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सोसाइटी फॉर इंडेन्जर्ड एंड लेसर नोन लैंग्वेजेज की शोध पत्रिका

A Phonological Sketch of the Koch Language

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Abstract

Koch is a language of the Bodo group belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language family. The language is mainly spoken in the states of Assam and Meghalaya. The UNESCO report mentions Koch as 'Definitely Endangered'. Koch has been dealt with in the retrospective literature from the point of view of comparative vocabulary, history and social structure, dialectal variations, language pedagogy and bilingualism. But a phonological account of the Koch language is yet to be studied. Therefore, the present paper attempts to provide a brief sketch of the Koch phonology. Although there are six varieties of the Koch language, the present paper studies the phonology of the language depending upon the Harigaya variety of Koch. The data of the present paper was collected during field investigation in the Tura, Garo Hills of Meghalaya from the Koch informants who are mainly the speakers of Harigaya variety.

Key Words - contact, endangered, ethno-linguistic, Harigaya, phonemic, Tibeto-Burman

1. Introduction

Koch is a language belonging to the Bodo group of Tibeto-Burman language family. The language is mainly spoken in the states of Assam and Meghalaya. In Assam Koch speakers inhabit in Goalpara, Nagaon, Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Bongaigao, Barpeta, Baksa, Udalguri, Karbi Anglong and Golaghat districts. In Meghalaya the language is spoken in West Garo Hills, South-West Garo Hills, South Garo Hills and East Khasi Hills Districts. Koch people are found in the northern part of West Bengal and also in Bangladesh. According to 2011 census the speaker strength of Koch in India is 36,434. Koch community is the bilingual speakers of Assamese, Bengali, Garo, Hindi, and English. Impact of Indo-Aryan languages like Assamese and Bengali due to the prolonged contact situation is evident in the language structure of Koch. This has made the language vulnerable to language shift. The UNESCO report mentions Koch as 'Definitely Endangered'. According to Kondakov (2013) there are six distinct dialects of Koch, viz., Wanang, Koch-Rabha (Kocha), Harigaya, Margan, Chapra and Tintekiya. Kondakov (2013:24) states, "The relationship between the six Koch speech varieties are rather complex. They represent a dialect chain that stretches out from Koch-Rabha in the north to Tintekiya Koch in the south." It has been reported during my field investigation that there are nine ethno-linguistic varieties of Koch. These are Harigaya, Wanang, Tintekiya, Margan, Chapra, Satpariya, Sankar, Banai and Koch Mandai (also mentioned in Kondakov, 2013:5). As a traditional religious practice, the Koch people follow animism and also worship Sakti god of Hinduism. Christianity is also followed by some Koch-Rabha people.

Koch has been dealt with from the point of view of comparative vocabulary from the middle of the 19th century, viz., Hodgson (1847), Williamson (1869), Beams (1872), Damant (1880), Grierson (1903), Shafer (1974), Bradley (1997), Burling (2003), mainly for the purpose of classification of the language. Scholars like Chatterji (1951), Majumder (1967), Koch (1984), Chakravorty (2007) dealt with the history and social structure of the Koch speech community. It was Kondakov and Koch (2009), Mondol

(2010), Koch (2013), Kondakov (2013), Koch (2016), Kondakov (2018) which essentially dealt with the lexical items of the language and word structure keeping in view dialectal variations, language pedagogy and bilingualism. Dattamajumdar (2002) dealt with the socio-linguistic profile of the Koch language with a list of basic vocabulary items of the language. But a phonological account of the Koch language is yet to be studied. Therefore, the present paper attempts to provide a brief sketch of the Koch phonology.

It is pertinent to mention here that although there are six varieties of the Koch language (mentioned earlier), the present paper studies the phonology of the language mainly depending upon the Harigaya variety of Koch. The data of the present paper was collected during field investigation in the Tura, Garo Hills of Meghalaya from the Koch informants who are mainly the speakers of Harigaya variety, although interaction with speakers of other varieties of Koch were also carried out.

2.Vowels

There are six vowel phonemes in Koch. As the length and nasalization of the vowels cannot be determined from my limited data of Harigaya variety of the language, these cannot be treated as phonemes of the language.

The following table represents the vowels of the Koch language.

Koch Vowels			
	Front	Central	Back
	Unrounded	Unrounded	Rounded
High	i		u
High-mid	e		o
Low-mid			ɔ
Low		a	

Each of the vowels has been described and exemplified below in terms of the following parameters.

1. Part of the tongue involved in the articulation
2. Height of the tongue that is raised during articulation
3. Position of the lips (that is, rounded or unrounded) during articulation

1. /i/ is a front high unrounded close vowel. It occurs in the initial, medial and final positions of a word. The examples are given below.

/iɔ / ‘it’

/kiriŋ/ ‘seed’

/misi/ ‘buffalo’

The phonemic status of the vowel can be had from the contrastive distribution presented below.

- I. /kin/ 'to shout'
/kan/ 'body'
- II. /ʃi/ 'blood'
/ʃo/ 'to go'

2. /e/ is a front high-mid unrounded half- close vowel. It occurs in all the three positions of a word. Examples are given below.

/enda/ 'worm/caterpillar'

/hen/ 'crab'

/ne/ 'bee'

The phonemic status of the vowel can be had from the contrastive distribution presented below.

- I. /hen/ 'crab'
/hun/ 'cotton'
- II. /bek/ 'all'
/bak/ 'conversation/ to speak'

3. /a/ is a central low unrounded open vowel. The language attests this vowel in all the three positions of a word – initial, medial and final which are exemplified below.

/akuk/ 'grasshopper'

/rambu/ 'cloud'

/na/ 'fish'

The phonemic status of the vowel can be had from the contrastive distribution presented below.

- I. /far/ 'night'
/fir/ 'fox'
- II. /na/ 'fish'
/ne/ 'bee'

4. /u/ is a back high rounded close vowel. The vowel occurs in all the positions of a word. Examples are given below.

/usm/ 'tortoise'

/purun/ 'goat'

/madzu/ 'woman'

The phonemic status of the vowel can be had from the contrastive distribution presented below.

- I. /sum/ ‘salt’
/sam/ ‘grass’
- II. /ruŋ/ ‘boat’
/riŋ/ ‘to understand’

5. /o/ is a back high-mid rounded half-close vowel. The occurrence has been observed to be in the initial, medial and final positions of a word. Examples are given below.

/ok/ ‘belly’

/top/ ‘nest’

/soso/ ‘mosquito’

The phonemic status of the vowel can be had from the contrastive distribution presented below.

- I. /soŋ/ ‘village’
/siŋ/ ‘waist’
- II. /ok/ ‘belly’
/ak/ ‘front’

6. /ɔ/ is a back low-mid rounded half-open vowel. The vowel occurs in all the three positions of a word. Examples are given in the following.

/kɔrɔt/ ‘sugarcane’

/ʃɔkɔt/ ‘wine’

/iɔ/ ‘this/it’

The phonemic status of the vowel can be had from the contrastive distribution presented below.

- I. /sɔn/ ‘tapeworm’
/san/ ‘day’
- II. /sɔŋ/ ‘village’
/suŋ/ ‘mind’

3. Consonants

There are twenty-one consonant sounds in Koch. A table determining the point and manner of articulation of the Koch consonants are presented below.

3.1 Koch Consonants

	Bilabial vl. vd.	Labio dental vl. vd.	Alveolar vl. vd.	Alveo- Palatal vl. vd.	Velar vl. vd.	Glottal
Stop Simple	p b		ṭ ḍ		k g	
Stop Aspirated	p ^h		t ^h d ^h		k ^h g ^h	
Affricate Simple				tʃ dʒ		
Fricative			s			h
Nasal	m		n		ŋ	
Lateral			l			
Trill			r			
Frictionless Continuant	w					

Each of the consonantal sounds of the language has been dealt with examples in the following.

1. /p/ is a voiceless bilabial stop occurring in the initial, medial and final positions of a word. Examples are given below.

/pumʃi/ ‘dew’

/nampar/ ‘wind’

/panhɔlop/ ‘bark’

The examples of the consonant in contrast are given in the following.

I. /pan/ ‘stem’
/kan/ ‘body’

II. /ɖupu/ ‘snake’
/duku/ ‘creel / basket to hold fish’

2. /b/ is a voiced bilabial stop of Koch. The occurrence of the sound is in word initial and medial positions. Examples are cited below.

/barupan/ ‘banyan tree’

/ɖebɔr/ ‘left’

/ɖeba/ ‘bedbug’

The examples of the consonant in contrastive distribution are presented in the following.

- I. /bak/ 'to speak'
/ʃak/ 'to kindle'

- II. /krab/ 'six'
/kraŋ/ 'feather'

3. /t/ is a voiceless alveolar stop. Its occurrence is found to be in word initial, medial and final positions which are exemplified below.

/tuŋto/ 'heat'

/haʔər/ 'earthquake'

/raŋfut/ ~/ raŋpʰut/ 'graze'

The phonemic status of the consonant is justified below from the contrastive distribution.

- I. /taũ/ 'bird'
/haũ/ 'father-in-law'

- II. /bat/ 'to throw'
/bak/ 'conversation'

4. /d/ is a voiced alveolar stop. The sound occurs in word initial and medial positions which are exemplified below.

/d̪iŋʔarani/ 'thunder'

/had̪el/ 'clay'

/hard̪uŋ/ 'cave'

The examples of contrastive distribution of the sound are presented below.

- I. /d̪am/ 'group'
/ʔam/ 'three'

- II. /ʃad̪am/ 'foot'
/ʃakam/ 'arm'

5. The sound /k/ is a voiceless velar stop. The consonant is found to occur in word initial, medial and final positions. Examples are given below.

/kaŋka/ 'cotton'

/hakaʃepa/ 'valley'

/ʃarek/ 'ground'

The examples of contrastive distribution of the consonant are given below.

- I. /kan/ 'to wear'
/man/ 'to get'

- II. /wak/ 'pig'
/war/ 'fire'

6. /g/ is a voiced velar stop in Koch. The sound occurs in word initial and medial positions. Examples are given below.

/gisin/ 'winter'

/gəŋgomari/ 'cloth for upper part of the body'

/gis/ 'nine'

The occurrence of the consonant in contrastive distribution is presented below.

- I. /guĩ/ 'beetelnut'
/kuĩ/ 'dog'

- II. /gap/ 'colour'
/rap/ 'to make'

7. /p^h/ is a voiceless aspirated bilabial stop. It occurs in initial and medial positions of a word. Examples are given below.

/p^ha/ ~ /fa/ 'teeth'

/lep^han/ ~ /lefan/ 'Koch lady's dress/skirt'

/p^haŋ/ ~ /faŋ/ 'bush'

The contrastive distribution of the sound can be seen from the following examples.

- I. /p^hui/ ~ /fui/ 'to come'
/kuĩ/ 'dog'

- II. /p^har/ ~ /far/ 'night'
/war/ 'fire'

8. /t^h/ is a voiceless aspirated alveolar stop. It is found in both word initial and medial positions. Examples are given in the following.

/t^ha/ 'vein'

/ma^th^op/ 'organization'

/bant^hai/ 'boy'

The sound in contrastive distribution is exemplified below.

I. /t^{hi}/ ‘to die’
/tʃi/ ‘blood’

II. /t^{hun}/ ‘lung’
/hun/ ‘cotton’

9. /d^h/ is voiced aspirated alveolar stop. It is found in both word initial and medial positions. Examples are given in the following.

/d^habat/ ‘to break’

/bed^hoka/ ‘ugly’

/d^her/ ‘back/rear’

The contrastive distribution of the sound is exemplified below.

I. /d^hoko/ ‘fish pot’
/t^hoko/ ‘tasty/ delicious’

II. /d^hena/ ‘arm’
/p^hena/ ‘foam’

10. /k^h/ is a voiceless aspirated velar stop. The consonant occurs in the initial, medial and final positions of a word. Examples are given below.

/k^hirit/ ‘louse’

/wak^handin/ ‘flute’

/bebak^h/ ‘all’

The occurrence of the sound in contrastive distribution is exemplified below.

I. /k^hap/ ‘grip’
/rap/ ‘to make’

II. /k^hu/ ‘fume’
/dʒu/ ‘to sleep’

11. /g^h/ is a voiced aspirated velar stop. The consonant occurs in the initial and medial positions of a word. Examples are given below.

/g^hop/ ‘cave’

/g^hili/ ‘fish pot’

/sraŋg^huraŋ/ ‘slogan’

The occurrence of the sound in contrastive distribution is exemplified below.

- I. /g^hul/ ‘to mix’
/ɖul/ ‘period from Feb-Mar’

- II. /g^hat/ ‘scale’
/p^hat/ ‘to vomit’

12. /tʃ/ is a voiceless alveo-palatal affricate occurring in word initial and medial positions. Examples are given below.

/tʃarek/ ‘low’

/muʃi/ ‘juice’

/tʃəlpək/ ‘soul’

The consonant in contrastive distribution is exemplified below.

- I. /haʃur/ ‘mountain’
/hapur/ ‘to scold’

- II. /tʃak/ ‘leaf’
/ɖak/ ‘to pluck’

13. /dʒ/ is a voiced alveo-palatal affricate which occurs in word initial and medial positions. Examples are given below.

/dʒitʊŋ/ ‘buttock’

/madʒu/ ‘woman’

/dʒikam/ ‘afterwards’

The consonant in contrastive distribution is shown below.

- I. /dʒeŋ/ ‘grass’
/peŋ/ ‘to attack’

- II. /dʒu/ ‘to sleep’
/lu/ ‘to bathe’

14. /s/ is a voiceless alveolar fricative consonant of the language. It occurs in word initial, medial and final positions. Examples are given in the following.

/san/ ‘day’

/gisiŋ/ ‘winter’

/gis/ ‘nine’

Examples of the consonant in contrastive distribution are presented below.

- I. /sam/ 'salt'
/bam/ 'to bow'

- II. /wasi/ 'axe'
/wari/ 'protection'

15. /h/ is a glottal fricative that occurs in word initial and medial positions. Examples are given below.

/harduɲ/ 'cave'

/mahɔɲ/ 'face'

/hɔlop/ 'skin'

The phonemic status of the consonant is exemplified below.

- I. /han/ 'yam'
/kan/ 'body'

- II. /haũ/ 'father-in-law'
/taũ/ 'bird'

16. /m/ is a voiced bilabial nasal stop. The sound occurs in word initial, medial and final positions. This is exemplified below.

/mækər/ 'eye'

/asumpri/ 'guava'

/lam/ 'road'

The contrastive distribution of the consonant is shown below.

- I. /maĩ/ 'paddy'
/taĩ/ 'fruit'

- II. /hem/ 'drum/
/hen/ 'crab'

17. The phoneme /n/ is a voiced alveolar nasal occurring in all the three positions of a word - initial, medial and final. Examples are given below.

/ne/ 'bee'

/randi/ 'widow'

/rasan/ 'sun'

The phoneme in contrastive distribution is presented below.

- I. /na/ 'fish'
/p^ha/ ~/fa/ 'teeth'

- II. /mani/ 'father's sister'
/masi/ 'millet'

18. /ŋ/ is a voiced velar nasal consonant. /ŋ/ can occur in word medial and final positions in Koch, which are exemplified below.

/adʒoŋ/ 'younger brother'

/nakuŋpar/ 'nose ring'

/kreŋ/ 'bone'

The consonant in contrastive distribution is exemplified below.

- I. /aŋ/ 'I'
/ak/ 'front'
- II. /boŋ/ 'five'
/bor/ 'to burn'

19. /l/ is an alveolar lateral sound which occurs in word initial, medial and final positions. Examples are presented below.

/loŋtai/ 'stone'

/panhɔlop/ 'bark'

/bukʃil/ 'clothing'

The consonant is found to be in contrastive distribution from the following examples.

- I. /lam/ 'road'
/ɖam/ 'mat'
- II. /bal/ 'to go back'
/bak/ 'to speak'

20. /r/ is an alveolar trill which can occur in all the three positions of a word. This is exemplified below.

/rambu/ 'cloud'

/wartʃu/ 'smoke'

/lampar/ 'air'

The phoneme in contrastive distribution is presented below.

I. /par/ 'flower'
/pan/ 'stem'

II. /war/ 'fire'
/wak/ 'pig'

21. /w/ is a voiced bilabial frictionless continuant. It is found to occur word initially and medially, which are exemplified below.

/waŋtʃi/ 'mother's sister's husband'

/kawəi/ 'monkey'

/kawar/ 'crow'

The phoneme in contrastive distribution is presented below.

I. /awa/ 'father'
/aga/ 'before'

II. /war/ 'fire'
/par/ 'flower'

4. Some Observation

The phonological study of the Koch language reveals the impact of the languages like Bangla and Asamiya, the two major Indo-Aryan languages. Koch speech community came in contact with these two neighboring languages for a long period, the influence being superstrate. Although Koch is a Tibeto-Burman language, the borrowing from the Bangla language especially at the vocabulary level is evident in the study of the lexical items. In this connection Kondakov and Koch (2009: ii) states, "Koch has common Tibeto-Burman roots and it is akin to several other languages of the area, such as Rabha, Garo, Bodo and others. Due to a prolonged contact with the Indo-Aryan languages Koch has acquired certain features from those languages, especially with regard to its vocabulary. In spite of this fact the Koch language has preserved its distinct identity." Instances of such borrowing is found to be attested in many cases which are enumerated in the following.

1. Occurrence of /d/, /g/, /p^h/, /t^h/ and /d^h/ in word final position is not attested in the Koch words of Tibeto-Burman origin. It is found only in the borrowed words from Indo-Aryan languages.
2. Being a Tibeto-Burman language, occurrence of the labio-dental fricative /f/ is likely to be present in the language. But due to the influence of the Indo-Aryan languages especially Bangla which attests bilabial aspirated stop /p^h/, /f/ seems to have been replaced by /p^h/ in many cases. Free variation of the use of /p^h/ and /f/ in the same word by the same speaker is observed during data collection. This has been exemplified earlier in the present discussion of the /p^h/ sound. Therefore, /f/ is not considered a phoneme of Koch in the present discussion.
3. /b^h/ seems to be a borrowed sound in Koch from Indo-Aryan languages. For example, the words like /ab^hadra/ 'immoral', /gab^h/ 'pregnant' found in the Koch language are of Indo-Aryan origin. As a result, words with /b^h/ sound is quite scanty in Koch. So phonemic contrast of /b^h/ is also not found in the language.

4. The voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ is often found to occur in free variation with the palatal fricative /ʃ/ sound. As /ʃ/ is not found to occur in contrastive distribution, it is not considered to be a phoneme of the Koch language. On the other hand, /ʃ/ is a phoneme of Bangla. The free variation of /s/ and /ʃ/ in Koch can be ascertained to be the influence of the Bangla language.
5. Although occurrence of velar nasal /ŋ/ in the word initial position is a characteristic feature of the Tibeto-Burman languages, Koch does not attest words with /ŋ/ in the word initial position. This seems to be a structural influence of the Indo-Aryan languages.
6. The central vowel schwa /ə/ is observed to be an allophonic variation of /a/ as evident in the example like /səɾ/ ~ /sar/ ‘iron’, and in such other words.

However, this phonological account of Koch is based on my limited data and entails scope for more exhaustive enquiry. It is hoped to reveal more subtle observations on Koch speech sounds with further enquiries.

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Linguistic Diversity, Dominance, and Marginality: A Case Study of North-East India

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Abstract

North East India is the easternmost region of India both from a geographic and administrative perspective. Famous for the Seven Sister States, in other words, the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. Sikkim is also now included in the North Eastern Region of India as the eighth state. According to the 1971 Census, people of North East India speak around 220 languages which belong to multiple language families namely – Indo-European, Sino-Tetian, Kra-Dai, and Austroasiatic languages. Out of these, 12 languages from North East India are listed under endangered languages. Ideally, linguistic diversity should be a source of strength; unfortunately, it mostly ends up being a source of dominance by the bigger group and marginalization of the numerically smaller group. In India, English along with the national/official/regional languages constitute the dominating languages that become oppressive for the common people using the local dialects. These marginalized groups include poor people and mostly the tribal communities. This very factor in turn forces many of the local dialects into a state of endangerment and degradation. Therefore, this paper tries to highlight the interplay of the existing linguistic diversity, dominance by the numerically preponderant linguistic group, and ultimately marginalization of the local languages and the people speaking them in the context of North-East India.

Key Words: Language Policy, NEP, Dialects, Ethnic diversity, Endangerment.

1. Introduction

Linguistic diversity refers to the variety and multiplicity of languages spoken and used by different individuals, communities, or regions within a particular geographical area or across the world (Arcodia and Mauri, 2017). It encompasses the range of languages, dialects, and linguistic variations that exist among human populations. Linguistic diversity highlights the fact that languages differ in terms of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and cultural nuances. It recognizes that languages are not only means of communication but also repositories of knowledge, identity, and cultural heritage for the communities that speak them.

However, linguistic diversity faces numerous challenges, including language endangerment, language shift, and language loss due to factors such as globalization, urbanization, migration, and the dominance of major languages. Linguistic diversity and the marginalization of languages are interconnected phenomena. Marginalization refers to the social, economic, and political exclusion or devaluation of certain languages and their speakers within a broader linguistic landscape. This marginalization can occur at both individual and community levels.

Therefore, the present paper tries to highlight the dynamic of linguistic dominance and marginalization amidst the hub of linguistic diversity in North-East India.

2. North-East India

North-East India, also known as North-eastern India or simply the North-East, is a region in the easternmost part of India. It comprises eight states, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura. Geographically, the region is located in the northeastern part of the Indian subcontinent, bordered by Bhutan to the north, Myanmar (Burma) to the east, and Bangladesh to the south and southwest. North-East India is known for its rich cultural and ethnic diversity, with numerous indigenous communities residing in the region. Each state has its own distinct identity, language, and cultural practices.

3. Map of North-East India



(Source: Published by Bishop's House Guwahati)

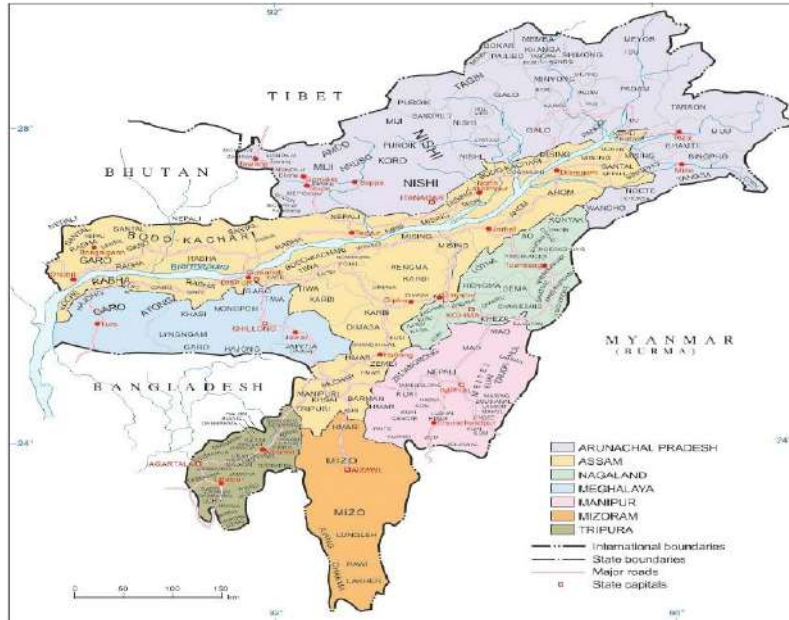
4. Linguistic Characteristics of North-East India

North-East India is known for its remarkable linguistic diversity, with a multitude of languages spoken across the region. According to 1971 Census, people of North-East India speak around 220 languages. These languages belong to various language families, including Tibeto-Burman, Austroasiatic, Indo-Aryan, Tai-Kadai, and Dravidian, among others. Some of the well-known languages in the region include Assamese, Manipuri (Meitei), Bodo, Khasi, Mizo (Lushai), Naga languages (such as Ao, Angami, Lotha, Tangkhul, Rongmei, and Zeme), and Tripuri (Kokborok).

In addition to these major languages, there are numerous smaller languages and dialects spoken by various ethnic communities in the region. The linguistic landscape of North-East India is characterized by rich diversity and cultural heritage, with many languages being endangered or facing the risk of language shift due to various socio-cultural and political factors. At present, 12 languages from North-East India are listed under endangered languages. The linguistic diversity of North-East India is characterized by the presence of a large number of languages belonging to different language families. The region is home to several major language families such as Tibeto-Burman,

Austroasiatic, Indo-Aryan, and Tai-Kadai, among others. This linguistic diversity, while rich and culturally significant, has also led to language dominance and marginalization within the region.

5. Linguistic Distribution in North-East India



(Source: Published by Bishop’s House Guwahati)

6. Communities Inhabiting the Different States of North-East India

(According to the 2001 Census)

Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura
26 Major Tribes and 100 Sub-tribes	45 Communities altogether (14 plain tribes, 15 Hill tribes and 16 Scheduled tribes)	35 Communities altogether (33 different sub-tribes under the umbrella tribes of Nagas and Kukis and Meiteis and Meitei Pangals)	3 Major Communities	5 Major tribes and 11 minor tribes	16 Major tribes	3 Major Communities	19 Major communities

7. Languages Spoken in Different States of North-East India

7.1 Manipur:

Manipuri (Meiteilon) is the official language of Manipur and is spoken by a majority of the population. Other languages/dialects spoken include Naga, Anal, Moyan, Monsang, Maring, Lamkang, Tarao, Tangkhul, Thadou, Paite, Hmar, Zou, Kom, Aimol, etc., which are primarily spoken by various tribal communities.

7.2 Nagaland:

Nagamese, a Creole language, is widely spoken as a lingua franca among different Naga tribes. Each Naga tribe has its own distinct language, such as Angami, Ao, Sema, Lotha, etc.

7.3 Arunachal Pradesh:

Arunachal Pradesh is known for its linguistic diversity, with a large number of languages spoken by different indigenous communities. Major language families in the state include Tibeto-Burman languages such as Adi, Nyishi, Apatani, Galo, Monpa, etc., as well as languages from other families like Assamese, Hindi, etc.

7.4 Tripura:

Bengali is the most widely spoken language in Tripura and serves as the official language of the state. Kokborok, an indigenous language spoken by the Tripuri community, is also prevalent.

7.5 Meghalaya:

Khasi, Garo, and Jaintia are the major indigenous languages spoken by different tribal communities in Meghalaya. English is also widely spoken and serves as an important language for communication and administration.

7.6 Mizoram:

Mizo is the official language of Mizoram and is spoken by the majority of the population. Other languages/dialects spoken include Lushai, Hmar, Mara, etc.

7.8 Sikkim:

Nepali is the most widely spoken language in Sikkim, with a significant majority of the population conversing in Nepali. It is also the official language of the state. Other Language or dialect includes Bhutia, Lepcha, Tamang, and Limbu.

8. Difference between “Language” and “Dialect”

8.1 Language: A language is a complex system of communication that is used by a particular community or group of people. It encompasses a set of sounds, words, grammar, and rules that enable individuals to express and convey meaning. A language is typically associated with a specific cultural, geographical, or ethnic community. It is characterized by mutual intelligibility, meaning that speakers of the same language can understand each other.

8.2 Dialect: A dialect is a variant form of a language that is spoken in a particular region or by a specific group within a larger language community. Dialects are characterized by variations in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions. These variations may be influenced by factors such as geographical location, historical development, social factors, and cultural

influences. Dialects often coexist within a broader language, and they may differ from one another to varying degrees. While speakers of different dialects within the same language can generally understand each other, there may be some differences that require adjustment or clarification.

9. Linguistic Diversity, Dominance, and Language Marginalization Through the Anthropological Lens

Linguistic Relativity which is also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, this theory suggests that the structure and content of language influence the way people perceive and think about the world. It implies that different languages encode and prioritize different aspects of reality, leading to diverse cultural perspectives and worldviews. From this perspective, linguistic diversity is seen as essential for maintaining a diverse range of cognitive and cultural perspectives (Hojjer, 1954).

According to Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), language is learned and acquired within social and cultural contexts. This theory which is also called Socialization theory, highlights the role of social interactions and cultural norms in shaping language use and transmission. Language socialization theory emphasizes that language is not only a means of communication but also a tool for cultural reproduction and social identity formation. It recognizes the significance of linguistic diversity in maintaining cultural traditions and social cohesion (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986; Garret and Baquedano-Lopez, 2002).

Drawing from sociopolitical theories, anthropologists examine how dominant languages and cultures exert power and influence over marginalized or minority languages. Language dominance is often associated with unequal power relations and can result in the marginalization or suppression of minority languages (Mustapha, 2014). Hegemonic forces such as colonialism, globalization, and nation-building processes contribute to language dominance by favoring the use of dominant languages in institutions, media, and other domains, while marginalizing or stigmatizing minority languages (Domjancic, 2015).

The theory of Language Endangerment and Vitality focuses on the factors that contribute to language endangerment, decline, and potential extinction. Anthropologists examine linguistic, social, economic, and political factors that affect the vitality of languages. According to UNESCO (2003), language endangerment is often linked to sociocultural changes, urbanization, migration, globalization, and language shift towards dominant languages. Anthropologists emphasize the importance of language revitalization efforts, community empowerment, and the recognition of linguistic rights to counter language endangerment.

Besides, there is the concept of Linguistic vitality which focuses on the factors that contribute to the maintenance and vitality of languages within a community. It highlights variables such as demographic factors, intergenerational transmission, institutional support, and community attitudes toward the language. Giles et al., (1977) in their book “*Towards a Theory of Language in ethnic group relations*” talk about the theoretical framework of ethnolinguistic vitality and its relationship with intergroup relations. Ethnolinguistic vitality theory provides a framework for understanding the conditions under which languages thrive or decline and guides efforts to support language revitalization and preservation (Giles and Johnson, 1987). Fishman (1991) discusses language shift and language revitalization efforts, providing valuable insights into the preservation of ethnolinguistic vitality in his book “*Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*”. Subsequently, Grenoble et al. (2006) discuss various strategies related to language revitalization, offering practical insights into maintaining ethnolinguistic vitality.

10. How linguistic diversity of North-East India leads to language dominance and marginalization

The dominance of major languages in North-East India could be observed in many states. Certain languages have acquired dominant status due to historical, social, or political factors (Devi, 2006). For example, languages like Assamese, Manipuri, and Bengali have emerged as major regional languages with wide usage and official recognition (Devi, 2006; Sarma, 2014). The dominance of these languages marginalizes other languages within the region, as they are given preferential treatment in education, administration, media, and other domains (Fishman, 1991; May, 2001).

Language policies pursued by governments can contribute to language dominance and marginalization. For instance, the adoption of a particular language as the official language or the medium of instruction in schools favors speakers of that language while marginalizing speakers of other languages (Grin et al., 2015). Language policies that do not recognize or support the linguistic diversity of the region can perpetuate language dominance and marginalization (McCarty, 2011). For example, when a dominant language is chosen as the sole official language or the medium of instruction in education, it marginalizes minority languages and restricts access to education, employment, and other opportunities for speakers of those languages (Kaplan et al., 1997).

Besides, economic and social factors can also influence language dominance and marginalization (Milroy and Gordon, 2003). In North-East India, there is often a correlation between language dominance and economic opportunities. Speakers of dominant languages have better access to employment, education, and social mobility, while speakers of marginalized languages may face barriers and discrimination (Milroy and Gordon, 2003; Bourdieu, 1991, Blommaert, 2001; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). This can create an imbalance of power and resources, reinforcing the marginalization of certain languages and their speakers.

Again, language shift occurs when speakers of one language gradually adopt another language, often due to social, economic, or political pressures (Fishman, 1991; Woodlard, 1985). In North-East India, there are instances of language shift where speakers of minority languages are increasingly using dominant languages in their daily lives, leading to the marginalization and decline of their native languages. This assimilation process can further reinforce language dominance and marginalization (Gal, 1979; Wardhaugh, 1987).

In addition to the above impacts, linguistic diversity can also give rise to language hierarchies, where certain languages are considered prestigious, dominant, or "major" languages, while others are marginalized or deemed inferior (Bourdieu, 1991; Fishman, 1991, Gal, 1979; Woodlard, 1985). This can lead to the marginalization of languages that are less widely spoken or have lower social status, limiting their use in formal domains, education, media, and public life.

Ultimately, linguistic diversity is threatened by language loss and endangerment, which occur when languages cease to be spoken or when their use declines significantly (Crystal, 2000; Harrison, 2007). Factors such as globalization, urbanization, and migration can contribute to the marginalization and erosion of minority languages, as speakers shift to more dominant languages for economic or social reasons (Grenoble et al., 2006).

11. The three language Policy of NEP 2020 and North-East India

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposed a three-language policy for schools across India, including the North-East region. While the policy aims to promote multilingualism and enhance

language skills, there are certain challenges and concerns specific to the implementation of the policy in the North-East.

Here are some of the problems associated with the implementation of the three-language policy in North-East India. Firstly, the North-East region is known for its linguistic diversity, with each state having its own indigenous languages and dialects. Implementing a uniform three-language policy may neglect the importance of preserving and promoting local languages. Many communities in the region have expressed concerns about the potential marginalization of their native languages under this policy.

Secondly, the region faces infrastructural and resource challenges, including a shortage of qualified teachers, textbooks, and teaching materials. Implementing a three-language policy requires additional resources and training for teachers to effectively teach multiple languages. Without sufficient resources, it becomes challenging to ensure quality language education across different languages. Thirdly, limited proficiency in Hindi poses a great linguistic imposition to the people living here. Hindi is one of the three languages proposed in the policy, alongside the mother tongue and English. However, Hindi is not widely spoken or understood in many parts of the North-East. Students and teachers may face difficulties in acquiring the required proficiency in Hindi, making it challenging to implement the policy effectively. The Fourth problem that arises here is the North-East region has a unique socio-cultural identity and history. The imposition of a three-language policy that does not adequately reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the region may lead to feelings of alienation and a sense of cultural imposition. It is crucial to consider the cultural sensitivities and aspirations of the local communities while implementing any language policy. Finally, the North-East region is home to numerous indigenous languages that are at risk of extinction. The three-language policy should prioritize the preservation and promotion of these indigenous languages rather than relegating them to a secondary status. Efforts should be made to integrate indigenous languages into the curriculum and provide resources for their preservation and development.

12. Conclusion

Linguistic diversity, dominance, and marginality in North-East India highlight the complex dynamics surrounding language use and preservation in the region. The Northeast is renowned for its remarkable linguistic diversity, with numerous languages and dialects spoken by various communities. This linguistic richness reflects the cultural heritage and identity of the region's diverse ethnic groups.

However, the dominance of certain languages, often associated with the majority or politically influential communities, can marginalize and endanger indigenous languages and dialects. The process of language dominance can result from historical, social, economic, and political factors that influence language use, education, media representation, and access to resources.

This linguistic marginalization poses challenges to the vitality and survival of endangered languages in the region. With their unique cultural knowledge and expressions, Indigenous languages are at risk of being lost, potentially leading to the erosion of cultural diversity and identity.

Efforts are being made to address these challenges and promote linguistic diversity and revitalization in Northeast India. Language preservation initiatives, community-based language programs, documentation projects, and advocacy for linguistic rights play crucial roles in raising awareness, promoting intergenerational language transmission, and empowering marginalized communities.

Safeguarding linguistic diversity in North-East India requires collaborative efforts from communities, scholars, policymakers, and society at large. By valuing and celebrating the richness of languages in the region, it is possible to foster an environment that respects linguistic rights, preserves cultural heritage, and strengthens the social fabric of North-East India.

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Pronouns in Poula

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Abstract

This paper attempts to discuss the different types of pronouns in Poula viz., Personal pronoun, Possessive pronoun, Reflexive pronoun, Interrogative pronoun and Demonstrative pronoun. Poula belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language of Kuki-Chin sub branch, it is one of the three varieties of languages spoken by the Chakhesang tribe of Nagaland, with the majority of speakers residing in parts of Manipur. The other two languages spoken by the tribe are Chokri and Khezha. As such, linguistically, this language shares a contiguous border with Manipur. This study will lay emphasis on the variety of Poula spoken in Phek district of Nagaland. Up to date, there are many literary works done on Chokri and Khezha, but Poula remains an unexplored and undocumented dialect. This dialect of Chakhesang is relatively unknown to even the other Naga language communities.

Keywords: Pronoun, Poula, Chakhesang, Phek, Nagaland

1. Introduction

The Chakhesangs are a Naga tribe who primarily inhabit the Phek district of Nagaland along with Pochury tribe who consider the district as their tribal headquarters. The name Chakhesang itself reflects three acronyms; 'Cha' which stands for Chokri, 'Khe' for Khezha and 'Sang' for Sangtam. Phek district is made up of three areas and two ranges, of which the present study uses the Razeba range as a point of departure for studying the Poula language. The range is a small one consisting of only three villages and a town who identify ethnically as Poumai. They are Zhavame (Zhamei), Zelome, Tsüpfüme (Chobama), and the town of Razeba with approximately only 6000-10,000 Poula speakers in Nagaland itself. The Poumais are classified as a sub-group of Chakhesang who in turn are further classified as a sub-group of the larger Tenyimia community. Poula language behaves differently from the slightly bigger languages of Chakhesangs - Khezha and Chokri, both morphologically and syntactically.

Pronoun is a term used in the grammatical classification of words, referring to the closed set of items which can be used to substitute for a noun phrase or a single noun (David Crystal, 2008). It is a word that can function as a noun used by itself and that refers either to the participants in the discourse or to someone or something mentioned elsewhere in the discourse. George Yule (1985), stated that Pronouns are words '...typically referring to people or things already known'. It falls under the noun sub-class on the ground that they take case and number markers just like nouns. RL Trask (1997), stated that a pronoun is 'a word class or word belonging to this class, whose member typically, form noun phrase, all by themselves, such as you, she, something or this'.

2. Conceptual Framework

Till date, no linguistic work is found in this variety of Poula. It was only in 2021, a small booklet titled ‘*Poula Primer Dictionary*’ was published by the Poula literature committee which is the first written literature in the language. Besides this, a few linguistics works are available in the variety spoken in Manipur; Veikho (2014) (2021), Veikho & Khyriem (2015) and Veikho & Sarmah (2018), which provides a preliminary phonological description of Poula, Consonants and Vowels. Veikho (2021) provides a more detailed analysis of the grammar of Poula.

The Poula Literature Board Committee was formed in the year 2013 with the primary intention to develop its orthography and provide reading materials in the language. One of their main focus lies on the development of Bible and hymnals in their own language. At present, the literature board is working on developing school textbooks for the primary sections.

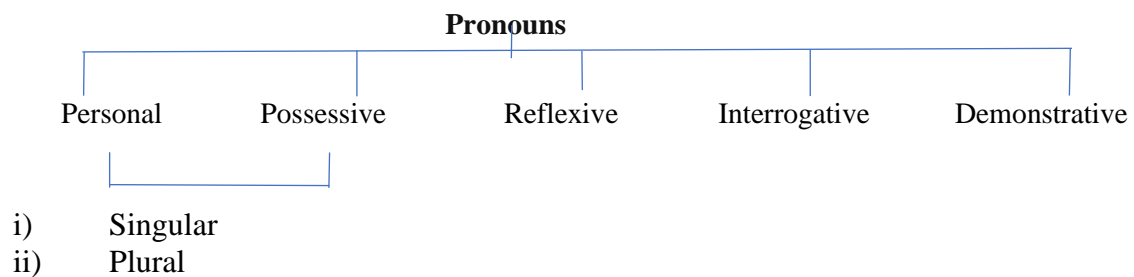
3. Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature and the data collected for this study were from native speakers of Razeba area in Phek district. Primary source includes observation method, structured and unstructured interviews, collection of community and personal narratives from native speakers varying in gender, age and occupation.

Secondary sources were in the form of books, journals, articles, internet sources, official documents and related literature written on the tribe to obtain information on the language and the people.

4. Pronouns in Poula

This section presents an overview of the different types of pronouns in Poula. Pronouns in Poula are free forms that can function alone to fill the position of a noun phrase in a clause. In Poula, the absence of a distinct dual marker is compensated by expressing duality through the combination with the cardinal number *ahe* ‘two’. The different types of pronouns found in the language are listed below:



4.1 Personal Pronouns

A personal pronoun is associated with a particular person. It can be classified into first person, second person and third person. Poula exhibits all three person and number category. The personal pronouns in Poula have singular and plural forms respectively. Morphologically, there is no separate form to distinguish between inclusive and exclusive category. It is distinguished in the conversation between the speaker and the hearer whether the hearer is excluded or included. Given below is an illustration of Poula personal pronouns basing on person and number category.

Table 1. Personal Pronouns

Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	/ɪ/ 'I' /a/ 'me'	/i/ or /it ^h .ume/ 'we/us'
2 nd	/ne/ 'you'	/neme/ 'you'
3 rd	/pû/ 'He/She'	/pûme/ 'they, them'

As shown in **Table 1**, the personal pronouns in Poula are not marked for gender, i.e., there is no separate forms or markers to indicate masculinity or femininity. The first person singular and the first-person plural is a case of isomorphism which are distinguished by tone. /ɪ/ which is the first-person singular takes the mid tone and the first-person plural takes the high tone /i/ as illustrated. Second person singular form is /ne/ and the second person plural is formed by suffixing the human marker /-me/ to the second person singular form.

Third person singular /pu/ is a free morpheme and the third person plural is formed by suffixing the human marker to the third person singular form. It is observed that there is no gender distinction in any of the person marking category.

4.1.1 Singular

The singular pronoun in Poula is unmarked and it is divided into first person, second person and third person.

i) First person singular

The first-person singular pronoun has two forms: /i/ and /a/. /i/ exclusively occurs in the subject position and /a/ exclusively occur in the object position as illustrated in example (1) and (2).

(1) i ʃidʒo kobi ʒa-le
 1SG tomorrow cabbage harvest-FUT
 'I will harvest the cabbage tomorrow'

(2) ne a-hi pəu-pi
 2SG 1SG-to tell-OB
 'You told me'

ii) Second person singular

The second person singular /ne/ has only one form which takes the position of both subject and object as illustrated below:

/ne/ occurring in subject position

(3) ne i bu tɹu-le
 2SG 1SG Kohima go-FUT
 'You and I will go to Kohima'

- (4) ne sa soi
 2SG tall very
 ‘You are tall’ (You’re very tall)

/ne/ occurring in object position

- (5) pume ne hi vu-le
 They 2SG to come-FUT
 ‘They will come to you’
- (6) pu ne p^həo bue
 3SG 2SG look PROG
 ‘He/she is looking for you’

iii) Third person singular

The third person singular in Poula is represented by /pu/ and it can take both subject and object position. Given below are some examples:

- (7) pu-nəu lik^hopi-le
 3SG-NOM cook-FUT
 ‘(S)he will cook’
- (8) pu şupafu vu nəu pu favə folu mo məpe hale şələu mo
 3SG market go but 3SG purse take NEG remember nothing buy-CAPMOD
 NEG
 k^he vu-de
 and come-PST
 ‘She went to the market and (unknowingly) left her purse at home so she had to return empty handed’
- (9) ne pu kəu pio
 2SG 3SG call IMP
 ‘You call him/her’

4.1.2 Plural

Plurality expresses more than one person or one object. The pronoun plurals in Poula are /it^h.umel/ ‘we’, /nemel/ ‘you’ and /pumel/ ‘they/them’. The pronoun plurals are suffixed by the human marker /-me/, the human marker obligatorily occurs after the pronoun which personifies the pronoun and makes it human.

i) First person plural

(10) it^h.ume ba .u ki ʃa so-le
1PL time six at tea drink-FUT

‘We will drink tea at 6’

(11) it^h.ume vu-dia koi
3PL come-EXIST call

‘They called us to come’

ii) Second person plural

(12) neme atɪuku-me muʃu pio
2PL others-HM inform IMP

‘You inform the others’

(13) i neme ʒe səu hasə ni
1SG 1PL hard do work want

‘I want you all to work hard’

iii) Third person plural

(14) pume tsəfə-me me
3SG tsüpfüme-HM people

‘They are from Tsüpfüme’

(15) i pume dəu hotəu ŋo
1SG them field go see

‘I saw them going to the field’

(16) pume dapa.u bue
they razeba be.LOC

‘They are in Razeba’

4.1.3 The dative in Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns in Poula can be marked with the dative suffix /hi/ as illustrated in the given examples. The dative marking in nouns in these examples are used for the semantic roles as recipient and beneficiary.

(17) a. dani a-hi larü li fopi
Danyi 1SG-DAT book one give

‘Danyi gave a book to me’

- b. dani pume-hi ɹafi fopi
 danyi 3PL-DAT fruit give
 ‘Danyi brought fruits for them’

4.1.4 Personal Pronouns and Degree of Comparison

The personal pronouns in Poula are also marked for the degree of comparison. The comparative marker /dzə/ occur independently after the pronouns. Given below are some examples:

- (18) pu a dzə ʒo hi
 3SG 1SG than long more
 ‘She is taller than me’
- (19) dani ne dzə tʰɹu hi
 Danyi 2SG than strong more
 ‘Danyi is stronger than you’
- (20) pu a dzə vi hi
 3SG 1SG than good more
 ‘He is better than me’

4.2 Possessive Pronouns

A possessive pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun to show possessiveness or ownership. The possessive case marker in Poula is /vi/ and it occurs as an independent morpheme.

Table 2. Possessive Pronouns

Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	/a vi/ ‘mine’	/itʰ.rume vi/ ‘ours’
2 nd	/ne vi/ ‘yours’	/neme vi/ ‘yours’
3 rd	/pu vi/ ‘his/hers’	/pume vi/ ‘theirs’

The first-person singular possessive pronoun is formed by adding the possessive form /vi/ to the first-person singular form /a/ which is an allomorph of the morpheme /i/. Similarly, second person singular possessive pronoun is formed by adding the possessive form /vi/ to the second person singular form /ne/. Second person plural is suffixed by a human marker and the possessive marker occur as a free morpheme to form second person possessive pronoun. The third person possessive pronouns are formed by adding the possessive marker /vi/ to the pronouns, and the third person plural is formed by suffixing the dual cardinal number and the human marker to the third person respectively.

i. First person

- (21) ki he a vi
 house this 1SG POSS
 ‘This house is mine’

(22) ki he it^h.ume vi
 house this 1PL POSS
 ‘This house is ours’

ii. Second person

(23) ki huna ne vi
 house that 2SG POSS
 ‘That house is yours’

(24) ki huna neme vi
 house that 2PL POSS
 ‘That house is yours’

iii. Third person

(25) ki huna pu vi
 house that 3SG POSS
 ‘That house is his/hers’

(26) ki huna pume vi
 house that 3PL POSS
 ‘That house is theirs’

4.3 Reflexive Pronouns

The reflexive pronoun in Poula is morphologically marked by a bound form */-lia/* ‘self’. The marker is uniform and it can occur with any pronoun.

Table 3. Reflexive Pronouns

Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	/ilia/ ‘myself’	/it ^h .umelia/ ‘ourselves’
2 nd	/nelia/ ‘yourself’	/nehelia/ ‘yourselves’
3 rd	/pulia/ ‘him/herself’	/pumelia/ ‘themselves’

As shown in the above Table 1.3, the reflexive marker in Poula is suffixed to the pronouns to form a reflexive pronoun. It can occur in the first person (27a) and (27b), second person (28a) and (28b) and third person (29a) and (29b) category respectively.

(27) a. i-lia i dɔulu-ɾe
 1SG-RFLX 1SG fool-PST
 ‘I fooled myself’

b. i ɹut^hɹa bu mo vasəu i-lia kikha haməti səu modashi-e
 1SG helper have NEG that's why 1SG-REFX home everything do should-HB
 'No one is there to help me at home, so I do the work all by myself'

(28) a. ne-lia ne muli-ləu
 2SG-RFLX 2SG trust-IMP
 'Trust yourself'

b. ne-lia bu mosəu si
 2SG-RFLX do harm bad
 'Don't harm yourself'

(29) a. pu-lia pu mədo-ləu
 3PL-RFLX 3SG teach-IMP
 '(S)he taught herself'

b. pu-lia hao-na səe
 3PL-RFLX work-DEF do
 '(S)he did the work himself'

4.4 Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns act as question word in a sentence. There are three types of interrogative pronouns in Poula which are used in human class forms.

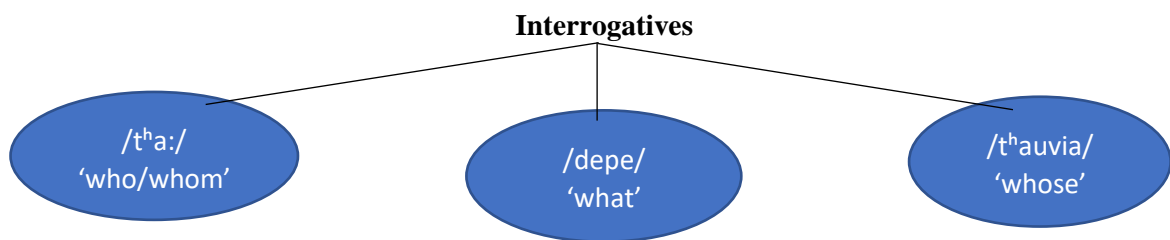


Figure 1. Interrogatives Pronouns

The human interrogative pronouns can be marked for number and gender. For human interrogative pronouns, Poula uses specific distinctions with regard to gender, i.e., masculine, feminine and diminutive interrogatives. The forms are given below:

Table 4. Interrogative Pronouns (Human)

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	/t ^h au/ 'who/whom'	/t ^h ame/
Feminine	/t ^h aufəpe/ ~	/t ^h amefə/
Diminutive	/t ^h anai/ ~	/t ^h amenai/

The respective interrogative forms are exclusively used for human. It is used when the person is known to the speaker as human (male/female). There is no marker to indicate masculine gender as such. The singular interrogatives can be used for both male and neuter beings where the gender of the person is unknown. In all the aspects, /*t^hau*/ is the common base where different forms are suffixed to it to form the different interrogatives. Example (30a), (30b) are illustrations of interrogative pronouns (human).

- (30) a. pu t^hau
 3SG who
 ‘Who is he?’
- b. pu t^haufəpe
 3SG who
 ‘Who is she?’

The other interrogative pronouns which can be used for both human and non-human consist of a number of free morphemes. /*kena*/ ‘which’, is the only form which have dual, plural and diminutive forms. /*dezo*/ or /*kiʒo*/ ‘what (cost)’ is the only interrogative pronoun which is exclusively applicable only in non-human interrogative pronouns. The other forms are spontaneously applicable in both human and non-human interrogatives.

Table 5. Interrogative Pronouns

Singular	Plural
kana ‘which’	kenat ^h io
depe ‘what’	~
deki/dekihi ‘where’	~
desənu ‘why’	~
kat ^h iia ‘how’	~
dezo ‘what cost’	~
desuki ‘when (of time)’	~

Given below are some sentential examples of interrogative pronouns:

- (31) a. kana ne si-a
 which 2SG dog-Q
 ‘Which one is your dog?’
- b. i zavame vu-le dzo ludu kalo vu-la
 1SG zhavame go-FUT so road which go-Q
 ‘Which road should I take to reach Zhavame?’

In Poula, the interrogative pronoun ‘which’ has two forms: /*kana*/ and /*kalo*/. /*kana*/ is used when the object being referred to is visible to the speaker (31a) and /*kalo*/ is used when the object being referred to is not visible to the speaker (31b).

- (32) ne pe deki buē
 2SG grandmother where have
 ‘Where is your grandmother?’
- (33) pu desənu tɪæ
 2SG why cry
 ‘Why is she crying?’
- (34) ne kaɪ^hɪa bau da-a?
 2SG how granary basket weave-Q
 ‘How do you weave a granary basket?’
- (35) mutɪubi mu kɪzɔ
 potato price what(cost)
 ‘What is the price of potatoes? (per Kg)’
- (36) desəki naoni muni-la
 when naoni celebrate-Q
 ‘When do you celebrate Naoni festival?’

4.5 Demonstrative Pronouns

A demonstrative pronoun is used to point out or represent the nouns that act as the subject or object in a sentence. The demonstrative pronouns in Poula have different forms to indicate proximity, visible or not visible to the eye and remoteness basing on the distance in time.

Table 6. Demonstrative Pronouns

Distance	Singular	Plural
Proximate	/hena/ ‘this’	/het ^h ɪo/ ‘these’
Medial	/həuna/ ‘that’	/həut ^h ɪo/ ‘those’
	/təna/ ‘that’	/tət ^h ɪo/ ‘these’
Remote	/səna/ ‘that’	/sət ^h ɪo/ ‘those’

The demonstrative pronouns (proximate) /hena/ and /het^h.ɔ/ are used to refer to a particular person, place, animal or thing that is closer in time and distance. The other forms (medial)- /həuna/ and /həut^h.ɔ/ which indicates medial are used to refer to a particular person, place, animal or thing that is away from both the speaker and the listener in time and distance yet visible to the eye. The other forms of medial demonstrative pronouns are /təna/ and /tət^h.ɔ/ which is used to indicate an object which is far away from the speaker but near the listener. The demonstrative pronouns (remote) such as- /səna/ and /sət^h.ɔ/ are used in order to indicate remoteness of an object or to refer to a particular person, place, animal or thing that is not visible in the eye. Some sentential examples are illustrated below:

Proximate:

- (37) a. i jadi he ʒə ni bue
 1SG land DET buy want PROG
 ‘I want to buy this plot’
- b. pu pɔpa he-t^h.ɔ dzəpai
 3SG flower DET-PL like
 ‘She likes these flowers’

Medial:

- (38) a. tɔalo həu-na fopi
 please DET-DEF give
 ‘Please pass me that cup’
- b. me həu-t^h.ɔ hi ʒe -je mo-de
 people DET-PL in live-HB NEG-PST
 ‘People don’t live in those places anymore (Pointing at a deserted place in the east)’

Remote:

- (39) a. i bu sə-na ʃo-e
 1SG place DET-DEF know
 ‘... I know that place (Oh, yes! I know that place)’
- b. ʃi sə-t^h.ɔ p^həu ʒə-ləu
 story DET-PL find collect-IMP
 ‘Collect those stories’

5. Conclusion

This paper presents five different types of pronouns in Poula, viz., personal pronoun, possessive pronoun, reflexive pronoun, interrogative pronoun and demonstrative pronoun. Despite the fact that Poula belongs to the Tenyimia group, precisely Tenyidie, where both the languages share an enormous similarity in morphological aspects. However, it was observed that the pronouns in Poula share very less similar features with the other Tenyimia group languages. Kuolie D. (2006), presents a detailed analysis of pronouns in Poula where he gave a clear distinction between inclusive and exclusive category both in first-person dual and first-person plural respectively. Citing the above stated examples, Poula particularly does not have a separate form to distinguish between inclusive and exclusive category. It is only through the conversation between the speaker and the hearer, the exclusive and the inclusive is distinguished. The possessive pronoun is marked by the independent morpheme /vi/. Reflexive pronouns have two forms /-lia/ and /-le/ whose functions are the same. The different types of interrogative pronouns and demonstrative pronouns were discussed in the latter sections. This study also observed that there is no diminutive marker in Poula.

Abbreviations:

1SG	- first person singular	2SG	- second person singular
3SG	- third person singular	1DU	- first person dual
2DU	- second person dual	3DU	- third person dual
1PL	- first person plural	2PL	- second person plural
3PL	- third person plural	DAT	- dative
DEF	- definitive	DET	- determiner
EXST	- existential	FUT	- future
HB	- habitual	HM	- human marker
IMP	- imperative	LOC	- locative
NEG	- negative	PL	- plural
POSS	- possessive	PROG	- progressive
PST	- past	RFLX	- reflexive
Q	- question particle		

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Gender marking in Yimkhiung: A Preliminary Analysis

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Abstract

Gender is a category of considerable importance in all languages (Haig, 2000) yet often it has been considered as a trivial topic. In some languages gender is central and pervasive, while in others it is totally absent (Corbett 1991: 1). Therefore, this paper is an attempt to describe the gender system found in Yimkhiung, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in North-East India. The paper aims to discuss how gender is marked, and the kinds of markers employed in distinguishing the masculine and feminine gender with regard to human and non-human entity.

Keywords - Yimkhiung, Tibeto-Burman, natural gender, lexical gender.

1. Introduction

The term ‘Yimkhiung’¹ (ISO 639-3: yim) refers to both the people as well as the language. Previously, they were known by the name Yimchunger/Yimchünger. It is a lesser known language spoken mainly in Shamator and Kiphire districts of Nagaland, a linguistically diverse state. As per 2011 census the total population of the Yimkhiung is recorded as 74,647². The language comprises of five varieties namely; Chirr, Mukury, Longpur, Phenunger, and Langa which are unintelligible. In this regard, Langa is used as the standard variety. Therefore, the data for this paper is based from the Langa speakers of Shamator district

The language belongs to Tibeto-Burman (henceforth TB) and it is classified under Ao group as “Yimchungrü” by Burling (2003). Like other Naga languages, Yimkhiung does not have its own script. They use roman letter with an addition of the vowel ‘ü’. The language exhibits its TB feature where it shows agglutinative as well as tonality. Structurally, it is verb final and exhibit postposition. Further, there is no verb agreement or grammatical gender in the language

2. Methodology

The data for this study is drawn from primary and secondary source. Primary source includes sentences, narratives, and personal interview with the native speakers from Shamartor district during the researcher field trip in the month of August, 2022. Further, the data were also consulted with native speakers in Kohima town. Secondary source were obtained from thesis, articles, journals and books.

3. Previous work

As aforementioned, Yimkhiung is an under studied language. The only linguistic work on morphology was done by Raguibou and Borah (2021) “Morphology of Yimchunger”. They briefly described on gender under nominal categories. In their data they presented four gender markers namely /-puʔ/, /-pe/, /-puŋ/ and /-tre/. The marker /-puʔ/ was marked for masculine; /-pe/ for feminine; /-puŋ/ for non-human masculine and /-tre/ for non-human feminine. The present study is in agreement with their findings and aims to provide detail description on the present paper.

¹ They also called themselves as Yimkhiungrü.

² https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yimkhiung_Naga.

Gender in Yimkhiung

The word gender is derived from “Latin genus, via Old French gendre, and originally meant ‘kind’ or ‘sort’” Corbett (1991:1). Hockett (2006: 231) defined gender as “classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words”. Doleschal (2015: 1159) defined gender marking “as a way of explicitly signalling that a linguistic expression refers to a male or female being (person or animal)”. As such, gender “relates to the property of extra-linguistic (i.e “natural” or “biological”) femaleness or maleness” (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001:6)

Singh (1985: 121) pointed out that “most languages and dialects of the Tibeto-Burman family do not have grammatical gender”. Likewise, gender in Yimkhiung is determined on the basics of natural or biological sexes as male and female. Further, like other TB languages such as Bodo and Hajong (Narzary, 2017), Sümi (Mughalivi, 2021) inanimate entities are unmarked. Therefore, gender marking in Yimkhiung is found only in animate entity. In human nouns gender is classified into two categories namely morphological and lexical. On the other hand, non-human nouns are marked only morphologically. It is to be noted that, gender marking in human and non-human entities are expressed by using different gender markers.

The study analyze four main markers namely /-puʔ/, /-pe/, /-puŋ/ and /-tɛ/. Besides these markers, Yimkhiung also employ markers such as /-la/, and /-paʔ/ in proper noun; /-to/ and /-lə/ is expressed for distinguishing non-virgin and virgin females [-human].

The paper is structured as follows, in (§3.1) morphological gender marking in animate [+ human] is discussed, in (§3.1.1) gender marking in agentive noun is discussed, in (§3.1.2) kinship term and common noun, in (§3.1.3) gender in pronominal, in (§3.1.4) gender marking in proper noun, in (§3.1.5) lexical gender, in (§4) morphological gender marking in animate [-human] is discussed, in (§ 4.4) virgin and non-virgin distinction is described and section 5 provides conclusion.

3.1 Morphological gender marking in animate [+human]

In morphological marking, the gender is expressed by /-puʔ/ for ‘male’ and /-pe/ for ‘female’ which is derived from the kinship term /puʔɪə/ ‘father’ and /peɪə/ ‘mother’³. The morphemes /puʔ/ and /pe/ do not bear any complete meaning when it occurs on its own therefore they function as bound morphemes.

As Doleschal (2015: 1167) opines “affixation is arguably the most varied and best studied means of gender marking”. Similarly, in Yimkhiung the markers /-puʔ/ and /-pe/ can be either prefixed or suffixed to the generic form to distinguish the gender in humans. However, prefixation is found to be more productive. It is also to be noted that the markers /-puʔ/ and /-pe/ is marked only for human entity.

In Yimkhiung, gender marking in humans can be found in agentive noun, kinship term, pronominal, and personal name which are morphologically marked by using /-puʔ/ and /-pe/ to specify specific gender. On the other hand lexical distinction is found in few kinship term and common noun which consist of opposite term (§3.1.5).

³ The kinship term /puʔɪə/ and /peɪə/ is the general term for father and mother in Yimkhiung.

3.1.1 Agentive noun

The agentive noun can be morphologically marked by /-puʔ/ and /-pe/ to indicate specific gender in Yimkhiung. Generally, the agentive noun takes the nominalizer /-lɔ̃/. However, in gender marking, the agentive noun undergoes a morpho-phonological change whereby the nominalizer /-lɔ̃/ in the generic form gets deleted when it is suffixed by the gender marker as shown in table 1. For instance, the generic form for singer is /kʰəntsəɬɔ̃/ which is derived from the verb /kʰəntsəɬ/ meaning ‘sing’ and this generic form can be referred to both the genders in general. However, in order to specify the specific gender as male and female singer, the gender marker /-puʔ/ and /-pe/ is suffixed to the generic form to form gender distinction. In this process, the final syllable /-lɔ̃/ or the nominalizer gets deleted and becomes /kʰəntsəpuʔ/ meaning ‘male singer’ and /kʰəntsəpe/ ‘female singer’.

Generic form	Masculine	Feminine
/kʰəntsəɬɔ̃/ ‘singer’	/kʰən-tʰə-puʔ/ song-do-M ‘male singer’	/kʰən-tʰə-pe/ song-do-F ‘female singer’
/saŋjuɬɔ̃/ ‘teacher’	/saŋju-puʔ/ teach-M ‘male teacher’	/saŋju-pe/ teach-F ‘female teacher’
/akʰeɬɔ̃/ ‘student’	/akʰe-puʔ/ student-M ‘male student’	/akʰe-pe/ student-F ‘female student’

Table 1: Gender marking in agentive noun

Given examples (1) to (3) provided paired sentential form for masculine and feminine gender of agentive noun.

- 1) a. kʰəntsə-pe ʃu i-məjamɬ aʔ
sing-F TOP 1SG.POSS-friend COP
‘The female singer is my friend.’ (elicited)
- b. kʰəntsə-puʔ ʃu i-məjamɬ aʔ
sing-M TOP 1SG.POSS-friend COP
‘The male singer is my friend.’ (elicited)
- 2) a. ha akʰe-pe ʃu akʰekʰi-ʃʰiŋ tʰə-tak laʔ
DEM.PROX student-F TOP study-PP good-SUPR DECL
‘This female student is very studious.’ (elicited)
- b. ha akʰe-puʔ ʃu akʰekʰi-ʃʰiŋ tʰə-tak laʔ
DEM.PROX student-M TOP study-PP good-SUPR DECL
‘This male student is very studious.’ (elicited)
- 3) a. hoʃu tʰaŋju-puʔ ʃu tʰaŋjukʰi-ʃʰiŋ tʰə-tak laʔ
DEM.DIST teach-M TOP teach-PP good-SUPR DECL
‘That male teacher is very good in teaching.’ (elicited)

- b. hofu t^hanjju-pe ʃu t^hanjjuk^hi-ʃ^hinj tsa-tak laʔ
 DEM.DIST teach-F TOP teach-PP good-SUPR DECL
 ‘That female teacher is very good in teaching.’ (elicited)

3.1.2 Kinship term and common noun

Under this category, few kinship term and common noun [+human] of opposite genders are marked by the human gender markers /-puʔ/ and /-pe/ by means of prefixing and suffixing (§ table 2). As shown in the given table 2, opposite kinship term such as ‘father’ and ‘mother’, father’s elder brother and father’s elder sister employs prefixation where the makers /puʔ-/ and /pe-/ is prefix to the nominalizer /-iə/ as /puʔiə/ and /peiə/, /puʔto/ and /peto/. On the other hand, suffixation is employed in /jamk^hənpuʔ/ ‘husband’ and /jamk^hənpe/ ‘wife’, /kiuloŋt^həpuʔ/ ‘king’ and /kiuloŋt^həpe/ ‘queen’.

Masculine	Feminine
/puʔ-iə/ M-NMLZ ‘father’	/pe-iə/ F-NMLZ ‘mother’
/jamk ^h ən-puʔ/ married-M ‘husband’	/jamk ^h ən-pe/ married-F ‘wife’
/puʔ-to/ M-big ‘father’s elder brother’	/pe-to/ F-big ‘father’s elder sister’
/k ^h imo-puʔ-iə/ without spouse-M-NMLZ ‘widower’	/k ^h imo-pe-iə/ without spouse-F-NMLZ ‘widow’
/kiuloŋt ^h ə-puʔ/ king-M ‘king’	/kiuloŋt ^h ə-pe/ king-F ‘queen’

Table 2: Gender marking in kinship term and common noun

3.1.3 Pronominal

When it comes to pronoun, similar to most Naga languages the third person singular is distinguished for gender. In Yimkhiung, it is marked by suffixing the human gender marker /-puʔ/ and /-pe/ with /əniʔ/ as /əniʔpuʔ/ and /əniʔpe/. In this manner, the third person singular male is expressed by /əniʔpuʔ/ ‘he’ while for female it is expressed by /əniʔpe/ ‘she’. Given example (4) exemplify the third person female occurring as the subject and example (5) provides for third person male.

- 4) əniʔpe ʃu i-məjam-iə aʔ
 3SG.F TOP 1SG-friend-NMLZ COP
 ‘She is my friend.’ (elicited)
- 5) əniʔpuʔ nə nə mək^hiak laʔ
 3SG.M FOC 2SG know DECL
 ‘He knows you.’ (elicited)

3.1.4 Proper noun

Proper noun like personal names such as male and female are also morphologically marked in Yimkhiung. Female names are commonly marked by /-la/ while some male names are marked by /-paʔ/⁴ as shown in table 3. It is observed that gender marking in female names is found to be more consistently marked than male names. Some male names without the male marker are also found to end with /kiu/, /k^hiung/, and /to/ carrying semantic meaning to the name.

Interestingly, it is found that even in other Ao group⁵ such as Ao, Sangtam and Chang the same female marker /-la/ is employed in female names. For instance, ‘Sentijungla’ is a female name in Ao; ‘Changsola’ in Chang, and ‘Thsidipila’ in Sangtam. Further, in Ao the male name is also specified by /-pa/ as ‘Toshimongba’.

Masculine	Feminine
/tʰipon- <i>paʔ</i> / chipong-M ‘Chipongpah’	/tsəi-la/ tsuri-F ‘Tsurila’
/hanp ^h u- <i>paʔ</i> / hanp ^h u-M ‘Hanphupa’	/hanp ^h u-la/ hanphu-F ‘Hanphula’
/ts ^h anʃi- <i>paʔ</i> / thsanji-M ‘Thsanjiba’	/soʃi-la/ soshi-F ‘Soshila’

Table 3: Gender marking in Pronoun

3.1.5 Lexical gender

Lexical gender refers to those lexical specifications of noun which carries “the semantic property [female] or [male] respectively, which may in turn relate to the extra-linguistic category of referential gender (or “sex referent”)” (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001:7). ‘It is an important parameter in the structure of kinship terminologies, address term, and a number of basic, i.e. frequently used personal pronouns’ (ibid, 2001). Though some kinship term and common nouns takes gender markers as discussed in the above sub-section, yet some are morphologically unmarked. Such nouns are lexically realized for gender by their meaning. These instances are found in kinship or address term and in opposite lexical pairs as in shown in table 4. Further, in Yimkhiung most address term takes the non-relational marker /a/ which can be dropped when it occurs with the personal pronoun (§ example 7-10).

Masculine	Feminine
/apə/ ‘grandfather’	/aʃi/ ‘grandmother’
/ak ^h iun/ ‘elder brother’	/aʃ ^h i/ ‘elder sister’
/akə/ ‘uncle’	/aɲi/ ‘aunty’
/at ^h .ɪənəŋtsəŋ/ ‘refers to a young man’	/anənəɪ/ ‘young lady’

Table 4: Lexical gender marking

⁴ Orthographically it is usually written as ‘pa’ or ‘ba’ however phonetically it is realized as /paʔ/.

⁵ Burling (2003) classification.

Examples of lexical term in sentential form are illustrated in (6) to (11).

- 6) apə nə a-tʰəiətsʰəiə-po kʰiak
 grandfather AGT 3SG-POSS-grandchildren-PLU DOM
 mənəʔməhi ʃiʔ-to
 bless give-PST
 ‘The grandfather blessed his grandchildren (when they visited him)’ (elicited)
- 7) i-ʃi nə nə-ki ʃipə jukʰian kʰian
 1SG.POSS-grandmother AGT 2SG-DAT forefather story narrate
 huʔ-paʔ
 show-IRR
 ‘My grandmother will narrate a folkstory to you.’ (elicited)
- 8) aɲiʔpuʔ ʃu i-kʰiuŋ azopə aʔ
 3SG.M TOP 1SG.POSS-brother elder COP
 ‘He is my elder brother.’ (elicited)
- 9) atəso i-ʃhi ʃe kuʃaŋ-nə jin-a-təʔ-a paʔ-to
 earlier 1SG.POSS-sister also kushang-AGT sell-SEQ-eat-SIM SEQ-PST
 ‘Earlier my sister (elder) was also sold by Kushang.’ (text)
- 10) i-ni soʃila nə hiŋ kiak kʰuk laʔ
 1SG-aunt soshila AGT thread weave can DECL
 ‘My aunty Soshila can weave.’ (elicited)
- 11) atʰiənəŋtəŋ kʰəlaŋ-ʃunə api-ʃu kʰite məəʔte tʰə-to təʃʰo
 young man one-AGT her-TOP very like happen-PST HRY
 ‘A young man happened to like her.’ (text)

4. Morphological gender marking in animate [-human]

Gender marking in non-human is morphologically marked, yet it is limited. There are two main markers for expressing gender in animate [-human] noun namely: /-puŋ/ and /-tɪe/ by suffixing to the generic form as shown in table 5. The marker /-puŋ/ is marked for masculine and /-tɪe/ for common feminine gender. Generally, in most speech discourse the generic term is expressed for both the gender. However, the gender markers are expressed when the distinction for specific gender arises as in domesticated animals such as dog, pig, chicken etc. It can also be expressed for birds and non-domesticated animals as well.

Generic form	Masculine	Feminine(common term)
/tʰunu/ ‘chicken’	/tʰunu-puŋ/ chicken-M ‘cock/rooster’	/tʰunu-tɪe/ chicken-F ‘hen’
/kʰiʔnu/ ‘dog’	/kʰiʔnu-puŋ/ dog-M ‘drake’	/kʰiʔnu-tɪe/ dog-F ‘bitch’

/ʃiʔməʃʰi/ 'deer'	/ʃiʔməʃʰi-puŋ/ deer-M 'buck'	/ʃiʔməʃʰi-tɛ/ deer-F 'doe'
/ɣəʔtʰəɪŋ/ 'blyth's tragopan'	/ɣəʔtʰəɪŋ-puŋ/ tragopan-M 'blyth's tragopan (male)'	/ɣəʔtʰəɪŋ-tɛ/ tragopan-F 'blyth's tragopan (female)'

Table 5: Gender marking in non-human noun

4.1 Virgin and non-virgin

A notable gender feature in non-human feminine is that, the females are distinguished on the basis of virgin and non-virgin. The marker used for this distinction is marked by /-to/ and /-lə/ by suffixing to the common feminine term. The marker /-to/ is marked for all non-virgin which is homophonous with the past marker⁶ specifying that the non-animate female had produced an offspring as shown in table 6. On the other hand, those virgin non-human females which have not produce an offspring are marked by /-lə/. Such distinction can be expressed in domesticated animals, non-domesticated animals and birds that can be distinguished for such distinction.

Feminine (non-virgin)	Feminine (Virgin)
/tʰunu-tɛ-to/ chicken-F-NON.VIR 'hen'	/tʰunu-tɛ-lə/ chicken-F-VIR 'hen'
/kʰiʔnu-tɛ-to/ dog-F-NON.VIR 'bitch'	/kʰiʔnu-tɛ-lə/ dog-F-VIR 'bitch'
/kʰiaknu-tɛ-to/ pig-F-NON.VIR 'sow'	/kʰiaknu-tɛ/ pig-F-VIR 'sow'
/ʃʰi-tɛ-to/ mithun-F-NON.VIR 'she-mithun'	/ʃʰi-tɛ-lə/ mithun-F-VIR 'she-mithun'

Table 6: Non-human virgin and non-virgin feminine

Interestingly, offspring and without offspring (or virgin and non-virgin) distinction is also found in Sümi (Mughalivi, 2019) belonging to Angami-Pochuri⁷ group. In Sümi, there are three markers for marking non-human female namely /ali/, /ani/, and /aqu/ (§ table 7). The markers /ali/ and /ani/ is employed for marking those female which have not produce an offspring and /aqua/ is marked for those female animate [-human] with an offspring.

⁶ ʃiʔ-to 'gave', see example 6
⁷ Burling 2003 classification.

Neutral	Marker	Neutral + Marker
/awu/ ‘chicken’	/li/, /ali/	awuli/ ali ‘female chicken’
/afe/ ‘deer’	/ali/	afe ali ‘female deer’
/awo/ ‘pig’	/ni/, /ani/	awoni/ ani ‘female pig’
/atsi/ ‘dog’	/ani/	atsi ani ‘female dog’
/k ^h osa/ ‘cat’	/qu/, /aqu/	ak ^h osaqu/aqu ‘mother cat’

Table 7: Non-human female marking in Sumi (ibib, 2019, p.65-66)

5. Conclusion

This study has shown that Yimkhiung like any other Tibeto-Burman languages exhibit natural gender and lacks grammatical gender. Further, inanimate gender is also unmarked. In human, gender distinction is expressed in two ways: morphological and lexical. Morphologically, it is expressed by suffixing or prefixing /puʔ/ and /pe/ to the generic form where the former is marked for male and the latter for female. Moreover, it is observed that the gender markers expressed for proper nouns is exhibited even in other Ao group such as Ao, Sangtam and Chang. Additionally, virgin and non-virgin [-human] distinction is also observed in other Naga languages such as Sümi from Angami-Pochuri group. Thus, Yimkhiung shared similar gender features with the other Naga languages as well as Tibeto-Burman languages.

Abbreviations

- AGT- agentive
- DAT- dative
- DECL- declarative
- DEM- demonstrative
- DIST- distal
- DOM- direct object marker
- F- female
- FOC- focus
- HRY- hearsay
- IRR- irrealis
- M- male
- PLU- plural
- POSS- possessive
- PP- post position
- PST- past
- PROX- proximate
- SEQ- sequential converb suffix
- SG- singular
- SIM- simultaneous converb suffix
- SUPR- superlative
- TOP- topic
- NMLZ- nominalizer
- NON-VIR- non-Virgin
- VIR- virgin

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Language Planning and Policy in India Post NEP 2020

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Abstract

This paper scrutinizes the implications of NEP 2020 on the teaching and learning of languages. NEP allows states to choose three languages for students, with at least two being native to India. A noteworthy departure from previous norms is the exclusion of Hindi and English from the three-language formula. The initial attempt to make Hindi compulsory faced resistance and was subsequently omitted. English might be excluded due to a sentiment viewing it as a tool of linguistic imperialism and a threat to cultural unity.

While Hindi is not compulsory, the government allocates significant funds for its promotion. Various initiatives like celebrating Hindi Diwas, awards, scholarships, and institutional directives encourage its use. The exclusion of English may have limited impact given its global importance and repertoire of knowledge. English is even perceived as a liberating force by some marginalized communities.

The policy underscores the importance of Sanskrit, designating it for study at all education levels. However, other classical languages receive less attention and studying them is limited to two years. The policy wordings on Sanskrit recalls T.B. Macaulay's colonial-era intent to introduce English. Because of Sanskrit's rich textual tradition but limited everyday utility Sanskrit should be an academic subject but not a compulsory language. India's linguistic diversity is acknowledged by the NEP 2020. However, concerns are raised about the focus on languages listed in the Eighth Schedule, with a call for attention to the 99 non-scheduled languages to ensure linguistic inclusivity and recognize India's diverse linguistic heritage.

The study highlights a shift in language perceptions under the NEP 2020, with sustained importance given to Hindi, a reduced emphasis on English, and extensive promotion of Sanskrit. It advocates for a balanced approach, promoting multilingualism, regional language development, and respect for diverse linguistic heritages in alignment with the policy's overarching vision.

1. Introduction

National Education Policy 2020¹ (2020) is the third education policy of independent India. The first was in 1968 (1968) followed by the second in 1986 modified in 1992 (1992). NEP 2020 is presented as “the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country.” This study aims to examine the implications of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 on diverse languages and its impact on language teaching and learning. Specifically, the research investigates whether the NEP 2020 imposes linguistic preferences, potentially favoring the advancement of a few selected languages. The analysis delves into the underlying attitudes reflected in the policy's language-related statements. Additionally, the paper explores the influence of various other factors - like the language practices and language negotiations- on the language teaching and learning process in India.

India is a multilingual country. As per the Census of India data and the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution, India is home to 24 Indo European languages of which 15 are scheduled, 17 Dravidian languages of which 4 are scheduled, 14 Austro Asiatic languages of which 1 is scheduled, and 66 Tibeto Burman languages of which 2 are scheduled. 146 dialects have been recorded under these 121 scheduled and non-scheduled languages. Government of India recognizes six languages as ‘Classical languages’ - Tamil (declared in 2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014) (Secretariat, 2020). In the present world marked by globalization, there is an increasing tendency towards homogenization of codes, discourses, and communicative practices. (Canagarajah, 2009). Because of this there is negotiation and conflict between the global homogenous discourses and the local discourses. India has witnessed major language movements for recognition and resistance to homogenization in the pre and post-independence period - Tamil (Srivastava, 1979) (Haque, 2021), Assamese (Misra, 2000), Marathi (Pawar, 2015), Sindhi (Daswani, 1979), Chatisgarhi, Kannada (Horowitz, 2001), Oriya (Acharya, 2004), Gujrati (Isaka, 2021). Secondly, the language taught and the medium of education varied from time to time. The medium of education in the pre- colonial period varied from Sanskrit for brahmins, Pali for Buddhist monks, and regional languages for all the other castes (Annamalai, 2005). English was added during the colonial period and continued to be the language of higher education in India (Annamalai, 2005), (Mahmood, 1974). Teaching in local language was seen as too expensive and impractical during the colonial period (Annamalai, 2005). Thirdly, a significant disparity exists in the attitudes toward different languages. In light of these variations, meticulous examination and scrutiny should be applied to language planning, policy, and practices.

2. What constitutes Language Policy?

Shohamy states that to obtain meaningful understanding of the “real” language policy, “there is a need to deduce it through various mechanisms, language policy and practices and the set negotiations, conversations and battles that take place among them” (Shohamy, 2006). The mechanisms may include linguistic landscaping, school language test, policy/ legal documents, entrance examinations for higher education, medium of education in the primary, secondary and tertiary sector, private educational institutions that fulfil popular demands, language institutions for the promotion of various languages, etc. These mechanisms may not be seen as policy devices but strongly affect language practice.

Spolsky opines that a study of the language planning should include “the actual practice, the society’s language beliefs or ideology, and any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management” (Spolsky, 2004). Andrée Tabouret-Keller adds that “a nation has so many means of forcing a language upon their citizens the constitutional definition of a national, official, or state language, ... and secondly allowed for school education, for law and justice, etc.” (Tabouret-Keller, 1997) These scholars points at the non-written covert language policies. The influence of non-written covert language policies on actual language practices which includes societal language beliefs or ideology, constitutional definitions, official state languages, and legal frameworks employed by nations to enforce language preferences among citizen surpasses the influence of the educational policy itself.

3. Hindi and English

NEP 2020 states, “The three languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions, and of course the students themselves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India.” (2020) Hindi and English may not be taught compulsorily in the schools as part of the three-language formula. This is a clear departure from the earlier stance.

In the context of the exclusion English, one cannot emphasize enough the importance of English as a global language (Krishnaswamy, 2006). Resources in various fields of knowledge are readily available in the English language. Research from across the world, original or translated are also published in English journals. To keep abreast of the growing knowledge in science and technology (recognized in NEP 1968) the Indian researchers must have a good command of the English Language.

In a complex nation like India, many citizens also view the English language as a social and economic liberator (Kachru, 1990). The Scheduled Castes believe that the Sanskrit language and culture, has long oppressed them and treated them in the most inhumane way. These communities find liberation in the English language. Studying English is considered a tool to break from the fetters of these disgraceful and sub-human cultural practices perpetuated through the Sanskrit language. Consequentially, in a village called Banka in Uttar Pradesh, Scheduled Castes have dedicated a temple to the English language. The English language has been deified as a goddess, *Angrezi Devi*ⁱⁱ, and a statue erected that is modelled after the Statue of Liberty.

A growing apathy towards English has been developed worldwide in the last four decades and its reverberations are heard in India too. English came to be regarded as a ‘killer language’ (Pakir, 1997), (Mühlhäusler, 1996) and as a means of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992, Saville 2002, Tollefson 1995). A growing number of people in India also regard teaching-learning English as a linguistic neo-colonization which will affect the unity of India, question the integrity of the nation, and will construct a slavish mentality (Gandhi, 1968).

For the promotion of English, Central Institute of English (CIE) was founded in 1958. It was renamed the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL) in 1972 with the addition of other Languages. In 2006-2007, CIEFL was given central university status focusing on ten foreign languages. Private sector is investing in building English medium schools, that fulfil the popular demands of parents (Meganathan, 2020) especially in the urban areas but also in the rural ones.

Hindi is also not advocated as one of the three languages as a part of the three-language formula. The draft NEP, which made it mandatory for all to study Hindi, caused major upheavals in various parts of India. The reason for the disgruntlement was the perception that Hindi was imposed on all even when their mother tongue belongs to a completely different language family. As a result, in the final draft Hindi was not made compulsory. But we often hear that Hindi is the national language and we as one nation will be unified by one Language to impress upon the importance of teaching-learning Hindi. In certain schools Hindi is introduced to students as *rastrabhasha* (national language)ⁱⁱⁱ. As per the constitution of India and the official language act of 1963, Hindi is the official Language of the Union. Further, language is not the necessary means by which a nation can be united. In a distinctly multilingual country like India, the following statement made by Renan holds a lot of value:

“Language invites one to reunite; it does not oblige it. The United States and England, Spanish America and Spain speak the same language and do not form a single nation. In contrast, Switzerland, so well formed since it was created by the assent of the different parts, has three or four languages. There is in man something superior to language: that is will. The will of Switzerland to be united, despite the variety of its languages, is much more important than a similitude often obtained by humiliation.” (Judt & Lacorne , 2004)

It is also highlighted often that Hindi is the language spoken by the majority in India or is the mother tongue of the majority of the people of India. As per Census 2011 (General, 2011), Hindi was spoken by only 36.99% of the total population in 1971, 38.74% in 1981, 39.29% in 1991, 41.03% in 2001 and 43.63% in 2011^{iv}. This also includes the substantial number of speakers who speak the 57 odd “dialects” of Hindi. Some of these dialects, like Bhojpuri, Chhattisgarhi, Garhwali, Kumauni, Magadi/Magahi, and Rajasthani, have a sizable number of speakers. These languages have presented their case to the central government to be included as separate languages in the Eighth Schedule to the Indian Constitution. If this is approved, then the perceived majority of Hindi will further reduce.

Even though, Hindi is not made mandatory in the schools, there are other ways in which it is promoted. Awards have been constituted - Rajbhasha Gaurav Award Scheme for Original Book writing in Hindi, Rajbhasha Gaurav Award Scheme for authors of articles published in magazines, Rajbhasha Kirti Award Scheme for in-house magazines. The commission for scientific & technical terminology has published a Glossary of administrative terms. Central Institute of Hindi was established in 1961 with the mission of play a leading role in the promotion and propagation of Hindi in India. Indian Council for Cultural Relations with the objective of promoting Hindi abroad sends Hindi teachers to Indian Cultural Centers abroad, has been establishing University level Hindi teachers at Chairs in various foreign universities, and providing scholarships to students. As per the department of official language data, more than six thousand crore rupees is spent for the promotion of Hindi since 2017.

Governmental and non-governmental institutions, at different points in time, have issued statements and circulated directives promoting the adoption of Hindi in the workplace. Some of it were later withdrawn due to backlashes. Various instances reflect a concerted effort to promote the usage of Hindi in different domains. The Chief of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) encouraged accountants to adopt Hindi in their professional endeavors. The Delhi Police issued directives instructing personnel to conduct all official tasks in Hindi^v. The Haryana High Court issued a notice to the Haryana government to enact a law mandating Hindi in lower courts. Minister Piyush Goyal declined to respond to a question posed by a DMK MP in English during a session in the Lok Sabha. The Ministry of Rural Development outlined plans to implement 100% Hindi communication. Additionally, a delegation comprising 30 Members of Parliament visited Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to promote the Hindi language.

September 14 each year is celebrated as Hindi Diwas. On that day Amit Shah pitched for 'one nation, one Language' that is Hindi, which has been "Unifying Force" for India for centuries. Further, Amit Shah while presiding over the 37th meeting of the Parliamentary Official Language Committee stated that “efforts being made to promote usage of Hindi language in official works”^{vi}. Rajnath Singh reiterated it.

India's National Academy of Letters Sahitya Akademi confers awards to writers of both English and Hindi. Thus, though Hindi and English are not made mandatory The language attitudes and practices concerning Hindi and English align with the observations articulated by Miller, “In India Hindi is the nationalist language at the federal level, while the language of former imperialism, English, has the nationist function of assuaging the fears of Hindi language hegemony felt by speakers of Dravidian languages.” (Millar, 2005)

4. Classical Languages

NEP 2020 visualizes “The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought as the guiding light for this Policy”. One of the fundamental principles of the policy is to create “a rootedness and pride in India, and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions”. These two aims shall be achieved through the study of classical languages and their knowledge tradition. In the case of classical language studies too t,he policy wordings are highly unobjective and Sanskrit has been given preferential treatment. Sanskrit despite being the least spoken language amongst the scheduled languages (only 24,821 uses it as their mother tongue according to the census 2011) in present-day India, NEP states that Sanskrit is “an important modern language mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India” (4.17). Rather than communicative it is the symbolic function of Sanskrit that is highlighted here. Hence, NEP 2020 recommends that “...Sanskrit will thus be offered at all levels of school and higher education as an important, enriching option for students, including as an option in the three-language formula.” Apart from Hindi, Sanskrit can thus be one of the three languages taught in schools for a period of ten years.

Five other languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, are given classical language status in India. Most of these are languages are spoken in their modern form in various states and have a sizeable number of speakers. Tamil proudly lays its claim to a rich literary heritage and knowledge tradition, that is nothing subordinate to Sanskrit. But the policy only states “For the enrichment of the children, and for the preservation of these rich languages and their artistic treasures, all students in all schools, public or private, will have the option of learning at least two years of a classical language of India and its associated literature, through experiential and innovative approaches.” These languages will be studied for only two years as compared to Sanskrit which can be studied for 10 years.

Further, the document states that “Under the ‘Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat’ initiative, students will learn about the remarkable unity of most of the major Indian languages, starting with their common phonetic and scientifically-arranged alphabets and scripts, their common grammatical structures, their origins and sources of vocabularies from Sanskrit and other classical languages, as well as their rich inter-influences and differences.” Here also one can notice the partisan view that major Indian languages have their origins and sources of vocabularies from Sanskrit. Further, the fact that all the other five classical languages (Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia,) have been reduced to just other classical languages shows the priority given to Sanskrit.

We see reverberations and reversal of the now (in)famous Minutes^{vii} by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay, dated the 2nd of February 1835 all over NEP. This document by Macaulay replaced the Indian Education system and Sanskrit language with the Western education system and

English in India. It “was to order them to be instructed in the English and French languages, and in all the sciences to which those languages are the chief keys.”

Macaulay states “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, --a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.” Whereas in NEP 2020 we see “The vision of the Policy is to instill among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions.” Annamali opines that “the choice of language in education provides the necessary first step and frame of mind to engage in this process” (Annamalai, 2005).

In the minutes Macaulay states “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.... All the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the paltriest abridgments used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy, the relative position of the two nations is the same.” In NEP 2020 we see the reversal of it as it states “Sanskrit.... possesses a classical literature that is greater in volume than that of Latin and Greek put together, containing vast treasures of mathematics, philosophy, grammar, music, politics, medicine, architecture, metallurgy, drama, poetry, storytelling, and more (known as ‘Sanskrit Knowledge Systems’)”.

The apparent parallelism between Macaulay's minutes and NEP 2020 prompts contemplation on the possibility that, much like Macaulay's intent to introduce English educational system to India, NEP 2020 might similarly aspire to institute Sanskrit on a broader scale in the country. This assertion gains credence when considering the recent elevation of deemed to be Sanskrit universities to the status of central universities by the Government of India. The establishment of three central universities — Central Sanskrit University, New Delhi, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University, New Delhi, and National Sanskrit University, Tirupati — coupled with the creation of Sanskrit centers within other universities, underscores a notable emphasis on Sanskrit education. In contrast, the central government's commitment to other classical languages, apart from Classical Tamil managed by the Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT), Chennai, appears less robust and is often contingent upon the initiatives of individual state governments.

While acknowledging the extensive corpus of texts within the Sanskrit knowledge tradition and its applications in Natural Language Processing and other computational endeavors, the practical utility of Sanskrit in everyday life remains limited due to its status as a non-native language for the majority of the population. Consequently, advocating for Sanskrit as a distinct academic subject in schools, akin to other classical languages, is advocated. This perspective contends that Sanskrit, given its restricted use in daily interactions, should not be obligatory in the three-language formula but rather offered as an academic pursuit. The suggestion is to allocate the third language slot to a regional modern Indian language, fostering an appreciation for the nation's diverse linguistic heritage.

5. Other Modern Indian Languages

NEP 2020 celebrates multilingualism at least in a limited sense. It states, “There will be a major effort from both the Central and State governments to invest in large numbers of language teachers in all regional languages around the country.” (4.12) and “All efforts will be made in preparing high-quality bilingual textbooks and teaching-learning materials for science and mathematics.” (4.14) NEP 202 envisages “Education is a great leveler and is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality.” Further, one of the fundamental principles that is highlighted is “respect for diversity and respect for the local context in all curricula, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject”. It further states that “Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language.”

The language census of 2011, apart from the 22 scheduled languages, lists 99 other non-scheduled languages and 146 varieties/dialects of these languages. The question here then would be whether there will be a concrete effort to develop all these 121 languages or just the scheduled languages. The matter of fact the policy states that efforts should be made “in particular, for all languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.”(4.12) This means that States and Centre will put in more effort to develop the Eighth Schedule languages i.e. Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Maithili, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. Though these languages form 97% of the total population, there is a substantial population that speaks the other 99 languages and forms 3 percent of the total population.

The language practices in various Indian institutions reveal a nuanced approach that embraces linguistic diversity and regional distinctions. Notably, major examinations such as the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE), the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET), and the Central University Eligibility Test (CUET) incorporate eleven languages, in addition to English, Hindi, and Urdu.^{viii} Since 2021 JEE in Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telugu has been conducted only in the regions where these languages are used and in Hindi, English and Urdu held across the country. The University Grants Commission (UGC) NET examination covers 34 language/literature subjects. The Sahitya Akademi awards acknowledge literary contributions in 24 languages including Indian English. Efforts are underway to transliterate Prime Minister Modi's official website into 22 Indian languages^{ix}. The Press Information Bureau (PIB) disseminates press releases in 12 regional languages alongside English, Hindi, and Urdu^x. The central government has decided to conduct government job tests in 15 Indian languages^{xi}. In the legal domain, the Chief Justice of India emphasizes linguistic accessibility by making Supreme Court judgments available in Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati, and Odia. This commitment is driven by the acknowledgment that English may not be comprehensible to a significant proportion of the country's citizens^{xii}. All these reflect a commitment to linguistic inclusivity, and a recognition of the importance of linguistic diversity.

A glimpse of the language census 2011 will establish that in many states & Union Territories the percentage of people speaking these non-scheduled languages are in two digits as in Sikkim (26.36), Manipur (41.80), Tripura (30.22), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (37.68), Lakshadweep

(14.46), and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (14.77). In Arunachal Pradesh (721.3), Nagaland (88.13), Mizoram (87.65), Meghalaya (85.35), they form the majority of speakers. If we investigate the language-dialect distinction further and find objective criteria to label one variety as a separate language, then the number of languages will increase. The paucity of space does not permit me to elaborate this point here. Nonetheless, I would like to highlight an example. This is the case of Rajasthani spoken in the state of Rajasthan. Rajasthan was formed into a state by the union of several princely states when India got its independence. The borders of the state were extended after the linguistic re-organization of the Indian States in 1956. During this linguistic re-organization Rajasthani was considered a separate language. Further, Rajasthani is recognized as a distinct literary language by Sahitya Academy^{xiii} and the University Grants Commission^{xiv}. In 2003 the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution to include Rajasthani in the eighth schedule languages. Despite a large population (2,58,06,344; 2.2% of the total population) of Rajasthani speakers, which is much more than many of the existing scheduled languages, and a long history of independent geographical and political state ship, Rajasthani was not included in the Eight schedule. It is still considered a dialect of Hindi.

As per the Ministry of Home affairs, at present, there are demands for inclusion of 38 more languages in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. These languages are Angika, Banjara, Bazika, Bhojpuri, Bhoti, Bhotia, Bundelkhandi, Chhattisgarhi, Dhatki, English, Garhwali (Pahari), Gondi, Gujjar/Gujjari, Ho, Kachachhi, Kamtapuri, Karbi, Khasi, Kodava (Coorg), Kok Barak, Kumaoni (Pahari), Kurak, Kurmali, Lepcha, Limbu, Mizo (Lushai), Magahi, Mundari, Nagpuri, Nicobarese, Pahari (Himachali), Pali, Rajasthani, Sambalpuri/Kosali, Shaurseni (Prakrit), Siraiiki, Tenyidi and Tulu. Two committees, namely the Pahwa Committee (1996) and Sitakant Mohapatra (2003) Committee were constituted to evolve a set of objective criteria with reference to which representations of languages to be included in the 8th Schedule will be analyzed. Unfortunately, so far this activity of the central Government has been futile, and no objective criteria could be identified.

One can presume the plight of the 99 languages listed in the census which have far smaller number of speakers than Rajasthani. If these languages are not promoted and given adequate status as per the Indian constitution, they will gradually become extinct and with them the wealth of knowledge, culture and literature (folk and written) will be lost forever. Isn't it gross injustice to all those people whose mother tongues are not listed in the scheduled language lists? Won't this be against the spirit of one of the major aims of this policy the "promulgation of Multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning"? Shouldn't they have the choice to use their mother tongue which is also a highlight of this policy? Will this not affect equality, inclusion and mobility? Or is it a surreptitious attempt to impose Hindi as opposed to other languages? A very concerted effort should be made to include these languages in the Eighth schedule of languages. India will not be the only county which shall do so. "In Peru, there are 93 living languages, and all languages are official. Spanish is spoken by 80.3 per cent of the population, Quechua by 16.2 per cent and other indigenous languages are spoken by 3 per cent."^{xv} As Tony Judt and Denis Lacorne noted "Linguistic choices are indeed choices, often political ones." (Judt & Lacorne , 2004) But policies should not be visualized and framed to severely constrain the choices.

6. Conclusion

When we put policy, practice and attitudes towards various languages into perspective, we can recognize a noticeable break in the way language is perceived in the present policy in contrast to the 1968 and 1986 education policies. Hindi, though not compulsory, continues to be pertinent in the educational field and is promoted widely. English has lost much of its glamour over the last one decade. Still it continues to hold its sway among the masses. Sanskrit is being promoted extensively. Gradually, many regional languages may lose their importance. As Millar argues, “It is easier (and cheaper) to teach (and govern) a population in one language. One language may be of higher prestige than any other spoken in that territory so that a hegemonic assumption of superiority might be made.” He also states, “It often actually suits a nation-state to ignore its multilingualism, for economic, social or, regularly, political and ideological reasons.” (Millar, 2005)

Education must be locally relevant, nationally inclusive, and internationally competitive. With this intent in mind, the government needs to promote the three-language formula in letter and in spirit. Everybody should be given the opportunity to study in their mother tongue at the primary and secondary level along with Hindi and English. Hindi enjoys the status of the official language of the Union. English is widely recognized as the global lingua franca (Costa, 2019) and India has gained much because of English language (Kanna & Rakesh, 2023). Literature in Sanskrit and other classical language literature can be included as a separate subject of study. This will assist to fulfil the vision of this new policy, of learners at all levels having “a deep-rooted pride in being Indian ... and reflecting a truly global citizen.”

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ⁱ The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is an education policy document that was introduced in India.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.thehindu.com/books/a-temple-for-a-language/article17752224.ece>

ⁱⁱⁱ There has been many instances where Hindi has been presumed to be the nation language. Hindi national language, says Mumbai HC as it rejects bail petition in NDPS case. Zomato lands in a row after customer care agent says 'Hindi is our national language'. Amit Shah says Hindi should be made national language and Hindi is a friend of all Indian languages.

^{iv} Census of India 2011, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India; 2011

^v <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/150917/nation-current-affairs/article/use-hindi-all-official-communications-delhi-police>

^{vi} <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1814606>

^{vii} Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education; Thomas Babington Macaulay; 1835

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- viii <https://www.ndtv.com/education/jee-main-2021-over-45000-students-writing-exam-in-regional-languages-2378496>
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- xii <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/sc-judgments-to-be-now-available-in-4-languages-says-cji-101674588729524.html>
- xiii the National Academy of Letters which gives a separate award for Rajasthani writers
- xiv National Eligibility Test has Rajasthani language as a separate subject
- xv www.peru.gob.pe; <https://www.ethnologue.com/country/PE/>

A Note on the Status of Juang Language

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Abstract

Juang (ISO 639-3-jun) is a Munda language spoken in the state of Odisha in Eastern India with a total population of 47095 (Census of India, 2011). The present work discusses about various factors of language endangerment with reference to Juang. The study determines the degree of endangerment of the language. Though the people continue to speak the language, Juang is experiencing enormous pressure of language assimilation from surrounding dominant languages. There is gradual loss of indigenous vocabularies as there is decline in the practice of age-old traditions among younger generations. The domains for language used are limited and the people have to often rely on code-mixing and code-switching to communicate. The loss of language also causes the loss of other culturally significant practices that are dependent on the language. The aspects like number of speakers, language contact, borrowing and language change are analyzed in the paper. A survey was conducted to assess the attitudes of community members towards their mother tongue.

Keywords- Juang, language endangerment, mother tongue, language attitudes, Munda.

1. Introduction: The People and the Language

Juang is one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of Odisha. The tribe belongs to proto-Australoid racial stock (Patnaik and Mohanty, 2004 & 2015). They are concentrated in Keonjhar district as well as the adjoining districts of Dhenkanal and Angul. The people consider Juang Pirh in Keonjhar district as their original homeland. Keonjhar district is located in the northern part of Odisha and lies between 21.1 degree North latitude and 85.11 degree East longitude with an area of 8330.7 sq km.

The Juangs broadly classified themselves into two groups, namely the Thaniya, also known as Hill Juang, and Bhagudia, also known as Plain Juang. The Thaniyas are the ones living in and around their original homeland, Juang Pirh, located in Gonasika hills. They consider themselves as the native or original settlers. Whereas, the Bhagudias are those who have migrated to the plains of Kendujhar and Dhenkanal districts (Ota et al. 2018, Mohanty 2015, Patniak and Mohanty 2004 & 2015).

The language of the Juang belongs to the Munda subgroup of the western Austroasiatic language family. Zide (1969) and Anderson (2001) paired Juang with Kharia to form the South Munda language subgroup. The language has no script of its own and when written, uses the Odia (Oriya) script. As a result of prolong contact with Odia (Oriya) speaking people; they have become bilingual, speaking both Juang and Odia (Oriya). Younger generations who have access to education also speaks Hindi and English.

2. The Status Juang Language:

The UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World’s languages in Danger (Moseley, 2010) has classified 197 languages of India as vulnerable or endangered. Juang is included in this list and the language is classified as ‘definitely endangered’.

While language endangerment typically involves a process of language shift, the number of users who identify with a particular language, and the number and nature of the users or functions for which the language is employed are two dimensions to characterized the nature of endangerment (Lewis et al, 2015). Another important factor that contributes to language endangerment and vitalization is the attitude of the speakers towards its native language. Many linguists, on the other hand, are of the view that the number of speakers hardly matters for determining the viability of any endangered language. There are cases where a small group of speakers successfully manage to maintain their native languages intact, where as some larger groups fail to pass on their native languages to new generations. The intensity of language contact is a crucial factor too. Studies have shown that prolonged contact leads to change in phonological, lexical and syntactic levels. Some of these factors will be discussed in the context of Juang in the following sections.

An assessment study was conducted on the degree of language endangerment based on the major evaluative factors of language vitality provided in UNESCO’s document Language Vitality and Endangerment (2003) on the language communities, the result of which is provided in table number 1 below. The assessment of Juang was conducted in Gonasika and Guptaganga village of Keonjhar district, Odisha.

Intergenerational language transmission	Stable yet threatened (5-): The language is spoken in most contexts by all generations with unbroken intergenerational transmission, yet multilingualism in the native language and one or more dominant language(s) has usurped certain important communication contexts.
Proportion of speakers within the total population	Unsafe (4): Nearly all speak the language.
Shifts in domains of language use	Dwindling domains (3): The language is in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.
Response to new domains and media	Minimal (1): The language is used in only a few new domains.
Materials for language education and literacy	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration. (4)
Government and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use	Differentiated support (4): Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains.
Attitudes of community members toward their own language	Most members support language maintenance. (4)
Amount and quality of documentation	Fragmentary (2): There are some grammatical sketches, word lists and texts useful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage.

Table 1. Estimated Degree of Endangerment of Juang

As mentioned earlier, the language has no script but use Odia script for writing. There are few books and primers published in Juang using Odia script. The community has no language or cultural organization such as literary committee. However, for overall development of the community, the government of Odisha formed a separate agency called ‘Juang Development Agency’ (JDA), headquartered at Gonasika. The younger generation are bilinguals, speaking both Juang and Odia. Odia, which is the dominant language of the state has penetrated even at home domain. Informants from Gonasika and Guptaganga mentioned that they used both Odia and Juang at home. Outside home and village, they had to switch to languages other than their mother tongue. Some of the informants said they are comfortable with Odia even for prayers. There is no place for Juang in mass media such as Radio, Television, Newspapers, Journals, etc. However, the language is taught in some schools and there are Juang language teachers.

Juang has relatively small number of speakers. A small speech community is much more vulnerable to language endangerment. A smaller minority group may also easily merge with a neighbouring majority group giving up its own language and culture. The small population of Juang is spread across the districts of Keonjhar, Dhenkanal and Angul. As a minority community the domains for language use is limited to home in most cases. There is intergenerational language transmission, nevertheless it exists under the shadow of a more dominant languages. Most families or children of the community speaks Juang as their first language, however, it is restricted to specific social domains, such as home where children interact only with their family members.

3. Attitudes towards their Mother Tongue

A survey was conducted to check the attitudes of the native speaker towards their mother tongue. The questionnaire used in the survey is provided in appendix 1. The survey was concentrated in Gonasika and Guptaganga village. A total of twenty males in their 20’s and 30’s was selected for the survey. The analysis of the survey is shown in table 2 below:

Statement	Yes	No
Is your language/mother tongue easy to learn/speak?	80%	20%
Can you express your thoughts in your mother tongue?	90%	10%
Do you accept mixing other language words in your mother tongue?	72%	28%
When you are given opportunities will learn to write in your mother tongue?	90%	10%
Do you think that your language is better suited for performing various activities such as business, employment, schooling etc.?	46%	54%
Do you think that other languages are easy to learn?	42%	58%
Do you think that one language is enough for all types of usages?	18%	82%
Do you think that learning other languages improve your knowledge level?	90%	10%
What language(s) do you want your children to know well?	Odia-64%, Eng-12%, Hin-24%	

Do you think that your language will still be used 20 years from now?	100%	-
What language(s) do you think your children will learn when they grow up?	Eng-10% Juang and Odia-72% Hindi-18%	
When your children become adults what language(s) do you think that they will speak with their children?	Juang-80% Odia and Hindi-20%	
Do you like your language to be spoken by your children?	100%	-
Do you speak your mother tongue as same as the way your parents speak your mother tongue?	80%	20%
Do you think that your language is essential for day-to-day activities?	60%	40%
Do you prefer to marry a person who does not know your language?	100%	

Table 2: Attitudes toward Mother Tongue (Juang)

The results indicate that majority of the respondents find it easy to learn and communicate in their mother tongue. This indicate that inter-generational transmission of Juang is still steady. Few of them, however, expressed that their language may be difficult for outsiders to pick-up or learn. The respondents are bilingual, speaking Juang and Odia, and some multilingual, speaking Hindi as well. They agreed that mixing other language with their mother tongue is now a common occurrence and it is acceptable. The overwhelming majority wanted to learn to write in their mother tongue. More than half of the respondents are of the opinion that their language is not well-suited for performing various activities such as business, employment, schooling, etc. They find learning other languages such as Hindi and English difficult while learning Odia is comparatively easier. They also think that knowing just one language is not enough and wanted to learn other languages so that their knowledge would increase. Of the respondents, 64% want their children to learn Odia well, while some them want their children to learn Hindi and English too. All the respondents believed that Juang will still be in used 20 years from now. However, most them also thinks that their children will learn more of Odia and other languages. 80% of the respondents thinks their children will continue to speak Juang to their children whereas the remaining 20% thinks that their children will speak either in Odia or Hindi to the next generation. All the respondents want their mother tongue to be spoken by their children. 20% of the respondents think that the fluency over their mother tongue is not as good as their parent’s generation. Only 60% of the respondents thinks that Juang is essential for day-to-day activities. All the unmarried respondents wanted to get married within their community. Overall, they have positive attitudes towards their mother tongue.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The role of a speech community in monitoring the degree of language loss is important in maintaining and revitalizing mother tongue. In order to preserve and revitalized the language, the following steps need to be reinforced in the speech community.

Documentation and description of language is important because it will facilitate the process of sharing and preserving the cultural heritage of the community which would otherwise be lost. Linguists and wide range of community members should be encouraged to participate in documentation and description of the language. Initially, focus can be given to document the age-old oral literatures which are at risk of complete loss. The speech forms of both young and old should be documented to get the full linguistic resource of the community.

Documentary and descriptive linguists, especially working in close collaboration with endangered language communities like Juang, need to guide and train community people in the preparation of appropriate and useful materials in support of teaching and learning in schools. Linguists and trained community members have a role to play in description of the language, which is necessary for corpus planning like the codification, graphization, orthography, standardization of the language, as well as terminology development. The use of Juang in media and cyberspace should be supported and promoted. Assisting such programs will strengthen the role of local language in the transmission of local and indigenous knowledge.

Creation of pictorial glossary and addition of cultural materials will help children and younger people learn indigenous terms and use it in their discourse. It will also be crucial for bridging between their ancient and contemporary cultures.

And most importantly, get the young people interested to use mother tongue in different ways and platforms. Provide venues for them to creatively use their mother tongue by conducting literary activities like writing poems, essays, songs, stories, etc., in the language. Also encourage young people to get involve in traditional cultural activities like singing folksongs, learning folk dances, practicing arts and crafts and narrating folktales. There is a general consensus that culture plays a key role in assisting language revival. This can be done through creating real life situation or a natural context by choosing one of the cultural aspects mentioned to aid in preserving and maintaining Juang language.

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Appendix - 1 Questionnaire used in language survey

Personal profile of the informant

- 1. Name of the respondent :
- 2. Sex :
- 3. Age :
- 4. Education :
- 5. Occupation :

Language identification

- 1. Does your language has a written form?
 - a) If yes, which script is used? Indigenous script, Roman Script, Devanagari or any other etc.
- 2. Is there any book published in your mother tongue?
 - a) If yes, provide details.
- 3. Do you have a language/cultural organization such as literary committee?
 - a) If yes, provide details.
- 4. What are the other languages that you know?

Domains of use

- 1. What language(s) do you speak at home?

a. With grandparents?	
b. With spouse?	
c. With children?	
d. With grand children?	
e. With siblings?	

2. What language(s) do you speak at the market?

a. With the merchant of the same tribe/community?	
b. With the merchant of the other tribe/community?	
c. With an acquaintance in the market?	

3. What language(s) do you speak at a place of worship?

a. While praying to god?	
b. While reciting or performing rituals?	
c. While singing religious songs?	
d. When get possessed?	
e. While talking with other worshippers at the worship place?	
f. For religious discussions at the place of worship with the priest?	

5. What language do you speak at your community meetings?

(Mother Tongue/Dominant Language/Other language)

6. What language do you speak with a stranger? Mother tongue/Dominant language:

7. Is your language used in the mass media?

- a. Radio
- b. TV
- c. Newspaper, Journals
- d. Others (specify)

Language attitude

1. Is your language/mother tongue easy to learn/speak: Yes/No

2. Can you express your thoughts in your mother tongue: Yes/No

3. Do you accept mixing other language words in your mother tongue: Yes/No

a. If yes, with which other language (s)

b. If no, with which other language (s)

4. When you are given opportunities will learn to write in your mother tongue: Yes/No

a. If no, which other language(s) will you prefer?

5. Do you think that your language is better suited for performing various activities such as business, employment, schooling etc.: Yes/No
 - a. If yes, compared to which other language(s)
 - b. If no, compared to which other language(s)
6. Do you think that other languages are easy to learn: Yes/No
 - a. If yes, which other language(s)
 - b. If no, which other language(s)
7. Do you think that one language is enough for all types of usages: Yes/No
 - a. If no, which other language(s) should be included:
8. Do you think that learning other languages improve your knowledge level: Yes/No
9. What language(s) do you want your children to know well?
10. What language(s) will you like to listen to scriptures in?
11. Do you think that your language will still be used 20 years from now? Yes/No
12. What language(s) do you think your children will learn when they grow up? (If not your language, what do you think of this?)
13. When your children become adults what language(s) do you think that they will speak with their children?
14. Do you like your language to be spoken by your children?
15. Do you speak your mother tongue as same as the way your parents speak your mother tongue?
16. Do you think that your language is essential for day-to-day activities?
17. Do you prefer to marry a person who does not know your language?

कुमाउनी और गुजराती की समस्रोतीय शब्दावली

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शोध सार

प्रस्तुत शोधपत्र में कुमाउनी और गुजराती की समस्रोतीय शब्दावली का अध्ययन-विश्लेषण किया गया है। कुमाउनी और गुजराती एक ही भाषा-परिवार की भाषाएँ हैं। उत्तराखण्ड राज्य के दो मंडल हैं - कुमाऊँ और गढ़वाल। कुमाउनी - कुमाऊँ मंडल की प्रमुख भाषा है, जिसकी लिपि देवनागरी है। प्रस्तुत शोध पत्र में कुमाउनी और गुजराती शब्दावली की तुलना भिन्न-भिन्न दृष्टियों से की गई है, जैसे - कुमाउनी गुजराती के समानस्रोतीय-भिन्नार्थी शब्द, कुमाउनी-गुजराती के समोच्चरित-समानार्थी लिंग भेद वाले शब्द, कुमाउनी-गुजराती के समानार्थी किंतु ध्वनि में सामान्य अंतर वाले शब्द व कुमाउनी-गुजराती के समोच्चरित-भिन्नार्थी व लिंग भेद वाले शब्द। प्रत्येक वर्ग से कतिपय शब्दावली उदाहरणार्थ दी गई है। निष्कर्ष रूप में यही कहा गया है कि संसार की परिवर्तनशीलता की भाँति ही भाषा में भी परिवर्तन-संबद्धन होता रहता है। भाषा परिवर्तन के अनेक कारणों को शोधपत्र में इंगित किया गया है, जिनके फलस्वरूप शब्द और शब्दार्थ तथा ध्वनि में परिवर्तन आ जाता है।

1. परिचय

प्रसिद्ध भाषाशास्त्री सर जॉर्ज ग्रियर्सन ने आधुनिक भारतीय आर्यभाषाओं का भौगोलिक दृष्टि से जो विभाजन प्रस्तुत किया है, उसमें पश्चिमी हिन्दी, पंजाबी, गुजराती, खानदेशी तथा राजस्थानी भाषा को एक ही वर्ग में स्थान दिया है। जिस प्रकार हिन्दी और गुजराती दोनों एक ही परिवार की भाषाएँ हैं¹, उसी प्रकार कुमाउनी और गुजराती भी एक ही भाषा परिवार से सम्बद्ध हैं। हिन्दी की पाँच उपभाषाएँ हैं - पूर्वी, पश्चिमी, बिहारी, राजस्थानी व पहाड़ी। पहाड़ी उपभाषा के अन्तर्गत कुमाउनी और गढ़वाली दोनों भाषाएँ आ जाती हैं, गुजराती और कुमाउनी दोनों भाषाओं का विकास शौरसेनी अपभ्रंश से हुआ है। यद्यपि दरद/खस की कुछ विशेषताएँ कुमाउनी भाषा में विद्यमान होने से कुछ विद्वान इसे दरद से भी संबद्ध करते हैं। ग्रियर्सन की भाँति डॉ. सुनीति कुमार चटर्जी ने भी पहाड़ी भाषाओं का आधार पैशाची, दरद या खस प्राकृत ठहराते हुए मध्यकाल में उन्हें राजस्थानी की प्राकृत एवं अपभ्रंश से प्रभावित बताया है² किन्तु डॉ. धीरेन्द्र वर्मा, उदय नारायण तिवारी आदि वर्तमान कुमाउनी को शौरसेनी अपभ्रंश से उद्भूत मानते हैं। डॉ. वर्मा की स्पष्ट धारणा है कि हिन्दी, राजस्थानी, पंजाबी, गुजराती आदि की भाँति मध्य पहाड़ी का सम्बन्ध भी शौरसेनी अपभ्रंश से है³ शौरसेनी अपभ्रंश और कुमाउनी में प्राप्त अनकानेक समानताएँ इसकी पुष्टि करती हैं।

2. विश्लेषण

शब्दावली, वाक्य-विन्यास, व्याकरण संरचना, अर्थबोध आदि अनेक दृष्टियों से एक ही परिवार की दो भाषाओं में समानता होना स्वाभाविक है, क्योंकि दोनों भाषाएँ अपनी आधारभूत शब्दावली प्रायः समानस्रोतों से ग्रहण करती हैं। इतना ही नहीं एक ही भाषा परिवार से निकली दो भाषाओं में कई दृष्टियों से असमानताएँ होना भी आश्चर्यजनक नहीं है। इसलिए ऐसी दो भाषाओं का अध्ययन-विश्लेषण तब और महत्वपूर्ण हो जाता है जब इन समानताओं के साथ असमानताएँ भी अध्ययन का विषय हो। आचार्य सुन्दर रेड्डी के अनुसार, “तुलनात्मक अध्ययन मानव के सीमित ज्ञान क्षेत्र का विस्तार करता है। देश की एकता एवं राष्ट्रीय जीवन की एकता के लिए के लिए विभिन्न भारतीय भाषाओं एवं साहित्यों का तुलनात्मक अध्ययन आवश्यक ही नहीं, अनिवार्य भी है।”⁴ डॉ. कैलाश चन्द्र भाटिया का मानना है, “दो भाषाओं की शब्दावली की तुलना समान स्रोत के आधार पर ही की जानी चाहिए। संयोग से दो भाषाओं में समध्वनि, समवर्तनी के दो शब्द हो सकते हैं जो अर्थ में नितान्त भिन्न हों। इन शब्दों की समानता मात्र ऊपरी है। समस्रोत की शब्दावली की तुलना निम्नलिखित दृष्टि से की जा सकती है - ‘(क) उच्चारण (ख) वर्तनी (ग) अर्थ’⁵ प्रस्तुत शोधपत्र में समस्रोतीय दृष्टि से उपर्युक्त दो भाषाओं की शब्दावली का अध्ययन किया जाएगा। यद्यपि गहन शोध से यह निष्कर्ष निकला है कि कुमाउनी और गुजराती में समानस्रोतीय-समानार्थी शब्दों की बहुलता है। सैकड़ों शब्द ऐसे हैं, जो इन भाषाओं में समान रूप से, तो कुछ तनिक उच्चारणगत भिन्नता के साथ प्रयुक्त होते हैं।⁶ दूसरी ओर बहुत शब्द ऐसे भी हैं जो इन दोनों भाषाओं में समान रूप से प्रचलित हैं, जिनके स्रोत एक हैं, किन्तु इनके अर्थ प्रायः समान नहीं हैं। डॉ. रजनीकांत जोशी ने हिन्दी और गुजराती की समानस्रोतीय शब्दावली के अन्तर्गत ऐसे शब्दों की लम्बी सूची प्रकाशित की है। कुमाउनी और गुजराती शब्दावली की तुलना निम्नांकित रूप में की जा सकती है-

1. कुमाउनी और गुजराती के समस्रोतीय-भिन्नार्थी शब्द
2. कुमाउनी-गुजराती के समोच्चरित-समानार्थी, लिंग भेद वाले शब्द
3. कुमाउनी-गुजराती के समानार्थी-भिन्नोच्चरित, लिंग भेद वाले शब्द
4. कुमाउनी-गुजराती के समोच्चरित-भिन्नार्थी एवं लिंग भेद वाले शब्द

3. कुमाउनी-गुजराती के समानस्रोतीय-भिन्नार्थी शब्द

कुमाउनी		गुजराती	
शब्द	अर्थ	शब्द	अर्थ
अवेर, अवेर	देर होना	अवेर	संबंध, क्रम
आलू, आलु	एक जमीकंद	आलू	सूखा मेवा
उपाधि	पदवी	उपाधि	दुःख, मानसिक चिन्ता

कातर	भयभीत, परेशान	कातर	कैंची
गाँधी	महात्मा गाँधी	गांधी	पंसारी
चाट	चस्का, लत	चाट	झेंप, खिसियाना
चेष्टा	प्रयत्न	चेष्टा	नखरे, मजाक
झालर	झूल	झालर	एक दलहन
ठेठ	शुद्ध, बिल्कुल	ठेठ	अंत तक
दफतर	कार्यालय	दफतर	विद्यार्थियों का बस्ता
प्रसिद्ध	मशहूर	प्रसिद्ध	प्रकाशित
बिना	बगैर	बिना	हकीकत, प्रसंग
भोट	भूटान देश	भोट	बेवकूफ
यात्रा	पर्यटन	यात्रा	तीर्थ, धाम
लाद	पेट, उदर	लाद	घोड़े की लीद
सही	शुद्ध, ठीक	सही	हस्ताक्षर
बाँक	टेढ़ा, दोषयुक्त	बांक	दोष, गुनाह

4. कुमाउनी-गुजराती के समोच्चरित-समानार्थी लिंग भेद वाले शब्द

शब्द	लिंग (कुमाउनी में)	लिंग (गुजराती में)
असर	पुल्लिंग	स्त्रीलिंग
आत्मा	स्त्रीलिंग	पुल्लिंग
आवाज	स्त्रीलिंग	पुल्लिंग
उमंग	स्त्रीलिंग	पुल्लिंग
कसूर	पुल्लिंग	स्त्रीलिंग
तकदीर	स्त्रीलिंग	नपुंसकलिंग
फर्ज	पुल्लिंग	स्त्रीलिंग

संदूक	पुल्लिंग	स्त्रीलिंग
शपथ	स्त्रीलिंग	पुल्लिंग
संतान	स्त्रीलिंग	नपुंसकलिंग

5. कुमाउनी-गुजराती के समानार्थी किन्तु ध्वनि में सामान्य अंतर वाले शब्द

कुमाउनी शब्द	गुजराती शब्द	अर्थ
अन्यार	अंधारुं	अंधेरा
अफीम	अफीण	अफीम
अमचूर	आमचुं	अमचूर
आँस, आँसु	आंसु	आँसू
ऐवज	अवेज	बदले में
कील	खील	कील
खुराग	खोराक	खुराक
गप	गप्पुं	इधर-उधर की बातें, डींग
जगमगाट	झगमगाहट	जगमगाने की क्रिया या भाव
ज्व्ड़, ज्वौड़	जोडुं	जोड़ा
ताव	तालुं	ताला
धन	धण	धन
फित	फीत, फीतुं	फीता
बचपन	बालपण, बचपण	बाल्यावस्था
बहौड़	बाछड़ुं., बाछरडुं	तरुण बैल
बादव, बादल	वादलुं	बादल, मेघ
बेंगन	वेंगण, वंगड	बेंगन
मौत	मोत	मौत, मृत्यु
रैत	राईतुं	रायता
लासण	लसण	लहसुन

शश	ससलुं	शशक, खरगोश
सौरास	सासरियुं	ससुराल

6. कुमाउनी-गुजराती के समोच्चरित-भिन्नार्थी व लिंग भेद वाले शब्द

कुमाउनी			गुजराती		
शब्द	लिंग	अर्थ	शब्द	लिंग	अर्थ
देर	स्त्रीलिंग	विलंब	देर	पुल्लिंग	देवर
शोक	पुल्लिंग	खेद, दुःख	शोक	स्त्रीलिंग	सौत
हामी	स्त्रीलिंग	स्वीकारोक्ति	हामी	पुल्लिंग	जमानत देने वाला
बेल	पुल्लिंग	बेल, एक फल	बेल	स्त्रीलिंग	जोड़ा, साथी
शिक्षा	स्त्रीलिंग	बोध, ज्ञान	शिक्षा	पुल्लिंग	दंड

7. निष्कर्ष

उपर्युक्त के आलोक में कहा जा सकता है कि जिस तरह संसार परिवर्तनशील है, उसी प्रकार भाषा में भी परिवर्तन-संवर्द्धन होता रहता है। भाषा के प्रयोक्ताओं की भिन्नता के साथ-साथ भाषा के विभिन्न स्वरूप बनते चले जाते हैं। प्रसिद्ध भाषा वैज्ञानिक डॉ. बाबूराम सक्सेना भाषा-परिवर्तन के कारणों में शरीर-रचना की भिन्नता को एक महत्वपूर्ण कारण मानते हैं।⁷ शरीर-रचना की भिन्नता के अतिरिक्त भी कई ऐसे कारण हैं जिनका परिवर्तन भाषा पर पड़ता है। जिनमें भौगोलिक विभिन्नता, किसी जाति की मानसिक अवस्था एवं विभिन्न राजनीतिक परिस्थितियों को लिया जा सकता है। उदाहरणार्थ- एक जाति जब दूसरी जाति को पराजित कर अपने अधीन कर लेती है तो उसकी संस्कृति के मूल अवयव यानि उसकी भाषा को प्रभावित करती है और विजित जाति की भाषा में तेजी से परिवर्तन होता है। उदाहरणार्थ, भारतवर्ष को ही लें, क्रमशः मुसलमानों और फिर अंग्रेजों के आक्रमणों के फलस्वरूप यहाँ की विभिन्न भाषाओं पर अरबी-फारसी और अंग्रेजी का इतना अधिक प्रभाव पड़ा कि स्वतंत्र होने के बावजूद भी भारत की सभी भाषाओं में इनकी शब्दावली छाई हुई है। 'श्रम लाघव' की प्रवृत्ति भी भाषा-परिवर्तन का एक महत्वपूर्ण कारण है। हर व्यक्ति प्रयास करता है कि वह अपना कार्य इस प्रकार करे कि उसे परिश्रम कम से कम करना पड़े, परिणामतः एक ही शब्द अनेक बार प्रयोग किए जाने से उसका लघु रूप बन जाता है। जैसे-'उपाध्याय' से 'ओझा' फिर 'झा', या 'लोहकार' से 'लुहार', 'मास्टर साहब' से 'मास्साब' आदि-आदि।

भाषा के अन्तर्गत उसके शब्द और शब्द के अर्थों में भी परिवर्तन आता है। यद्यपि शब्द और अर्थ अन्योन्याश्रित हैं। भाषाशास्त्री शब्द और अर्थ का संबंध शरीर और आत्मा की तरह अविच्छिन्न मानते हैं किन्तु देश, काल और वाक्य-रचना के अनुसार इसमें भी परिवर्तन स्वाभाविक है। डॉ. रजनीकांत जोशी मानते हैं- 'एक शब्द एक प्रांत में जिस भाव या अर्थ के लिए प्रयुक्त होता है, वही शब्द दूसरे प्रांत में समोच्चरित होते हुए भी भिन्नार्थक

हो सकता है।' इसीलिए शब्द से अर्थ का बोध सामयिक होता है, नित्य नहीं।* कुछ शब्दों में 'अर्थ विस्तार' होता है अर्थात् जब शब्दों का अर्थ सीमित एवं संकुचित क्षेत्र से निकलकर अधिक विस्तृत और व्यापक हो जाता है। जैसे:- 'स्याही' शब्द प्रारम्भ में 'स्याह' अर्थात् सिर्फ काले रंग की स्याही के लिए प्रयुक्त होता था किन्तु आज लाल, हरी, नीली आदि रंगों की स्याही के लिए भी प्रयुक्त होता है। कुछ शब्दों में 'अर्थसंकोच' होता है अर्थात् जब किसी शब्द का प्रयोग विस्तृत या व्यापक अर्थ से हटकर विशिष्ट या सीमित अर्थों में होने लगता है। जैसे:- 'मृग' शब्द पहले सभी प्रकार के जानवरों के लिए प्रयुक्त होता था किन्तु हिन्दी में आज केवल 'हिरन' अर्थ में प्रयुक्त होता है। कुछ शब्दों में 'अर्थदिश' की प्रवृत्ति मिलती है अर्थात् शब्द धीरे-धीरे अपना मूल अर्थ खोकर नए अर्थ ग्रहण कर लेता है। जैसे:- 'महाराज' शब्द प्रारंभ में 'महान राजा' का द्योतक था किन्तु आज हिन्दी में 'रसोइये' के लिए 'महाराज' शब्द प्रयुक्त होता है।

भाषा-परिवर्तन के अन्तर्गत ध्वनि के क्षेत्र में जो परिवर्तन आता है, वह 'ध्वनि-परिवर्तन' कहलाता है। ध्वनि-परिवर्तन के आन्तरिक कारणों में जहाँ मुख-सुख, अपूर्ण अनुकरण, मानसिक अयोग्यता, बोल-चाल में शीघ्रता, बलाघात, विपर्यय और स्वरागम आदि परिस्थितियाँ मुख्य होती हैं, वहीं बाह्य कारणों में वाग्यंत्र, विदेशी भाषाओं का प्रभाव आदि महत्वपूर्ण कारक होते हैं। यही कारण है कि एक ही परिवार की भाषाओं में भी समय-समय पर शब्द, अर्थ, ध्वनि विषयक परिवर्तन होते रहते हैं।

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पुस्तक -परिचय

डॉ. विष्णु कुमार सिंह

'हिंदी-कुमाउनी अध्येता कोश' (Hindi-Kumauni Learner's Dictionary) केंद्रीय हिंदी संस्थान, आगरा से प्रकाशित है। इस कोश का निर्माण डॉ. सतवीर सिंह और मीनाक्षी दुबे के संयोजकत्व में संपन्न हुआ है, कोश के निर्माण में हिंदी भाषा के विशेषज्ञ के रूप में प्रो. हरिशंकर और कुमाउनी विशेषज्ञ- प्रो. देवसिंह पोखरिया, प्रो. जगत सिंह बिष्ट, प्रो. चन्द्रकला रावत, डॉ. प्रीती आर्या और डॉ. हयात सिंह रावत हैं।

यह कोश हिंदी-कुमाउनी से सम्बन्धित है। इस द्विभाषी शब्दकोश में हिंदी के 3500 आधारभूत शब्द हैं। कुमाउनी उत्तराखंड के कुमाउं संभाग की भाषा है। कुमाउनी भाषा का कोई सर्वसम्मत रूप नहीं है, इस भाषा के मानकीकरण की प्रक्रिया जारी है। पौड़ी-गढ़वाल और अल्मोड़ा में गढ़वाली और कुमाउनी का पाठ्यक्रम तैयार कर पढ़ाया जाने लगा है। जनजातीय क्षेत्र में भी संपर्क भाषा के रूप में कुमाउनी का प्रयोग होता है। कुमाउनी, प्रवासी कुमाउनी भाषी, कुमाउनी विद्यार्थियों और हिंदी- कुमाउनी भाषियों को ध्यान में रखते हुए इस कोश का निर्माण किया गया है। इस अध्येता कोश में पूर्वी कुमाउनी की प्रतिनिधि बोली 'सोर्याली' और 'खसपर्जिया' की ध्वनि, वर्तनी, शब्द-प्रयोग और क्रियारूपों को जगह दी गयी है।

कुछ हिंदी शब्दों की हिंदी में दो वर्तनी प्रचलित हैं, इस अध्येता कोश में दोनों वर्तनियों को जगह दी गयी है। सही उच्चारण के लिए शब्दों के आगे अक्षर विभाजन भी रखा गया है। शब्दों की विभिन्न अर्थ छटाओं (Shades of meaning) के साथ साथ एकाधिक अर्थ-छवि को दिखाने के लिए अलग-अलग सन्दर्भ और वाक्यांश में प्रस्तुत किया गया है। इस अध्येता कोश में परिशिष्ट के अन्तर्गत कुमाउनी भाषी विद्यार्थियों के वार्तालाप के लिए दस पाठ दिए गए हैं और इस वार्तालाप का अनुवाद भी कुमाउनी में दिया गया है।

यह 'कुमाउनी-हिंदी अध्येता कोश' हिंदी-कुमाउनी भाषी लोगों के साथ-साथ शोध छात्रों के लिए उपयोगी सिद्ध होगा।

पुस्तक: हिंदी-कुमाउनी अध्येता कोश

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