



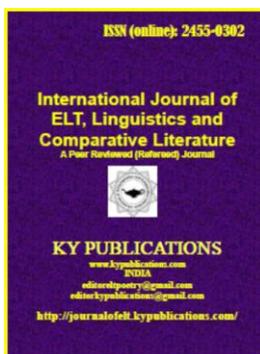
NEED OF LINGUISTIC SURVEY IN PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

Despite the rich traditions in India, unfortunately, all the Indian languages did not have had full descriptions. Even today quite a few spoken languages remain as non-literary languages, languages without script, as a result of which they are without proper development. To view the Indian languages from a technically advanced perspective, the Language Division of the Office of the Registrar General, India submitted a proposal for the conduct of a fresh Linguistic Survey of India to the Government of India which was duly approved and the work of Linguistic Survey is in progress in the current period of time, however, so far it has covered only four states – Orissa, Rajasthan, Sikkim, and West Bengal – and one Union Territory – Dadra and Nagar Haveli. The state of Punjab is also a mix of different local languages and some of these local languages are popular even at international level due to the Punjabi diaspora. Thus, the main objective of this paper is to highlight the need of Linguistic Survey in Punjab at the priority basis.

Key words: census, India, language, Punjab, survey.

1. INTRODUCTION

Of all the human inventions, language is the most ancient and yet the most important and indispensable one for the survival and development of mankind. It won't be an exaggeration if it is claimed that it is this invention which distinguishes human beings from other beings. In other words, man becomes a fulfilled species because of the capability to use both the spoken and the written form of language for communication. Despite the rich traditions in India, unfortunately, all the Indian languages did not have had full descriptions. Even today quite a few spoken languages remain as non-literary languages, languages without script, as a result of which they are without proper development. The efforts undertaken by Sir George Abraham Grierson and his team, led to comprehensive study of the Indian languages and the descriptions of languages was published in several volumes during the years 1896-1927. However, despite its usefulness and popularity at the national and international levels, this survey had certain inadequacy, owing to the fact that the tools of research available at that time were not as developed as at present. It was only during the early years of the previous century that the subject of linguistics started to emerge as an independent field of study at the global level and India lost no time in establishing in several universities, linguistics as a field of scientific pursuit. This eventually gave a boost to the study of Indian languages and dialects as a consequence of which scientific tools and designs for description of Indian languages evolved. Moreover, with the gaining of independence and reorganization of states on linguistic basis, the geo-political boundaries of India have undergone a radical change after Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India (Reference 1).



With a view to overcome these constraints and to view the Indian languages from a technically advanced perspective, the Language Division of the Office of the Registrar General, India submitted a proposal for the conduct of a fresh Linguistic Survey of India to the Government of India which was duly approved. Though the original proposed envisaged simultaneous survey of all languages of the country, later it was decided that the survey would be carried out state by state in view of certain administrative and technical constraints (Reference 1). Therefore, the work of Linguistic Survey is in progress in the current period of time, undoubtedly at a very slow pace. Moreover, so far it has covered only four states – Orissa, Rajasthan (Part-I), Sikkim (Part-I,II), and West Bengal (Part-I) – and for one Union Territory – Dadra and Nagar Haveli. The state of Punjab is also a mix of different local languages and some of these local languages are popular even at international level due to the Punjabi diaspora. Thus, the main objective of this paper is to highlight the need of Linguistic Survey in Punjab at the priority basis. The paper is divided into six sections. Following introduction, second section presents history of linguistic survey in India. Linguistic survey in independent India and in Census 2011 is presented in sections three and four respectively. Section five views the need of linguistic Census in Punjab and the paper concludes in section six.

2. HISTORY OF LINGUISTIC SURVEY IN INDIA

The Linguistic Survey of India, often referred to as the LSI, is a comprehensive survey of the languages of British India, describing 364 languages and dialects. The Survey was first proposed by George Abraham Grierson, a member of the Indian Civil Service and a linguist who attended the Seventh International Oriental Congress held at Vienna in September 1886. He made a proposal of the linguistic survey and it was initially turned down by the Government of India. After persisting and demonstrating that it could be done at low cost using the existing network of government officials at a reasonable cost, it was approved in 1891. It was however formally begun only in 1894 and the survey continued for thirty years with the last of the results being published in 1928. Grierson made use of Government officers to collect data from across India. He made forms and guidance material for the officers who gathered the information. There were numerous problems in ensuring uniformity of data gathering and clarity of understanding. One officer noted the difficulty even of noting the name of the language from a household (Reference 2).

3. LINGUISTIC SURVEY IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

A second Linguistic Survey of India project was initiated by the Language Division of Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India in 1984. This project is ongoing and at the end of year 2010 approximately 40% of the survey has been completed. This survey has a limited objective to trace the changes in the linguistic scenario after Grierson's study. Several professional linguists have criticized the project for repeating Grierson's methodological mistakes – like choosing local language teachers or government officials as informants rather than laypersons for collecting the linguistic data. The 1991 census of India found 1,576 "mother tongues" with separate grammatical structures and 1,796 languages classified as "other mother tongues". The Government of India announced an ambitious project to expand and revise the Linguistic Survey of India. In the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007–12) Rs. 2.8 billion was sanctioned for the project. It was classified into two sections: a New Linguistic Survey of India and a Survey of Minor and Endangered Languages. Under the auspices of the Central Institute of Indian Language in Mysore, and under the direction of Udaya Narayana Singh, the project was expected to involve over 54 universities, 2,000 investigators and 10,000 linguists and language specialists working over a period of ten years (Reference 2).



4. LINGUISTIC SURVEY AND CENSUS 2011

The Census 2011 linguistic survey data is prepared by Language Division, Office of the Registrar General, India for four states – Orissa, Rajasthan (Part-I), Sikkim (Part-I,II), and West Bengal (Part-I) – and for one Union Territory – Dadra and Nagar Haveli, in the memory of Sir George Abraham Grierson for his pioneering contribution in the field of survey of Indian languages and classification of languages in Indian Census. The major features of three linguistic surveys covering the states of Orissa, Sikkim, and Rajasthan are presented in the following sub-sections.

4.1 Linguistic Survey of India: Orissa

The report of the Orissa Linguistic Survey has been presented in the four chapters: (1) Introduction; (2) Indo-Aryan Family (that is, mainly Oriya and its dialects); (3) Austro-Asiatic Family; and (4) Dravidian Family. The introductory part of the survey report discusses the infrastructural facilities that were made available for carrying out the survey, the methodology adopted, the significance of the survey as also the scope and limitations of the survey. The second part presents a description of Standard Oriya. It gives descriptions of the five dialects of Oriya language: (i) Sambalpuri, (ii) Bhatiri, (iii) Desia (Proja), (iv) Relli, and (v) Bhuyan. A comparative word list of one thousand lexical items of the four dialects is appended in the section to provide a scope for comparing the lexical items of these dialects of Oriya. Further, this chapter includes a section on the tribal dialects of Oriya also. Besides, a brief account of the phonological isoglosses, plotted in maps are included in this section. The third part of the survey report comprises of the descriptions of eleven languages, namely, (i) Bhumij, (ii) Bonda, (iii) Didei, (iv) Gadaba (Gutob), (v) Ho, (vi) Juang, (vii) Kharia, (viii) Mundari, (ix) Parengi, (x) Santali, and (xi) Savara. The descriptions of these eleven languages include a brief sociolinguistic account as well as a word list comprising two hundred and fifty basic vocabulary items. The description of languages, belonging to Dravidian family, is presented in the fourth part. The languages whose descriptions are included in this part are (i) Khond/Kondh, (ii) Kisan, (iii) Koya, (iv) Kui, (v) Kuvi, and (vi) Gadaba (Ollari). The sociolinguistic descriptions of the languages included in this survey in general and that of Oriya language in particular give a glimpse of the dynamics of the sociolinguistic situation as found in Orissa. Moreover, the description of the bilingual situation prevailing in Orissa throws some light on the linguistic mobility of the people, especially the tribal communities inhabiting the Orissa state (Reference 1).

4.2 Linguistic Survey of India: Sikkim

The survey operations in the state of Sikkim were started in 1995 and these continued up to 2000, covering the investigations on Bhotia and Tibetan, Lepcha, Limbu, Sherpa, Rai, Tamang, Newari, Gurung, Mangari, and Sunwar. In 2008, there was another visit for updating of the linguistic data and for collecting sociolinguistic information. The peculiarity of the linguistic composition of the state lies in the existence of Nepali, the only language of Indo-Aryan family, as the first most populous language amidst various Tibeto-Burman ethno-linguistic communities. Being the most populous language as well as the language used for education, administration etc., Nepali has emerged as the superposed language of the state. The immigrant Bhutias (the descendents of the Tibetan) has become the second populous followed by the other major settlers of the land originally inhabited by the Limbus, Lepchas and others. This background frames the existence of the groups and sub-groups of Tibeto-Burman linguistic communities in the land of Sikkim – the Himalayan Queen (Reference 3).



4.3 Linguistic Survey of India: Rajasthan

The survey operation in the state of Rajasthan was started in the year of 1998 and continued up to 2001, covering the investigations on Marwari, Malvi, Mewati, Jaipuri (Dhundhari), Brajbhasha, Bundeli/Bundelkhandi (mother tongues listed under Hindi Group since 1971 Census and Wagdi – listed under Bhili/Bhilodi group of languages. Prior to this or according to Grierson's classification these are languages of Central Group of Indo-Aryan falling in 3 sub groups – Rajasthani, Hindi and Bhili. The survey brings out the linguistic situation of Rajasthan state in the historical, political and social background. The peculiarity of the linguistic composition of the state lies in the existence of mother tongues like Rajasthani, Marwari, Dhundhari or Jaipuri, Bagri Rajasthani, Bagri, Mewati, Malvi, Labani, Brajbhasha, Bundeli/Bundelkhandi, Baori, Bhili/Bhilodi, Wagdi, Panjabi, Sindhi and Urdu, many of which are also spoken in good number in other states sharing borders with Rajasthan. The survey, undoubtedly, would be useful to the researchers, planners and data users as it will provide some insight into linguistic picture of Rajasthan at a glance (Reference 4).

5. NEED OF LINGUISTIC SURVEY IN PUNJAB

After the partition on India in 1947, the Punjab province of British India was divided between India and Pakistan. The Indian Punjab was divided on the basis of language in 1966. It was divided into 3 parts. Haryanvi speaking areas (dialect of Hindi) were carved out as Haryana, Hilly regions and Pahari speaking areas formed Himachal Pradesh alongside the current state of Punjab. (Reference 5). Punjabi is an Indo-Aryan language spoken by over 100 million native speakers worldwide, making it the 10th most widely spoken language in the world. It is the native language of the Punjabi people who inhabit the historical Punjab region of Pakistan and India. The major dialects of Punjabi include Majhi, Doabi, Malwai, Powadhi, Pothohari, and Multani. Others are Shahpuri or Sargodha dialect, Dhani, Jhangochi/Changvi, Jangli/Rachnavi, Hindko, Jand ali, Jafri/Khetrani, Chenavari etc. (Reference 6). Thus because of the vast diversity of languages and dialects, there is need to conduct a language survey in the Census in Punjab.

6. CONCLUSION

The language survey in the Census is a tremendous achievement to capture the neglected visible languages. But there are many ignored and invisible languages. Because of urbanization, displacement of population due to industrialization and modernization, pressure of dominant languages that smaller and marginalized languages are under threat. Unless a conscious effort is made to describe revive and preserve them, valuable national heritage will be lost (Reference 3). Therefore, it is suggested that language survey, for the state of Punjab and for the other parts of this multilingual country, should be completed on the prior basis and the central government as well as the state governments should add the issue of linguistic survey in the initial points of their manifestoes and agendas.

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