper seeks to examine the relationship between colonialism and linguistic practices, especially in the Indian subcontinent, and its relation with language endangerment. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section examines the colonial encounter with cultural variation in general and linguistic variation in particular, along with the responses to this encounter both by the colonizers and the colonized. Section 2 examines the patterns of language use in the Nath Panthi Davri Gosavi community. This section also provides a characterization of Parushi as a linguistic variety. Section 3 examines the pragmatics of Parushi in this overall pattern of language-use. Section 4 relates the issues discussed in Section 1, 2 & 3 and the challenges they pose to efforts in stemming language endangerment.

### **1. Colonialism and Linguistic Variation**

Though linguistic variation was not unknown in Europe before the colonial encounter, such variation was reducible to ‘universal’ forms of Greek & Latin. One of the major linguistic consequences of European colonialism has been its attempts to come to terms with the immense linguistic variation which the Europeans encountered during their spread throughout the globe. A large part of this variation was based on oral cultures. The discipline of Linguistics is an outcome of the attempts of European colonizers to make these cultures accessible to them. Before we examine the nature of these attempts, let us attempt a characterization of colonialism.

### **1.1. What is Colonialism?**

Colonialism, a form of imperialism, produces and reproduces itself through control of resources – natural, social, economic and cultural – which by the law of natural justice rightfully belongs to different peoples all over the planet. For effective control over the resources, the colonizers need to implement a system of governance which furthers its interests. For the purpose of the present paper let us flag but two aspects of this system:

First, the ecology of the colonized is recreated in the image of the colonizers through a system of categorization and classification which furthers the interests of the colonizers. Second, the colonial system leads to deflationary tendencies in the cultural capital of the colonized. Language shift and language loss is a result of these tendencies.

A caveat is in order here: One should not view the contact and conflict between the colonizers and the colonized as a contact and conflict between the ‘West’ and the ‘East’. There exists a close affinity and collaboration between the colonizers, both external and internal, which indicates a very basic trait of colonialism: colonialism does not annihilate pre-existing hierarchical structures but rather modifies them to suit its interest. Colonialism progresses on the ladder of pre-existing hierarchy.

### **1.2 Colonialism and the notion of ‘Language’**

The development of Modern Linguistics, which rose through the encounter of the colonizers and the

colonized in the Indian subcontinent, bears testimony to the complexity of the phenomena of colonialism. The European colonizers were perplexed not only by the complexity of the linguistic situation in the Indian subcontinent but also the folk conceptualization of it, as is evident in the following quote:

Few natives at the present day are able to comprehend the idea denoted by the words of 'a language'. Dialects they know and understand. They separate them and distinguish them with a meticulous, hair-slitting subtlety, which to us seems unnecessary and absurd; but their minds are not trained to grasp the conception, so familiar to us, of a general term embracing a number of interconnected dialects. It is as if we, in England, spoke of 'Somersetshire' and 'Yorkshire' dialects but never used the term 'English language'. It thus follows that, while dialect-names in the following pages have been taken from indigenous nomenclature, nearly all the language-names have been invented by the Europeans. Some of them, such as 'Bengali', 'Assamese', and the like, are founded on words which have received English citizenship, and are not real Indian words at all; while others, like 'Hindustani', 'Bihari' and so forth, are based on already existing names of countries or nationalities.

(Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. I 1909: 350-351.)

The Europeans sought to 'rectify' the situation and capture the unity of 'languages' by writing grammars of Modern Indian Languages. Their negative evaluation of the situation led to responses from Indian nationalist scholars, which sought to address the issue by writing their own grammars of their 'languages' and putting their linguistic varieties in 'order' and classifying them as 'languages' i.e. unified systems of communication, as seen in the following quote by Dadoba Pandurang:

The main purpose (of writing this grammar) is to regulate, as far as possible, Marathi Language, which is very much cluttered because nobody ever tried to regulate her till date, and which is matted with lots of tangles, since nobody did a coiffure for her with a comb of grammar and bring her in a state of resolution by untangling some layers of tangles that were entangled for a long time.

(cited in Damle 2012.)

While the Europeans wrote grammars of modern Indian languages in active collaboration with the 'natives', most notably the Brahmins, the nationalist scholars' response was largely confined by the intellectual framework adopted by the colonizers. This intellectual framework is best known through the work of the philosopher Herder and we shall here refer to it as the Herderian conception of language (Hymes, 1973). This conception seeks to identify unity among the people who speak of a 'language'. In face of the immense linguistic diversity

which one observes, this unity can only be imagined, constituting an 'ethos' which unites the people speaking the language as 'natives'.

The complexity of the colonial encounter becomes all the more engrossing if one looks for the underlying intellectual basis of the above-mentioned engagement and collaboration between the colonizers and the natives. Modern Linguistics derives its methods from Sanskrit scholarship which thrived in Ancient India and which the Europeans discovered in the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> century. Received Modern Linguistics is decidedly Paninian in character. Such movements and exchanges between the colonizers and the colonized make the categories 'West' and 'East' even more superfluous, especially in Linguistics. The result of this sort of movements and exchanges has been the wide acceptance of the Herderian conception of language, where the boundaries of language and that of community coincide. This 'one community – one language' unit was superimposed on the vast linguistic resources of the subcontinent.

### 1.3 Classifying 'Languages'

Linguistic varieties were classified into various languages which were documented and described by the Colonial State. The monumental efforts of Grierson is an excellent example of such an enterprise. The effects of this colonial exercise on the lives of people living in the subcontinent has been immense.

In a typical multilingual situation, language plays a low key instrumental role. With the imposition of a discrete system of classification, the role of language was made out to be that of a top-gear defining characteristic (Khubchandani, 1992). This shift has caused a lot of strife in the cultural life of people in the sub-continent, for language as a top-gear defining characteristic looks to structurally differentiate people creating a kind of language politics which we had never experienced before. We observe a process of building enclosures around pastures in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe. The British policies in India built such enclosures around the linguistic pastures of the subcontinent.

Acceptance of these enclosures around linguistic varieties has been widespread and continues till date. The continuity is clearly visible in the way the census organizes and classifies language data, as seen in the quote below. The tension between people's perception of the linguistic varieties they use and 'actual linguistic mediums' is quite palpable creating problems for the task of 'enumerating' them:

As the above instructions to the enumerator would show, the respondent was made to feel free to return the name of his mother tongue and the same was recorded faithfully by the enumerator. This has led to the recording of a very large number of mother-tongue names from all over the country. At the 2001

census, the number of such raw returns of mother tongues has totaled 6,661. Since mother-tongues as returned in the census are basically the designations provided by the respondents of the linguistic mediums in which the respondents think they communicate, they need not be identical with the actual linguistic mediums. For assessing the correlation between the mother tongue and designations of the census and for presenting the numerous raw returns in terms of their linguistic affiliation to actual languages and dialects, 6,661 raw returns were subjected to thorough linguistic scrutiny, edit and rationalization. This resulted in 1635 rationalized mother tongues and 1957 names which were treated as 'unclassified' and relegated to 'other' mother tongue category. The 1635 rationalized mother tongues were further classified following the usual linguistic methods for rational grouping based on available linguistic information. Thus, an inventory of classified mother tongues returned by 10,000 or more speakers are grouped under appropriate languages at the all India level, wherever possible, has been prepared for final presentation of the 2001 mother tongue data. The total number of languages arrived at is 122.

([http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census\\_Data\\_2001/Census\\_Data\\_Online/Language/gen\\_note.html](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_Data_Online/Language/gen_note.html).)

Further:

The 122 languages are presented in two parts viz.

**Part A:** Languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India (Scheduled Languages) comprising of 22 languages; and

**Part B:** Languages not included in the Eighth Schedule (Non-Scheduled Languages) comprising of 100 languages plus the category "Total of other languages" which includes all other languages and mother tongues falling under Part B and which returned less than 10,000 speakers each at the all India level or were not identifiable on the basis of the linguistic information available.

(ibid.)

The resultant pyramid of linguistic hierarchy has English & Hindi at the top of the pyramid, followed by the scheduled languages, then the languages of wider communication and at the base of the pyramid are the 'Others'. This hierarchy is strongly reminiscent of the linguistic hierarchy distinguished in Sanskrit literature as Sanskrit, Prakrit, popular dialect and the language of demons (Heller-Roazen, 2013: 88-89). The language of the 'Demons' now secularized as 'Others' are languages which have existed in the shadows of our village system and are now fighting for survival in the shadow of the Modern State for the past two centuries.

In times where enumerating linguistic varieties is a proof of 'actual linguistic mediums' and that we speak 'languages', this miscellaneous category of 'Others' amounts to nothing but an imposed 'Aphasia' (Devy, 2000) on the 6500+ mother tongues of India.

The *raison d'être* of the colonial state was control of resources. Such a state seeks to increasingly control the lives of its people. This has resulted in a contraction of spaces for people and thereby their languages to survive. Knowledge of particular languages serves as a ticket to progress. Language thus becomes an important component in the race for privileges. The entire debate surrounding medium of instruction in schools and the unmistakable shift - towards privileged languages- in the linguistic behaviour of the educated populace, very clearly indicates the changing roles of language in the subcontinent in the past two centuries. These changing roles lie at the heart of the problem of language endangerment which we face today.

#### 1.4 Classifying people

Languages cannot be classified without classifying the people who use those languages. Besides classifying languages, one of the other major tasks which the Colonial State undertook was enumerating groups and communities. The Colonial State accepted the equation between caste and occupation and interpreted it in terms of race, as a category which the Europeans used, to understand diversity amongst people (Brown, 2001). While the relation between caste and occupation was postulated as a form of social determinism by the elite in the pre-colonial times, the colonial understanding of caste in terms of race treated the relation between caste and occupation as a form of biological determinism. The brazenness with which the colonizers classified people in the subcontinent in order to suit their needs is seen most clearly in the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 which went through a series of modifications and generalizations and was finally known as the Criminal Tribes Act, 1924.

A word about the people who came under the purview of this Act:

In the village-based economy of the pre-colonial times, there were a large number of individuals/groups/communities which existed on the margins (literally) of the village system. These people were, in Marathi, referred to as 'phiraste/bhatke' (nomads), which served as a term to refer to a miscellaneous group of people, the 'others' of the village-economy. A significant number of these people had become *phiraste* due to loss of livelihood brought about by the policies of the colonial state. The state was not interested in the traditional means of livelihood of the people living in the subcontinent but wanted to promote activities which were beneficial to the colonizers (Brown, 2001). Thus they were forced to become *phiraste/bhatke*.

Dealing with such groups posed a problem for the colonial administration as these people were always on the move and their lack of a 'stable' address made it difficult for the administration to locate and identify these people and thereby they posed a problem for enumeration. As a result the colonial administration found it difficult to control these groups. They were therefore seen as a law and order problem by the colonial administration. In the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 a large number of communities, *notified* in the act, were declared to be hereditary criminal tribes (not just habitual offenders as viewed by elites in the pre-colonial times). The colonial state treated these notified tribes in a manner akin to prisoners of war.

After Independence, these notified tribes were denotified through the Habitual Offenders Act 1952 of the Government of India. *The Habitual Offenders Act, Bombay 1959* refers to the groups coming under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 as *Vimukta Jatis* (literally "Freed Castes"), listed as Group A of Nomadic Tribes, while *bhatke* which relied mainly on begging (*bhik*) were listed in Group B of Nomadic Tribes. As per the 2001 census, there are 14 VJNT and 29 NT (Group B) tribes in Maharashtra. The strength of the VJNT is around 3% of the population while the Group B of Nomadic Tribes form 2.5% of the population. The combined strength of the Vimukta Jatis and the Nomadic Tribes (Group B) in Maharashtra is around 55 lakhs, though scholars claim that the actual numbers range between 1-1.25 crores.

Even though the groups were 'freed', in actual practice nothing much – or too little- has changed for these people. The relation between these people and the police has hardly changed. State institutions function not only on the basis of laws but also on precedence or previous practices. This is referred to as the craft of functioning of institutions (police, army, courts, schools etc.). These practices become part of the common sense/practical sense of the people involved in the functioning of the institutions. It is here that the colonial experience is most telling. The colonial legacy continues in practice, if not in theory.

## 2. The Parushi language of the Nath Panthi Davri Gosavi (NPDG) community

### 2.1. The People

The Nath Panthi Davri Gosavi community is classified under Group B of Nomadic Tribes (NT) as per the Maharashtra Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, De-Notified Tribes (Vimukta Jatis), Nomadic Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Special Backward Category (Regulation of Issuance and Verification of) Caste Certificate Act, 2000.<sup>1</sup> In some of the states of North

India, the Nath Jogi community is included as part of the DNT (Ex-Criminal Tribes) category. We shall focus only on the NPDG community in Maharashtra.

The NPDG are *bhatke-bhikari* (literally nomad-beggars) i.e. this community relies on begging as its main source of livelihood for which they wander from one place to another all over the country. They are worshippers of *Nath* hence *Nath Panthi*. They carry a *damru* (a small two-headed hour-glass shaped drum) hence *Davri* and they beg for flour hence *Gosavi*. Thus the name Nath Panthi Davri Gosavi.

Generally a group of NPDG people consists of four-five families (around 30 people) which wander together. Before they can temporarily settle in a place outside a particular village or city, in their *palas* (tents), they need to report to the police and prove their identity and show papers from the local police station of their previous stay. While on the begging rounds, the men wear saffron coloured clothes, a small pouch containing gular around their neck, a bag on their shoulders for keeping the grain flour obtained from begging, a trishul in their hands and a long horned Kapila cow for accompaniment. Often they use a cow which may have five legs or three eyes or two mouths for the purpose of begging as people often consider these cows to be divine. Some groups use photographs and/or idols of gods while begging. In all, the NPDG have developed around 20 begging methods (Bhosale, 2008: 75-77). In recent times, young women and children accompany men during begging rounds. This exposes them to all sorts of harassment and sexual violence. The average income of the family is around ₹ 50-100 per day. Therefore most members of this community live a life of penury.

The literacy rate in the community is around 1% and the number of highly educated people would be in single or double digits. Educational levels are on the rise in the new generation.

### 2.2. Language use in the NPDG community

Given their lifestyle, it is not surprising that individuals belonging to the NPDG community are highly multilingual. It is common to meet individuals from this community with a working knowledge of half a dozen languages. One of my informants had a working knowledge of around 12 languages. Thus they use the local languages to communicate with strangers.

For intra-group communication, the NPDG people use a variety of Marathi which for the purpose of the paper will be referred to as Nath Panthi Davri Gosavi Marathi (DGM). DGM can be termed as the mother tongue or 'native language' for most individuals in this community. Their ability to maintain their language in spite of travelling so much and for so long is remarkable. It would indeed be very instructive for linguists interested in language preservation and

<sup>1</sup> <http://bombayhighcourt.nic.in/libweb/acts/2001.23..pdf>



The horse kicked

ix. tʃa liwki kəŋni b<sup>h</sup>ai nɑɾə t<sup>h</sup>alliʃ

That girl has big houses

x. k<sup>h</sup>oŋə vəiʃlə ka

did you eat?

xi. məki rodz̄ tʃiŋgəni vəiʃto

The man drinks alcohol everyday

Some further observations:

- a. **All** functional terms, without exception, are those used in Marathi.
- b. The syntax of these sentences do not violate any constraint of Marathi syntax.
- c. The morphology of all words in these sentences obey all constraints of Marathi morphology.
- d. No phonotactic constraint of Marathi phonology is violated in any of these sentences.
- e. These observations apply to all the data collected from various informants. Thus, if we understand the system of language as consisting of a grammar and a lexicon then then the grammar of Parushi is identical with that of Marathi.
- f. If we focus on the content words, then **some** of the words in the above sentences are typically Marathi words while others can be said to belong to Parushi.
- g. The use of Marathi words is similar to that found in other varieties of Marathi. In this sense there is nothing remarkable about them.
- h. The Parushi words are opaque to users of Marathi in the sense that knowledge of Marathi would not help in identifying the meaning of the Parushi words.
- i. Some Parushi words are derived directly from common Marathi words. Examples: k<sup>h</sup>uʃsəl from uʃsəl (pick-up); k<sup>h</sup>əp[ɑ from pə[ (run) etc.

From the set of observations given above, we can conclude that as far as the system of language is concerned, characterizing Parushi would involve an exclusive concern with the lexicon.

## 2.4 The Lexicon

Upon a closer look at the lexicon of Parushi, one realizes that it is not a complete lexicon in itself i.e. only Parushi words cannot be used to conduct a discourse. A sentence *may* consist of only Parushi words (as in viii. above) but not an entire conversation/discourse. There are no songs, stories, narration of incidents etc. which could be conducted using only Parushi words. On the

other hand, discourse is possible only in DGM without any recourse to Parushi words.

One explanation could be that Parushi words and grammar has been gradually forgotten by the community (Bhosale, 2013: 83-96). However this possibility seems unlikely as Parushi words share very special characteristics:

- a. Parushi words are those which the NPDG people use in hostile and dangerous situations, which these people might face during the course of their interactions with the state, strangers etc. where communication needs to be swift and effective while excluding the elements which might serve to be harmful to the NPDG people. There are Parushi words which the NPDG people use in earning their livelihood.
- b. Taboo words are often Parushi. Examples: words related to private parts, excretion etc.
- c. The NPDG people use are concerned with religious symbols and rituals. Therefore they would like to portray a spartan lifestyle, for example that is typically expected from the priestly class. Thus there are Parushi words for mutton, fish, alcohol etc. but no Parushi words for wheat, rice, jowari etc
- d. Thus a large number of Parushi words have a 'negative' orientation, as far as the NPDG people are concerned. Thus, no Parushi words exist for positive emotions, kinship terms, colour terms, directions, planets, stars, calendar terms, time, metals, flora and fauna (except those animals used by them in their begging, diet etc.) etc.
- e. The semantics of Parushi words show a 'coarse' level of semantic differentiation. We do not observe the fine differentiations of meaning, which these people show while using DGM. Consider for example words from the above examples:
  - vəiʃ is used for both eating and drinking;
  - gəvɳ is used for legs/limbs as well as footwear;
  - gasəi is used for come/go/shift etc.
  - kemɾə is used for cow/bull/ox

In general, Parushi words are vaguer as compared to words in DGM, in spite of both being used by the same people.

## 3. The Pragmatics of the use of Parushi

We have briefly examined the development of the contexts in which the NPDG people use language. Parushi can be seen as a linguistic response to these

contexts, an attempt on the part of the NPDG people to negotiate the conditions under which the NPDG people live their lives. The extreme hostility on the part of the state and society towards communities such as NPDG required these people to develop a mechanism whereby they could defend themselves and survive in these hostile conditions. This required a communication strategy which allowed the NPDG groups to communicate with each other effectively under conditions which are unfavourable to them and in which they feel danger from the state-actors as well as society. Here effectively seems to be translated into two conditions:

First, the transfer of the message should take place at a speed which would allow other members of the group to take action immediately. Communication - where high speed is a major constraint - is understandably *telegraphic* in nature where there is no time for complex processing mechanisms. Processing has to be fast and frugal.

The grammatical consequences are: lower levels of morphological complexity (as compared to DGM): Parushi words are, almost always, monomorphemic; Level of semantic differentiation is 'coarse'; greater levels of implicit communication and hence greater dependence on the context, as compared to the use of DGM by the NPDG people. The world of Parushi usage is a world of very direct face-to-face communication. For example in sentence (vii) above there is a clear preference for (a) over (b):

- a. meka|k<sup>h</sup>uʈsɫuŋ gas.ɪəvə
- b. meka|k<sup>h</sup>uʈsəl

The overall consequence of the development of a linguistic variety through the process of

- Simplification of outer forms resulting in a lowering in the complexity of morphological forms.
- Reduction in the inner form of language resulting in 'coarse' semantics.
- Restriction in the domains where the linguistic variety is used i.e. in domains of intra-group communication in light of perceived danger and domains which are perceived as taboo.

The above processes are indicative of the process of *pidginization* within DGM and Parushi can be said to belong to a *pre-pidgin continuum* often observed in different linguistic varieties (Hymes, 1974).

Second, the use of Parushi depends upon the evaluation of the situation by the NPDG people. Thus the primary function of Parushi is to convey *connotative* meaning and not *denotative* meaning, as is often assumed for 'normal' language use (Sornig, 1981). It involves connotations of an attitudinal nature as it concerns itself

with the appropriateness of the situation for using the linguistic variety in communication. Thus the use of Parushi involves a pragmatic encoding of the situation in its various aspects:

- The assessment of the situation by the speaker;
- A determination of relationship between the interlocutors;
- Achieving the intended perlocutionary effect on the addressee(s) and ensuring the exclusion of other kinds of interlocutors.

Parushi is a linguistic reflex to the extreme hostility in which its users live. It is created and recreated in an environment of fear. It thus bears the marks of that fear: a fear to name things/situations and the desire to disobey the logic of fear and overcome it. The fear creates the distance between the users and the situation while the overcoming of the fear tries to bridge this distance. A notion that constantly accompanies Parushi is *taboo*. Parushi is *naming* of one that shall not be named – a taboo. Naming, most commonly, involves the lexicon. Hence we can understand Parushi as a form of *lexical innovation*, (Sornig, 1981: 66-68) which helps its users to deal with the hostility and fear they are constantly exposed to.

Pragmatically, Parushi serves a double function: evocation of the hostile situation and provocation of the recipient to act in manner so as to avoid the hostility. Such a function could not be fulfilled through DGM, hence Parushi.

#### 4. The NPDG people, Parushi and the issue of Language Endangerment.

The NPDG people have been kept out of the village-system and forced to live in spaces –both social and physical - outside the habitable, places unsafe and unfit for human existence. They have been rendered invisible under the category of 'Others'. This has been the legacy which has existed from the pre-colonial times and greatly exacerbated by the Colonial State, a legacy which continues till date, at least in practice. Not only the people but their linguistic varieties too have been kept out of the tradition of speaking Marathi.

What we observe, in section 2, is a mismatch between the notion of language as a system and language as a tradition (an institution). Addressing this mismatch is of vital importance to the efforts of preventing language endangerment. Are we to preserve linguistic systems or linguistic traditions? If preservation of languages involves people – the users of language – then linguistic traditions are what we are looking at. What does it mean to preserve a tradition?

It is here that the colonial legacy is most telling: the shift in the function of language, from a low-key instrumental function to a high-gear defining function. If language defines a community, denial of status of

language to the linguistic variety of a community leads to a loss in self-esteem for the community. Assertions that Parushi is a language which has been gradually forgotten by the community can be seen as a response which seeks to regain that self-esteem. But can such a reclamation be possible in an imperialist set-up? This brings us to the other response viz. language shift and language loss. It is important to note that both the responses are constrained by the colonial framework imposed on the people and cultures of this subcontinent.

The most severe question which Parushi poses before us is: are all traditions worth preserving? The continuing use of Parushi implies a continuation of the social conditions which create and recreate Parushi. We have noted that the new generation of NPDG people is moving towards education. What would it mean for them to preserve Parushi? The current trend is to give up the use of this linguistic variety. What could be a convincing argument against this trend?

Linguistic variation often (not always) has its roots in inequality. Received Linguistics, with its focus on the system of language, had ignored the social function of language(s). But the speakers of linguistic varieties experience these varieties through their social functions. Therefore they have an acute sense of the relationship between linguistic varieties and inequality. In such a scenario, what solution does Linguistics have to offer? The answer to this question is of great importance to our efforts towards preservation of linguistic varieties. A prolegomena to attempts in developing a theory of linguistic diversity would involve Linguistics re-examining and shrugging off its colonial roots. Without an adequate theory of linguistic diversity, our attempts towards language preservation and development would either exclude the people involved or remain an abstract utopian ideal.

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# **Mother Tongue Literacy in the Caribbean, Latin America and the South Pacific: Community-Based Approaches that Promote the Survival of Endangered Languages**

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## **Abstract**

The focus of this paper will be the results of several community-driven projects in which the authors have participated, all of which were designed to address the educational challenges posed by the imposition of colonial languages in education in the Caribbean, Latin America and the South Pacific. We begin with a case study from the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Eustatius, where we became involved in a community-wide mobilisation process that has resulted in a change in language policy. Next, we turn our attention to a community-based research initiative in Honduras where we worked with six indigenous and two African-descended communities whose first languages (most of which are endangered) are different from the official colonial language Spanish. Finally, we turn to the South Pacific to showcase innovative community-driven approaches to the implementation of language policies that integrate students' first languages into educational systems where the dominant colonial languages English and French were formerly used as the languages of instruction and initial literacy. Although these initiatives emerged in three very different regions of the world, they all attest to the importance of communities assuming control over their educational process in the areas of research, policy, planning, and implementation.

## **Introduction**

In this paper, we give concrete examples of how community-based approaches can successfully mobilise people at all levels to engage in the formulation and implementation of major changes in language planning and use in schools, with the goal of providing innovative and creative solutions to problems of language endangerment resulting from antiquated colonial language policy and practice. The focus of this paper will be the results of several community-driven projects in which the authors have participated over the past two decades, all of which were designed to address the educational challenges posed by the imposition of

colonial languages in education in the Caribbean, Latin America and the South Pacific.

We begin with a very encouraging case study from the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Eustatius, where we as action-researchers became involved in a community-wide mobilisation process that has resulted in a change in language policy. Most of the students on the island attend schools where the colonial language Dutch is used as the language of instruction, even though the overwhelming majority of them almost never encounter Dutch outside of the classroom. The result has been high failure rates. This community mobilisation project has actually led to a change in official policy from the

use of Dutch toward the use of the students' first language as language of instruction in the schools.

Next, we turn our attention to a community-based initiative in Honduras where we worked with six indigenous and two African-descended communities whose first languages (most of which are endangered) are different from the official colonial language Spanish. Instead of adopting a traditional academic approach to the formulation of solutions to the challenges posed by this situation, which has resulted in very high failure rates among indigenous and African-descended students, community activists themselves became co-researchers along with other community members. This approach yielded some very robust results supporting the use of students' first languages in education, the main features of which will be outlined in this article.

Finally, we turn to the South Pacific in order to showcase innovative community-driven approaches to the actual implementation of language policies that integrate students' first languages in educational systems where the dominant colonial languages English and French were formerly used as the exclusive languages of instruction and initial literacy. Community-based initiatives in the Melanesian countries of Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea effectively demonstrate that, even in a situation where students speak hundreds of different indigenous languages (a number of which are endangered) and resources such as formally trained teachers, permanent classrooms and commercially produced materials are in short supply, effective first language literacy programmes can be established and maintained by community members themselves.

### **Language Policy and Language Endangerment in the Caribbean: The Language of Instruction in St. Eustatius 2012-2014**

When three of the authors of this paper were first approached by the Dutch government in 2012 to carry out research on the language of instruction on the northeastern Caribbean island of St. Eustatius, we had some misgivings about becoming involved in the project. St. Eustatius had just been compelled to change its political status from an overseas territory to a municipality of the Netherlands in 2010, and the issue of the continued use of the Dutch language as the language of instruction in the schools was the subject of intense debate on the island. Despite the fact that the great majority of the children of St. Eustatius do not in fact speak Dutch as a first or even a second language, for most of the years since the establishment of state-sponsored universal education, Dutch has been the language of instruction in most classrooms. From the year 2007 onward, however, some limited changes in policy were made to allow the mother tongue of the

children to be used in the early years of primary school. Since their full incorporation into the European Netherlands in 2010, many of the people on the island were becoming concerned that these limited reforms in favor of the use of their children's mother tongue in the schools would be reversed in favor of Dutch. We were hesitant to become involved in this situation as outside researchers, being fully aware that in our efforts as academics and community workers to reverse the process of language endangerment that has resulted from the imposition of colonial languages on the peoples of Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Americas, it is of utmost importance that we look critically at the approaches and practices that we adopt, to make sure that we are not unconsciously replicating the colonial ideologies and relations of power that created the problem in the first place.

The Ministry of Education had requested that we do a review of the literature on the use of the mother tongue in education worldwide, that we conduct a survey on language use and attitudes on Saint Eustatius, and, on the basis of our results, that we formulate recommendations as to which language should be used as the language of instruction on the island. We decided to make a counter proposal to the Ministry, where we advocated for an action-research model, designed to involve the community more directly in the process of identification, analysis and resolution of the problem under study. In the framework for research that we put forward, we envisioned an ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders whereby their own understanding and insight would be actively elicited, acknowledged and integrated into the findings and recommendations. We proposed that beside a literature review and a survey, it would be necessary to conduct multiple focus group meetings with students, teachers, parents, educational authorities, and educational support professionals, that classroom observations be made, and that proficiency testing in both Dutch and the students' home language be done to gain an overview of what the students were actually learning in the classroom. The Ministry of Education studied our suggested modifications to their original proposal and accepted them, and we began our work on the island in 2013.

The debates in the previous years had polarized the population of the island into two camps, those who favoured the continued use of Dutch as the language of instruction in the schools versus those who wanted to replace Dutch with the students' mother tongue. The research project quickly became a venue for input, discussion and reflection on the part of the people of the island, a considerable number of whom were eager to participate in sometimes lengthy discussions and focus group meetings. As the process unfolded, people came to realize that, no matter which camp they identified with, in the end they all shared quite a number of basic understandings of the educational problems faced by the students, the root causes of these problems, and the

results that they wanted their schools to achieve. Most participants in the discussions were pleasantly surprised at the number of points of consensus which eventually emerged, including the following:

- 1) All agreed that the system in place was not working and that the results were far below their expectations.
- 2) All agreed that the goal of education on the island should be full academic competence in the students' mother tongue as well as full academic competence in Dutch.
- 3) All agreed that, for the great majority of the students of Saint Eustatius, Dutch is a foreign language.
- 4) All had observed that the students' attitudes toward Dutch in particular, and learning in general, tended to deteriorate as the students progressed from primary school where Dutch was being used alongside their own language to secondary school where all lessons were supposed to be taught only in Dutch.

These points of consensus were resoundingly confirmed by the results of the language attitudes and use survey, the language proficiency tests, and classroom observations, enhancing the validity of the study results and ensuring that as many stakeholders as possible could eventually take ownership over the process of addressing the question of language of instruction in the schools.

The research process culminated in the following recommendations being made to the Ministry of Education in 2013:

- The mother tongue should be the language of instruction and the language of initial literacy in the pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools, with Dutch being taught consistently and systematically as a foreign language at all of these levels.
- Foreign language instruction in Dutch should follow a strategy of playful informal learning at the pre-primary level and during the first years of primary school, to ensure that all students gain a sufficient informal competence in Dutch to allow them to begin to acquire an academic competence in Dutch later.
- Literacy in the mother tongue should begin to be taught in the first years of primary school, while literacy in Dutch should not be introduced until a solid foundation has been established in reading and writing in the mother tongue.
- Thereafter, academic competence in Dutch should be further consolidated on the basis of students' academic competence in the mother tongue. This means that, in general, academic concepts should be taught in the mother tongue first before they are introduced in Dutch.

These recommendations were presented to the community of Saint Eustatius in January 2014 and were approved by the Ministry later in the same year (Faraclas, Kester & Mijts, 2014). The implementation of the transition from Dutch to the mother tongue as language of instruction is now underway.

### **The Implementation of Educational Programmes to Reverse Language Endangerment in Latin America: Intercultural Bilingual Education in Honduras 2005-2009**

The movement for Intercultural Bilingual Education (*Educación Intercultural Bilingüe* or EIB) in Latin America was designed to reverse the process of language endangerment that is threatening many of the indigenous languages of the region, primarily through the introduction of the mother tongue as a language of instruction and initial literacy at the primary school level. During the 1990s, the government of Honduras adopted the EIB framework in an effort to address the educational challenges faced by the six indigenous and two African-descended communities in the country whose ancestral tongue is not Spanish, the official language of instruction in the schools. The languages traditionally spoken in these indigenous communities are: Lenca, Tol, Ch'orti, Pech, Miskito and Tahwaka, while the languages traditionally spoken in these African-descended communities are Garifuna and Isleño. While all of these languages could be considered to be to one degree or another endangered, Lenca is almost extinct, Tol and Ch'orti are under severe threat, Pech (and Tahwaka which for logistical reasons could not be included in the study reported on here) is significantly threatened, and Miskito, Garifuna and Isleño are still relatively stable.

In order to eventually measure the effect of mother tongue education in these communities, two of the authors of this article were asked to undertake a base line study to determine the situation before the implementation of the new policy favoring the use of indigenous and African-descended languages in the classroom. When deciding if and how such a research project should be carried out, we were acutely aware of the shortcomings of similar EIB initiatives which had been undertaken in other Latin American countries, such as Peru (Gasché, 2001), where a top-down approach to research and implementation had not achieved the desired results. We therefore decided to adopt a bottom-up community-based action-research approach, rather than using a more conventional academic model for conducting this baseline study.

Under the auspices of the EIB secretariat in the Department of Education, a group of more than 50 cultural and educational workers from all eight ethnic groups had been meeting regularly for ongoing training

and discussion related to the implementation of the programme. We decided to approach this group to begin a dialogue about how best to carry out the study. They responded enthusiastically to the prospect of becoming community-based action researchers, and, as a result, a series of planning sessions was initiated during which the research design was formulated. These community based researchers immediately identified the biggest challenge to establishing a base line, namely, the fact that, over the past decades, in many of their communities different initiatives had already been taken to integrate indigenous and African-descended languages and cultures into the primary school curriculum. Thus, the group decided to include some diagnostic elements in the instruments to be used in the study which might help determine the extent to which a given school would have already implemented aspects of the EIB programme.

The instruments for the study were developed by the community workers themselves, based on their identification and analysis of the major challenges related to language and education faced by their communities. They designed five different questionnaires to be used in interview and focus group sessions, one for each of the five stakeholder groups identified by them as key actors: students (10 questionnaires per school), teachers (5 questionnaires per school), parents (10 questionnaires per school), educational authorities (2 questionnaires per community) and community leaders/cultural workers (5 questionnaires per community).

The community workers organized several joint training sessions in which they took part in role playing exercises to simulate how the data gathering sessions would actually take place in their communities. During the course of these sessions, the questionnaires were modified to rephrase unclear questions and, to ensure consistency, the community based researchers were able to come to agreement on what each question meant and how the responses to each question should be scored. Once they had completed the training sessions, the action researchers went back to their communities to collect the data. When they had completed this process, they were again brought together to tabulate, process and analyze the information that they had gathered.

Some 1500 questionnaires with some 25 questions each were collected from 48 primary schools located in seven of the eight indigenous and African-descended communities. The results were far more comprehensive, statistically valid and relevant to the needs of the communities involved than we could ever have hoped for utilising a conventional academic approach to research conducted by 'experts' from outside of the community.

Using the diagnostic questions designed for the purpose, the schools were divided into groups according to the extent to which they had integrated elements of the EIB programme into their classrooms. Based on this division among the schools, various performance variables could be compared with the level at which schools were implementing aspects of the EIB programme. Among the results obtained are the following:

- 1) The more the local indigenous language and culture were being used in instruction, the higher the levels of satisfaction among all stakeholder groups.
- 2) The more the local indigenous language and culture were being used in instruction, the higher the levels of confidence among the students.
- 3) The more the local indigenous language and culture were being used in instruction, the lower the levels of fear among the students.
- 4) The more the local indigenous language and culture were being used in instruction, the higher the levels of participation by parents in their children's education.

### **Community-Based Literacy Initiatives to Reverse Language Endangerment in the South Pacific: The Movement for Local Language Literacy in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu 1985-2016**

Melanesia is without a doubt the most linguistically diverse region in the world, with some 1,000 distinct languages belonging to several different families being spoken in the countries of Papua New Guinea (population 6,000,000) and Vanuatu (population 300,000) alone. Dozens of languages are in danger of disappearance as the colonial languages English and French gain ground alongside the Tok Pisin and Bislama dialects of Melanesian English-lexifier pidgin/creole. While most children speak their ancestral Melanesian language and Melanesian pidgin/creole, very few have much exposure to English or French, the official languages of instruction in schools, before they enter the classroom. This has predictably led to high rates of attrition, with more than 50% of students pushed out of the formal system before they finish primary school in Papua New Guinea.

In the 1980s and 1990s, communities were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the academic performance of their children. As a result, a grassroots movement for community based literacy for children in their ancestral languages took root and gained momentum. With little or no support from the government, communities themselves began to create their own local language pre-schools to ensure that their children could learn to read and write first in their mother tongue, before being

taught to read and write in English or French in the formal system. One of the first of these initiatives was the *Wambao Enga Pii Sukulu* program in Enga Province of Papua New Guinea, where a community based local language preschool teaching literacy first in the local language managed to dramatically improve the performance students in English at the primary level and beyond (Stringer and Faraclas, 1987).

Taking their cue from such pioneering initiatives, thousands of other local language literacy pre-schools were established by communities in over 300 languages between 1985 and 2000 in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the neighboring nation of the Solomon Islands. With minimal help from lecturers and students in linguistics from the University of Papua New Guinea and the University of the South Pacific, local communities took it upon themselves to develop their own writing systems in those cases where their language had not been written in the past. Community members also wrote their own books based on their traditional stories and then printed them on silk screen printers. Pre-school teachers were selected by their communities from among those young people who had been pushed out of the formal system. These teachers then attended training sessions where they quickly mastered a maximally user friendly methodology for teaching local language literacy. To compensate these teachers for their work, parents planted gardens and built houses for them. Classrooms were also constructed by the communities themselves from local materials. By the end of the 1990s, these community based efforts had become a Melanesia-wide movement for local language literacy, which was beginning to reverse some of the dismal results in the formal system, as well as to reverse some of the effects of language endangerment.

By the year 2000, the government of Papua New Guinea acknowledged these efforts and changed the national language policy to allow for all children to learn reading and writing first in their mother tongue before learning to read and write in English. Government funds and support for training and materials were made available for this purpose, but the communities themselves were neither consulted nor given any control over the process. The two authors of this article who worked alongside local communities throughout the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s in the movement for local language literacy constantly warned the government that, if they wanted this new policy initiative to succeed, they would have to leave the communities themselves in charge of their pre-schools. Unfortunately, these warnings were not heeded. By 2010, a successful bottom-up community driven movement had become in many cases a top-down government-driven appendage to a dysfunctional formal system. Those local language literacy pre-schools that have survived intact until the present in both Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu are those that refused to accept government assistance, thus

retaining their independence and sovereign control over their children's educational process.

## Conclusion

Although the initiatives related to reversing language endangerment reported on in this article emerged in three very different regions of the world, they all dramatically attest to the importance of communities assuming control over their educational process in the areas of research, policy, planning, and implementation. We, the authors of this article, as academics and community workers have witnessed with our own eyes the incredible power that is unleashed once community members become agents in a collective effort to confront the colonial legacy in education. It is our hope that these experiences can serve as an inspiration to people throughout the world whose languages and cultures are being threatened by what theorist and activist Vandana Shiva (1993) terms "the monoculture of the mind."

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# Vocabulary Retention and Loss in Nihali, an Endangered Isolate

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## Abstract

There are many languages below ten thousand mark in India. How to go about them? There appears to be two most important reasons for language endangerment. That is lack of prestige for a community, being economically poor, as well as feeling of socio-culturally inferior. And the second obvious reason is the number of people getting reduced to such an extent that finally the number becomes zero. Some examples: Andaman group of languages, Bhili language, Toda, Nihali, etc. Many more examples could be easily added. The need of the hour is to prepare a detailed list of languages and to identify their status, and to decide what steps can be taken to document them and attempt at revitalizing them.

It has been observed that endangered languages come to be used progressively less and less throughout the community, with some of the functions they originally performed either dying out or gradually being supplanted by other languages. In the process there will be frequent loss of native vocabulary and more often replaced by the vocabulary of the dominant language of the area. It is interesting to note that all the languages of the area (most of India) have obtained same word order (= SOV), by that possibly losing many family characteristics. Taking Nihali into account, a language Isolate and highly endangered (spoken in a few villages of Buldana dt. of Maharashtra, see KSN, *The Nihali Language* 2014, CIIL, Mysore) what is left in it, is the vocabulary which alone has to be used as an identifying marker. While some areas like kinship, verbs, pronouns and a few grammatical elements are retained to a great extent, while other areas show extensive losses. Even though the present language, Nihali still holds out as a separate identity, much of its so-called original features have been lost. So, the question is how long this situation can continue? This paper tries to seek what might happen in the next one hundred years of its life.

## Introduction

We do not know much about languages, their communities whose speakers number less than ten thousand and their health, linguistic as well as cultural. This aspect has seized the academic world seriously since the publication of some important facts about the languages of the world (in 1992 in *Journal Language's* publication). Time seems to be prime now to take a stock of our languages, and make concerted effort in preserving, maintaining and documenting not only from language point of view, but also taking societies as wholes. In this context David Crystal states as follows in his book: *Language Death* (2000): page 154: "*Languages need communities in order to live. So, only a community can save an endangered language. This point is fundamental. The community, and only the community, can preserve a living language. If the community surrenders its responsibility to outsiders, or even to a few persons within the community, (such as school teachers) the language will die. Language preservation efforts much involve the total community, and not just a part of it.*"

Taking Nihali into account, a language isolate and highly endangered (spoken in a few villages of

Buldanadt. of Maharashtra), what is left in it, is the vocabulary which alone has to be used as an identifying marker. While some areas like pronouns, verbs and a few grammatical elements are retained to a great extent, other areas like kinship, numerals show extensive losses.

Korku is a well-accepted North-Munda language, and as Nihals live almost with them in their shadows, as it were, and also most of them are bilinguals in Korku (as far as I could get information), an attempt is made here to place some vocabulary belonging to different semantic domains of these two languages face to face, to ascertain the extent of language loss and retention. It may not be surprising to note that nouns belong to that category which is easily replaced by borrowing. So, though by itself may not be too alarming, as it happens in most languages, when it happens in a language like Nihali, which is an isolate, it brings irreparable loss to the language as the replacements will be from neighbouring dominant languages. So, a look at them may be fruitful. In this case only some nouns are taken into consideration; though at the end a few grammatical categories are listed as mark of retention. The nouns belonging to the following semantic domains are taken up in this comparison: kinship terms, body parts, numerals, adjectives, and adverbs.

The main problem in comparing these two languages, as they are genetically unrelated, is determination of relatedness. There is no clear cut method (as far as I know) which can be used to determine the relatedness. In a way the same issues which crop up in lexicostatistic method (though between related languages) are faced here as well. Even then, an attempt is made here to find out the extent of borrowing in Nihali from Korku. In case of Korku, it is to some extent easier in that if the form concerned is found in its cognate languages, then it can be safely considered as native Korku form. If an item is phonetically and semantically same/almost same, it is taken that that form is taken into Nihali from Korku. As Korku has borrowed heavily from Indo-Aryan (and may be from other sources ?), an attempt is made to eliminate them, before comparing them with Nihali. Nihali might have borrowed from various sources, besides from IA, like the words suggest: *na:y* ‘dog’, *mu:tho* ‘three’, *naltho* ‘four’ indicate – probably from Dravidian source; *i:r/e:r/ira:r* ‘2’ – could be from Austroasiatic [Khasi *a:r* ‘2’] ?. But possibilities of other sources cannot be ruled out.

**1. Kinship system:** This is one of the semantic domains which has been affected quite seriously. First, a comparative table of kinship terms (incomplete) of both the languages is presented followed by a discussion on it.

**Comparative table is provided here:**

The forms in underscore indicate they are probably borrowed.

Gloss	Nihali	Korku
Br-Da.	<u>kosreŋ</u>	komon, <u>kosreŋ</u> -je (old.)
Child	palfo	kon
Daughter	pirjo	konje/te; kon-je(y)
El.Bo-So.	<u>bhati:ja</u>	kosreŋ
Br-Wi.	karyom (old.), wayri (yo.)	u: / ou
El.Si-Hu.; Wi-Yo.Br.	kalatt̄el, tyā	tyā
Elder brother, Fa-Br-So.	bha:gaḍay	ḍey ~ ḍeyte
Fa.-Br	<u>ka:ka (Yo.)</u> , <u>ca:ca (Old.)</u>	ga:gṭa
Fa.-Br-Wi.	<u>ka:ki</u> , <u>ca:ci</u>	khan-may
Fa.-Mo.	<u>ta:ji</u>	<u>bhayc</u>
Fa.-Si.	<u>phuphu</u>	<u>ga:gṭa-te</u>
Fa-Fa., Mo-Fa.	ba:ba, a:juba, a:joba	sana:-ba, a:ja-ba
Fa-Si.	<u>phuphu</u>	<u>p(h)uphu</u>
Fa-Si.-So.	phuphu nana	<u>puphu</u> konṭe

Father	aba, ba, ba:te	aba ~ ba (A); ba:te (R)
Fa-Yo.Br.	<u>ka:ka</u>	<u>ka:ka</u>
Fa-Yo.Br-Wi.	<u>ka:ki</u> , backama:y	<u>ka:ki</u>
Grand son	caca:w	kura:r
Granddaughter	cica:w	kura:r-te
Grand-sibling	cica:w	kurarakurar
Hu-El.Br.	<u>baḍeba:p</u>	niwirkupkar
Hus.-Yo.Br.	<u>ilur</u>	<u>ilur</u>
Hu-Si., Wi-Si.	aji (yo.)	jijikapkar
Hu-Fa.; Wi-Fa. (=father-in-law)	birtom	kipkar/ kujkar
Hu-Mo.; Wi-Mo. (=mother-in-law), Wi-Fa-Si.	napyom	kapkar
Hus.-El.Br.	birtom	niwirkupkar
Husband	a:tho	dho:ṭa, sa:na-te
Hus.'s el. sister	<u>puphu</u> , <u>phuphu</u>	niwirkupkar
Hus.'syo. sister	<u>jiji</u> , <u>aji</u>	<u>aji</u>
Man	<u>manfo</u> , kalṭo	koro
Mo.-Si, Fa.-Wi.	<u>mawsi</u>	a:y
Mo/Fa-Mo., Fa/Mo-Fa-Mo.	ta:ji	sani-ma:y
Mo-Br.	<u>ma:ma</u>	<u>ma:ma</u>
Mo-Br-Wi.	<u>ma:mi</u> , <u>napyom</u>	<u>ma:mi</u>
Mo-Si-Hu., Fa-El.Br.'	ka:ka	khaḍ-ba
Mother	ma:y	aṅte (R); ma:y (A)
Br.	ḍāy; backa-, bha:ga-	ḍāy (old.),
Sister	<u>jiji</u> ; backa-, bha:ga- (old.)	<u>ji:ji</u> , khaḍ-ba:y
Sister's daughter	<u>bhaṅji</u>	<u>bhaṅji</u>
Sister's son	<u>bhaṅja</u>	<u>bhaṅja</u>
Son	ejer, nana	konṭe
So-Wi.; Si-So-Wi.; Br-So-Wi.	wa:ri	kimin
So-Wi-Fa., Da-Hu-Fa.	<u>samdi</u>	<u>samdi</u>
So-Wi-Mo.; Da-Hus-Mo.	<u>samdi</u>	<u>samdi</u>
Wi.'s Fa.	<u>a:juba</u>	<u>kipkar/kupkar</u>
Wi.'s Mo.	ḍukrima	<u>kapkar</u>
Wi.'s Br.	kalatt̄el (Eld.)	ba:w
Wi.-Yo.Si.	bawan	bawan-je
Wi.-El.Si.	napyom, jijinapyom	jijikapkar
Wife, woman	ko:l	ḍ/dukri(te), japa:y
Si./Br. (young one)	gita	sani-ba:y, boko-je
Yo.Si-Hus., Da-Hus	jaway, jaway-ja	jaway
Younger sibling	gita, backaḍay	boko

The above incomplete list of forms gives an idea of what type of forms and different relations are found in these languages. Though Korku has many more forms as compared to that of Nihali, in the above table only comparable forms are provided. So, there are many gaps in Nihali.

**NIHALI:** In comparison to the Korku system, the available Nihali terms as can be observed above are few in number. The third generation ascending forms are not available here. Also, in the descending generations, in the second and third generations only one form *caca:w* is used.

From the above list it becomes clear that though some forms are similar to Korku, (due to proximity of the Korku people), many forms are different. Here, the adjectives for ‘small/young’ is *backa-*, and for big/elder’ is *bha:ga-*. Also, there is a term *gita* meaning ‘younger sibling’, male or female. Such common terms are very few.

The following comparative table, highlights the differences between Nihali and Korku:

Gloss	Nihali	Korku
child	palfɔ	kon
man	manfo, kalto	koro
people (pl.)	manta	korku
woman	ko:l	ɖukri
Hu-Mo., Wi-Mo.	napyom	kapkar
Hu-El.Br.	birtom	niwirkupkar
husband	a:tho	dho:ta, sa:nate
daughter	pirjo	konje
son	ejer, nana	konje
Br-Wi.	karyom	ũ:,ou
Br-So-Wi.	wa:ri	kimin

The above comparative table gives an interesting view of the differences between Korku and Nihali languages. In Nihali all are single morphemes except for *manta* ‘people’ where *-ta* is the plural marker. Also, the form *caca:w*, having initial CV repeated seems to be problematic. It could be a borrowing from Dravidian source.

## 2. Body parts:

Only some comparable forms are provided.

Gloss	Nihali	Korku
arm (upper)	pakhra	bawra ?
armpit	kaɖhla	katla
back (of body)	bha:wri	bawri
belly, stomach	po:po	la:j'
blood	corto, co:rto	majum
body	hombo	kombor

bone	pa:kto	gor-jan
brain	gu:ro	gu:ro
breast	bucu	bucu
buttock	ɖophor	ba:mbu
calf-muscle	gadɖa	pindri
cheek	ga:l	joka ?
chin	o:tha	otha
ear	cigam	lutur
eye	jiki(t)'	met'
eye ball, pupil	jikitga:ra	keɖega:ra
eye lash	jikitbhuy-bhuy	meɖapapni
eye sand	jikitsili	meɖasilij
face	mwa:r, muha:r	mwa:r
fat-grease	te:m	ta:ja
fingers	akhandɖa	tiboto (hand finger)
flesh	ka:w	jilu
foot	khuri	capoy
lips	dhundru	lelewe
liver	ma:ndom	kalija ?
lungs	popsa	popsa
mouth	kaggo	ca:bu
mustache	mu:ca	mufa
nail (finger)	nakkho	nakho
navel	bumli	bombli
neck	gardan	totɖa
nose	con	mu
nostril	co:n-popa	mu-popa
palm	bakkomijar	tɖala
parting of hair	fitpa:ra	ciɖhi
rib	sipra	sipri
shoulder	tagli, khanda	khanda
skeleton	ɖoɖhor	ja:nahade
skin	to:l	ka:tɖi
stomach	gɔdri	laj'
temple (face)	cawni, tewre	kanpatti
thigh	ma:to	bulu
toes	khuryiakhandɖa	boto
tongue	la:n, la:p, la:y	la:n
tooth	meje	tiɖip
waist	carkhat	ma:ya:n
wrist	tabbo	tɖjoka

## 3. Adjectives and Adverbs:

### (a) Adjectives

Gloss	Nihali	Korku
big	bha:ga	kha:t
many/plenty	arma:n	khu:p/b
small	baska	cit
lot	gida:r	ghonoc

many	kho:bo, gayra	le:ka
heavy	jac(y)om, ja:ra	khambal
good, beautiful	pu:r, acca, masto	saja, awel
red	<u>ra:fa</u>	<u>ra:fa</u>
hot	cacko	cafa, seḍa
cold	him(ka), <u>raba:ŋ</u>	<u>raḅaŋ</u> , raram, bhamra
rough	<u>ḍa:fo</u>	<u>ḍofo</u>
lean, thin, weak	<u>patrya</u>	usu, <u>fonre</u>
tall	<u>u:ca</u>	<u>u(n)cha</u>
fat	te:m, <u>ja:da</u> , ku:ba	<u>ja:ra</u> , ta:ja
last, previous	pasla	mana-(worso 'year')
sweet	cacom	simbil
sharp	te:jo, bhum, nitto, <u>dha:r</u>	bolo, <u>dha:r</u>
dull	bebhum, bhola	murdañ
blunt	benitto	bigar-bolo
proper	<u>ḍhaŋ</u>	soy, thayka
useless	<u>beḍhaŋ</u>	<u>ḍheppo</u>
new	nawa	uni, uni-uni, ratte-
white	pa:nder	pulum
black	popor	keḅde
old	juna	<u>juna</u>
all	pura, he(:)la, <u>pa:r</u>	<u>pa:r</u> , <u>sabay</u>
bad	<u>a:ḅda</u>	<u>bura</u>
bitter	ka:go	kaḅij
clean, healthy	sapa:y ?	ṣokha
happy	kusi-kusi	<u>mast</u> , swa:y

(b) Adverbs

Gloss	Nihali	Korku
slowly	geyra-ki	bage-bage-ten
fast	<u>jaldi</u>	jhaḅto, kithay
nicely	<u>masto-ki</u>	pakka
all of a sudden	<u>jhaḅ-ki</u>	<u>jhaḅto</u>
silently	bageteka	peyko-peyko
happily	<u>kusi-kusi</u>	ceḅ-ten
properly	baro:bar	<u>acca-ten</u>
now	a:jyu	a:y, na:ka
today	ba:y	<u>teḅ</u>
day	dya	<u>din</u>
night	miḅḍi	<u>ra:fo</u>
morning	<u>phejar</u>	<u>phejar</u>
summer	a:ginkini	<u>unara</u>
sun set/evening	<u>dewtabudi</u>	siḅrup
sun rise	<u>dewtaberki</u>	gomuj-oḅ
night	ciryā	miḅḍi
yesterday	se	<u>ko:ldin ?</u>
tomorrow	kya:m(p)	paḅta, gaphaḅ

day after tomorrow	uḅni	mya:ŋ
day before yesterday	uḅni	makha/ makhwa-din
before	ceyni	suḅu
outside	<u>bahere</u>	<u>balla</u>
year	<u>sa:l</u>	<u>sa:l, warso</u>
last year	e:ri <u>sa:l</u>	manawarso
next year	pa:ḅosa:l	<u>samma:sa:l</u>
again	thari	eḅha
and	<u>ḍo</u>	<u>ḍo</u>
but	<u>pine, pani</u>	<u>phene, phire; lekin</u>
so, then	ka:y, ki	maka, makha
so	maka	kay, maka
so	uku, oku	ni
or	ki	ya, ne, ki, bhala
angrily	khijo	ka:yal-mo:yal
far	dha:va	lanjka
fear-fully	ca:wgo	higra

4. Numerals:

The numeral system is the most affected one, as it probably has retained the number for 'one' and 'two' only, while all others appear to be from other languages. The interesting numbers are for 3: *mo:ḅho*, 4: *naltho*, similar words are in Dravidian, but not in either Indo-Aryan or Austric. The numbers for 1 and 2 seem to be native words, without any comparable forms in any language of the area-*biḍi/baḍa* '1', *ira:r/i:r* '2'. (But Khasi, a Mon-Khmer language spoken in Meghalaya has *a:r* 'two!'). Bhattacharya (1957) had given two forms for 'one', one for masculine and another feminine. But the present speakers know only one form, which is used without gender distinction. Other numbers are borrowed from Hindi.

In relation to Nihali situation, Korku retains a fairly complete system of numerals; though younger generation tends to replace them by IA numerals.

Nahali	Korku	Khasi
'1' <i>biḍi/baḍa</i>	<i>mya</i>	<i>wey, fi</i>
'2' <i>ira:r/i:r</i>	<u><i>ba:r/ba:rya</i></u>	<u><i>a:r</i></u>
'3' <i>mo:ḅho</i>	<i>aphay/aphya</i>	<i>la:y</i>
'4' <i>naltho</i>	<i>uphun/uphunya, etc. san,</i>	

etc.

So, in the aspect of numerals both the languages are very different.

5. Animal world:

Gloss	Nihali	Korku
bear	bolgo	bana
bee	eḅta	ruku

bird	poe, pyu	ciɖi, bhuri
black faced monkey	carko	sara
blood	corto	pacna
buffalo	kakhrya; oɖaw	biɸkɸhil
cow	ɖhor	gayi
crab	jaran	khaphri
deer	citra	ruy, matɸi
dog	na:y	sita
fish	ca:n	ka:ku
flesh	ka:w	jilu
frog	ɖedɖa	ɖedɖa
hare	boɸor	kwa:lic
horse	ma:w	ghuɸgi
leopard	ɸe(:)mbrya	sosokula
louse	ke:pe	siku
pig	cogom	sukɸi
red faced monkey	ɖugi	ɖugi
sheep	meɸɖa	meɸɖa
snake	ko:go	biɸj
tiger	ɸe(:)mbrya	kula

In addition to the semantic domains which we saw so far, it appears that Nihali has retained various grammatical categories like pronouns, demonstratives, interrogatives and negative markers intact, that means, they are different from those in Korku. They are listed below.

## 6. Grammatical categories:

(i) **Number:** Three-level number distinction is made, in both Nihali and Korku, into- singular, dual and plural. But this distinction is restricted to animate nouns only.

Nihali			Korku		
Sg.	Dual	Pl.	Sg.	Dual	Pl.
Ø	-ka	-ta	Ø	-kip	-ku

In Korku: koro 'man', kor-**kip** 'men' (dual)  
kor-ku 'men/people'

(ii) **Pronouns:** The domain of Pronouns does not show evidence of any loss.

(a) **Personal pronouns:** It appears that personal pronouns have been retained fully.

	Sg.	Dual	Pl.
1p.:	jo	tye:ko	iji
2p.:	ne	na:ko	la
3p.:	eɸey	hiɸkel	eɸeyla.

In Korku the personal pronouns have two forms, independent forms and suffixal forms. The

suffixal forms are the shortened forms of the independent forms. That way they are different from Nihali forms as such a distinction is not found in that language. Also, Korku has a distinction between 'inclusive' vs. 'exclusive' distinction in dual and plural forms, which are not found in Nihali. The following situation is found.:

	Sg.	Dual	Plural
1p.	inj	alɸɸ (incl.) aliɸ (excl.)	abuɸ (incl.) ale (excl.) alam
2p.	a:m	apiɸ	ape
3p. M/F:	ɖic	ɖi-kiɸ	ɖi-ku
Neu.:	ɖi	[ɖi-kiɸ]	[ɖi-ku]

Beyond the structural similarities as for as personal pronouns concerned, there are many differences between these two languages.

In **possessive pronouns** except for first person, same personal pronouns are used. In 1st person: *eɸe* 'my', and *ijiɸ* 'our'. Elsewhere possessive is marked partially by *-n*, *-na*, and  $\emptyset$  (zero).-

ne:-a:wa:r	'your (sg.) house' (zero),
la:-a:wa:r	'your (pl.) house' (zero),
eɸey-na	aba-re 'his father',
eɸla-n	a:wa:r 'their house',
patarpa:la	'dried leaf' (zero), etc.

In Korku the possessive marker is *-a*; dissimilar to that of Nihali. However a structural similarity is found between them in that, in both, when a pronoun is used in possessive construction, the marker as such is not used. So, Korku: *ale-kon* 'our child', *ɖiku-ura* 'their village', etc.

(b) **Demonstrative pronouns:** In Nihali the demonstrative pronouns are quite marked and complex:

ha:n	'this',	hotan	'that'
hin	'here',	huɸtin	'there'.

In the above two sets one can observe a potential infix of the form of *-Vt-* which might mark 'distance'. Similar pattern can be observed in demonstrative adjective forms of the following type- *hi-* 'this': *hiti* 'that'. Elsewhere this type of process is not observed.

In 'remote' demonstrative, a distinction is made between 'visible' and 'invisible'- *hewɸta/ho* 'that' (visible-definite), *ifi* 'that' (non-visible-indefinite).

Demonstrative adjectives have some-what contracted forms:

hi- 'this': hi-manso 'this man',  
 iṭi - 'that': iṭi-manso 'that man',  
 iṭi-pustok 'that book', etc.

In Korku, the situation is much more elaborate though simpler. Here the basic distinction is between proximate vs. remote. Within each type, subdivisions can be made. (See Nagaraja, 1999).

(c) **Interrogative forms:** The interrogative forms in Nahali are the following- *nan* 'what', *nani* 'who', *naway* 'why', *nava:san* 'why'; *meran* 'when', *miṇa:y* 'where', *m(i)yan* 'how much'.

The interrogative forms in Nihali and Korku are the following-

Gloss	Nihali	Korku
what	nan	co:(ʈ)
who	nani	je
why	naway/nawasan	co: ~ co:ʈ
when	meran/miran	co:la
where	miṇay	ʈone/ʈoṇan 'at where'
how much	m(i)yan	co-ʈo
how	naw-ki	co-phar
whose	nan-in	je-konʈe 'whose son'
which-(book)	nu-san (pustak)	ʈone-(bukko)

**Negative forms:** Negation is marked by various forms; some preceding the verbal root, some following it. In negative constructions all the tenses are not marked. The negative markers are: *ho:to*, *beṭhe*, *hayom*, and *biji*.

**Korku** also has many negative forms. They are the following: *heba*, *ban*, *ḍun/ḍuka*, *athika*, *baw*, *baki* and *baṇon*. (See Nagaraja 1999).

**Conclusion:** Nihali language, an Isolate (as amply demonstrated/indicated above) as well as highly endangered, shows in this limited study, that it has lost quite a bit in the couple of semantic domains under consideration; however it is fairly intact when it comes to certain grammatical features. It is in fact necessary to study other areas as well before coming to a conclusion as to the extent of loss in the language. In any case being endangered, how long will it preserve it's remaining features and what features will emerge in the decades to come under convergence tendencies will be intriguing. It will be interesting to watch and record the developments in the language in the days to come.

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# Describing Endangered languages: Experiences from Nihali Documentation Project

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## Abstract

Fieldwork in Indian situation is always a language contact situation. Languages spoken in the subcontinent share a number of structural traits at the phonological, syntactic and semantic level. However, they also exhibit difference from each other in their unique way. It is imperative to work as inductively as possible, and make explicit arguments for all generalizations.

Nihali is a language isolate spoken in Indian sub-continent. Presently, the Nihali language speakers are located in Jalgaon-Jamud tehsil of Maharashtra state. Korku, Hindi, Marathi language speakers are in close contact with Nihali speakers. The Nihali language is generally linked with other languages such as - *Kusunda*- a language isolate spoken in Nepal (Fleming, 1996); *Ainu*- spoken in Japan (Bengston, 1996), a branch of Nostratic- Dravidian (Dolgopolsky, 1996) and a part of *Greater Austric* macro-phylum (Bengston, 2006). None of these existing studies to date have provided conclusive evidence for a genetic relationship between Nihali and other existing languages. All these hypothesis present the anomalous position of Nihali language, hence identified as an isolate in the context of current Indian linguistic diversity. On the origin of Nihali words, Kuiper (1966) had argued that Nihali lexicon consists of cognates from TibetoBurman, Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and Munda languages of the sub-continent. Mohan (2014, 2016) has also made similar observations at structural level. Presently, Nihali exhibits several layers of language contact. The contact seems to be historical as well as local in context. The focus in this presentation will be to address that the similarities found in Nihali language that emerge from comparison is just a typological similarity or is the consequence of some historical contiguity.

## Introduction

The present contribution deals with documenting and describing the grammatical aspects of Nihali language which is considered a language isolate spoken in central India, a language for which no historical (genetic) relationships can be established. However, some researchers have linked Nihali to other languages such as Nostratic (Dolgopolsky, 1996) *Kusunda*, a language spoken in Nepal (Fleming, 1996), and *Ainu* (Bengton, 1996). On the origin of Nihali words, Kuiper (1966) had argued that Nihali lexicon consists of cognates from Tibeto-Burman, Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and Munda languages of the sub-continent. Mohan (2014) has also made similar observations at structural level. The first detailed monograph on the Nihali/ Nahali language was written by F.B.J. Kuiper in 1962. On the basis of 505 etyma Kuiper found the following strata:

Ia) A stratum shared by Nahali with neighboring Kurku/Korku. This includes loanwords

from Indo-Aryan which entered Nahali via Kurku/Korku.

Ib) A Munda stratum without parallels in Kurku/Korku.

IIa-d) Four Dravidian strata,

III) Around 12 to 15 etyma have clear parallels in Tibeto-Burmese Himalayan languages.

IV) Around 123 examples are isolates and cannot be etymologized at the moment.

According to Kuiper, Dravidian and Korku loans in the language are the most recent borrowings. About one quarter of the Nihali vocabulary has no correspondence to any other language in India.

The first mention of the name *Nahals* occurs in the *Report of the Ethnological Committee* by A. C. Lyall, who mentioned the 'Nahil', whose language is reported to be "*Nimaree*" (Kuiper, 1962:7). Information about the *Nihali* language first became available in the *Linguistic Survey of India* Vol. IV published in 1906. In that publication the *Nihali/ Nahali* language was classified as a Munda language and at the same time it

was noted that there were few vocabulary items of Dravidian origin. It was reported to be a Munda language in origin and which first came under the influence of Dravidian language and then the Indo-Aryan language.

Presently, Nihali exhibits several layers of language contact. The contact seems to be historical as well as local in context. The Nihal tribe is at present much reduced both in numbers and socio-economic status. The literacy rate among them is very low. Nihali language speaking Nihals are very few and it is considered a critically endangered language as per UNESCO endangered languages list. There are no monolinguals among them and are proficient in Hindi, Marathi and Korku languages. Many Nihali speakers now speak Korku, an Austro-asiatic language of the Munda branch, but a segment of Nihali speakers still speak their native language. There are Nihali speaking Nihals and Korku speaking Nihals. The Nihals of Nimar area have shifted to Korku language or other neighbouring languages.

## The Language

The language is spoken by approximately 2,500 native speakers. The linguistic neighbours of Nihali speakers are Korku, Hindi and Marathi. People refer to them as 'Nihal' and their language as 'Nihali', but the native speakers identify themselves as *kalto* and their speech *kalto mandī*. Originally, the Nihali language speakers were believed to be hunters and foragers in the jungles, now they are mainly agricultural labourers. The Nihal tribe is at present much reduced both in numbers and socio-economic status. The literacy rate among them is very low.

## Typological features of Nihali language:

### (i) Word Order

Nihali is an SOV language, as the following examples show:

(1) nana adḍo-n ganḍa-i  
boy.SG tree-ACC cut-PERF  
'The boy cut the tree'

(2) eṭey ram-g<sup>h</sup>elya pustək ko-i  
he ram-BEN book buy-PERF  
'He has bought a book for Ram'

Nihali permits considerable flexibility with respect to word order as attested in the most South Asian languages. However, the most basic order for various types of clauses is SOV.

### (ii) Noun Phrase + Postposition

(3) eṭey jəlgəon- jamud-ṭam sərəko arku-i  
kon  
he jalgaon- jamud- road make-PERF  
ABL LOC  
'He built a road from Jalgaon to Jamud'

### (iii) Genitive + Noun Phrase

(4) ram-na nana  
ram-GEN son  
'Ram's son'

### (iv) Adjective + Noun

(5) /bhag-a nana/ 'big child'  
/bhag-el nana- ṭa/ 'big children'

### (v) Demonstrative + Noun

(6) hi manso 'This man ( proximate)'  
həu manso 'that man(remote-visible)'  
hoṭka manso 'remote far that man (visible)'  
iṭi manso 'remote that man ( non-visible)'

### (vi) Numeral + Noun

(7) biḍi manso 'one man'  
'ir pustək'' 'two books'

## Anaphors

The form of the anaphor ( reflexive) is *person-* and *number-* dependent in Nihali. In 1<sup>st</sup> person and 2<sup>nd</sup> person, the anaphor is formed by reduplication of personal pronoun, and in 3<sup>rd</sup> Person 'honen' in singular and 'hulin' in plural. In all three persons the first part of the anaphor is followed by a postposition.

(8)

eṭey hone-n aina-ki ara-kin  
 He mirror- see- PRG  
 LOC/DAT  
 ‘He is seeing himself in the mirror’

(9).

eṭla	huli-n	aina-ki	ara-kin
They	self	mirror-loc/Dat	see- Progressive

‘They are seeing themselves in the mirror’

(10).

jo/ tyeko/ ingi/ ne/ nako/ la	enge-n/tyeko-n/ ingi-n/ne-ne-n/ la- la-n	aina-ki	ara-kin
I/we two/we/you/you two/you plural	I-self/ we two- self/ours/you-self/you two self/you plu.self	mirror- LOC/DA T	see- PRG
‘I/we two/we/you/ seeing self in the mirror’ You two/you plural/			

It is most likely that first person singular ‘jo’ is an innovation and the original first singular element is related to the possessive *enge-n* ‘my’ with correlation with *ingi-n* ‘our’ and *ingi* ‘we’. Anaphor is person dependent. In 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person, anaphor is formed by reduplication of personal pronoun and in 3<sup>rd</sup> person by ‘hone-n’ in singular and ‘huli-n’ in plural.

### Nihali and Korku comparison:

The comparative account of Nihali and Korku case system is as follows:

Case	Nihali	Korku
Nominative	ϕ	ϕ
Objective/ Accusative	-n/na	-ke/k <sup>h</sup> e
Dative	-ki	-ke/ k <sup>h</sup> e
Benefactive	- g <sup>h</sup> elya	- g <sup>h</sup> elya
Experiencer Subject	-ki	-en
Genitive	-n/na	-a/ya/ga

Comitative	-gon	-gon
Instrumental	-ki	- ṭen
Ablative	-kon	- ṭen
Perlative	- bundṭin	- ṭen
Allative	- ṭam	- ṭay
Locative-on	-kajar-ki	- liyen
Locative-in	-minjar	- ṭalan

Table 1: Nihali- Korku Comparison

It is also observed that Nihali marks the dative and dative subject, instrumental and locative with the same form while Korku marks the objective/accusative, dative with the same form while instrumental, ablative and perlative with the same form. Both Nihali and Korku mark benefactive and comitative cases in a similar way. It can also be concluded that Nihali has a 3-way distinction between accusative vs, dative vs. benefactive. Nihali seems to have an actual dative subject marker but Korku appears to have a typologically different experience marker, since it is marked by /-en/ other than the objective marker. The benefactive marked similarly in the both languages. It seems that they may have originated from a possible 3<sup>rd</sup> source. Since, benefactive was originally marked verbally in Korku, the direction of borrowing would likely be from Nihali. This may be unexpected sociolinguistically. The phonology makes it seem like its possible source may be Indo-Aryan since the /-g<sup>h</sup>/ sound is not a Munda sound historically.

### Pro-forms

The label *pro-form* is “a cover term for several closed classes of words which, under certain circumstances, are used as substitutes for words belonging to open classes, or for larger constituents. (Schachter and Shopen 2007: 24)” The words that satisfy the definition offered by Schachter and Shopen in Nihali are personal pronouns, interrogative words and demonstratives.

#### Personal pronoun

Personal pronouns are grammatical forms that are used “to refer to the speaker (e.g. *I, me*), the person spoken to (*you*) and other persons and things whose referents are



In the example (10) the embedded subject is in Nominative case, phenomena that is not allowed in Hindi. Nihali shares this feature with some Dravidian languages.

**Feature 4**

*No distinction on the occurrence of the negative participle*

(14) a. Nihali

hoṭo paṭo manso-n nan maṇḍ-i

NEG come man-ACC what say-PERF  
‘What do you say to the man who hasnot come’

b. Hindi ( Sridevi & Choudhary2001;44)

\*nahi a:ya hua a:dmi-ko kya keh-n-a

NEG come man-ACC what say-PERF  
‘What do you say to the man who hasnot come’

c. Telugu ( Sridevi & Choudhary2001;44)

rani manisini emi ama:la

NEG- Come man-ACC what say

‘What do you say to the man who hasnot come’

**Feature 5**

*Nominalisation*

Nihali language form attributive clauses with the help of nominalisers also. Often there is free choice between nominaliser and a stem form.

(15)

a. beṭṭo ṭembriya  
die lion  
‘the lion that died

b. beṭṭo--re ṭembriya  
die-NML lion  
‘the lion that died’

c. manso-n- paḍa-re ṭembriya  
man- ACC kill-NML lion  
‘the tiger that the man killed ’

**Feature 6**

*Participial Clause as a Gap strategy*

In Nihali, participle clause is also recognised as a gap strategy since there is no relative pronoun in the embedded clause as observed in (16)

(16)

cergo nana acanak cipp-i  
run boy suddenly stop-PERF

‘The boy who was running has suddenly stopped’

**Agreement Pattern in Verb**

There is no agreement of verb with arguments (subject, direct object etc.)

(17)

jo	etei-ki	palso-n	be-i
I	he- DAT	child- ACC	give- PERF
‘ I gave him a child’			

(18)

eṭṭa	en-ki	palso-n	be-i
They	I- DAT	child- ACC	give- PERF
‘ They gave me a child’			

**Negation**

Nihali marks past event with a separate negation.

(19)

jo eṭey-ki pustak be-i  
I he-dat book give-perf.

‘I gave him a book’

jo eṭey-ki pustak hoṭo be-i  
I he-DAT book not give-PERF.

‘I didn’t give him a book’

(20)

jo eṭey-ki pustak be-ken  
I he-dat book give-FUT.

‘I will give him a book’

jo eṭey-ki pustak beṭhe be-ken  
I he-dat book not give-FUT

‘I will not give him a book

## Conclusion

In this study, some aspects of the Nihali language have been described. It is hoped that the description will help to fill the gap that exists with regard to the knowledge of this language, as well as to provide data for the comparative study of the other South Asian languages.

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# Revisiting the Language Resources and Linguistic Pluralism in India

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## Abstract

This paper attempts to revisit the language resources of India, their status and functions. The status of a language accrues from two main sources -- linguistic and legal. The linguistic autonomy of a language is established by its intrinsic distance from other systems or its development. The other dimension through which status accrues to a language is legal. But considering the vast linguistic resources it is very difficult to say exactly how many languages are there in the country possessing linguistically autonomous systems or otherwise. The main source of official data on languages is the decennial Census. According to the last Census 2001 there are 122 languages (of which 22 languages are included in the VIII Schedule of the Indian Constitution) with 10,000 or more speakers. However, in spite of their inherent equality all languages are not of equal status and they are subjected to ranking of various sorts, presenting a complex mosaic of the country.

The linguistic groups in India acquire the use of other languages in addition to their mother tongues and this practice of multilingualism is functional and not merely geographical.

## Introduction

Revisiting the linguistic resources of India naturally presupposes an inventory of all the living languages and their status in India. Of course, in a geographically vast multilingual country with over one billion population (1, 21, 05, 69, 573 in the 2011 Census), language identification is not a simple matter. In fact, there are numerous spoken languages including hundreds of dialectal forms distributed around like continuum and this linguistic continuum is marked by fuzzy linguistic boundaries between dialect and language, between languages across states and international borders and speech forms differentiated on cultural and political grounds (Annamalai, 1990). The language areas and the politico-administrative areas were not co-extensive until the reorganization of states on linguistic basis in the post-independence periods of 1950s and 1960s.

Though there is no official inventory of languages spoken in India, the main source that is adopted here is the Indian decennial Census (since the first Census of 1881). The last Census 2001 reports 122 languages with 234 mother tongues (each with 10,000 or more speakers at all India level) grouped under appropriate

languages. These 122 languages are a linguistic abstraction of 1635 mother tongues reported by the people, indicating their perception of linguistic identity.

Of these 122 languages 22 are Scheduled languages<sup>1</sup> (languages included in the Schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution) of the Indian Constitution make up overwhelming 96.56 per cent of the total population and the rest 100 non-scheduled languages<sup>2</sup> (not included in the Eighth Schedule of

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<sup>1</sup>Indo-European--- Indo-Aryan: Assamese, Bengali, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Urdu; Dravidian: Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu; Austroasiatic: Santali; Tibeto-Burmese: Manipuri, Bodo

<sup>2</sup>Indo-European--- Indo-Aryan: Bhili/Bhoilodi, Bishnupuriya, Halbi, Khandeshi, Lahnda, Shina; Germanic: English; Iranian: Afghani/ Kabuli/Pashtu, Persian; Dravidian: Koorgi/Kodagu, Gondi, Jatapu, Khondh/Kondh, Kisan, Kolami, Konda, Koya, Kui, Kurukh/Oraon, Malto, Parji, Tulu; Austroasiatic: Bhimij, Gadaba, Ho, Juang, Kharia, Khasi, Kodakora, Korku, Korwa, Munda, Mundari, Nicobarese (later reclassified), Savara.; Semito-Hamitic: Arabic/Arabi; Tibeto-Burmese: Adi, Anal, Angami, Ao, Balti, Bhotia, Chakhesang, Chakru/Chokri/ Chang, Deori, Dimasa, Gange, Garo, Halam, Hmar, Kabui, Karbi/Mikir, Khezha, Khiemnungan, Kinnauri, Koch, Kom, Konyak, Kuki, Ladakhi, Lahauli, Lakher, Lalung, Lepcha, Liangmei, Limbu, Lotha, Lushai/Mizo, Maram, Marimg, Miri/Mishing, Mishmi, Mogh, Monpa, Nisssi/Dafla, Nocte, Paite, Pawi, Phom, Pochuri, Rabha, Rai, Rengma, Sangtam, Sema, Sherpa, Simte,

the Constitution) constitute 3.44 per cent, but these languages are no less important for their communities and the regions where they are spoken.

Among the other sources, of course, Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India (1896-1928) recorded and described 723 speeches (179 languages and 544 dialects). The People of India Series of the Anthropological Survey of India (1993) identified 325 languages of which 77 are "major languages". Another source is Ethnologue which reports 398 languages in India of which 387 are living and 11 are extinct. Then the UNESCO (in their 2009 atlas) has produced a list of 196 (176 languages or so under threat) endangered languages in India, classified into different categories (the language list and the categories under which these languages are classified, are not satisfactory).

In this connection it may be mentioned that although endangerment phenomenon is not an exception, yet unlike other countries, in India language maintenance is the norm, plurality and multilingualism has been ingrained here.

However, Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India, though monumental but is considered inadequate in terms of coverage, content and methodology. Though consistent, the Census being a "mass-data-survey" by definition, the wider scope loses somewhat in depth and detail. The People of India and Ethnologue and UNESCO data have their own limitations.

### **Problem of Language Identification**

Thus, understanding language situation involves more information on language competence of the individuals in mother tongue and other tongue (which includes language comprehensibility and language use). Therefore, it is very difficult in our present state of knowledge to say exactly how many languages are there in the country, possessing linguistically autonomous systems (in terms of Abstand and Ausbau) or otherwise. It is not always an easy task to decide whether speech varieties in which some writings have been produced comprise an autonomous language, and are not dialects or sociolects. The decision where one language begins and another ends is often arbitrary, if is not

dependent on ethnological or other geo-political considerations.

To illustrate, Khondh/Kondh, Kui and Konda people speak more or less mutually intelligible speeches. The ethnic distance between these groups also may not prove definitive about their autonomy. Whereas, Gadabas speak two different languages, one belongs to the Dravidian family and the other to the Austroasiatic family.

Similarly, Tibeto-Burman languages of the North-Eastern states cannot exactly be counted because it is difficult to know whether two related speech forms should be considered separate languages or dialects of a single language. Robbins Burling reports, about 20 Kuki groups of Manipur are believed to have their own languages, but these languages are very much similar to one another and some of them are mutually intelligible also. This makes it difficult to count the exact number of Kuki languages. Same is the case with the languages of eastern and western extremes of Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Language Status**

In fact, the status of a language is determined through its linguistic, sociolinguistic and legal parameters. The intrinsic distance between the languages (Abstand) is not always definitive to establish autonomy of a language. But their autonomy could be established on the basis of their (Ausbau) development supported by legal recognition. In case of unwritten languages whose Abstand and Ausbau both are not always definitive to establish autonomy, the attitude of the people and their bond of ethnicity could reinforce the status of these ethno-linguistic communities.

The other parameters which determines the status is legal. The Indian Constitution which is the fountainhead of the official language policy, grants status oriented juridical classification of languages. In India all mother tongues have some status, e.g. any mother tongue speakers can address the Parliament and can represent their grievances in their mother tongues. The Indian Constitution makes conservation of one's language as a part of their cultural and educational rights. Hindi in Devanagari script, is the official language of the Indian Union and English is continued to be the associate official language for an indefinite period. 22 languages have been included in the VIII Schedule of the Indian

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Tamang, Tangkhul, Tangsa, Thado, Tibetan, Tripuri, Vaiphei, Wancho, Yimchungre, Zeliang, Zemi, Zou

Constitution. Moreover, in view of the provision made in the Article 345 most of the states have adopted regional languages for official purposes. In this process several non-scheduled languages like Lushai/ Mizo in Mizoram, Lepcha, Bhotia and Limbu in Sikkim, Kok-Barok in Tripura and altogether eleven languages got the recognition in the state or local level in Jharkhand.

As such one of the problems which India is facing is to determine the status and also the function of its constituent languages. Very often these two terms along with the third one, i.e. prestige are confused. The status of a language depends on what people can do with it (its potential) – legally, culturally, economically, politically and demographically. But it is not the same as what you do with the language and it is obviously connected with prestige of the language (Mackey 1998). For example, Sanskrit has a lot of prestige in India but has limited functions. Number, of course, is basic to the status of any language especially the demographic one (but the number may not always help if the language group is dispersed and distributed across the states). But empowering a language with legal status does not assume that everyone knows it. Of course, in case of conflict the need to accord legal status to a language (presence of Hindi and English in India) made it necessary to provide language status by legal means.

For obvious reasons there is a special status of English in India. As in all post-colonial areas of the world the colonial language has been maintained because it has become the real lingua-franca, capable of many things, common to all constituent language groups.

### **Language Written vs Unwritten**

Although we are using a blanket term for some of the languages as unwritten, but there have been some efforts to cultivate these languages. Excepting some languages, namely, Bhumij, Gadaba, Jatapu, Juang, Kisan, Koch, Koda/Kora, Kolami, Korwa, Koya and Khandeshi, for rest of the languages there are at least a script, a word list and a few pieces of some popular booklets. In fact, the biblical translation of these languages appeared fairly early as in Koi (1893), Koru (1900), Balti (1905), Lakher (1912), Kinnauri (1909), Koch (1916), Vaiphei (1917), Shina (1929), Adi (1932), Savara (1939), but its advantage to the native speakers of each of the languages was minimal. Of the non-scheduled languages 17

different Naga languages of Nagaland have been introduced in the schools. Halabi had some additional importance as a sort of official language for the Bastar district which has been taken away by Hindi. Adi, Nissi/Dafla, Mao, Paite, Monpa and Vaiphei have produced text-books in the language, and at least a literacy primer is available in Khond/Kond, Miri/Mishing, Mishmi, Nocte, Bhotia, Rabha and Wancho. A piece of Bible translation and Gospels are available in Deori, Halam, Kinnauri, Lakher, Konda, Kui, Lahauli, Lahnda, Parji, Pawi, Shina and Tangsa languages.

Since literacy materials are available in some of the languages, we can accept that graphization for them has been started, and some of them are emerging as incipient written languages. One interesting exception is Coorgi/Kodagu which has a number of publications in its credit but they have accepted Kannada, the dominant state language of the region, as their school language (of late, a language movement has been noticed). Regarding Lahnda, it may be mentioned that the entire Lahnda speaking areas is now in Pakistan. However, it is treated as an Indian language since 1961 Census. Bible in Multani alphabet was printed as early as in 1819.

The ethnic data for the tribal groups which are available for comparison with the mother tongue data reveal another dimension of identity problem. Many of the minor speech communities employ mother tongue at home and use other languages for outside activities. It means literacy for many of these people is not mother tongue literacy rather it is the other tongue literacy. For the practical purposes these people use any prevalent language of the region. Several tribal communities, a sizeable section of them returned in Census more than one mother tongue (up to five/six languages). But there is a problem in measuring the functions played by each of them.

Actually it is the social context rather than the fact of linguistic heterogeneity in itself which creates linguistic problems. Linguistic heterogeneity including multilingualism, multialectalism, code-switching seems to be actual in an appropriate social context not otherwise (Southworth, 1977).

### **Matrix of Language Comparison**

The notion of equality of languages arises from the inherent nature of the human language, that is, 'a language is a system (Bloch and Trager, 1942). But

human languages in spite of their inherent equality, are subjected to ranking of various sorts. Thus a multilingual country is likely to present a complex mosaic, no two languages are of equal status. Therefore, there is a need for a matrix along which languages can be compared. So that a sociolinguistic typology of languages can be developed with the indices which roughly correspond to the three broad sociolinguistic dimensions of language, that is juridical, linguistic and sociological and the fourth dimension, that is demographic; this also plays a dominant role.

Besides numerical strength, another dimension is location of the languages i.e., where these languages are spoken. Basically many of the languages are rural. Since urbanization and urban centers have a very significant role for the development of these languages, the process of development is very slow for many of them. Although national average rate of urbanization was 27.8 per cent for 2001, the state units have either higher or lower rates. The states which have a higher rate of urbanization than national average are Goa, Mizoram, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra (above 40.00 per cent) and Gujarat, Karnataka, Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh (above 25.00 per cent), all others below this could be as low as Bihar (10.5 per cent), Sikkim (11.1 per cent), Odisha (15.0 per cent), Assam (12.9 per cent) and Himachal Pradesh (9.8 per cent).

The languages which are spoken in these states may generally reflect their territorial characteristics, but there could be exceptions. Therefore, it is the language which has to be identified individually as urban and rural. In terms of urbanization the Scheduled languages fall into the following rank order: Sindhi, Urdu, Konkani, Tamil, Sanskrit, Gujarati, Manipuri, Punjabi, Marathi, Malayalam, Telugu, Dogri, Kannada, Bengali, Hindi and Santali ranging from 74.24 per cent for Sindhi to 4.69 per cent for Santali. Among the non-scheduled languages Lushai/Mizo has the highest 58.86 per cent after English (87.25 per cent), while languages like Koya (1.26 per cent) Miri/Mishing (1.98 per cent), Savara (2.61 per cent), Malto (1.04 per cent), Rabha (1.69 per cent), Phom (1.54 per cent), Kolami (1.33 per cent) have minimum urbanization.

Based upon this disparity, languages such as Lushai/Mizo (58.86 per cent), Lahnda (43.81 per cent), Tulu (32.73 per cent), may be called by Indian standards urban and some others can be classified as semi-urban and Malto, Phom, Kolami, Rabha for

them urbanization is insignificant. Urbanization and urban centers have very definite sociological impact; it helps promote language standardization.

The other sociological factor which has a significant bearing on development is societal literacy. Unfortunately, no data is available of literacy by social groups in India, as the rate of literacy is taken in terms of states not according to mother tongue.

Mahapatra, McConnell and Others (1989) covering 50 written languages, report that mother tongue education at the primary level is very high, except perhaps Kashmiri and Sindhi. Moreover, it is of utmost importance that some non-scheduled languages and some other minor languages have now mother tongue education — the number of such languages has reached to 116 (Mishra, 2011).

The other factors closely linked to the standardization of languages are the mass-media. A language area without a defined urban center and not served by the mass-media is likely to remain underdeveloped. The different mass-media are the actual carriers of urban values and norms which eventually reach the remote areas of the country. There is a steady increase in the number of languages used in mass media. For example, All India Radio uses more than hundred languages/Mother tongues for broadcasting. Similarly, there are about hundred odd languages in which news papers and literary magazines are published.

### Summing Up

Finally, the language scenario of India may be summarized in this way:

- i) There are number of mother tongues actual statuses of which are yet to be established.
- ii) There are number of languages without a written equivalent – unwritten.
- iii) There are languages that have only recently acquired the writing skill.
- iv) The language/ dialect which once had a written tradition subsequently became dialectalised.
- v) The languages with a long standing written tradition.

It is needless to say that the total language scenario can be made explicit only on further investigation.

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# A New Linguistic World Order and Language Endangerment

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## Abstract

The paper argues that the matter of language endangerment must be debated with modesty and genuineness, as today one can easily find something strange in the study of these issues. The frank appraisal of the language endangerment camp suggests that in the 21st century linguistic world is facing a crisis of linguistic credibility and offering a sober warning about the linguistic world. We describe reasons as to why issues related to endangerment do not speak out the truth and are also far from the reality. The theoretical gaps need urgent fixing because there appears to be a serious disconnect between theoretical models of language endangerment and sociolinguistic realities of the New Linguistic World Order. Here we begin to answer questions that linguists have never asked so far. In particular, the apparent emergence of 'New Linguistic World Order' in the 21st century demands explanation from 'alternative sociolinguistics', in order to assess the real-politik and real-groups that have propelled linguists to overemphasize the notion of language endangerment. In a similar vein, leaving aside the weeds for sociolinguistic pundits to wade through, we intend to capture broad socio-political indications of the enhanced new alliance that has emerged over the years, whuxch show the colonized world of yesterday as unable to solve its linguistic problems. We here offers a new way to understand language endangerment, emphasizing the fact that safeguarding languages to promote linguistic diversity is important, and must serve as the foundation for a sustainable and suitable linguistic ecology amidst 'New Linguistic World Order'.

## Introduction

Let me begin with a declarative sentence: The topic of language endangerment is close to my heart because language matters to me more than anything else anytime and everywhere and also touches every domain of my life. There cannot be a second opinion on the fact that we should all stand together on the theme of global distress, such as language endangerment. Having said that onus is on now everyone to care own language and also ensure transmission to the next generations – or else, it will lead towards a perfect example of a sacred marriage gone astray. Let's debate the matter of language endangerment with dignity and seriousness because being impressed too much by the idea of language endangerment is dangerous. Has it become the main motto of sociolinguists today? Are linguists becoming middlemen in the endeavour? Academic seriousness in this direction might prevent language endangerment in becoming breaking news and linguistic nostalgia.

I do feel that the issue is slowly becoming repetitive and boring. I can see that the topic is threatening and making us sleepless too. As a result, in the midst of New Linguistic World Order (hence forth, NLWO) (Singh, 2014), the issue of endangerment demands

rediscovering in a refreshingly new way because it has either been over – or underdetermined, either an excess or a supplement. Today, it is more than obvious that that linguistic world is undergoing a phase of radical transition. The dawning of 21<sup>st</sup> century – unlike that of the previous centuries - has brought with it the sense that something has fundamentally changed, and old theoretical models are no longer sufficient to deal with the new linguistic world's realities.

## Language Endangerment within and beyond sociolinguistics

It is irony of our time that since the birth of sociolinguistics, linguistic diversity has never been seen making a smart and creditable turnaround. At many junctures, it also became linguistically infamous – especially during the foundation of discipline within linguistics. The facts revealed in the 'Atlas of World's languages in danger of disappearing', unveiled by the UNESCO on the eve of 'International Mother tongue Day', once again portrayed India for awful news for having maximum number of languages -196- on the verge of extinct. USA, with 192 languages in peril, follows India closely. It is the story of 21<sup>st</sup> century which has transformed the issues of language



## **New Linguistic World Order and Alternative sociolinguistics**

Today we find ourselves in extraordinary sociolinguistic situation. Why is this so? Both – sociolinguistics and critical sociolinguistics – were institutionalized in the west in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Alternative sociolinguistics has to take shape in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. European scholars – mainly from Great Britain, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and Spain - stirred the major breakthrough in sociolinguistics by appropriating critical thinking in 80s at a time when the European Union represented 31.6% of the world's GDP and USA economy experienced a deep recession. The failure of modernization ideology in the developing was sufficiently realized. During the 80s and 90s, there were many supporters of language maintenance and drew parallel between linguistic diversity and biodiversity on the assumption that cultural diversity in all respects encourages biodiversity or vice versa (Harmon, 1996).

Today the world economic has changed drastically where in alternative west can exercise an enormous amount of control to shape the sociolinguistic studies. There is no harm in this endeavour so long as we keep an open mind about the paradigm shift which will bring the greatest change in the linguistic history. It is a central question for the present and future: Can there be sociolinguistics without being western in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? This question did not arise in 20<sup>th</sup> century, as it was packaged tightly in the western context. It is more than obvious that the west is entering into a period in its history in which it will necessarily be compelled to be part of inclusive world.

At this juncture, search for another sub-discipline seems to be, at least, an immediate possible solution to describe the sphere of reality within which our present study seeks to focus on the emerging issues. A call for the 'alternative sociolinguistics' will be a correcting measure to rectify the theoretical deficiencies of sociolinguistics. Henceforth, sociolinguists must try for making sociolinguistics a 'fit' discipline to cope with current sociolinguistic realities. We have almost been pushed to make an appeal before everyone. The representation of language endangerment demands courageous intervention and resistance and not simply displacement for academic satisfaction. At the outset, the repertoire of resistance calls for questioning. But one may still ask: Who/what is destination next?

With rise of the 'New Linguistic World Order', linguists must learn that the western academia can no longer afford to nurture linguistics either with obsolete or hegemonic theoretical models. The inquiry into language endangerment has to be taken in the spirit of present paradigm shift without any prior assumptions about what has already been established. The present sociolinguistic realism is enthused by the paradigm

shift which also seeks answer for the questions: How is it changing the world sociolinguistically like never before in the annals of human history. Unfortunately, the issue of language endangerment is bringing smiles to the faces of many seasoned linguists in the alternative-western camp like political elites. However, it goes without saying that the issue deserves serious attention. The theme of language endangerment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be discussed in the right perspective of 'New Linguistic World Order' which would serve as the foundation of sustainable and suitable linguistic ecology. Hence, the notions of language endangerment lack many things, or almost everything, that sociolinguistic reality otherwise demonstrates in the new linguistic world order.

Sociolinguists should initiate a new discourse on 'Alternative Sociolinguistics' as a right measure for correcting deficiencies of sociolinguistic theories and to justify its suitability in coping up with new realities. Let me invite all you to watch the linguistic race of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as the spectre of growing politico-economic needs turns the west to east. As the 21<sup>st</sup> century is approaching, the world is becoming a heady rush of language with a warm feeling of togetherness even among comparative strangers. Most likely, on contrary to sidelines, linguistic world, for the first time, is into upswing to breakdown the stereotypes. Indeed, time has come to take note of the fact that it is 21<sup>st</sup> century and the world is inching towards making new linguistic world order. As a result, the imperative task before linguists is to harbor an optimistic approach and watch out opportunity that this century has in store for aspirants. In the background, new story is sprouting and the story that will dominate the history of 21<sup>st</sup> century is undoubtedly the issue of living together with linguistic stability. The reason is almost obvious.

### **Tougher Questions**

In so doing, it would be wise to pursue such questions, as:

1. Does the discourse of language endangerment sound like yet another colonial, western and hegemonic agenda wherein post-colonial, non-western and democratic are prone to be gripped and trapped easily?
2. How privileging would be the subject matter in present-day perspective for the non-western linguists to highlight the way new breed manages himself between [...own] tongue and [...other] tongue without pushing himself on the axes of either [...self] or [...other]?
3. As to why, in the deep multilingual nation, local languages have nothing to fear from

global language due to new linguistic generosity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century ?

4. Or else, why, in the deep multilingual nation, global language will never replace local languages as super markets, in India, are not emerging as an absolute alternative for lucrative kirana shops?

5. To which extent local languages, as an essential component for inclusive growth, are utilizing linguistic space effectively moving away from politics of confrontation to an effective grass-root paradigm that involves [...self] and [...other]

6. Is the hype of language endangerment focused exclusively on western linguistic model that cannot provide the panacea for any linguistic ills in the deep multilingual settings?

### **Towards highlighting the defects**

For me there are three parts to this debate on sanitizing the defects of language endangerment. The first part of argument is ethically extraordinary serious because we are hurting the linguistic passions of speakers. The second part of argument is that it is far from reality and adopts alien ways of speaking into objects of sociolinguistic knowledge. Thirdly, the whole debate is not extended to different understandings that different categories of people have about the nature of sociolinguistic world. Basically, it is a goodbye call to the old debate on language endangerment

### **Hurriedness in declaration**

We need to remember that the topic of language endangerment must have focused purpose and not to indulge in sheer announcement. In 2010, the UNESCO lists the following languages of North-east India under vulnerable and definitely endangered languages: Bodo, Dimasa, Hmar, Karbi, Mizo, Angami, Baitei, Douri, Khasi, Kabui, Koch, Ao, Konyak, Meitei, Mech. It is surprising to learn that the UNSECO had withdrawn Khasi from its Atlas of the world's languages in danger in 2012. The status of this language was reassessed by the Editorial Board of the Atlas and came up with conclusion that Khasi may be classified under the "safe" on the UNESCO's scale of language vitality. What transpired them to do so in just two years? Was it a case of rectifying the mistake committed in the act of declaration in hurry? Does it also suggest that other languages were not reassessed and left untouched to live on their own fate? Or else, does it also mean that the information relating to Khasi being an endangered language was always incomplete? Was it so because of lack of proper information? Certainly, such embarrassment is bound to emerge unless the real character of the region is properly accessed. It is

unethical on the part of linguists to make others sleepless and alternatively pushing and placing themselves in the position of sound sleep.

### **Overestimation**

The Atlas listed 2473 endangered languages in the world, classified on five degrees of vitality: vulnerable, definitely endangered, severely endangered, critically endangered and extinct. It has been predicted that 80% of world languages may vanish within the next century. On the other, one estimate says that in 100 years' time 3,000 languages will be extinct. It has also been estimated that one language dies every 14 days. On the other hand, there is estimation that by the next century nearly half of the roughly 7,000 languages spoken on Earth will likely to disappear because communities are throwing away their native tongues in favour of dominant languages such as English, Mandarin and Spanish, Hindi, Russian, Arabic, Indonesian and Swahili. According to some linguists, up to 90% of the world's languages may well be replaced by dominant languages by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century which would reduce the present number of almost 7,000 languages to less than 700. Where does this leave our discussion on language endangerment as terms like 'vanishing', 'extinct', 'death', 'vulnerable', 'dyeing', 'unsafe', disappear and such others have been used without any gravity? Our main objection is that language never dies and it cannot die also. Where to go from here is the intriguing question. Such estimation cannot be treated as a global body of knowledge; instead, it is overestimation because its parameter once again overlooks valuable perspective of deep multilingualism that enriches and enhances our sociolinguistics' understanding of world.

### **Misunderstanding**

The excitement surrounding language endangerment appears to be highly misplaced and also misled. The contemporary methodology for judging the fact of language endangerment is nothing but a serious act of indulging into an exercise of labelling others without even knowing the minimum substance. The question is: Do these theoretical models of language endangerment involve the consent of alternative west? This is a matter of grave concern and ironically it is still a one way relationship between theoretical model and sociolinguistic realities. This is day when I should not think who I to ask all these questions am.

Among 196 Indian languages that are classified under the various categories of endangered, Angika, one of the varieties of Hindi, was grouped under vulnerable. The question is: If Angika, a variety of similar status to Bajjika, has already reached up to this label, then why not Bajjika? Who will decide about whom as Kashyap points out:

The non-Bajjika speakers of Hindi tend to consider Bajjika as a dialect of Hindi, Maithili speakers treat it as a dialect of Maithili and Bhojpuri speakers think it is another form of Bhojpuri (Kashyap 217-218).

It is worrying that the debate on language endangerment goes on without understanding and acknowledging the sociolinguistic reality of the region. Also worth addressing is the question of what really must be done to avert panic of endangerment among speech communities that are fairly caring for their languages at whatever possible levels capable of doing so. In particular, therefore, I start by articulating that the notions of language endangerment no longer explain reality of the deep multilingual setting, resulting in a redefinition of taken for granted parameters. On this ground, one can raise the question: As to how and why language endangerment has become misnomer, especially when language shift, language abandonment and language death are confused as one and the same?

Hopefully, we can generate a debate, a stimulus for thought, on dynamics of language endangerment and engendering across the world to see reality as a process in the deep multilingual nation. More than those, these approaches hardly tend to generate inclusive view on linguistic engendering mainly because they are inspired predominantly on the tenants of western reality. The question is: Would there be some better ways of understanding the social realities in the field of sociolinguistics and find some ways of altering the parameters?

Hence, this requires complex knowing of what is new or radical in this current portrayal of endangered languages at the local and global levels. Is it simply a new twist on an old favorite: global language as wicked demons with political power at various domains, local languages as defenseless, chaste innocents in need of protection? Some linguists have gone for this view with whole hog. Is it a nostalgic tone? We cannot deny red flag on top. Should anyone miss the message?

## **Language endangerment and sociolinguistic realism**

### **Scenario 1**

An attempt to develop a realist sociolinguistic theory of endangerment is interesting one. However, it is always full of risk. There are reasons as to why issues related to endangerment do not speak out the truth or far from the reality. Bellari language - Dravidian variety spoken by about 1000 Bellara, a scheduled caste of Kerala and Karnataka – has been grouped under critically endangered language. Passi dialect of Adi and Asur have been also listed under the endangered category. Critical voices have to be raised against those attempts which are actively engaged in creating confusion rather

than offering solution to better linguistic life where choice of language heavily depends on the sociolinguistic contexts such as native, home, institutional, political, market, media and cultural domains. To depict the real sociolinguistic scenario of country like India, Singh's observation is worth mentioning here:

Language labels change every decade. For example, Angika, Bajjika or Galong are labels that went out of use recently but we have no dearth of new labels: eg. Rajbanshi, Kokborok or Gorkhali” (Singh 2008:40).

Unjust exclusion or inclusion of variety, dialect and language in the endangered category has to be contested – or else, it will restrict the scope of discipline itself. It appears that linguistics is entering into a new era of theory building by losing the side of this basic truth. Pennycook (2004, 2) rightly alarms us that “...that moment has arrived to argue that language concept too has served its time” and as a result “... over-determined sense of linguistic fixity, with its long ties to colonialism and linguistics needs to be profoundly questioned”. A way forward, I would rather welcome the title of Fabian's essay (2001) ‘With so much critique and reflection around, who needs theory?’. On this ground we must seek answer for the question: Whether or not the notion of language endangerment appears to be more bluster than substance? There are many questions on the way because we have not begun to think carefully about politics of conducting research on groups of people who desire to live within inclusive diversity as deep multilinguals. The experts in the field are in many ways less prepared to acknowledge the facts as their mainstream predecessors. Theorists have to face reality such as a famous North Indian saying goes as follows:

**“Kos kos pe pani badle, tin kos pe bani”**

It means that after every 2.25 miles taste of water changes and after every 6.75 miles changes the linguistic variety. ‘Kos’ is a unit of distance measurement in the ancient India. The saying appropriately explains the linguistic richness in India. However, this linguistic richness appears to be a major source of confusion for the ideologue of language endangerment and also reveals alternatively a great deal about what we expect from the research enterprise of language endangerment. How many endangered languages the editorial board of Atlas will list from the Grierson's finding?

“[Most] Indian languages gradually merge into each other and are not separated by hard and fast boundary lines. When such boundaries are spoken of, or are shown on a map, they must always be understood as conventional methods of showing

definitely a state of things which is in its essence indefinite. Although Assamese differs widely from Marathi, and a speaker of one would be entirely unintelligible to the other, a man could almost walk for twenty-eight hundred miles, from Dibrugarh to Bombay and thence to Dardistan, without being able to point to a single stage where he had passed through eight distinct tongues of the Indian continent, Assamese, Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Lahnda, and Kohistani..." (Grierson 1927:30-1).

While discussing trends of convergence and divergence in the region, which is supposed to be having maximum number of endangered languages, Singh says that:

Some languages split and new speech forms and labels emerged, as in Indo Aryan – Sanskrit and Prakrit to Apabhramsha to modern Indian languages. Some languages (like Tamil) changed without accompanying changes in their names or labels. Further, merger of structures or linguistic convergence was a common process by which dissimilar and divergent languages become more like one another. When this happens on social plane, unified varieties emerge like Sadari or Nagamese (Singh 2008: 40).

We also need to answer the question: As to how success in managing linguistic minorities at state level in India indicates linguistic manufacturing accuracy to its political design, enviable linguistic integration to its social composition and linguistic efficiency to its new breed? This is also an issue where proponents of language endangerment can benefit from the example. In state like Meghalaya, Khasi is the majority language with 49.54% of speakers, Garo is the first minority language with 30.86%, Bengali is the second minority with 8.36% and the third minority language is Nepali with 2.77%. You may find yourself at a loss of words to answer this question: Why English is the official language of state even majority language dominates? Meghalaya is not alone – many more states are managing the linguistic affairs in almost similar tone. Arunachal Pradesh – which houses the maximum number of endangered languages as per the report - presents unique example of linguistic management where English is the official language and Hindi has emerged as lingua Franca for communicating among various tribes. The case of Nagaland is equally interesting. The new linguistic breed are trying to find out remedies in keeping own tongue alive and well in the presence of others. As a result multilingualism will no longer be only strategic, negotiable and manipulative but will turn out so deep that it will become the only way of life. Deep multilingualism will be desired by all those who have been bemoaning over the loss of languages. What else?

## Scenario 2

On the other hand, language endangerment debate has to recognize the realm of inclusive globalization in which sociolinguistic activities are taking place today. Inclusive globalization is restructuring a new kind of society in which the fixed linguistic boundaries are bound to melt with new hybrids and varieties to negotiate with emerging varieties. It is crucial point to note that in totality "none of us speaks a single, uniform language, nor is any of us a single, uniform identity" (Gee, 2012:90) and as result "the different social languages we use allow us to render multiple whos (who we are) and whats (what we are doing) socially visible" (Gee, 2012:90). English leads the race as Shohamy (2006: 11) says:" English provides further evidence of crossing the fixed boundaries of language of language as it constantly creates new varieties, demonstrating the fluidity and flexibility of languages". Should then we assume that Queen's English is endangered today as English is fragmenting with new classes in the new social structuring of the world? The 'Queen's English Society', which championed good English to protect language from against poor spelling and grammar, conceded defeat in 2012 and even ceased to exist. Expressing the sadness, the Chairman Rhea William said: "Things change, people change" and also "people care about different things" ( quoted by Damien Gayle, 2012). What is to be done?

## Conclusion

The question is: Who is losing 'sleep' over this: The speakers? The community? The state? The nation? Linguists? Or UNESCO?

The more we talk about language endangerment the less we seem to be able to do anything about it. This is where the flaw in our linguistic vocabulary reveals itself.

Perhaps, it is the right time for sociologists anthropologists and social-psychologists and sociolinguists, in particular, to realize that linguistic endangerment is an aberration in the straightforward operation of theoretical linguistic model.

Much of what makes the multilingualism new or deep is linguistic temptation and celebration. Deep multilingualism, emerging from this, is clearly traceable. The linguistic temptation is to pluralize views of multilingualism, demanding the space to enter into new linguistic domains.

However, this project is risky. Therefore, analysis demands complex knowledge – not only in terms of past but also in terms of present. Hope and an alternative sociolinguistics is the right call. But the subject matter of language endangerment will be better

understood in the 21<sup>st</sup> century if discussed in the broader context of New Linguistic World Order.

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# Foundation for Endangered Languages

## Manifesto

### Preamble

#### 1.1. The Present Situation

At this point in human history, most human languages are spoken by exceedingly few people. And that majority, the majority of languages, is about to vanish.

The most authoritative source on the languages of the world (Ethnologue, 19<sup>th</sup> edition 2016) lists 7097 living languages. Of these, it may be noted that:

- 52.7% are spoken by fewer than 10,000 people;
- 37.6% by fewer than 1,000; and
- 83% are restricted to single countries, and so are particularly exposed to the policies of a single government.

At the other end of the scale, 10 major languages, each spoken by over 100 million people, are the mother tongues of almost half (49%) of the world's population.

More important than this snapshot of proportions and populations is the outlook for survival of the languages we have. Hard comparable data here are scarce or absent, often because of the sheer variety of the human condition: a small community, isolated or bilingual, may continue for centuries to speak a unique language, while in another place a populous language may for social or political reasons die out in little more than a generation. Another reason is that the period in which records have been kept is too short to document a trend: e.g. the Ethnologue has been issued only since 1951. However, it is difficult to imagine many communities sustaining serious daily use of a language for even a generation with fewer than 100 speakers: yet at least 10% of the world's living languages are now in this position.

Some of the forces which make for language loss are clear: the impacts of urbanization, Westernization and global communications grow daily, all serving to diminish the self-sufficiency and self-confidence of small and traditional communities. Discriminatory policies, and population movements also take their toll of languages.

In our era, the preponderance of tiny language communities means that the majority of the world's languages are vulnerable not just to decline but to extinction.

#### 1.2. The Likely Prospect

There is agreement among linguists who have considered the situation that over half of the world's languages are moribund, i.e. not effectively being passed on to the next generation. We and our children, then, are living at the point in human history where, within perhaps two generations, most languages in the world will die out.

This mass extinction of languages may not appear immediately life-threatening. Some will feel that a reduction in numbers of languages will ease communication, and perhaps help build nations, even global solidarity. But it has been well pointed out that the success of humanity in colonizing the planet has been due to our ability to develop cultures suited for survival in a variety of environments. These cultures have everywhere been transmitted by languages, in oral traditions and latterly in written literatures. So when language transmission itself breaks down, especially before the advent of literacy in a culture, there is always a large loss of inherited knowledge.

Valued or not, that knowledge is lost, and humanity is the poorer. Along with it may go a large part of the pride and self-identity of the community of former speakers.

And there is another kind of loss, of a different type of knowledge. As each language dies, science, in linguistics, anthropology, prehistory and psychology, loses one more precious source of data, one more of the diverse and unique ways that the

human mind can express itself through a language's structure and vocabulary.

We cannot now assess the full effect of the massive simplification of the world's linguistic diversity now occurring. But language loss, when it occurs, is sheer loss, irreversible and not in itself creative. Speakers of an endangered language may well resist the extinction of their traditions, and of their linguistic identity. They have every right to do so. And we, as scientists, or concerned human beings, will applaud them in trying to preserve part of the diversity which is one of our greatest strengths and treasures.

#### 1.3. The Need for an Organization

We cannot stem the global forces which are at the root of language decline and loss.

But we can work to lessen the ignorance which sees language loss as inevitable when it is not, and does not properly value all that will go when a language itself vanishes.

We can work to see technological developments, such as computing and telecommunications, used to support small communities and their traditions rather than to supplant them.

And we can work to lessen the damage:

- by recording as much as possible of the languages of communities which seem to be in terminal decline;
- by emphasizing particular benefits of the diversity still remaining; and
- by promoting literacy and language maintenance programmes, to increase the strength and morale of the users of languages in danger.

In order to further these aims, there is a need for an autonomous international organization which is not constrained or influenced by matters of race, politics, gender or religion. This organization will recognise in language issues the principles of self-determination, and group and individual rights. It will pay due regard to economic, social, cultural, community and humanitarian considerations. Although it may work with any international, regional or local Authority, it will retain its independence throughout. Membership will be open to those in all walks of life.

### Aims and Objectives

The Foundation for Endangered Languages exists to support, enable and assist the documentation, protection and promotion of endangered languages. In order to do this, it aims:-

- (i) To raise awareness of endangered languages, both inside and outside the communities where they are spoken, through all channels and media;
- (ii) To support the use of endangered languages in all contexts: at home, in education, in the media, and in social, cultural and economic life;
- (iii) To monitor linguistic policies and practices, and to seek to influence the appropriate authorities where necessary;
- (iv) To support the documentation of endangered languages, by offering financial assistance, training, or facilities for the publication of results;
- (v) To collect together and make available information of use in the preservation of endangered languages;
- (vi) To disseminate information on all of the above activities as widely as possible.

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