LANGUAGE EDUCATION SOCIAL JUSTICE

LACHMAN M. KHUBCHANDANI

FOR COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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Cover Illustration :

PHOENIX

Engraving by Morante

In the hands of the Spaniard Pedro Diaz Morante, perhaps, its most brilliant exponent, the one-line technique in black is repeatedly employed to form traditional motives that are far from meaningless to anyone who is acquainted with their history. We find the 'one-line', too employed in parts of his wood engraving of the Phoenix, protecting a trinity of rabbits (who are guarded also by a one-line 'fence') from the poison of the snake, in what Strzygowski would have called a 'Hvarena landscape' and is undoubtedly a Paradise.

The Inscription, "My piety makes light of poison", in connection with the ancient motive of the Sunbird killing a snake, makes it almost certain that Morante meant his Phoenix for a type of Christ; while the form of the 'fence' reminds us that the Greek key-pattern or meander had once a metaphysical significance.

(Source: Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, "The Iconography of Dürer's 'Knots' and Leonardo's 'Concatenation'", *Art Quarterly*, Vol. VII, Spring 1944).

For

BHĀSKAR - -

the

Coming Generation

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The Publication of *Language, Education, Social Justice*, in its present form, is a culmination of a project initiated at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla in 1974, and later pursued at the East-West Center Honolulu, and SEAMEO Regional Language Centre Singapore during 1975-77. The Study has been revised and enlarged after the author's return to Poona in 1979. We are greatly indebted to Professor A. K. Saran and Dr. K. Banerjee for their editorial suggestions.

The Editorial Board is glad to present this Monograph in the newly launched Series *In Search of Tomorrow*. Through this medium, the Centre's endeavour is to foster *integral* knowledge of and concern for man and society, and to counter the trend of growing compartmentalisation in the realm of modern knowledge.

We deeply appreciate the interest shown by Shri Atur B. Sangtani in the Centre's programmes, and are grateful to him for providing a grant through the Atur Foundation towards the cost of this publication.

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Director

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Preface

During the post World War period many countries in Asia and Africa have been going through traumatic experiences of language transition. Issues of identity and development at national, regional and social levels have led political thinkers and education experts in many newly emergent nations to examine afresh the role of education in society and of language in education.

These issues have been the focus of attention not only among the intellectual and political élite but have often found expression through mass participation (protests, agitations, etc.) at the 'grassroots' level in these societies. The roles and the privileges of different languages and clashing loyalties over language in the countries of South Asia acquired political salience during their struggles for independence from colonial powers.

Pressures of universal literacy, extension of mass communication through massive technology, and manipulation of language for political and socio-economic gains are some of the concerns which characterise this period as an era of *new awareness* of language. This awareness among other things poses a serious challenge to the *élitist* foundations of education which were laid on the educational experiences of Western societies. Very often, developments in the field of education in these 'developed' societies such as, monolithic adherence to the literary standard, tailoring of education for social mobility, are regarded as *universal* truths.

In the realm of educational planning, language studies hitherto have been treated almost entirely as a concern of pedagogy. One notices among educationists a general apathy towards probing into the dynamics of language and learner (child or adult) as an individual as well as a member of society. Language studies tend to be guided by extraneous socio-political factors: such as, imperial or élite interests, ideological thrusts, adjustments with technology.

This lacuna is particularly felt in the context of the universalisation of education for the pluralistic subcontinent. In the midst of conflicting élitist and progressive theories, if our response to resolving the apparent crisis is going to be adequate, it will be essential to probe into the fundamental issues as the linguistic construction of reality and through it formation of judgements for the transcendental interests of mankind.

Contemporary thinking on speech communication underlines the entire variability phenomena in language activity as a 'natural' process of verbal behaviour. In this light, the supremacy of political and educational endeavours for uniformity and homogeneity in a language or language-area, so far assumed to be a universal article of faith, need to be specifically justified.

The present Study comprises six papers written during 1974-80. These papers seek in different ways, the search to identify various aspects of language which could have significant bearing on building new foundations for education with particular reference to plurilingual societies.

Chapter One provides a historical resumé of the conflicting ideologies in determining the goals of education through the period of Renaissance and its ramifications in colonial India manifested in the issues of the content, the spread and the medium of education. Chapter Two deals with the issues concerning the sociology of language and provides a conceptual framework for understanding the processes of language standardisation, of speech variation, and of determining language boundaries, and brings out how these processes present a paradoxical contrast in the midst of an overall 'organic unity' of language communications on the subcontinent. Chapter Three characterises participatory processes in humanistic communications, and highlights the central role language plays in the development of the child.

Chapter Four discusses the dynamics of rival pressure groups over language privileges such as, stretching or contracting the definition of 'language' to manoeuvre socio-political interests, prescribing the 'minimum' load of language study through the Three-Langauge Formula, etc. Chapter Five analyses the impact of the politicisation of the *medium* issue in education, as fostered by the language-élites belonging to rival camps. Chapter Six, in summing up, poses a few questions concerning the search for a new order of education, in consonance with the realities of the subcontinent.

A major thrust of the study is to provide an assessment of various socio-political contours of language policy for education in the context of cultural pluralism. It critically reviews the language values promoted through the *élitist* framework of schools which contributes, in a significant manner, in the perpetuation of inequalities between the haves and the have-nots. Of late, guided by a powerful ideology of social justice, there has come in vogue a new *grassroots* approach designed 'to serve a language environment which makes sense' and striving so as to make education more meaningful, useful, and better related to

work-experience. Gandhiji's concept of Basic Education is a forerunner of this kind of approach. This appraisal makes out a case for initiating a sustained academic scrutiny of such an approach.

This study largely comes out of my varied experiences as a school teacher, moving on to journalism and then to linguistics and communications, working in diverse settings of Delhi, Philadelphia, Poona, Zagreb, London, Simla, Singapore, Khartoum, and Honolulu. One factor, if it could be singled out, is that I have become increasingly inclined not to be led by any yardstick of predictability in my cross-cultural and cross-intellectual experiences since 1947 when I became a refugee in the wake of the partition of India. These experiences, whether interpreted as 'culture shocks', or 'culture thrills', have sharpened my sensitivity to some of the intricacies of plural societies.

A few draft papers emerging from the larger study upon which the present book is based, have been discussed at different conferences. I am indebted to many friends and experiences in this *yajña* 'oblation'. It will not be possible to name them individually; but I express my profound gratitude to them.

Poona
26 January, 1981

LACHMAN M KHUBCHANDANI

Man possesses the ability to construct languages capable of expressing every sense, without having any idea how each word has meaning or what its meaning is — just as people speak without knowing how the individual sounds are produced.

Everyday language is a part of the human organism and is no less complicated than it.

I

Language and Education

Ideology of language in schools is interwoven with the ideology of education in society. As in the medieval Europe, the language of education was Latin — the language of sacred literature, in India until the early decades of nineteenth century the privileged languages of education were Sanskrit for the Hindus and Arabic-Persian for the Muslims. Under the Muslim rule some of the Hindu élite made themselves conversant with both the systems of education.

1. *Before the British*

Education in the pre-colonial set up in India was generally regarded as an extension of 'primary' socialisation imbibed through the immediate environments of family, caste, creed, and tradition; it provided a foundation to the society in which an individual operated. It emphasised the 'disciple-master' relationship between the pupil and the teacher. The education system was oriented to *preserve* segmental identities in the society by catering to the needs of the Advanced and Ordinary traditions. The Advanced tradition (*gurukul* and *madrasseh*) represented the 'elegant' education to the élites (sons of priests, ruling class and high officials) by reading of scriptures and historical texts through Sanskrit or Arabic-Persian. The Ordinary tradition (*pāṭhaśālā* and *maktab*), on the other hand, stressed on the 'practical' education provided to the administrators and merchants to cope with the day-to-day needs of society (such as, for use in lower courts, for maintaining accounts) through locally dominant vernaculars.

Educational pursuits in the Indian society were characterised by a built-in *hierarchical* structuring of linguistic skills which promoted a chain of mutually intelligible speech varieties from local dialects to sub-regional dialects, to supra-regional networks of dialects and languages, and to 'high brow' styles -- in different diglossic situations. The educational set up provided a measure of fluidity in the use of language according to the propriety considerations of identity, context and purpose, which is a characteristic strength of plural society. An illustration is provided in the 1823 Report of the Collector of Bellary District, enumerating that out of 533 schools in the District, 235 schools employed Carnataca (Kannada), 226 Teloogoo (Telugu), 23 Mahratta (Marathi), 21 Persian, 4 Tamil, one English medium; besides, 23 schools were exclusively for Brahmins, teaching 'some of the Hindoo sciences, such as theology, astronomy, logic and law, still imperfectly taught in the Sanscrit language' (Sharp 1920). In this set up, Sanskrit and Arabic-Persian speaking élites acted as *liaison* between the rulers and masses. To some extent, Hindustani in the North, Tamil in the South, Bengali in the East also served this purpose for some of the princely states.

With the consolidation of the British rule on the Indian subcontinent at the turn of the nineteenth century, the rival British education system known as *schools*, soon eclipsed the traditional educational systems in large sections of British India. The earliest efforts to introduce any form of education different from the indigenous systems emanated from missionaries, private societies and individuals with occasional patronage from the East India Company. The trading rulers in the early stages took only antiquarian interest in Oriental learning, and encouraged in establishing a *madressa* in Calcutta in 1781 and a Sanskrit College in Benaras in 1792, and also founded the Calcutta Fort William College in 1800 (Sharp 1920). During the early period of consolidation, the rulers did not show particular enthusiasm for undertaking the responsibility of education upon themselves as at that time there was no State system of education in England itself. At this time the conditions of education in India were not radically different from those in the pre-Renaissance Europe.

2. *Through the Renaissance*

With the changing times, particularly since the inception of the

printing press, the ideals of education have undergone sweeping changes at the global level. Firstly, it had to turn away from its exclusive concerns of 'the sons of the landed gentry' to those of the expanding middle-class drawn from humbler social backgrounds aiming for upward mobility in the industrial society, as it was initiated in Europe. And now during the contemporary times the education system has been challenged by a massive thrust of the working classes to cope with the demands of universal literacy under the pressures of democratisation. With many nations' eyes set on rapid development, very often the choice of languages has been romantically projected as providing a solution for our present distortions in the society.

A glimpse of the conflicting demands of society made upon education can be had from the nineteenth century Curriculum Debate in England which was to have far-reaching effects in English studies in that country (for details, see Mathieson 1975). It may be relevant here to discuss at length broad contours of this Debate with a view to get a clearer understanding of the conflicting ideologies in determining the goals of education for a given society.

During the early stages of Industrial Revolution, educators were drawn into the polemics over the relative worth of classical and scientific subjects. All of them assumed that in any sound education there must be a liberal, truly humanising, morally improving subject at its centre. Classicists maintained their unshaken confidence in the superior humanism of the Classics and the truth of the Faculty theory. Universities in England then carried a self-image of building foundations of liberal education by refining the 'soul and character' of men of a privileged class 'who would later adopt suitable professions or else follow a life of leisure. The educational ideal was the Christian gentleman; if he was a scholar, then so much the better; if not, then he would benefit from the corporate life in the university.' (Cardwell 1957).

Champions of including science subjects and modern knowledge wanted national education to meet the needs of modern industrial nations. They believed that the traditional classical studies were failing to humanise scholars because of their narrowness and incomprehensibility and their irrelevance to the society as a whole. Classicists, on the other hand, identified science and English with utilitarianism

and trade—a sort of soul-less vocational training catered by the middle and working class schools, girls schools, and Mechanics Institutes. They distrusted the notion of progress through scientific discoveries and application, and were suspicious of education which laid sole emphasis on pupils acquiring the means of earning their living. They were of the conviction that classical studies put a person in possession of the inherited wisdom of all the ages and it equips pupils to withstand our 'mechanised, commercialised, industrialised existence' (Musgrave 1970). With their hostility to modern urban living, the study of physical sciences appeared to them 'inappropriate, superfluous and unnecessarily expensive'.

It was only in late nineteenth century, modern languages and science were introduced into Public Schools curricula in England, limiting them to the time-tables of the less-able pupils. The domination of Classics in Public Schools brought resentment from modern language teachers who were critical of the dull, mechanical teaching of classical languages, which, in their opinion, 'degenerated into the sterile routine of grammar drill and exercise of mere memory'.

Later in the century, many educationists softened their position and admitted the values of scientific studies, as Herbert Spencer, discussing science and religion, pointed out 'not only, however, for intellectual discipline is science the best; but also for moral discipline'. Huxley (1895), however, maintained that 'for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education'.

3. *Respectability of Vernacular*

Initially, the promotion of English in schools was governed by economic expediency when it was argued that education should be 'preparation for actual life'. In approaching the problem of educating a growing population in an industrial society, English was regarded as being 'the poor man's Latin'.

English for all its richness remained, even for its defenders, the low-status subject — a soft option in the esteem of classicists. Alongside the Greek and Latin Classics — embodying 'the purest, severest and most elevated literary taste' — were read in superior Public

Schools as the 'perfect' education for their upper-class pupils only (Sidgwick 1868). Victorian liberals accepted the class divisions in their society and were, in general, unquestioning in recommending different liberal education for different kinds of schools. English vernacular came to be increasingly associated with working-class education.

Literary men like Ruskin and Matthew Arnold disliked the 'mechanical' aspects of nineteenth century England and, fearing the threat to cultural standards represented by cheap press, supported the study of English literature for the education of 'soul and character'. Attributing the responsibility for these failings to the insufficient literary education in the schools, Sidgwick (1868) lamented over the young boy's mind, 'instead of being penetrated with the subtle and simple graces of form, is filled to the brim with thoughts of gender, quantity, tertiary predicates, uses of the subjunctive mood'. English literature was advocated as the source and essence of a truly humanising culture. "(It) could provide those vital formative experiences which most pupils missed in their linguistic battles with Latin and Greek" (Mathieson 1975).

It was only in early twentieth century English acquired academic respectability. The Oxford School laid emphasis on 'philological scholastic' aspects of Olde and Middle English, and also on the facts and history of English Literature to cultivate 'good taste'. But Leavis and others at Cambridge put up a strong resistance to the philological classicists' bias in favour of English. Leavis (1943) pleaded for the centrality of English in education curriculum on the basis of its humanising value, for sustaining tradition and providing continuity, and of its 'bonding' effects between different classes. The 1921 Newbolt Commission was also acutely conscious about the social divisiveness in England; it passionately recommended English studies as a 'bond' between the classes.

The Cambridge School assigned high value to the development of the faculty of critical discrimination, and studying Great Literature for understanding and aesthetic enjoyment. English Literature was projected as a means to balancing and ordering of impulses, and to provide resistance against the evils of modern industrial society, such as cheap literature and bad art of the mass media.

At the same time, Progressive Theories in educational psychology placed high value on children's ability to recreate experience through language, and brought to focus the potential of growth among children by captivating their interest through oral participation and dramatic activity in the classrooms : "... the teacher must accept what the children write. There should be no marking, no assessing.... This is essential if the teacher is to create an atmosphere in which imagination thrives" (Abbs 1969). The Newbolt Report also criticised the 'grammar book' concept of teaching English and suggested linguistic competence through drama, talks, discussion, and writing about personal experience. It, however, supported persistent correction by the teachers and the children's imitation of teacher's good pronunciation.

4. *Colonial Transplantation*

In the Indian context, the colonial education policy for over one and a half century made a significant impact on the concept of education itself and also on the role of language in education for plural societies of the subcontinent. During their rule the British administration could not resolve the three basic issues of education: the content, the spread, and the medium (Dakin 1968). Initially, the change in the *content* of education from 'traditional' to the 'Western' knowledge represented a little more than a continuation of the earlier system, as far as the *spread* and the *medium* of education was concerned. But soon a sharp contrast developed between the missionary system and the government system of education over the questions of the spread and the medium. The missionaries were keen to set up rural schools with local vernaculars as the medium, in opposition to the Advanced tradition of education; whereas the rulers' stress on education was aimed to attracting 'respectable' members of Indian society for manning administration through English medium (Document 5, Sharp 1920).

At the same time, the British administrators themselves remained divided — the Orientalists represented by Princep and the Anglicists represented by Grant and Macaulay — over the basic issues of the education policy for Indian subjects (Documents 22, 30, and 34, Sharp 1920). Because of the accruing privileges of economic status and social stratification, the Hindu and Muslim élites were easily

attracted to accept English as their liaison language, abdicating or curtailing the use of Sanskrit and Persian for such purposes. Many Indian élites had realised that English was their gateway to the outer world. Hindu reformers and educationists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar saw the incompatibility between the medium and the content of education. Hence they pleaded with the rulers to provide the English system of education to Indians (Document 26, Sharp 1920).

Macaulay's hard line concerning the triple question of content, spread, and medium of education echoed in the education programmes of the British throughout their stay in the subcontinent. In his famous *Minute* of 1835, Macaulay recommended a policy of imparting Western knowledge through Western tongue (English) and then only to a minority: "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 colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of population" (Document 30, Sharp 1920). In the same year Governor-General Bentinck, concurring with the sentiments of Macaulay, made it explicit that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone". Princep, however, registered his protest against the resolution, calling it a 'rash act' and 'a declaration of the mischievous and injurious tendency' (Document 34, Sharp 1920).

The Hardinge proclamation of 1844 further divorced the objectives of education from the environment by spelling out preferential treatment in recruitment for service in public offices 'to those who were educated in English schools' (India 1953).

During the later phase, British rulers modified their policy by accepting the responsibility for the education of the whole population,

as recommended in the 1854 Wood Despatch (Richey 1922). It suggested the use of vernacular medium 'to teach the far larger class who are ignorant of, or imperfectly acquainted with, English'. But the introduction of vernacular education was extremely slow, as in actual implementation when assigning resources priority continued to be given to English secondary schools in cities and towns, to the neglect of vernacular schools in villages. Though the rulers often proclaimed their policy of secular and vernacular education, individual administrators at the district level were often enthusiastic in lending direct or indirect support to promoting English education under the missionary patronage.

With the establishment of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras universities in 1857, primary and secondary education became merely a step to fulfil the requirements of entry to the university. These universities adopted English as the exclusive medium of instruction, and the study of Oriental learning as well as of modern Indian languages remained largely neglected.

In 1877, on the occasion of Queen Victoria assuming the title of the Empress of India, the Government of India accepted Punjab's plea for a separate university with Indian languages as media of instruction without neglecting the study of English. Eventually the Punjab University was established in 1882 with a statutory provision for vernacular education, but in practice English, by and large, continued to be the medium of examination and instruction (Document 42, Naik 1963).

The Hunter Commission in 1882, reviewing the implementation of the 1854 Despatch, recommended that priority should be given to primary education (through vernaculars) and it should be made the responsibility of provincial governments. Shift in the rulers' policy to run their administration at the lower level in the vernacular also required the setting up of the committees to evolve a single script and establishing a single standard variety for Indian languages for use in formal communication. The Education Commission in 1902 recommended mother-tongue as the proper medium of instruction for all classes upto the higher secondary level.

In actual terms, the British recognised three types of education:

1. English medium, in urban centres for the education of the élite, right from the primary stage.
2. Two-tier media — vernacular medium for primary stage and English medium for advanced stage — in towns.
3. Vernacular medium, in rural areas for primary education.

• • •

Thus, by the turn of the twentieth century, 'although the official policy was that of the Despatch of 1854, it was Macaulay's policy of selective higher education in English that had achieved comparatively the greater success', under the plea of devoting the inadequate financial resources to improving the quality of education (Dakin 1968). A British educationist Howell (1872) very aptly characterised the rulers' approach: "Education in India under the British Government was first ignored, then violently and successfully opposed, then conducted on a system now universally admitted to be erroneous."

Contrary to 'modern' values attributed to Humanism, the country was rather confronted with a deliberate policy of *selective* higher education to train an élite class to mediate between the technologically superior 'caste' or class. Thus the English language, which was largely responsible for injecting 'modern' thought into Oriental life, took over the dominant position hitherto enjoyed by Sanskrit and Persian. The British system of education in India thus perpetuated the *dichotomy* of the privileged language (English) versus vernaculars, whereas accelerating modernisation processes during the periods of Renaissance and Enlightenment in Europe had resurrected European languages from the dominance of classical languages — Latin and Greek.

At the same time, the Western Enlightenment imbibed through English contact radically changed the concept of education for the Indian élite. The 'modern' conviction of the supremacy of mother-tongue brought the demands for the use of Indian vernaculars for formal communication (i.e., administration, academic achievement, etc.). Dayanand Saraswati towards the end of the nineteenth century, and later Tagore (1906) and Gandhi (1916), were among the leading champions of the struggle for vernacularisation of education.

These trends, to a certain extent, shook the dichotomous structure of the liaison between the élite and the masses which existed in the medieval period and was also perpetuated by the English rulers.

But, by and large, a filter-down approach in education, as directed through the famous Macaulay *Minute*, claims phophetic validity after a century and a half of colonial history.

During the long struggle for Indian Independence, the selective educational structure was vehemently criticised by the leaders of the Indian National Congress. Gokhale and other intellectuals, influenced by the Western literature of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, saw the need for *universal* elementary education, and also put forward pleas for the use of mother-tongue in administration. Pleading for a self-governing India on Western lines, Gokhale the leader of the Moderates in the Congress Movement argued : " The quality of education assumes significance only after illiteracy is liquidated" (cited in Saiyidain *et al* 1952). The 1929 Hartog Report, on the other hand, emphasised the 'drastic reorganisation of the elementary system' before introducing any wide application of condition.

Tagore and Gandhi, rejecting both the manner and content of English education, laid emphasis on bringing education and life together. Aurobindo called the education introduced through the British as ' teaching by snippets ' and found ' both its content and method to be far removed from any genuine education of the mind and soul. '

Mahatma Gandhi in the thirties proposed a scheme for Basic Education which was practically the antithesis of Macaulay's policy concerning the questions of content, spread, and medium. It attempted to resolve the conflict between *quality* and *quantity* in education, by proposing to bring it into closer relationship with the child's environment and to extend it throughout rural areas without increasing the cost by integrating it to the rural handicrafts. Though Gandhi's self-supporting rural education was seriously contested by many Indian educationists, it found eventual acceptance in the 1944 Sargent Report which envisaged universal, compulsory, and free edu-

cation for children between the age of six and fourteen. "But the gap between the ambitions and achievement of British administration on the eve of Independence (in 1947) was immense. Though nearly every Province had passed a compulsory education bill, only one quarter of the school-age population was actually attending the school in 1948-49" (Dakin 1968).

The politicisation of the language issue in India during the struggle for Independence dominated the *medium* controversy, pushing into the background the ideological issues concerning the *content* of education. The demand for vernacularisation by the 'native' élite was associated with the cultural and national resurgence, and eventually with the growth of democracy promoting equality of opportunity through education. In the post-Independence period, inspite of severe criticism that the content of present education is not well-integrated with society, no formidable challenge has been posed to the white collar-oriented, urban-biased education. Gandhiji's programme of Basic Education, catering to the needs of rural masses, has not seriously been tried by the national élite wedded to the high values of 'elegance' in education.

The dichotomy perpetuated by the education system between those who have education and those who have not continues to prevail in the form of urban-élite standards, as far as the medium and the content of education are concerned. One notices several inhibitions among educationists concerning the problems of the wide gap between the hinterland speech varieties and the urban-based standards of literary languages being imposed as *school* mother-tongue. In several elementary education curricula one often notices an overemphasis on careful drilling in the 'correct' forms of standard regional speech and pronunciation. Thus in many situations the acquisition of literacy in languages like Hindi, Urdu, Panjabi, Marathi, Tamil becomes more like learning a 'second' language.

Many socio-political and psychological generalisations about the supremacy of mother-tongue made during the Independence movement have, to a great extent, obscured the picture. The issues concerning the facility of expression in mother-tongue have been high-

lighted in rather simplistic terms, by juxtaposing mother-tongue against the foreign language — English. In this regard, it is taken for granted that a foreign medium hampers the growth of creativity and talents. In this conflict anti-Hindi lobbies regard even Hindi, along with English, as a foreign language. The supporters of mother-tongue ideology have not cared to define the bounds of mother-tongue; nor has adequate attention been paid to accounting for the diverse patterns of language *hierarchy* prevailing in multilingual plural societies, as will be evident from the discussion in the next Chapter.

(Poona 1979)

II

Language and Society

1. *Plural Society*

During the Independence struggle, in the thrust for canvassing mother-tongue medium for education, Indian experts did not fully comprehend the plural character of Indian society at large, where a child's earliest first-hand experiences of life do not necessarily resemble the formal 'school-version' of his mother-tongue. In societies where speech habits are not consistently identified with a particular language label, the esteem for a particular *ideal* of speech or a socio-political belief may lead individuals to identify with a prestigious major language group which need not necessarily be one's *native* speech.

The vast Hindi-Urdu-Panjabi (HUP) Region, comprising 46 per cent of the country's total population, represents the case in point where *identificational* considerations of communication override the linguistic characteristics. In this Region the Hindi, Urdu, and Panjabi language loyalties, in the thrust for rival claims of solidarity, incorporate many vernaculars (such as, Pahari, Lahnda, Rajasthani, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Chattisgarhi) in their overall speech matrices. Among the mother-tongue claimants of Hindi in the region, one prominent category is of those monolinguals (mostly rural) who though speaking vernaculars altogether different from Hindi, claim 'Hindi' as their mother-tongue, as they regard themselves as part of the great 'Hindi tradition'. Their speech, in the strict formal sense, will be classified as a distinct language different from the so-called *Hindi* (i.e., Khariboli) as understood by struc-

turalists, academicians and other custodians of language standardisation.

In multilingual and multidialectal societies, various groups claim virtual native control over more than one language or dialect. One sees an inevitable measure of *fluidity* in mother-tongue claims in many regions in India, Pakistan and Bangla Desh and among smaller groups throughout the subcontinent. In such situations one's total repertoire is influenced by more than one normative system, and native adults of such plurilingual communities are hardly conscious of operating across language boundaries. Dialect or language boundaries in these societies remain fluid, and the masses at large do not show overt consciousness of the speech characteristics which bind them in one language or another, as is evident from the oscillating identification of Bihari and Urdu speakers in decennial census returns.[1]

Until as recently as three or four decades ago, one's language group was not generally a very important criterion for distinguishing oneself from others sharply. Hutton, in the 1931 Census (Vol. I), reports : "So deep does bilingualism go in parts of Ganjam that from very infancy many grow up speaking both Oriya and Telugu, and are so much at home in both that they cannot tell which to return as their mother tongue". This phenomenon of plurality in mother-tongues is much more widespread than recorded in the linguistic studies of the subcontinent.

In such fluid conditions, natives speak a typical 'language' which defies the standard notion of 'grammar'. People do not associate speech labels precisely with grammatical or pronunciation stereotypes, and the standardisation and other propriety controls in verbal behaviour generally tend to be permissive. Consequently, it is often difficult to determine whether a particular discourse belongs

[1] The Indian Census bears witness to very large fluctuations concerning mother-tongue claims, responding to overt identity pressures, such as (a) a phenomenal increase between 1951 and 1961 of 14611%(!) in mother-tongue claims, for Bihari group of languages — mainly Maithili, Bhojpuri and Magahi — in Bihari; (b) a move away from *regional* towards *religious* identity among bilingual Muslims throughout the country revealed through the consolidation of Urdu mother-tongue claims, a growth of 68.7% during 1951-61.

to language *A* or language *B*. Such ambiguities can arise with the Panjabi settlers in Delhi, urban Muslims in Gujarat and Maharashtra, and urbanised tribal communities. The fall-in-line processes of Western societies, operating through various standardisation mechanisms, do not find easy acceptance in the speech behaviour of even literate groups in the South Asian region, as revealed through 'high brow' Anglicised versions of Indian languages, and also through code-switching among bilinguals i. e., intermittent shifting between Indian languages and English in an interaction.

In a heterogeneous plural environment, a child acquires language from everyday life situations where speech behaviour is guided by various implicit pressures based on close group, regional, supra-regional and outgroup identities. A child learns his language not from grammar books but from the behaviour of adults and peers through his innate capacities of synergy, serendipity, etc. (discussed in Chapter 3).

Individuals in a plural society belong to different socio-cultural identity groups (such as, nationality, ethnicity, religion, language) and share only a *core* of experience crisscrossing in more than one manner—hardly coterminating within the same boundary. Each of the differences in a plural society may be important under some circumstances but no single division will be so important that it would operate to divide one group (identified through speech, religion, economic or social strata, etc.) from another group in all traits. Thus, individuals joined through a single trait (say, speech) are generally marked by their variety, their lack of unity and their tendency to act as fairly discrete groups relevant to the pulls and pressures of time and space. It would, therefore, be a fallacy to characterise a plural society in terms of dominance or dependence of one unit over the other[2]. Insular

[2] In the context of the interdependence of man and society, Gandhiji has explained individual units in terms of 'concentric circles' in an ocean which keep on widening, never ascending like 'a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom', to the outer periphery. In such a plural set up, the 'inner' circle forms an integral unit of the 'outer' oceanic circle, and will not be crushed by the overwhelming power the outer periphery; on the other hand, each should give strength to the other (Kripalani 1958; cited in Rothermund, 1978).

societies, in contrast, are marked by congruent identities terminating roughly at the same boundary and thus are amenable to clear-cut categorisation, such as nationality groups in Europe.

It is a characteristic of plural societies in the South and Southeast Asian regions that they comprise of different partial 'universes' coexisting within a state of mutual accommodation. A speech group in such a set up associates the diversity of speech (styles, registers, dialects, languages, etc.) around it with differential values in social interaction. Verbal repertoire of an individual or a group in a plural society is often characterised by a creative use of speech variation in diverse combinations through linguistic stratification (such as, diglossic complimentation, code-switching, code-mixing, bilingualism) in everyday life. In other words, diversity of speech on a societal level is not merely a convenience or an 'aesthetic' choice (a luxury that can be dispensed with) but it signifies the subtlety of purpose in an interaction; it is highly functional. The human quality of communications in a plural society is bound to suffer when we discard such an asset through the stream-roller effects of standardisation, as is presently being emphasised in schools.

As discussed earlier, the built-in hierarchical structuring of linguistic skills and a measure of fluidity in the use of language were characteristic features of the pluralistic education set up in the country before the advent of the British 'school' system. There were many regional systems of writing in vogue for the same language varying according to locality and professional group. Sanskrit of the Advanced tradition was written in more than one script. Apart from the Devanagari writing system, Sanskrit records are found in Grantha, Malayalam, Telugu craracters in the South; in Bhoti script in Tibet; in Sharada script in Kashmir; in Bengali, Maithili variations of Nagari writing in the East; and other regional variations of the Devanagari script in different areas.

The scholarship, though limited to the privileged few, had to be acquainted with a variety of languages and writing systems distinguished according to locality, social group, domain of use. Burton (1851) gives an elaborate account of the multilingual pattern of education in Sind before its conquest by the British in 1843. According to him, a Hindu child started with the Devanagari script from a Brahmin

teacher for studying the religious texts in Sindhi and also acquiring rudiments of Sanskrit. He also learnt Gurumukhi characters to read the *Guru Granth* — a sacred text of the Sikhs and Hindus in Northern India. An *Amil* boy (belonging to the 'courtly' Hindu class) then moved to an *Akhund* (a Muslim or Hindu pedagogue under the *maktab* system) and was introduced to popular Persian poetry. A few studied Arabic also. The *Amil* boy is 'then taken to some *dajtar* (secretariat) by a relation to be initiated in the mysteries of *arzi* (petition-writing in Persian), simple calculation, etc.'

Diversification of language use prevailing in the traditional educational set up of South Asia was regarded by the colonial rulers as a 'handicap'. Many British administrators responded with a sense of bafflement to relatively fluid segmentation patterns in language behaviour of the Indian society, and often expressed their annoyance concerning 'the want of precision by the people themselves' in indentifying their language (Gait 1913). Axiomatically correlating their European experience of social homogenisation, the rulers laid great emphasis on clear-cut categorisation and monistic solutions concerning languages and scripts. Many administrators during the colonial times engaged themselves in standardising a single writing system, and prescribing a standard grammar and a style for every domain of use, so as to bring order into a 'chaotic' situation. A vivid example is provided by the Sind Government's decision in 1852 when it set up a Committee to decide upon a single script for Sindhi in the midst of diverse usage. Though the philologists like Stack and Trumpp agreed upon a modified version of Devanagari to suit the needs of the Sindhi language, the rulers because of political considerations ultimately decided in favour of a modified Perso-Arabic script. But, not surprisingly, till today the Sindhi settlers in India continue to be divided over the formal recognition of one *or* the other script.

This controversy going on for over a century among the Sindhi-élite provides useful insights into the consequences of such monistic assertions, particularly when the decisions contradict sociolinguistic realities of the subcontinent.

2. *Across Language Boundaries*

In contrast to the traditional Indian accommodation to linguistic

heterogeneity based on 'grassroots' multilingualism which easily responds to situational needs, the 'élitist' ideology in present-day education has led the attention of linguists to the dominant concern for the issues of language 'autonomy' and other privileges of languages as medium and as subject in the name of *language development*.

A large gap between the speech patterns of typical illiterate communities and the language values promoted through school education is evident from the examples of Marathi and Santali heterogenous speech groups (see Table 1):

It is significant to note in this study the literate cultures regarding hybrid varieties (patois, pidgins, creoles, etc.) as a sign of inferior socialisation, and discouraging them in the formal situations (such as, schools). In this 'filter-down' approach of the educational élite, grassroots 'folk' multilingualism is devalued and language teaching gets focused on 'remedial' programmes so that the 'backward' pupils speaking hybrid varieties become eligible for entry into the 'advanced' world through the mastery of standard language(s).

In many plurilingual regions in South Asia different socialisation processes identify the characteristics of a speech stratum—local speech, subregional varieties, lingua franca, 'high brow' dictions—associating them with a variety of interactions on the cline:

close ingroup → wider ingroup → intergroup →
mobility → mass communication → urban contact →
formal (model for prestige).

In the north-central HUP region of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent many claimants of Hindi/Urdu as their mother-tongue in the census returns, who are *not* native speakers of Hindi or Urdu in the strict linguistic sense, command by and large native-like control over Hindi/Urdu and either of the language is almost an 'associate native' speech to them. For such people Hindi or Urdu represents a particular *tradition*. Most of the speakers in the region remain unaware of their bilingual or multilingual behaviour. For them switching of linguistic codes from native speech (Bhojuri, Chhatisgarhi, etc.) to Hindi/Urdu is similar to the switching of styles (such as, informal/formal) in a monolingual situation, as is evident from very low bilingualism

TABLE 1

SPEECH BEHAVIOUR AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

A. Rural Marathi Community around Nagpur

TYPICAL VERBAL REPERTOIRE		LANGUAGE VALUES PROMOTED THROUGH EDUCATION	
Speech varieties	Communication situations	Languages taught	School values
1	2	3	4
Nagpuri Marathi	close ingroup	—	denied prestige, and used minimally as substandard varieties
Supra-dialectal Marathi	wider ingroup	—	
Standard Marathi	ingroup mass communication	Marathi	promoted through 'autonomy' values in all situations
Neighbouring varieties of Marathi	optional familiarity through mobility	—	regarded as non-prestigious and their use not promoted
Nagpuri Hindustani	inter-group	—	its use signified a non-prestigious upbringing
Standard Hindi/ Urdu	inter-group mass communication	Hindi	learnt as 'exercises' for eventual use after the school career (not related to immediate use)
Regional English usage (a few phrases)	optional modernistic acquaintance	English	
Sanskrit or Arabic (a few phrases)	optional ritualistic acquaintance	Sanskrit Persian	learnt as an optional classical language for religious and literary scholarship

B. Rural Santali Community in Bihar

1	2	3	4
Local Santali	close ingroup	—	denied prestige, and used minimally as substandard varieties
Supra-dialectal Santali	wider ingroup	—	
—	—	Santali (standard: set by language-élite)	medium for primary education
Other tribal languages (Munda, Ho, etc.)	optional familiarity through mobility	—	regarded as non-prestigious, and their use not promoted
Sadri (Sadan)— a hybrid Bihari language	tribal inter-group	—	its use signifies a non-prestigious upbringing
Bihari languages (Maithili, Magahi, etc.), Regional Bengali or Oriya	non-tribal inter-group	—	regarded as non-prestigious. and their use not promoted
Regional Hindustani	urban contact	—	its use signifies a non-prestigious upbringing
Standard Hindi/ Urdu; standard Bengali or Oriya	mass communication	Hindi	medium for further education
Regional English usage (a few phrases)	optional modernistic acquaintance	English	learnt as an 'exercise' for eventual use after the school career (not related to immediate use)
—	—	Sanskrit	learnt as an optional classical language for religious and literary scholarship.

returns of most of the states in the Region (UP, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan) in every decennial census.[3]

Literacy programmes in several plurilingual situations are organised through a contact language (such as, literacy in the Kashmir Valley is imparted through Urdu, in Arunachal Pradesh through Hindi and among tribal communities through respective regional languages — Telugu, Oriya, Bengali, Marathi, Hindi, etc.) In such diversified areas, education programmes need to be geared to facilitate the scope of communication with the prevailing socialisation values in a community extending from one's native speech to 'associate native' speech, second language, and when necessary to totally unfamiliar (foreign) language.

A critical appraisal of such situations will be useful to learn about the processes of spontaneity and creativity leading to language pidginisation, language selection and its design, and will help us in devising an adequate theoretical framework to deal with literacy in plurilingual societies. Investigations on child-language generally assume that in the learning processes bilingual children must become aware of language boundaries. Many of the interpretations of child-language acquisition slip into the mistake of comparing the language activity at two different levels — standard grammar and child-speech. We need to examine more closely the processes of language acquisition among the children of plurilingual societies, particularly in the South Asian context where the roots of learning are entrenched through 'oral' tradition without being overtly conscious about their communication patterns spread across language/dialect boundaries.

3. *Language Standardisation* :

Studies of language as a social process point to the fact that different varieties of speech enjoy differential prestige in a community. Patterns of social interaction are differentially valued within a culture. Often, different roles in a setting or different identities or cultural legacies transmit some prominent values of interaction from one generation to another — a way of interpret-

[3] This is one of the primary characteristics of the North-Central Region, identified as Fluid Zone in the author's studies on language demography (Khubchandani 1969b, 1972, 1979b).

ing and sharing experiences known as communication *ethos*. A variety of social norms such as, *implicit* identity pressures known as 'linguistic etiquette' (*śiṣṭācār* or *tamīz* in Hindi-Urdu), explicitly defined values (standards) with sanction from language-élite in a community, and other interaction pressures provide a distinct communication ethos to a speech community.

In everyday verbal communication one notices enormous *fluidity* and diversity of codes dealing with informal situations; whereas in the formal situations, particularly in the written form, one demands compartmentalised 'appropriate' and 'correct' usage according to the professed ditcum. One or more socially favoured styles of verbal expression (generally promoted through literature and schooling) are labelled as 'standard language'; its communication networks are marked by a wider spread in the society. Speech varieties with smaller or specialised communication networks — dialects, slangs, jargons, etc. — are considered as uncouth or quaint in the élite judgement.

Standardisation of language, in this sense, can be regarded as a legitimating activity expanding its institutional order through a 'programmed course' in socialisation (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Through different standardisation techniques, the self-evident 'situational' affirmations to linguistic etiquettes and rudimentary pragmatic nuances give way to formalised explicit procedures, as prescribed by the officially accredited custodians of linguistic reality in grammar manuals, dictionaries, style-sheets, etc. In standard usage, the emphasis shifts from 'event-centred' discourse to an ideal-oriented 'expression-concerning' discourse. "What expressions are *right*" (as ultimately defined by language-élite) gets the pride of place at the cost of "what expressions actually *occur* spontaneously" (in response to a situation or an event). Thus, rigidly standardised societies can turn the *effortless gift* of social verbalisation into a *directed effort* of learning the élite-acceptable diction of their own speech. Language 'boundaries' become sacred, and spontaneity and creativity leading to hybridisation gets rationed through the standardisation processes. In such situations the contextual and functional fluidity in speech, which manages to go across the boundaries of language or diction, is deprecated by the custodians of language.

Most of the languages in the subcontinent cultivated through the plural character of society have not been subjected to the pressures of standardisation as implied in the West, and have not been explicitly described through spelling and grammar manuals, dictionaries, etc. For many major Indian languages standardisation imperatives and literacy drives have been introduced so recently that these have not yet seriously challenged the dominance of implicit identity pressures.

Traditionally, linguistic studies have presented each language having a uniform and invariant structure. But contemporary research suggests that the entire speech matrix in use in a community may be an amalgam or a conglomeration of different speech varieties with diverse and heterogeneous structures (Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog 1968). These varieties have been identified under various classificatory labels — registers, styles, codes, dialects, etc. A number of common historical associations, however, lead a speech community to cherish all such speech varieties as a part of its shared 'tradition', through one or more 'language' labels. In genealogical terms these varieties may be closely or distantly related such as, Khariboli and Braj are examples of 'closely related' varieties, whereas Khariboli and Maithili can be regarded as 'distantly related' varieties of Hindi. Through such associations a group develops a set of social attitudes, which finds expression in highly stratified variations in actual speech, towards the entire speech matrix.

A community's identification through a uniform 'standard' language in the midst of a diversified speech matrix could be regarded a matter of idealisation, conditioned by the 'bonds' of tradition. The notion of uniformity and homogeneity even in the speech behaviour of an individual is only a myth. In a sense, speech behaviour can be regarded as a coherent cerebral activity having a wider or narrower spectrum in an individual or in a speech community.

The 'literate' world seems to be circumscribed by the myth of treating language in everyday life as a 'crystallised entity' characterised by distinct 'tradition', embodied in its literary heritage. Qualities of language in a literary creation are quite different from those required in actual communication. In a sense, a literary creation comes closest to being regarded as an 'artifact' or an 'entity' —

utilising speech as its raw material and crystallising it within a language 'boundary' — and is distinguished from an everyday life communication regarded as a 'fact'.

This myth is being shared by many 'underdeveloped' speech communities too in their drive for modernisation, just as they accept many other institutions and values from the developed societies for transforming the econonomic and technological patterns of their societies. Many visionaries of language, by accepting language as a 'social artifact' instead of as an 'ongoing activity', commit themselves to provide all authentic apparatus to the chosen one or more speech varieties around them. This leads to crystallising the preferred speech more-or-less arbitrarily, guided mainly by literary styles and pressures from the élite, and proclaiming 'autonomy' of the variety (or varieties) in all domains of communication.

For a better understanding of speech as *living* phenomenon, it may be useful to examine the distinction between 'speech process' in everyday life and 'normative entity' as chaperoned through language-élite.[4] Certain prominent features distinguishing *process* from *entity* are informally presented in Table 2 :

Verbal behaviour of a speech community when looked at in its threefold aspects namely, as a communication device, as a strategy of control, and as a total repertoire, reveals divergent characteristics of 'speech process' and 'language entity'. An interplay of centripetal and centrifugal factors in a community, as indicated in the Table, provides a base for the natural growth of a 'living' language. This distinction makes us aware of the apparent paradox in the speech behaviour of plural societies, and at the same time helps in realising the *complementarity* of speech variation and language standardisation in a speech community.

[4] In this regard, Saussure's dichotomy of *parole* and *langue* (1959), Pike's *etic* and *emic* approach to language (1967), and Chomsky's model of language distinguishing *performance* from *competence* of the ideal speaker (1965) provide useful insights concerning the plurilateral facets of speech activity. Braga (1972), discussing the dialectical premise for developing a comprehensive model in sociolinguistic studies, introduces a distinction between *expectations* concerning linguistic behaviour and actual *performance*.

TABLE 2

SPEECH AS LIVING PHENOMENON

Speech Process	*Normative entity*
I. COMMUNICATION DEVICE :	
1. An organic process, potentially diverse and heterogeneous	A formalised entity, emphasising uniformity and homogeneity
2. Regarded as a non-autonomous device, communicating in symphony with other non-linguistic devices; its full signifiation can only be explicated from the imperatives of context and communicative tasks	Ideally aiming at the targets of being an autonomous and unambiguous tool of communication
3. Interpretation dependent on the focus of communication 'field' and the degree of individual's 'sensitivity' toward it	Interpretation relying heavily on explicit formulae — grammar, dictionaries, etc.; efforts for consistency made through the standardisation apparatus
4. An effortless integral activity; discourse centres around the 'event' with the support of *ad hoc* 'expression' strategies	An ideal-oriented representation requiring directed effort; discourse concentrates on 'expression' which measures the 'event'
II. STRATEGY OF CONTROL :	
5. Guided by implicit identity pressures — a sort of etiquette agreed upon *ad hoc* by those participating in it	Characterised by explicitly defined value system — a prescriptive code with sanctions from language-élite in the community
6. Regulated by 'situation-bound' propriety in which ecosystems, constituting the social reality 'here and now', claim a prominent share	Conditioned by 'tradition-inspired' profiles in which 'time-honoured' standard practices (spelled out through the grammatical accounts, lexicons, and style-sheets) dominate the scene
7. Permissive toward inherited variations linked with region, class, etc.	Less tolerant toward such deviations; assimilatory pressures in favour of the élitist standard variety

Speech Process	*Normative entity*
III. TOTAL REPERTOIRE :	
8. Total verbal repertoire is malleable, responsive to contextual expediencies resulting in uninhibited convergence between speech varieties with the contact pressures of pidginisation, hybridisation, code-switching, etc.	Total verbal repertoire is demarcated for the demands of different normative systems (specified by a 'distant' élite) involving stress on maintaining divergent development of different systems, and insistence on exclusiveness or 'purity' of tradition
9. Greater scope for functional fluidity leading to innovations and creativity of expression in negotiating the 'event'	Restrictions over the scope for spontaneity and creativity due to the pressures of exclusive conformity to different systems.
10. Fuzzy speech boundaries; interlocking variations responding to covert stratificational and situational differences	Sharp language boundaries; compartmentalisation through overt linguistic differentia.

4. *Social Justice*

Educators in the developing world, by and large, continue to live in the euphoria of social romanticism according to which their 'temples of learning' are charged with the transmission of 'total' knowledge as an end in itself, and of perfection as an ideal. The pyramidal structure in the contemporary education, concentrating on the preparation of the talented few to the full extent of their capabilities, has led to the staggering number of failures at every stage of evaluation.

At the same time, educational planners of modern India have committed themselves to the education *for all* without seriously questioning the élitist framework of education streamlined through time-bound stages in a credential-based system) which we inherited from the colonial set up.

It is a sad fact that the challenges of *quality* and *quantity* in education have remained unresolved even after three decades of Independence.

Many of the current drives for literacy are marked by wastage and stagnation. The non-correlation of many of the literacy programmes to the patterns of everyday life has given rise to scepticism and apathy among the masses in judging the high-sounding goals of education for *development*. Its pronounced effect is found in rural areas where, on the one hand, a large proportion of those terminating their education at the primary level often relapses into illiteracy or semi-literacy; and on the other, those who show successful results in their literacy achievements are often posed with the problem of 'alienation' from their surroundings and own kith and kin. A team engaged in the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP), sponsored by the UNESCO and UNDP in several Third World countries (including India) during the sixties, also pointed to the absence of *absolute* correlation between the ratio of success in conventional literacy and the rate of growth in agricultural production on short-term *ad hoc* basis (UNDP 1976).

This malady is evident in the disturbing phenomenon of increasing illiteracy in the World in absolute terms. In the Indian context, the total figures of adult illiterate population in the age-group 15-plus have increased from 174 million in 1951 to 210 million in 1971, though the ratio of adult illiterates has come down from 81 per cent in 1951 to 66 per cent in the same age-group (India 1978a).

A wide gap between the language of home and that of school contributes, to a significant extent, to the large number of school dropouts in the country. Schools have a strong tendency to employ exclusively the 'representational' model of language, though irrelevant to the majority. Children of the School of Barbiana in Italy, in *Letter to a Teacher* (1970), angrily assert : "Languages are created by the poor, who then go on renewing them forever. The rich crystallize them in order to put on the spot anybody who speaks in a different way or in order to make him fail exams...Your own language could become a convenience in time. But meanwhile, don't throw him [lower-class child] out of school."

Most standardisation devices in Indian languages today serve only to extend the 'tradition-inspired' value system of small urban élites (mostly derived through literature) over all domains in the

entire speech community. So far there does not seem to be much realisation of the difficulties the rural population faces arising out of the unintelligibility of the instant 'high brow' standards projected in mother-tongue textbooks. The pleas of language leaders for developing puristic 'academic', 'official' standards of language — on the lines of the nineteenth century Latinised English and the Sanskritised or Perso-Arabicised 'high brow' literary styles of Indian languages — puts a heavy strain on the users of language. It runs counter to the concerns for the facility of expression of students through mother-tongue education, as stressed in the UNESCO Report (1953) :

> "Psychologically, it (mother-tongue) is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium".

Requirements of 'elegance' in education also inhibit the introduction of literacy in an economical manner. Common man has to be educated to use the language of the academic (i.e., formal standard) which may be quite unrelated to the facility in communication in everyday life. The state of affairs can be visualised from a report of the Directorate of Education in Nagaland stating that textbooks (even for primary education) are being 'originally written in English and then translated in local languages' as 'authors in the local languages are not available' (Sharma 1971). In such a set up, the only door open to rural illiterates appears to be sweating their way to the camp of the middle-class urban literates.

Theoretically, the arguments for the supremacy of mother-tongue in education based on 'elegant' urban standards hold little substance as far as the facility of expression is concerned. The sudden imposition of a standard variety by language-élite on a community creates serious communication gaps. One gets a vivid realisation of this handicap in many radio and TV programmes when introducing topics such as rural development, family planning in Indian languages through urban experts. Insistence on accepting the diction prevailing among the élite for the rest of the community often makes native speakers 'alien' and 'handicapped' in their own surroundings. It disables them to cope with even simple communication needs because

of the new values and norms proclaimed for their speech behaviour, especially in the domains of public communication — administration, education, mass media, etc.

Such an 'instant' standard remains unintelligible to the hinterland communities for a long time (as shown in Table 1), and its tyranny hampers mass literacy programmes. Problems of *discontinuity* for rural and working class children entering the predominantly middle-class world of schools, particularly their failure to articulate the middle-class 'urban' language of the school, has resulted in questioning school's role in removing inequalities in the social structure which could lead to greater social justice and also curtail the wastage of nation's talent. Halliday (1964), a noted linguist, points to this phenomenon with some indignation : "A speaker who is made ashamed of his own language habits suffers a basic injury as a human being; to make anyone, especially a child, feel so ashamed is as indefensible as to make him feel ashamed of the colour of his skin".

During past few decades a significant shift in modern linguistics has drawn attention away from the 'prescription' of language towards *relativism* in speech, refusing to make qualitative judgement about human communication. The primacy of speech (in contrast to the written form) in linguistic theory has challenged the academic prejudice that working-class children can hardly speak even their own language. The controversy in the United States over the English spoken by the Blacks is a case in point. The way speech variation is being accepted in current sociolinguistic studies also lends powerfull support to the view that 'there is actually no such thing as a slovenly dialect or accent'.

Divergence in the home and the school environment and, at the same time, diverse multiple inputs in mass media at different stages of education suggest viewing the heterogeneity of speech within an overall *organic unity* of communication on the subcontinent.

(Singapore 1976)

III

Language and Communication

1. *Communication Orchestra*

Communications at the interpersonal level utilise language as an infinitely subtle, flexible, and powerful instrument to cope with the endless variety and diversity of facts. Communication at this level generally transpires through the evocation of mental imageries in a dyad. There is no mechanistic transfer of information, that is, 'sending and receiving' of the message like a postal delivery, as such, But, more appropriately, one can describe the process as the 'releasing and catching' of the message, regulated by the vagaries of space and time and by indeterminacies, attitudes, and backgrounds of the participants.

On the inferential plane, it can be claimed that a communication never starts with a clean slate, every message is prevalued (to begin with) and revalued (after the event). What *transpires* from a speech event matters more in everyday life reality, not merely what it *signifies*. As early as two thousand years ago, Bhartrhari's philosophy of *sphoṭa* 'plosion', that is, the ultimate in language, stressed this reality that verbal and non-verbal signals *evoke* a situation of reality, just as throwing a pebble in a pond causes ripples to grow (Subramania Iyer 1963).

Communication in its rudimentary sense is built on multiple and overlapping signalling devices so that its interpretation does not have to be tagged with *one and only one* signalling system. It is primarily

a *synergistic* system in which numerous elements operate in an independent and intricate fashion, adjusting to the imperatives of time and space. The multifaceted character of a communicative act can, at best, be compared to an orchestra. All symbolic sub-systems in such an orchestra — verbal (and non-verbal) cues, roles and identities of participants, conscious attitudes, unconscious moods, value structures, intensity of involvement, etc. — play their part in realising a message.

It is not the time to go into the details of the communication processes operating through verbal media; a detailed discussion on the three-dimensional model of language study — formal, institutional, and pragmatic — and its application to the characteristics of address and reference in Hindi-Urdu is presented elsewhere (Khubchandani 1978b). "A sentence does not 'convey' meaning the way a truck conveys cargo, complete and packaged. It is more like a blueprint that allows the hearer to reconstruct the meaning from his own knowledge" (Winograd 1975). In language activity one finds characteristics of different dimensions flowing simultaneously into one another, responsive to differences of density as in osmosis. Often, it is difficult to isolate elements as belonging exclusively to one or the other dimension. This approach casts serious aspersions on the general assumption in linguistics that language is a 'self-contained' autonomous system.

Many language standardising agencies (such as, school), in evaluating the efficiency of communications, tend to be concerned exclusively with the homogeneous grasp of language skills. Yet this is only one factor, although no doubt a significant one, in human communications. In the reality of everyday life, one does not find the 'schoolmasterly' dichotomy of *right* versus *wrong* (acceptable-unacceptable) utterances in a language. Deviations from the 'norm' in specific situations could be more appropriate, purposeful, amusing, pejorative, offending, ambiguous, hazardous, unintelligible, socially neutral or identifying a group (characterising region, strata, class, etc.).

In cross-purpose encounters as well as in cross-cultural settings one often notices that some message is communicated but perhaps

not the one intended. Barriers to communication are often highlighted through the difficulties people have in understanding one another if they do not have a language (dialect, register) or experience in common; in other words, it is alleged that there is lack of reciprocity of language skills among the communicators. But one generally fails to identify the miscues in communication that arise from the lack of common interest and discordant values and attitudes in an interaction (i.e., the mutuality of focus), even though the communicators possess ample reciprocity of language skills. "Until recently the focus in intercultural communication was on errors, mistakes barriers, breakdowns and a long list of other negatives" (Harms 1974).

The phenomenon of 'communicative sensitivity' is distinct from 'proficiency' in language skills. It allows a communicator to transform many diverse and *ad hoc* fluid cues in speech to a degree of communicability for a particular purpose. In other words, it promps a communicator to put forth one's own efforts to explicate the message (through synergy) and to be tuned for the unexpected bonus (through serendipity) so as to adjust oneself to the pressures of propriety, identity, cultural values and demands on verbalisation. This communicative sensitivity features prominently in affective communication, developed through the relationship between two communicators in a dyad, between two groups (marked by sex, age, nationality, religion, ideology or other cultural traits), or by the imperatives of setting, transmission channel, etc.

As already discussed, a native speaker's use of speech in everyday life reality is an *integral* activity, relevant to the context and purpose of verbalisation. His actual discourse in everyday life gets modulated on the scale of *rational* and *reflexixe* extremes. At the rational end, thought processes are sequential through calculated (audio-monitored) speech, verbalisation is overt and deliberate, and attention in the discourse is concentrated on 'expression'. On the other hand, at the *reflexive* end, communicative processes are simultaneous with extempore speech (being integrated with somatic reactions), verbalisation is spontaneous and involuntary, and attention in the discourse is cocentrated on 'event' (see Table 2).

Every speech act is endowed with an intrinsic purpose. Speech is noteworthy for what it conceals as much as for what it reveals. The reflexive use of language is characterised by implicit imperatives of reference or peer groups and covert suggestions (discussed at length in the address system of Hindi-Urdu referred to earlier). The Japanese people are known to cherish keen sensitivity about nurturing the concept of *amae* in interpersonal and group communications, that is, seeking to protect a relationship (through mutual desire for a smooth, congenial transaction, cf. Doi 1974). In the 'implicative' sense, speech evokes ideas, images, and other introspective experiences in the mental system of the hearer that often remains vague and indeterminate. Ambiguity becomes a virtue in such communication settings: e.g., *He didn't say in so many words what he meant.*

But in contemporary societies many modernisation processes have been undermining the multiway, interactive, participatory processes in humanistic communication. The present-day targets of teaching mother-tongue or second language, being primarily conditioned by the criterion of *excellence* in the normative sense, have been further contributing to the erosion of humanistic qualities in everyday life communcation.

2. *Adequacy in communication*

In the school value system non-standard varieties have been rated grammatically as 'incorrect' and 'bad', conceptually as 'deficient', and sociologically as 'deprived'. In the school-lore, educational disadvantage for rural and poor children is often thought to have its origins in the language deprivation the child suffers at home in the pre-school years and afterwards (Bernstein 1971).

Under the influence of progressive theories, many educators are now coming round to the view that the child's perception of reality should be accepted on his own terms rather than be treated as a sort of 'deficiency' in his system. These developments throw doubts on the exclusive concentration upon élite culture in schools where majority of students have to exert for catching up with the Jonses in their linguistic competence (for an interesting account of this race between the Upper and non-Upper usage in British English, see Mitford 1962). Labov's studies show in definitive terms the language diffe-

rences among the Blacks in the United States can be specific and of equal value; they handle abstract and logical arguments effectively :

> " 'Cause, you see, doesn' nobody really know that it's a God, y'know, 'cause I mean I have seen black gods, pink gods, white gods, all colour gods, and don't nobody know it's really a God. An' when they be sayin' if you good, you goin' t' heaven, tha's bullshit, 'cause you ain' goin' to no heaven, 'cause it ain't no heaven for you to go to ... I'll tell you why. 'Cause the average whitey out here got everythin', you dig? An' the nigger ain't got shit, y'know? Y'unnerstan'? So-um-for-in order for *that* to happen, y'know it ain't no black God that's doin' that bullshit." (Labov 1970.)

Questioning the theory of deprived culture (assessed through I.Q. tests and other such devices), these studies assert that the so-called 'poor culture' does have educational skills which are not exploited in the conventional school system; "... in many ways working-class speakers are more effective narrators, reasoners and debators than many middle-class speakers, who temporise, qualify and lose their argument in a mass of irrelevant detail" (Labov *op. cit.*).

Discussing the problems of language discrimination affecting the Blacks and the Spanish-Americans, Spolsky (1971) points out the cases where "language is used as an excuse, like race or skin color or sex, for not hiring someone. No amount of language training will change this, for the discrimination exists in the hearer and not the speaker."

How far do the differences in language behaviour we observe in our population reflect differences in *adequacy* as opposed to *acceptable* variation? This inquiry raises certain issues of fundamental nature which need to be probed in an inter-disciplinary perspective. How does language structure reality — both in the child's 'innocent' view of his universe, and in the adult's 'culturally determined' view of phenomena? "How far is the child's ability to think internally related to the external evidence of his thinking, by words? A standard language use is often equated with good standard thoughts; but this may not be the case" (Wilkinson 1975). In what manner do the 'high brow' values of speech — uniformity, precision, elegance, purity of form, allegiance to literary tradition, elaboration of language

through coinage of new terms (taken for granted in the education system) actually meet the demands of adequacy and effect in everyday life communication among rural and working-class children? "To elaborate is not necessarily to clarify, it is sometimes more likely to complicate and often to confuse" (Searle 1973). In his respect, Whitehead's (1948) remarks on 'hard-headed' clarity merit serious attention: "Insurance on clarity at all cost is based on sheer superstition as to the mode in which human intelligence functions. Our reasonings grasp at straws for premises and float on gossamers for deductions."

Recent experiences in the fields of rural literacy, family planning and agricultural development on the Indian subcontinent also support this view. One observes markedly different persuasive techniques in the conduct of election campaigns — delivering speeches, conducting debates, organising publicity, etc. — in such different countries as India, Britain and the United States. Reluctance to adopt the family planning and agricultural promotion campaigns carried by radio and television in 'poor' Oriental societies could be attributed to the importation of 'affluent' Occidental techniques of persuasion, which do not cut much ice with Oriental masses. In this context, we need to examine the *values* of communication that prevail in plurilingual societies and relate the characteristics of communication ethos on the cline of local, regional and national interactions.

Contemporary education theories highlights the democratic concept of individual worth conducive to creating conditions for fostering creativity among growing children and encouraging greater pupil participation in school. This has led to questioning the conventional adult authority in the classroom, and also rejecting the adult imposition of standards of correctness in speech, as voiced by Doughty (1972) concerning the 'table-manners' of English in the classroom :

> "Much common-room demand for a 'clear, concise and intelligent English' is an expression of the wish that students' experience of language should coincide with that of the teachers'...The linguistic table-manners that are thought to reveal the presence of this universally applicable 'plain English', define and delimit the social group who are thought best suited

> to the staffing of the key institutions in our society, the Law, the Civil Service, Education, Company Administration, and so on."

Classroom provides a situation typically of *unequal* language exchange both in type and in balance. The Barbiana *Letter* (1970), raising accusing finger at the teacher who represents the higher-class values of speech, points out to the fundamental rights of individuals: "All citizens are equal without distinction as to language . . . But you honour grammar more than constitutions."

The classroom language is characterised by its rational use, which is only one of the sociolinguistic variables in actual speech activity. The classroom interaction generally puts premium on the explicit, unambiguous, overt manifestation through language. Teachers' stress on normative expectancy in the classroom makes demands of 'appropriate' language behaviour from pupils, and rejects indirect, sidetracking, witty or mischievous answers. Such schooling promotes 'empty verbalism' among cunning pupils, behind which there is no real understanding. We need to look at pupil's speech in everyday life and his interpretation of the classroom situation, in the light of the demands made by the teacher. There is no intrinsic advantage in holding to the superiority of adult communication in the classroom. One notices growing dissatisfaction with the current analyses of classroom language interaction which stresses overt language functions.

3. *Grassroots Approach*

Guided by a powerful ideology of social justice, progressive educators propose shifts of emphasis from school's values to the pupils', from the teacher's talk to the pupils' performance, and from the subjects of the élite culture (high literature and fine arts) to the experiences of pupils in everyday life. In recent years these trends have led towards strong reaction against the élitism of a literary approach to English in the schools in U.K. Present stress upon literature is regarded as the contemporary version of the nineteenth century approach to the Classics. Doughty (1972) claims that the majority of English teachers are working on the principle that if a pupil reads the best literature it will 'rub on' on him and enable him to write the 'best English'.

Teaching of literature in modern Indian languages has also acquired the central position guided solely by the English curriculum in the Indian education system. It has gone to the extent that many protagonists of major literary languages point out to the illogicality of literacy in those languages which have no written literature.

Linguists, convinced about the central role language plays in the development of the child as a social being, profess new approach to language teaching. A new education order envisages the language teacher 'to serve a language environment which makes sense' (Britton 1979), and provides opportunities to learners for 'how we use language to live'. This new approach lays emphasis on evolving programmes which widen learners' range of verbal repertoire by *progressive differentiation*: from local speech to supra-dialectal varieties, culminating in a sophisticated grasp of standard and literary styles for community's motivated specialists. These programmes would have to be attuned to the great variation in linguistic usage with the properties of social situation.

A liberal and flexible approach to linguistic usage in education can potentially release new energy among the neo-literates, enable different élite-layers to act as *models* of supra-dialectal varieties, and thus break the monopoly of a small 'privileged' urban-élite — far removed from the common man's speech — as *the* custodians of language. In this scheme, learning would be encouraged through 'mutually supportive' peer groups (instead of teacher-directed monologues in the classroom), and the teacher will enjoy merely procedural authority as chairman in an enquiry session (Mathieson 1975). To replace the old 'prescriptive' language teaching through grammar-book exercises, Halliday (1964) recommends what he calls 'descriptive' and 'productive' language teaching :

> "Descriptive language teaching aims to show the pupil how English works, this includes making him aware of his own use of English. Productive language teaching is concerned to help him — to extend the use of his native language in the most effective way. Unlike prescriptive teaching, productive teaching is designed not to alter patterns he has already acquired but to add to his resources and to do so in such a way that he has the greatest possible range of potentialities of his language available to him for appropriate use, in all the varied situations in which he needs them".

In this light, the material introduced through the *Language in Use* project in England during early seventies constructed a series of situations feasible for pupils to explore in the classroom, with the aim of filling gap between the discredited formal grammar and the highly structural linguistics in the area of English language teaching. It suggested the study of literature into 'themes' and 'projects' to enable the learner to extend the range within a language and to adapt to a variety of roles in everyday life.

In the implementation of these programmes, one, however, notices an increasing gap between the supporters of oral work who encourage the children's 'personal' use of language across the curriculum, and those promoting the 'bonding' character of a standard language through its use in textbooks. Halliday (1964) points to the danger in separating the written and spoken language in children's work : "(It) puts a brake on children's self-expression and leads ultimately to the listlessness of some classroom essays."

The 'élitist' system does not take into account the complexity of speech variation across dialects in flux (and in plurilingual societies, often across languages) at the folklevel. Under such system, the development of language is erroneously linked with the clear-cut demarcation of language use, and is considered as a necessary prerequisite for its entry in school corridors. But a grassroots approach to education supports the value of encouraging children's creativity of starting with their experiences, of 'keeping the flow going without fussing about grammar and spelling'. Waisman (1952), a noted philosopher, has rightly remarked : "Correctness is useful but a negative virtue.... Grammatically streamlined language is only good for saying things that are no longer worth saying".

Education in the élitist model has been projected as society's investment for *eventual* returns — preparing younger generation for adulthood. Conventional education, in this sense, tends to be bookish, unproductive, and alienated from *immediate* needs. It is reflected in an undue stress on the rational and overt use of language in the school, as pointed out earlier. Language in such situations is treated as an 'artifact' in which pupils remain detached and uninvolved from the communication point of view; only rehearsals are conducted for even-

tual confrontations with the unknown (i.e., future) reality. Whereas, speech outside the classroom, as a living phenomenon, is very much a 'fact' in which participants are directly involved.

The grassroots approach emphasises making education more meaningful, useful, and productive to work-experience. Sensitivity to speech variation and a grasp over the communication ethos prevailing in the society is, no doubt, enhanced by 'doing' verbal events in natural settings. In this regard, an elaboration of Gandhiji's thinking concerning Basic Education could provide a useful focus. Gandhiji laid stress on integrating education with experience, and language acquisition with communicability (as advocated in his approach to Hindustani).

4. *Language for Literacy*

The Indian Government has recently committed itself to launching a mass movement for the eradication of illiteracy to enable the masses to play an active role in social and cultural change. The National Adult Education Programme (NAEP), clearly under the spell of contemporary radical thinking in education, envisages that adult education should be *relevant* to the environment and learners' needs, and diversified in regard to curriculum, teaching and learning materials and methods. It lays stress on 'learning' rather than on 'teaching', on the use of *spoken* language in literacy programmes, on harnessing the mass media and the cultural environment (India 1978b).

With a view to relate the learner's education to his personal and social life, to his own community and culture, the NAEP recognises the importance of the use of locally spoken language as the medium of literacy. At the same time, it also supports that 'whenever necessary bridges [to be] built for the learner to secure facility in the regional language'. The principle involved is that an adult educator should use all private assets of the learner for his education to give him the much needed self-confidence. But at the operational level, one is not surprised to find the bureaucratic machinery not mustering enough courage in accepting departure from the conventional thinking and thus commissioning its resources for preparing materials in

'standard regional or sub-regional languages/dialects' as an *interim measure*, 'since it may not be possible to develop teaching-learning materials at the district/project level within he next one year' (India 1978b).

Concerning the issue of *medium* for transmitting literacy skills on a universal basis, we come across diverse approaches promoted by different non-formal education agencies :

1. Conventional educators profess strict adherence to the standard language prevailing in the region.
2. Liberal educators recommend a bidialectal approach of gradual phasing in time from home dialect to the standard speech; thus initiating literacy through a non-standard 'home' variety of learners as a *transitory* feature which facilitates in switching over to the standard language at a later stage.
3. Some educators plead for a dichotomous approach, by accommodating diversity of dialects/speech varieties at the spoken level, but at the same time insisting on the uniformity of standard language at the written level i.e., at the level of acquiring literacy skills.
4. Those supporting a grassroots approach for the universalisation of education endorse a pluralistic model of literacy by which variation in speech is regarded as an asset to communication. It promotes cultivating *positive* values for the diversity of speech varieties/dialects prevailing in a group/individual in response to the demands of situation, identity, and communication task. In this schema, literacy in the standard variety is, no doubt, promoted for economic-oriented situations and communicative tasks; at the same time, learners are educated to diffuse the pejorative attributes to non-standard varieties which prevail in the society and are often maintained or even enforced in conventional learning situations.

We need to look into how to tackle varying demands in the spoken and written genre of the same language. It is necessary to adopt a pragmatic approach to linguistic usage in education taking

into account the mechanisms of standardisation of language in plural societies and also values attached to such process, so as to build on the resources inherent in the wide range of speech settings characteristic of intricately segmented communities in the country.

(Poona 1979)

IV

Language Privileges

In recent decades political and educational systems of many developing nations have been subjected to increasing pressures built upon various issues of language loyalty. Consequently language is emerging as one of the most important element in identifying a 'group' — an emblem of national or group solidarity.

1. *'Centre-Periphery' Hypothesis*

So pervasive, in our times, is the distinction between the developed and underdeveloped (euphemistically called *developing*) stages of economies, societies and even cultures that many language experts are led to employ the same dichotomy for languages too. 'A high degree of arbitrary social and linguistic heterogeniety' in a region is characterised as a feature of *less developed* modernising societies, whereas 'the fast growth of functional heterogeneity' within a language is associated with *more developed* industrialised societies (Neustupný 1974). Several *homogenisation* processes in language behaviour of many European societies, stimulated from the trends set by the age of Renaissance and Reformation — such as, creation of new standard languages, assimilation of neighbouring dialects and unwritten languages, of minorities (Breton in France, Frisian in the Netherlands, etc.) — are regarded by many language-élites as *inevitable* in the contemporary stages of modernisation in Asia and Africa as well.

This approach to language development relies, to a large extent, on the 'centre-periphery' hypothesis of politico-economic development According to this hypothesis, the so-called 'developed' and 'under-

developed' stages of language are determined on a set of certain ecological, social, and projectional dimensions, as shown in Table 3 :

TABLE 3

DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Dimensions	*'Developed' Languages*	*'Underdeveloped' Languages*
Ecological		
Utilisation	wider communication 'world' languages	languages limited to a region (national, local languages)
Population strength	dominant 'majority' languages	dominated 'minority' languages (often treated as 'dialects' in policy making)
Social		
Legitimisation	standard languages (acceptable to the élite)	non-standard regional varieties, sub-standard languages (slangs, hybrids)
Domains of use	full-fledged 'autonomous' languages	languages with restrictive use (vernaculars in diglossia situations)
Projectional		
Graphisation	written languages	unwritten languages
Literature	literary languages	colloquial *bazaar* languages
Medium of education	advanced 'cultivated' languages	preparatory 'ethnic' languages
Technologisation	languages suitable for typing, shorthand, and telecommunication purposes	languages not extended for technological tasks.

Guided by such 'imported' models, Westernised language-élite in many developing countries, in the thrust for 'modernity', either seek to get their speech recognised as developed 'absolute'

language or abandon the 'handicapped' speech altogether in favour of the one foisted as the 'privileged' variety, as per the dicta of newly established politico-economic institutions. In this dichotomous process, many less favourably placed speech varieties — which may be dialects, vernaculars, minority languages or may have non-élite styles — stand in danger of becoming totally extinct. At the age-old, harmonious hierarchic patterning of different speech varieties (or languages) in the verbal repertoire of pluralistic societies gets disturbed, it gives birth to disharmony among heterogeneous societies — such as, issues of language privileges in education, state boundary disputes over language identity.

The reshuffling of language privileges causes friction among vested groups within a speech community. This has been largely instrumental in bringing tension in the national life of the South Asian subcontinent. If the tribal languages like Santali in Bihar and W. Bengal, Gondi in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, Bhili in Maharashtra and Gujarat have not so far hit the headline in language controversies (as has been the case with the so-called 'major' languages in the country), it is primarily because their speakers live in unfavourable socio-economic conditions and their aspirations are not adequately articulated in the national struggle. Considering the present climate of language assertions, they too can be expected to make a bid for their share in the spoils of language 'privileges'.

This dichotomous approach in *language development*, in a way, depicts the futile race of catching up with the Joneses. In this unending chase of the mirage, by the time the vernaculars struggle their way to acquiring the credibility of 'developed' languages, the latter will have moved higher with additional honours, such as, usability with computers, or space satellites, and so on.

2. *Group Dynamics*

Considering the linguistically heterogeneous composition of nearly half of the districts in India — where minority speech groups exceed twenty per cent of the total district population (152 out of 330 districts, at the time of the 1961 Census) — the numerical majority of twelve regional languages in respective regions *does not necessarily correspond* with the language communication patterns in those areas.

Demands for regional languages media during the Independence struggle signified, to a large extent, assertive attitudes of majority pressure groups aligned with these languages.

During the past three decades, with the politicisation of language pressure groups, attention has been greatly focussed towards legislating the role of languages in public spheres of communication i.e., administration, education, mass media, etc. (Nayar 1969, Das Gupta 1970). In this regard, national leaders show great mastery in tightrope walking, recognising the strengths and weaknesses of diverse pressure groups in language politics. With a view to resolve the highly sensitised issues of language privileges, several language labels — such as, home language, regional language, link language, national language, official language, literary language, library language, world language — have acquired political salience in educational and other developmental programmes. A cursory glance at the patterns of groups dynamics as projected through confronting language-élites on the Indian scene draws our attention to some of the complexities involved in determining the language policy for multilingual societies.

The Hindi-Urdu struggle on the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent provides a typical example for understanding the *nature* of conflict simmering between the two pressure groups well before the 'modernisation' forces came to play any significant role on the Indian scene. The conflict came to the surface mainly as a consequence of the decline of Persian language in the Mughal Court simultaneous with the elevation of Persianised Khariboli (called Hindvi, Rekhta, Urdu, Dakhini) in its place, at the time when the influence of the Mughal rulers was on the decline. In this regard the impact of the British rulers in aggravating conflicting loyalties, which eventually were utilised as effective weapons for political mobilisation, needs to be critically assessed. The failure to get Hindi and Urdu particularlist élites to agree to Mahatma Gandhi's proposal to elevate the 'composite' Hindustani to a national status reflected the rigid political postures (for the sake of influencing the higher echelons of authority) during the colonial rule. This contributed, in a significant way, to the partition of the country. Immediately after Independence, no doubt, the

Sanskritic Hindi-élite succeeded in installing Hindi (and not Hindustani) as the Official language in Constitutional provisions by adversary principle, instead of the accepted concensus tradition prevailing in the Indian National Congress Party. But they could not escape accommodating some of the *composite* attributes of Hindustani (namely, international numerals, borrowings from the languages listed under the Eighth Schedule), although with many reservations and conflicting interpretations. The result is the constitutional directive for the development of Hindi (Article 351) which provides us with a unique specimen of the most complex (both intricate and ambiguous) 'language engineering' ever envisaged through legislation. "These conflicts more often than not, have proved to be the schools of bargaining and negotiation" (Das Gupta 1970).

As discussed earlier, the dominance of English during the British rule produced a reaction to the other extreme i.e., a feverish campaign for a total switch over from English to indigenous languages in the post-British period. The demand for the immediate expulsion of English in favour of Indian languages (though it might generate a 'vacuum' in transition) is generally voiced from a concern for the optimal development of talent-latent through the *full* use of mother-tongue. It is, at the same time, motivated by the issues of employment and economic opportunities. Alienation of the established-élite from the masses has been a great source of irritation to newly rising democratic forces in the country. Revolt against English, apart from having the overtones of national pride, is primarily a symptom of the revolt against this established privileged 'caste'.

The established-élite, on the other hand, has a vested interest in maintaining the predominance of English in all spheres of life and has been clamouring for the *status quo* in the name of Indian unity and of the advantages for a nation in possessing a 'world' language. Clash of interests between regional languages and Hindi, and the 'underdevelopment' of Indian languages for modern needs are cited as factors necessiating the retention of English. The task of language transition could get some what smoothened, if the established English élite gave up the notion of 'exclusive dominance' and worked in 'partnership' with Indian languages in the fields of public communication. There is a good deal of truth in the charge that the Wester-

nised intelligentsia do not care to address their own people but seek an international audience and within the country move in the 'clubs' of their self-restricted élite. The English educated élite in India develop a 'kind of dual personality'. Their personal life is virtually sealed off from their drawing-room behaviour acquired through education in 'a kind of linguistic polythene bag' (Le Page 1964).

The battle over the role of language in education and other privileges has largely been fought in the political arena. Often it has been used as a weapon in the struggle for political power. During the Independence movement, local languages were used as a means of arousing the masses against the 'alien' system. "What Hindi was to be on the national scale, the regional languages were on the provincial scale : a rallying cry, and a means of ruling" (Dakin 1968). After the Independence the language-élites, equipped with the verbal affluence of multilingual societies, have continued to engage themselves in the manipulative game of settling their scores on the socio-political front. While many governmental agencies under the pulls of democratisation may be keen to discard English in favour of regional languages, the agencies engaged in trade and technology still judge the achievement-orientation and merit-consideration of an individual on the basis of English. The masses at large, lured by the magnetic pulls of modernisation, also do not show as much disenchantment with English, or hostility towards it, as is evident from a section of the leadership. English-medium schools are still very much sought after by the social-élite or by those who want entry into the social-élite through their children.

The solution to the controversy of English versus Indian languages lies not in discarding English altogether or reducing it to the bare minimum function in the Indian society out of an inferiority complex but in changing the colonial-domination role of English into its equal participation along with developing Indian languages in the multilingual communication network.

3. *Three-Language Formula*

In this light, a critical review of the processes involved in arriving at amicable decisions concerning language policy in education

would provide useful insights in understanding the characteristics of group dynamics among plural societies in a federal democratic set up.

Amidst sharp controversies concerning the role of different languages in education a broad consensus has been arrived at in the 'Three-Language Formula' which provides a policy base for prescribing languages in the school education. The definition of mother-tongue, and the feasibility of teaching mother-tongue to linguistic minorities in different states on the grounds of practicability have dominated the thinking of policy makers in assigning a language the *first* place for study during the primary and secondary stages of education. The introduction of *second* and *third* languages at the lower and higher secondary stages have remained tied up with the issues of language privileges, cultural prestige, and socio-economic mobility.

The University Education Commission in 1949 first considered the teaching of regional language, general language (Hindi), and English in schools. The Secondary Education Commission in 1953, in a rather generous mood, suggested the teaching of five languages : mother-tongue, regional language, two 'federal' languages — Hindi and English, and also optionally a classical language — Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Persian, Arabic. The Council for Secondary Education (1956) settled down to the Three-Language Formula, recommending mother-tongue, Hindi and English for the non-Hindi speaking population; and Hindi, any other Indian language, and English for the Hindi speaking population. The Central Advisory Board of Education in 1957 also endorsed the Formula. But the tussle between the Hindi and English lobbies continued over the issue of *second* place in the education curriculum under the Three-Language Formula.

The Education Commission in 1966 recommended a liberalised version of the Formula, according to which it is expected that a student on the completion of the lower secondary stage, would have acquired sufficient control over three languages : mother-tongue and two non-native modern languages, broadly, Hindi as official medium and a link language for the majority of people for inter-state communication; and English as associate official medium and a link language for higher education and for intellectual and international

communication. The choice of determining the *second* or *third* places for Hindi or English was left with the individual states.

According to the modified Formula : (i) mother-tongue or regional language will be studied for 10 years (classes I-X, age 6-15 years), (ii) the official language — Hindi, or the associate official language of the Union — English, will be taught for a minimum of 6 years (classes V-X, age 10-15 years), and (iii) a modern Indian or foreign language — not covered under (i) and (ii) and not used as the medium language — will be studied for a minimum of 3 years (classes VIII-X, age 13-15 years).

But the Formula has been put to different interpretations by different states. On the one hand, Hindi states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh provide 'classical' Sanskrit as the *third* language, in place of a 'modern' Indian language, and on the other hand, West Bengal and Orissa also favour Sanskrit at the cost of Hindi as the *third* language.

Because of the prevailing antagonism over the language issue, many state institutions dodge the compulsory provision of teaching *second* and *third* languages (Hindi and English) by making 'passing' (securing credits) in these languages optional. Two states — Tamil Nadu and Mizoram — have backed out from the compulsory provision of the *third* language as envisaged in the Formula, thus avoiding the teaching of Hindi.

For several linguistic minorities, it has virtually become a *four*-language formula, as many state governments insist on the compulsory learning of regional language. There are many minority languages confined to small pockets in almost all states, comprising nearly 24 per cent of the nation's population (1961 Census). Some of these languages are proliferated widely in a state or are spread in more than one state (such as, Bhili, Santali, Kurukh, Garo). Generally the number of languages provided for teaching at the elementary stage is higher, and the number gets reduced as a student moves upward on the educational ladder. Various criteria are applied in different states for selecting languages as a subject of study : number of speakers, spread of the speakers in different areas, cultivation of language, etc.

Some states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra are experimenting with the teaching of 'composite' courses by combining a modern Indian language, usually mother-tongue, with a classical language — Sanskrit (or Urdu along with classical Arabic), to be offered as *first* language after the primary stage.

In addition to the compulsory teaching of three languages under the Formula, many states provide for the teaching of one or two additional languages on an *optional basis*. Optional languages are usually the additional regional language (s) for linguistic minorities or a classical language (Sanskrit, Pali, Ardhamagadhi, Avestha, Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin), or Hindi, or English, or any other modern Indian or foreign language (French, German, Italian, Spanish). These are usually studied at the terminal stages of school education, stretching from three to six years. Some institutions manipulate the choice of other subjects in favour of studying optional languages, e.g., Rajasthan allows the study of three optional languages at a time. Most popular among the classical languages as optional languages are Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. In eastern states, Maithili, Nepali, Santali, Khasi, Garo, Manipuri, Mizo, Boda, are also offered on an optional basis. Khasi is offered as a subject of study upto the B.A. in Meghalaya. Recently Dogri has also been introduced as a subject of study in the Jammu and Kashmir state.

4. *Language Teaching Strategies*

Different weightage is assigned to different languages in the total instructional programme. Generally schools in different states devote between a quarter and two-third of the duration of total teaching periods to the teaching of languages (Chaturvedi 1976). In spite of such heavy weightage given to language learning, one notices general devaluation of language instruction in school, because of the lack of motivation and also of coordination. So far the general structure of language instruction has not been studied objectively and the linguistic content is not spelled out adequately. The allotment of more or less time to the teaching of particular language is judged as a prestige or status issue for that language. In the absence of a clear objective of learning a language, one notices many political pressures — literary prestige of a language, socio-political privileges of language speakers—

being applied for incorporating specific languages in the curriculum. At places language programmes are allotted an out-of-proportion share in the total teaching load, in order to suit the climate of language privileges.

Language identity in the present Indian situation is characterised by the demands of language privileges in different walks of life, and consequently the 'high brow' content of the privileged language is cherished for its 'ornate functions particularly in the school system.

As an illustration, many Hindi and English teaching programmes in the country usually ignore the local international opportunities and are devised in the manner as if being conducted in totally alien environments. Students of the Bombay metropolis learn one version of Hindi (Sanskritic Khariboli) in schools, while functioning actively in quite different version of Hindi (known as Bombay Hindustani) which is stigmatised as 'inferior' or 'corrupt' Hindi in the élite-value system. At the same time, one is surprised to find that many native speakers of Khariboli (standard Hindi) settled in Bombay themselves acquire Bombay Hindustani to signal their links with the region as a mark of prestige. Thus Sanskritic Khariboli (officially sponsored Hindi) remains largely dysfunctional outside the corridors of school. No wonder, a large number of students though quite at ease in their Bombay Hindustani consider *school* Hindi to be very tedious, and fail to score good marks in the subject. On the other hand, Bombay metropolis abounds in instances where many illiterate migrants from different regions acquire a good command over one or more subsidiary languages (Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati) by functioning through participation in natural 'language events' (in other words, by 'doing' a language) without much strenuous effort.

Present second and foreign language programmes seem to be operating in a vicious circle of selecting teaching and curricular matrices and then assessing the proficiency of pupils on the basis of the same materials. These programmes, whether conducted through reading-based systems (inherited from the tradition of teaching classical languages) or through the oral-aural system, regard the classroom (often extended to the language laboratory) as the sole reservoir of language learning. As pointed out earlier (cf. Chapter 3), language in such situations is taught as an 'exercise' or as a preparation for eventual

utilisation goals, but having no immediate reinforcing plans whatsoever outside the classroom, which makes learners' task strenuous and intensely motivated. In such programmes, classroom 'exercises' in the target language become an end in itself. No communicative task is actually performed.

Many linguists are now turning their attention to the notion of effectiveness in communication i.e., making one's language actually *do* things. Strategies for teaching contact languages in different regions should respond to the immediate and long-term societal needs. It is essential to critically assess different approaches of language teaching and prepare a sociolinguistic framework for second and foreign language teaching, so as to project the complex task of integrating speech activity in everyday life through *interactional* strategies, controlled and graded on the basis of utilisation goals.

Language as a means of communication in a plural society and as a means of social mobility acquires significantly different characteristic under the pressures of modernisation. It is mostly the rural and working-class learners who have to bear the brunt of the imbalances arising out of the lopsided emphasis on language privileges and language elegance at the cost of communicability.

5. *Linguistic Minorities*

Soon after Independence in 1947, Indian administrators, with the professed policy of the Indianisation of 'alien' education system, were first confronted with the demands of mother-tongue education by the linguistic minorities. Initially the administrators' approach was of 'harassed bureaucrats trying to impose a workable system on linguistic chaos' (Dakin 1968). According to the 1961 Census (Mitra 1964), 87 per cent of the country's total population is aligned with 12 major regional languages: 76 per cent residing in their home states, and 11 per cent staying outside their language regions. Once the dominant groups' right to mother-tongue education was fully assured in their respective states, the new governing class did not lose much time in focusing its attention on the practical objectives of economy, utility, communication, and political cohesion, as far as it concerned with the demands of the remaining 13 per cent linguistic minorities, comprising a total of over fifty million speakers.

The University Education Commission (1949) and the Official Language Commission (1956) felt that 'the languages of the large, advanced and organized groups with a current literature, practice and tradition' were the *only* fit media of instruction. The first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, pointed in 1961 that the costs of making separate arrangements for mother-tongue education for different linguistic groups would be 'colossal' and is 'feasible' only if the linguistic group is of an appreciable size and forms a compact region. 'It cannot be reasonably demanded by those who are very small in number or are scattered in different parts of other linguistic regions'.

In the initial stages after Independence, different expert bodies on education (such as, Central Advisory Board of Education, University Education Commission, Official Language Commission) gave greater weight to the *broad* interpretation of mother-tongue i.e., regarding all minority languages not having any written tradition as 'dialects' of the dominant language in the region, by which there was implicit denial of equal right to linguistic minorities on the ground of practicability. This view was a dominant factor in the post-Renaissance period in Europe as well, when language was claimed as a major criterion for sabilising nationalistic states e.g., French view of treating minority languages — Provinçal (another Romance language), Breton (a Celtic language) and Basque (a non Indo-European language) as *dialects* of the dominant French (a Romance language).

But during the past three decades, the linguistic minorities have shown greater vigilance in safeguarding their rights for mother-tongue education, and have practically succeeded in getting the authorities accept the *narrow* interpretation of mother-tongue by which the home languages of each child 'the language spoken from the cradle' is accepted as mother-tongue (India 1954). Most of the state governments now show a sense of tolerance of the heterogeneity of education media in their multilingual pockets. The safeguards for mother-tongue education at the primary school stage for linguistic minorities were spelled out in the Three-Language Formula in 1956. Some concessions were even conceded for the continuance of secondary education through tribal language media wherever possible. But the pace of implementation has remained slow.

No doubt, the initial reluctance in accepting the narrow definition of mother-tongue is now overcome but several objections are still raised for its full implementation and many states find it convenient to wait for the extinction of minority languages on their own. In a critical appraisal of the role of mother-tongue in education, a study conducted at the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) highlights wide disparities in socio-cultural traditions of different states, and consequently languages of the region differing in their stages of development. The study points out that education through the minority languages, which hold subordinate position in society and are relatively less cultivated, is likely to produce uneven levels of achievements. Such a situation is bound to create unequal opportunities for higher education and employment for minority communities (Goel and Saini 1972).

The Constitutional provisions for safeguarding linguistic minorities being recommendatory and not mandatory, one does not find much enthusiasm among state authorities in the implementation of such programmes. The Articles 350A and 350B, inserted in the Constitution by the Seventh Amendment Act in 1956, tried to mitigate this situation : "It shall be the endeavour of every State to provide edequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups." But the authorities, by and large, still have not given up their hope that in practice the linguistic minorities will come to accept the advantages of the regional languages.

Hence, similar to the British ambivalence in accepting the principle of *universal* education but directing their resources for *selective* education, the present policies of the state governments also seem to be ambivalent as far as giving lip service to the narrow definition of mother-tongue but directing their attention and energies, along with their resources, to the development of respective regional languages, Hindi and even English.

(Simla 1974)

V

Squabbles Among Language-Elites

The heterogeneity of communication patterns in many regions, unequal cultivation of different languages for their use as media, demands of 'high brow' elegant versions of *school* mother-tongue, non-availability of personnel with adequate command over the *textbook* language, and the switching over to another medium in the multi-tier media system without adequate preparation are some of the difficulties faced by learners initiated into education through the mother-tongue medium.

As already discussed, the issues regarding the *content*, the *spread*, and the *medium* of instruction have been matters of great concern to educationists for a long time (cf. Chapter 1). Contemporary thinking on the subject has come a long way from the early phase of *selective* education through the media of classical languages (such as, Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, Persian-Arabic) and colonial languages (such as, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese) to the later phase of *universal* education through the media of the student's mother-tongue. But the multiplicity of languages in various regions has led to the re-examination of the supremacy of mother-tongue medium stretched over the *entire* education career. In recent years, many political and academic agencies have lent their support to the claims of imparting education through either a single *dominant* language in the region, or through some sort of compartmentalised or selective *bilingual* media, in order to keep pace with the socio-economic demands of rapid modernisation. But the academic community in the country has not yet seriously attended to the problems of designing and evaluating res-

pective place and function of mother-tongue and non-native languages media as learning strategies.

1. *Plural Media*

For a nation such as India with a multilingual and federal set up, education is made a responsibility of the states. The Constitution of India provides full freedom to the states to choose a language or languages in a region as 'official' language(s) (Article 345). It also allows linguistic minority groups to receive education through their mother-tongues and set up institutions of their choice for this purpose (Article 30). Hence, one finds wide variations in different states as far as the medium, content, duration, and nomenclature of educational stages are concerned. There is inevitable flexibility in the weightage assigned to different languages in the total educational programmes; the framing of language curricula; prescribing textbooks; etc. A national policy of education emerges out of a consensus arrived at among the states constituting the federal polity. The role of the Union Government is, therefore, largely confined to promoting the national policies through seeking mutual accommodation from individual states, coordination of institutions for higher education and research, and for vocational and technical training, persuation of language-élites, and offering incentives of resources at its command for specific programmes.

During British rule the English medium indisputably remained a mark of superior Advanced education, and the regional languages media were conceded a role of somewhat inferior Ordinary education in rural and urban areas (cf. Chapter 1). In the background of multiple-choice medium policy continued after the Independence, three stages of education have acquired distinct patterns of choice in the Indian system :

1. PRIMARY STAGE :

   Dominant regional language,
   Pan-Indian language — English/Hindi,
   Other major languages, or
   Newly cultivated languages (mostly tribal and other minority languages, as *preparatory* media).

2. SECONDARY STAGE :

   Dominant regional language,
   Pan-Indian languages — English/Hindi, or
   Other major languages.

3. HIGHER EDUCATION STAGE :

   English as developed medium, or
   Hindi and regional languages as *emerging* media.

According to the 1974 NCERT Survey, about eighty languages are being used as media of instruction at different stages of education. A large number of them is used only as *preparatory* media at the primary education stage (for classes I and II, often extended upto class IV), before a student switches over to any major language as the medium at the secondary stage. Some tribal languages, spoken by smaller populations, are also promoted as *elementary* media by private institutions (missionary schools, monastaries, etc.). There are fourteen *principal* media languages, comprising eleven regional languages (including the pan-Indian Hindi; excluding Kashmiri), two languages without any region — Urdu and Sindhi, and one foreign language — English. Foreign languages like Persian, Portuguese, and French are also retained as media in a few urban schools (Chaturvedi 1976).

In recent years some multilingual states, mostly in eastern India, have introduced as a state policy bilingual education in which a developing language in a region is used as a partial medium, together with English, Hindi, or the neighbouring regional language as the major medium. Some states are initiating bilingual schooling for their tribal populations; various minority communities, particularly in urban areas, also prefer bilingual media as shown below :

TABLE 4

BILINGUAL MEDIA

	Media at Primary Stage	*State*
A.	Manipuri — English	Manipur
	Khasi — English	Meghalaya
	Garo — English	Meghalaya
	Mizo — English	Mizoram
	Assamese — English	Arunachal Pradesh
	Hindi — English	Andaman and Nicobar Islands

B.	Santali — Elementary Hindi	West Bengal
	Tibetan — Elementary Hindi	West Bengal
	Kuvi — Oriya	Orissa
Extended to Secondary Stage		
C.	Kashmiri — Urdu	Jammu and Kashmir
	Urdu — English	Jammu and Kashmir
	Sindhi — English	Maharashtra
	Sindhi — Hindi	Delhi
	Panjabi — Hindi	Chandigarh
	Malayalam — English	Lakshadveep Islands

In informal settings, one notices a good deal of code-switching and hybridisation of two or more contact languages. There are many multilingual institutions catering to the needs of diverse populations spread in every state. Many minority institutions in every state impart education through minority languages, and/or pan-Indian languages like English and Hindi, depending upon the availability of textbooks, teachers, and the trends of language maintenance in a community.

Types of media are very much diversified in character. Though many states prefer to promote the 'exclusive' use of regional language as medium of instruction, in actual practice many students experience a shift in language medium at one or the other stage of their education career, depending upon the context, domain, and channel :.

1. *Passive and active media* : Students listen to lectures in one language and write answers in another.
2. *Formal and informal media* : Formal teaching in the classroom is conducted in one language, but informal explanations are provided in another language.
3. *Multi-tier media* : Elementary education is initiated through mother-tongue as the *preparatory* medium, but when a student moves upward in the education ladder, he has to shift to a more 'cultivated' medium.

In the present set up of education, a majority of students, mostly after high school stage, face the problem of switching over from their mother-tongue to a common existing medium — English or, in a few

cases, Hindi at the university stage. Success of the multi-tier system lies in the adequate preparation for shifting from one medium to another. To achieve this it will be useful to *formally* introduce bilingual education at the higher secondary stage (classes XI-XII), based on a *combination* of the mother-tongue and common language(s) — English or Hindi, the proportion of the latter gradually increasing till English, Hindi or both become the media at the post-graduate stage.

Bilingual and bicultural education requires, apart from the positive attitudes to speech variation, a degree of planning, a proficiency in the language of the classroom and in the language(s) of learners, and a high level of skill in teaching. The validity of these assumptions for a complex plural society, such as India, need to be assessed, and the differentiating roles of mother-tongue and non-native languages as media of instruction also need to be elaborated. A critical appraisal of the programmes of bilingual education in the United States (for Chicano, American Indian, Micronesian bilingual programmes), Canada (for English and French), Soviet Union, Yugoslavia (for Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian and Albanian languages), Philippines (for Tagalog and English) and other countries can also provide a useful perspective regarding the proportions of and the procedures for using the available languages as media of instruction.

As already pointed out, in actual practice one notices a wide gap between the professed language policies and actual practice in a classroom in the Indian situation. In many institutions there exist anomalous patterns of communication where the teacher and the taught interact in one language, classrooms are conducted in another, textbooks are written in a third, and answers are given in a fourth language/style. Thus one finds the linguistic needs and the capacity of learners are some of the prominent casualities in the present education set up.

2. *University Medium*

When the British left the country in 1947, there were many schools in which education up to primary and secondary stages was given in major Indian languages of respective regions. But at the higher education stages, the universities recognised *only* English as

the medium with no alternatives. Osmania University located at Hyderabad, in the Telugu-speaking princely state of Nizam, was an exception in introducing the Urdu medium for catering to the traditional Muslim education.

During the Independence struggle, in pursuance of language autonomy and language privileges, many political and educational organisations had built up strong pressures to extend Indian languages as media at the university level. The All-India Universities Conference in 1939 had recommended that the mother-tongue of students should be the medium of instruction at different stages up to degree courses. It was again endorsed by the Fourth Conference of Indian Universities in 1943 and by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1946 (India 1960).

Initially, the new Congress Government showed a good deal of enthusiasm for rapid change in the medium policy, and some universities expressed their willingness to introduce Hindi, Urdu, and other regional languages as media in five years time (India 1948). The University Education Commission in 1949 also endorsed the view that the switch over to mother-tongue education should be achieved within five years in all universities so as to promote cultural renaissance and social integration. But soon it became evident that due to the unenthusiastic response from the education experts who operated within the 'established' system, the government had to face an uphill task as far as the fulfillment of such aspirations was concerned.

In this tussle for leadership among the 'established' and the 'rising' power-élites, various language interests groups adopted rigid stands regarding language policy at the university stage :

1. The supporters of English claimed the virtues of having an 'advanced' medium for technological and scientific progress.
2. The supporters of Hindi were motivated by the interests of cultural regeneration and cohesion at the national level.
3. The supporters of regional languages emphasised the facility of expression for students, and were guided by the claims of equal privileges and autonomy for their languages.

National leaders Jawahar Lal Nehru, Maulana Azad, and Zakir Hussain (1950) were the early champions of common medium. Moderating the rigid postures in medium controversy, they suggested the *alternate* media policy, where Hindi serving the national interests could be adopted as the university medium along with English as a universally developed medium of knowledge. But the Tarachand Commission (1948) rejected Hindi as common medium for universities and suggested regional media in the states for administrative and academic purposes, restricting the common medium for the federal government.

The Official Language Commission in 1956 spelled out the criteria for the choice of medium at the university stage on the basis of the facility of expression, and the usefulness of such medium for students. It endorsed the *alternate* media policy with regional language as the major medium. A variety of solutions emerged from the dissenting notes :

1. English with alternatives (Hindi, or dominant regional language)
2. Hindi with alternatives (English, or regional language)
3. Sole Hindi medium
4. Sole regional language medium.

The latter two suggestions were later dubbed as 'Hindi imperialism' and 'language chauvinism' respectively by the opponents of these solutions in the controversy.

During the fifties many socio-political and legal battles were fought over the university medium issue concerning Bombay, Gujarat, and Madras Universities. The state governments' enthusiasm for switching over to Hindi (for Bombay University), Gujarati (for Gujarat University), and Tamil (for Madras Uuniversity) were frustrated by professional bodies. Hence, by and large, the states had to compromise their position, and leave the programme of switch over in universities largely unimplemented. At the time of linguistic reorganisation of states in 1956, it was strongly felt throughout the country that language tensions were undermining the national unity. The demand for a nation-wide common medium gained momentum on the pleas that national loyalty requires free and rather intense communication within the nation, and regional languages as sole

media will damage the administrative, judicial and academic integrity and scientific pursuits of the country.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) in its 1960 Report pointed to the difficulties of students when moving from a mother-tongue medium school to the English-medium university education, leading to parrot-learning and the crippling of original thought. It strongly pleaded that the sole dependence on English was widening the gulf between the educated few and the uneducated masses, which cannot be nourished in a democratic society. Earlier the Official Language Commission (1956) had also emphasised the deteriorating effects of English-medium education, such as 'a wearisome burdening of the memory, a sacrifice of the faculty of independent thinking, and a blunting intellect'.

Hence from early catholic stands of *sole* English, Hindi, or regional language, by 1961 a new approach promoting a *link* language had gained favour among national leaders. English and Hindi enthusiasts again seized the opportunity for claiming the 'new' *link* status. Some southern and eastern states showed preference for English in place of Hindi as a common medium. The Link Language Formula was evolved by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1962, suggesting that regional language medium will be necessary for removing the gap between the masses and the élites; and English as the 'transitional', and Hindi as the 'eventual' link languages will promote national unity, mobility among teachers and students, and the standards of education. The timing of the switch over to the new system was left open. Concerning the eventual adoption of Hindi as the link language, a *veto* was given to the states, and also to the professionals for gradual and 'well-prepared' change from English to regional languages and Hindi.

Many professionals continued to emphasise the utility of a highly cultivated media as 'a precision-instrument of thinking and communication through which students can be trained in logical thought and in the disciplined use of words'. This emphasis has been reiterated for over a century now, as is evident from the doctrine of 'refining the vernacular dialects' expounded in the Macaulay *Minute* of 1835 (cf. Chapter 1). A UGC Committee reporting on Standards of University Education (1965) went to the extent of saying :

> "A change is justified only when the university is confident of raising standards by doing so. Unless an Indian language has grown up to its full stature, with a good literature in science and other subjects, the move for its acceptance as the medium of instruction immediately would be a retrograde step".

It is interesting to note that this argument against Indian languages was voiced by some Indian élites at the time of establishing a vernacular university at Lahore over a century ago. The objection of the Lahore Indian Association in 1876 was couched in almost the same phraseology that the vernacular medium will be a 'retrograde and reactionary' step as there being 'in the vernacular languages a sad want of textbooks for the higher examinations' and 'the English being dispensed with, the standard to instruction must necessarily be lower than that of other universities' (Naik 1963).

After the unsuccessful attempts of the fifties, the force of hypersensitive language chauvinism are now considerably weakened, and rapid change in shifting the media of education at the university level is ruled out. The *status quo* of English as a compulsory medium for some time to come is now being widely accepted in most of the university campuses, on the pleas that knowledge is more important than the time-tables. By hard struggle the Indian languages are now proving themselves increasingly practicable and acceptable for a wider range of study in the 'élitist' framework of education. Today after the lapse of over a quarter century, the citadels of higher learning have yielded only in providing an *alternate* medium of regional language usually associated with the Ordinary tradition in education, for humanities and commerce courses up to the graduate level.

The quality and prestige of Advanced tradition still rests with the English medium. In a survey conducted at Nagpur University in the fifties, it was found that although Hindi and Marathi were compulsory media for undergraduate arts and science courses, 88 per cent of the Science students in 1955 obtained 'special permission' to study through English medium. Failure in both arts and science faculties were higher among the regional medium students. This reveals that the better students prefer English, and are able to cope with it (Dakin 1968).

There were over twenty universities in mid-seventies, which maintained their unilingual character, and continued to provide education *only* through English. These are the universities in the metropolitan areas — Bombay, Calcutta, Madras; many southern universities such as, Bangalore, Kerala, Sri Venkateswara (Tirupathi); and also those imparting professional education such as, agricultural and technological institutions, where there is no alternative to English. At the same time, many universities of Hindi and Bengali regions have been relatively more enthusiastic about providing regional language as an alternate medium along with English.

Thus the English status quo supporters won the battle of *time*, and the Hindi and regional language supporters felt contended with the *formal recognition* of their viewpoint, and also with their claims over large funds for language development.

3. *Polarisation of Issues*

It is rather amazing to find in a large nation committed to the gigantic task of eradicating illiteracy, its intellectuals, with their political power and educational expertise, to get entangled in the web of language privileges at the university level under the pretexts of the range and quality of education. Many of the issues generating acrimonious debates at the national level, sometimes erupting into campus skirmishes, do not seem to have much relevance to the quality of education. Prominent axes over which the medium controversy has become polarised during the past one hundred and fifty years are listed in Table 5 :

In long-drawn socio-political and legal squabbles over the medium, one notices various shades of opinions moderating between the two extremes. Eventually the *status quo* experts seem to have temporarily succeeded in their strategy by their insistence that the Indian vernaculars should first be cultivated through translations from 'advanced' languages and, before even undertaking this task, they must equip themselves with the scientific terminologies appropriate for different subjects. Because of the 'high brow' elegant values in the formal language behaviour, the task of cultivating urban-based standards has been the prerogative of the so-called 'purists' of language.

TABLE 5

POLARISATION OF MEDIUM CONTROVERSY

Conflicting issues	*Extreme stands professed by the 'established' élites*	*Extreme stands professed by the 'emerging' pressure groups*
1. Objectives of education	universal values of knowledge	knowledge in consonance with cultural background
2. Role of language in education	autonomy for mother-tongue as a full-fledged medium (from primary to advanced stages)	language hierarchy with multi-tier media (preparatory, auxiliary, and major media — linked with the relevance of education)
3. Choice of medium	common medium (national or universal)	plural media (regional and minority languages)
4. Requirements qualifying medium languages	(a) advanced languages with 'tradition-inspired' literary standards	vernacular languages, with prevailing 'situation-bound' implicit propriety controls
	(b) cultivated with 'elegant' terminologies and translations	endowed with uninhibited convergence resulting from pidginisation, hybridisation, code-switching
5. Pace of change	*status quo* or, if change at all, only after adequate preparation	rapid change from dominating language(s) by creating 'vacuum' in favour of vernacular languages.

Ironically, in the élite parlance, the modern languages saturated with the instant derivation of terms from non-native classical and neo-classical stocks — Sanskrit, Perso-Arabic or classical Tamil — are regarded as *śuddha* 'pure' languages, but those mixed with the everyday life terms borrowed from other *living* languages — such as English, Bengali, Marathi, matching with the newly acquired concepts from different cultures — are regarded as *khicṛī* 'hotchpotch, *pot-pourri*' languages.

From the 'expression' point of view, educational subjects can be classified into three broad categories, requiring different type of preparation for switch-over in the medium, particularly at the higher education level :

1. Demonstration-oriented subjects largely dealing with concrete visual or with other-than-language symbols : subjects of 'hard core' sciences and technology such as, medicine, engineering, physics, zoology, also subjects dependent on non-linguistic symbols such as, mathematics, astronomy.

   In these subjects the language expression tends to be rather simple, as it is usually supplemented by visual demonstration; hence it exploits only rudiments of language structure. Information in these subjects is well-formulated and unambiguous.

   Some of the prominent Indian languages with written tradition, drawing upon the heritage of classical Sanskrit, have acquired adequate expression for subjects such as, mathematics, astronomy, natural sciences (agriculture, horticulture, forestry), chemistry, *āyurved* (Indian medicine), archery, and a few cottage and small scale industries. Of course, for the expression of 'modernistic' technology-oriented subjects, Indian languages do not possess a well-sustained tradition, and most of the conceptualisation concerning these subjects is continuously borrowed from the Western experience, mainly through English.

2. Abstract subjects dealing with human phenomena: most of the arts, religion (theology), and social sciences (such as, history, philosophy, politics, economics, sociology, psychology). Creative literature and aesthetics also come under this category (These are further supplemented with expressions of emotions and personal feelings).

   In these subjects, language needs mature expression for portraying complexities of human nature but information is not so well-formulated and chances of ambiguity are more and interpretations are relatively less precise than in 'hard core' science subjects.

   Most of the Indian languages with literary standing possess a long tradition in many of the art subjects through classical litera-

tures. With the development of prose styles in various major languages, these are gradually catching up in the process of so-called 'modernisation' through borrowing and loan translations from classical literatures.

3. Subjects in which the object of interpretation is 'language' itself such as law, logic, semiotics, linguistics.

   These subjects develop a kind of meta-language by exploiting subtleties of the language structure for sophisticated and well-formulated communication.

The handicap in switching-over the media for science and technology is not so much inadequate cultivation of Indian languages as is generally presumed, but lack of linguistically re-educated personnel to take up the task, and also purists' shyness in accepting borrowed expressions for new concepts from living situations. Development of 'high brow' *tatsamised* style, based on artificial coinage from non-native classical stock has also been a great deterrent in adopting Indian languages for this purpose.

In this regard, an experience of a postgraduate institute at Coimbatore should be an eye-opener for us where Tamil medium supported by English technical terminology for teaching science subjects became very popular with students, as they had no handicap in understanding and expressing themselves in the medium closer to everyday life situation.

The preparation of textbooks for teaching technical subjects at the higher education stage is guided by the values set by ideological and literary leadership, and *not* by the exigencies of individual subjects, or professionals, and of the recipients of education. Thanks to the purists' antagonism towards endowing new concepts with expressions borrowed from real life, many scholars in various fields, finding the lofty coinages forbidding, are discouraged from making meaningful contributions through their native language.

Various programmes of change in the medium policy do not pay adequate attention to the reorientation limitations of the professionals, who in turn adopt the 'obstructionist' attitude in implementation. Teachers who could play pivotal role in implementation pro-

grammes are consequently reluctant to join in the processes of language shift, as most of them regard the issues concerning language policy being politically motivated and falling short on the test of practicability. One often notices a strong bias among them for leaning towards the rigid political stands concerning the functions and the content of different languages in the education curriculum. Against this background, teachers particularly of the advanced stages of education, who are themselves the product of *select* education system remain, by and large, uninvolved in the developmental processes of language media, demanding the cultivation of Indian languages on a platter and waiting conveniently till the 'developed' textbooks are produced by the language experts. To quote an instance, University teachers in Madras State at the Annual Conference in 1952, expressed their reluctance to make any change until 'a large variety of books and journals in the national and regional language become available'.

The actual beneficiaries in this game seem to be the multilingual élites who adopt language *postures* according to the ideologies preferring cultural resurgence, language autonomy in education, common medium, elegant styles, and 'vacuum' theory; but in actual *usage*, they feel at home in the prevailing patterns in education — cherishing universal knowledge, language hierarchy, alternate media, hybridisation, code-switching, and *status quo* (cf. Table 5). One is confronted with an interesting characteristic of regional 'neo-élites' in the emergent power structure who have succeeded in manipulating the colonial education system to their advantage by aligning themselves with the masses through the demands of cultural resurgence and rapid change in the education system, but at the same time professing the 'élitist' values of language autonomy, uniform medium, and elegant standards of 'school' language.

(Honolulu 1975)

VI

In Search Of A New Order

1. *Education As Politico-Economic Institution*

Education for 'development' has been acquiring growing significance in the modernisation processes, to the extent that the expenditure on education in many developing countries has been exceeding twenty per cent of their national budgets (second only to the defence budgets).

A UNESCO report in the sixties had calculated the costs of providing *universal* education for the Indian population — expansion of school establishments, the teachers' salaries, provision of books and food, the compensation of parents for loss of child labour, etc. — at three-fourths the total revenue of the central and state governments, and thus pointed out the futility of the expansion of education on the lines as designed for the upper-classes in urban areas.

Dimensions of growth of education in India can be visualised from a statistical account given in a recent UGC report (1978c), according to which, in 1975 there were 'more than 120 universities, 4,500 affiliated colleges, 40,000 secondary schools and 600,000 elementary schools, 3.5 million teachers, 100 million students and an annual expenditure of Rs. 25,000 million'. With increasing dependence on the allocation of funds from the State, education is bound to become more and more subservient to the vagaries of the established order, rather than being a viable change-agent in its own right, as per the lofty objectives proclaimed by educators. Education planners

in developing countries are yet to realise the seriousness of the issues arising out of such unidirectional expansion.

Developing Societies, by and large, in the pursuits of economic development tend to evaluate success in education in terms of material gains. Even many planning agencies concerned with education now profess linking education programmes with development in terms of per capita growth rate.

Education in modernised societies has been progressively asserting its dominance as a 'politico-economic institution', which raises doubts about its credence as an academic discipline. A historical review of the goals of education and the demands of language as medium of instruction and as a subject of study on the Indian scene (discussed in Chapters 1, 4 and 5) also confirms the fact that developments in the field of education are guided more by *extraneous* socio-political factors than being inspired by academic considerations.

The continuance of inherited dichotomies of Ordinary and Advanced traditions, and the urban-biased system of education as shaped during the colonial rule poses a serious handicap in implementing language education policies by different education agencies at the central and state levels. Amidst the conflicting ideologies of language, the administration tends to override the difficulties by cut-short means, promoting *ad hoc* solutions. On the grounds of feasibility, many programmes remain unimplemented because of the paucity of monetary and human resources, and the administrators content themselves merely with plugging holes in a system that is functionally out-dated and is simply not in tune with the growing aspirations of the masses.

Almost all of India's official efforts in the sphere of language planning proceed on a very simplistic basis treating language as if it were a kind of industry or technology. This applies equally to its literacy drives, teaching second and third languages, and its gigantic programmes for language standardisation and language 'elaboration' typified in fixing time-limits for the switch-over from one language to another, coining of terminologies while sitting in ivory towers, and translation endeavours for textbooks and reference books. The targets are set in a manner utterly unmindful of the natural human sensiti-

vities of plural speech communities (discussed elsewhere, Khubchandani 1969a). One cannot ignore the ecological imperatives of stratificational and situational multiplicity, so much more pervasive in the developing nations' pluralistic communication patterns than the *new values* being injected through the official programmes. So far, very little experimentation has been encouraged to test the validity of these assumptions for a complex plural society such as India.

2. *Non-Formal Education*

At this juncture the aspirations of restless masses and of educators are at crossroads, and many diverse claims are being made for bringing radical transformation in the educational structure as such. Progressive thinkers project education as an activity connected with the transformation of reality (conscientisation, to use Friere's concept) and its preservation, instead of the conventional notion of treating it as an agency of transmitting knowledge. Friere (1972) characterises the matrix and content of present education being determined by those who hold power; the bourgeoisie have shaped a system of education in keeping with their own image. Charging education with a new role as a component of fight for justce, he urges: '...if there can be an education for the domestication of the oppressed and for domination over them, there can also be an education for liberation... to make the oppressed realise the vulnerability of the oppressor.' Illich (1971) also, while attacking the culture of conformism promoted through education, advocates a new social order which has been characterised as 'deschooling society'.

There is also a growing awareness among education planners on the international scene to experiment with unconventional means of spreading literacy, instead of relying solely on the expansion of the formal system of education. The EWLP Experiment of the sixties (discussed in Chapter 2) also emphasised the need for launching massive programmes outside the formal education system for the creation of an *environment* in which the rural and working-class majority could participate in a sustained manner in transforming the reality. Many newly emergent nations with high rates of illiteracy are now looking upon adult education as a metnod of human resource

development which need to be effectively used in the modernisation processes.

In search for alternate education strategies, a number of 'not so formal' education programmes have emerged in many developing countries, primarily as a reaction against the inadequacy of the formal system, and are being viewed as experiments in reshaping and restructuring education. In the Third World countries many development programme agencies dealing with agriculture and rural development, social welfare, health and family planning, labour and manpower get more heavily engaged in 'non-formal' education than the professional education bodies.

The educator generally does not enjoy *monopoly* over these 'non-formal' programmes to which he is used in formal education. In the circumstances, 'non-formal' education stands rather low in esteem of many educators and also of the 'élitist' leadership who regards it as 'utilitarian' for specific work-related training schemes or a low-cost handy alternative to *real* education which only schools can provide. In this sense, 'non-formal' education is implied as inferior and a remedial contingency to overcome specific problems of modernisation, rather than accepting it as a vital component in the broad scheme of universal education.

This aspect itself signifies an urgent need to explicate the foundations of non-formal education and bring about a change of attitude among educators, and at the same time promote closer links between professional educators and non-professional agencies directly involved in the development programmes so as to coordinate the 'fragmented' efforts in the sphere of non-formal education. One has to recognise the fundamental differences in the purpose, timing, content, modes of delivery, and clientele of formal and non-formal education (Simkins 1977). A dispassionate understanding is required to prepare a sound basis for properly relating non-formal education as 'recurrent' life-long education with the formal education as 'preparatory' time-bound education.

3. *Oral Tradition*

At the same time, increasing awareness about the technological

imbalances generated in modernised societies has prompted many thinkers to come to a growing understanding of the assets of *oral* tradition among illiterate communities which has been transmitted from generation to generation through folklore, *Ramleela, Harikatha, Bhaggat* and other models of discourse presented during fairs and festivals. Traditionally, non-formal education has drawn its strength from the *mass* appeal through the pursuits of folk arts, missionary zeal, dissent movements and even subversive activities. Formal education, on the other hand, has historically pitched itself through elaborate mechanisms of *selection,* which have increasingly come under attack from progressive thinkers during recent times. Formal education is initiated by literacy and is pursued through certain time-bound stages in a credential-based system; whereas non-formal education is enmeshed in the cultural millieu of the society, as a part of life-long education, pursued through literacy *or without it.* It is spread 'over the life-span of the individual in a recurring way i.e., in the alternation with other activities principally with work' (Fordham 1979).

Gandhiji's programme of Basic Education, launched during the thirties by promoting education-cum-work centres in rural areas, provided a viable basis for meeting the demands of universal literacy with minimum financial inputs. Peoples' participation in the Independence struggle on a massive scale provided an impetus to the Hindustani/Hindi movement as an expression of national identity. A network of *rāṣṭrabhāṣā* and *carkhā* classes for adults, spread widely in many parts of the country, played a significant part in promoting literacy. After Independence, a few voluntary organisations like Literacy House have been engaged in programmes of adult literacy on a somewhat limited scale. So far, such educational pursuits of dedicated organisations have not been recognised as education 'proper' in the professional sense.

Traditional societies, while relying heavily upon the implicit mechanisms of oral tradition for the transmission of knowledge, assign literate groups (or individuals) certain essential liaison/intermediary functions. In this tradition the task of the educator is envisaged as promoting mutual learning from the culturally rich environment and transferring knowledge through sustained participation. In such a society literacy, no doubt, forms an important asset and accomplish-

ment of an individual, but *not a necessary* condition of his survival and dignity. But illiteracy in a modernised society has become 'an indivisible part of the general deprivation of employment, income, assets, social status and political power' (Kamat 1978).

Centrality of 'high brow' literature in the formal education has also been a significant factor in widening the gap between the speech behaviour of the illiterates and the literates. The written culture, no doubt, fortified with vast literature and extensive documentation has remained isolated from the oral tradition, which is endowed with a rich cultural millieu of traditional societies.

But in everyday life we use language 'to fit the external world into our own world. From a very early age the story is a powerful vehicle through which we channel and come to terms with feelings... The symbolic representation of experience, whether in children's play or our own gossip, is of the same order as that of the novel, the poem or the song; all of these modes enable the onlooker to contemplate the possibilties and consequences of the experience portrayed' (Grugeon 1972). According to Britton (1971), 'while there *is* a continuity between gossip and literature, there is also a distinction. The poetic utterance is a construct or artifact, verbal object; gossip fulfils an immediate and expressive function: expressive language is a loosely structured, free to fluctuate. However, both enable us to stand back and review the possibilities of experience'.

It s necessary to focus upon the continuum between oral tradition and written culture, and probe into the speech characteristics as projected through 'folk' events and also through rational discourse in journalistic writings as well as in serious research, through creative expression in school childrens' writings as well as in Great Literature. What we need is to identify the characteristics of a continuum which runs from the structured poetic utterances and incorporate them in our education programmes.

Many of the present goals of language development in India seem to be out of step with the Indian realities, so very different from the European realities, being closer to what the latter were when the printing press was invented. The functional relevance of many

changes in the speech patterns of traditional societies for the oral-tilted' mass communication needs (radio, TV, videophone, and other sound-recording devices) of the twentieth century has not been seriously attended to. One can envisage the possibility of the developing nations passing directly into a 'Macluhanesque' period where oral mass communication in the local traditional style would be made feasible by the electronic media (Garvin 1973).

Various constraints in the spread of education are attributed to the multiplicity of languages, whereas the real issues to cope with are the confrontation between 'tradition' and 'modernity' concerning the role of language in education, and dogmatic rigidity in claiming privileges for different languages in education in thrust for 'autonomy'. When dealing with education for plural societies we shall do well to realise the risks involved in *uniform* solutions.

(Poona 1980)

EPILOGUE

I don't believe any more in the notion of a cultural revolution in the sense that one form of politics and knowledge and religion is superseded by a new one. If I am interested in doing anything at this point, it's in creating a form of culture, knowledge, religion, or politics that does not view itself as replacing another, in any sense, but one that can contain in itself a way of undoing itself. If we are not here to do that, I quite frankly would rather go skiing!

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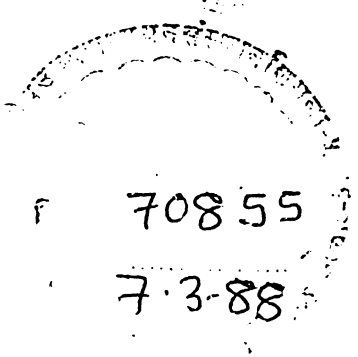
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