

## **Multilingualism/Bilingualism in Himachal Pradesh: A Case of Diglossia**

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### **Abstract**

The article analyzes the language conditions prevalent in Himachal Pradesh in context of diglossia existing there. Innumerable languages co-exist in Himachal Pradesh since the time immemorial and there is continuous give and take among these languages. The author discusses multilingualism/bilingualism existing in Himachal Pradesh in context of existence of high and low varieties of same languages with reference to Stewart's classification of language planning policies in new states and with reference to the theories of Joshua Fishman and Charles Ferguson. After a careful inquiry it becomes pertinent to say that these theories also conform to multilingualism/bilingualism existing in Himachal Pradesh. The language situations they explain are similarly found in different areas of Himachal Pradesh. The researcher tries to compare all the possible situations so as to understand the relevance of these theories in the language situations of Himachal Pradesh. Different types of diglossia also exist in Himachal Pradesh. This has also been defined with certain permanent and temporary language situations prevalent in Himachal Pradesh.

**Keywords:** Bilingualism in Himachal, Diglossia, Bilingualism vs Diaglossia, languages in Himachal. Pahari in Himachal

### **1. Introduction**

Himachal Pradesh is a multilingual society where Hindi is the state language but most of the people use their native languages in their day to day conversation. People incorporate all these languages into a big arena of Pahari language which exist in diverse varieties. Grierson had called it western pahari in his linguistic survey. The various dialects of Pahari spoken in the region are Mandiali (in Mandi), Kulavi (in Kulu), Kehluri (in Bilaspur), Hinduri (in Nalagarh), Chameali (in Chamba), Sirmauri (in Sirmur), Miahavi (in Mahasu region) and

Pangwali (in Pangi). Other dialects of this language include: kinnauri, Lahauli and Spitian. All the dialects of pahari language are of Sanskrit origin and may or may not be mutually intelligible. They were written in different scripts in different times. In the earlier times they were in tankari but during the Muslim period they were written in Persian script and finally emerged the Devnagari script for writing these with the passage of time.

English and Hindi are taught as compulsory school subjects whereas Hindi as a first language and English as a second language throughout the state. According to the Constitution of India English is a second language not a foreign language. This is not in consonance with what Anil Kumar Swadeshi states in his paper *English a Second Language in the Context of Multilingualism in Himachal Pradesh* where he concludes that as per use of English in the language community it is more of a foreign language. There is a wide difference between the medium of instruction in government schools on the one hand and public schools on the other hand. In government schools teachers are allowed to teach in Hindi, most of the time they use the varieties of Pahari language but most of the government schools discourage the use of Kangri language or Pahari by the students. Most of the public schools use English as a medium of instruction. Recently the scenario has been changed as the enrolment in the government schools fell by huge percentage and more precisely some of the schools are at the verge of closure. But Himachal Pradesh Government has introduced English language as a subject from the first class in order to increase the enrolment in the government schools. It is also found that the English language has been a language of higher status and prestige in the whole state. Even the people who live in rural areas also send their children to English medium schools despite the fact that they themselves have got educated in government schools.

If we think in terms of literature then we have a large corpus of literature that has been written in regional language i.e. Kangri. Kangri is the language of the common folk living in the districts of Hamirpur and Kangra. There have been rich traditions of Pahari literature in the state since the emergence of any civilization in the state.

Kuo (1980a) refers to Stewart's classification of language planning policies in new states through the following two categories:

1. The eventual elimination of all the languages except one by education or decree, and that one language is to function as the national language. If one applies the same logic in Indian context then the reorganisation of linguistic states is nothing but the eventual elimination or decree, of all but one language i.e. Hindi which is to remain as the official language.
2. The recognition and preservation of important languages within the national territory by adopting one or more languages for official purposes and for communication across language boundaries within the nation. This is clearly evident from the eighth schedule of Indian Constitution, where 22 languages have given higher status supplemented by the adoption of English and Hindi or more languages for official purposes and for communication also. Earlier there were 15, then 18 and now the number is 22 languages. It implies that the eighth schedule of Indian Constitution is just a case of Stewart's classification of language policies.

Ultimately as Himachal Pradesh is also a part of Indian Territory therefore these two types of strategies are equally applied here also for the reorganization of states and eighth schedule both are realities here too. Joshua Fishman points out that:

*Until the 1950s, the psychological literature on bilingualism was so much more extensive than its sociological counterparts that workers in the former field have*

*often failed to establish contact with those in the later. Since the 1960s a very respectable sociological or sociologically oriented literature has developed dealing with bilingual societies. (29)*

In context of this proposition it becomes imperative to relate these two research traditions to each other by tracing the interaction between their two major constructs: bilingualism on the part of psychologists and diglossia on the part of sociologists in the context of Himachal Pradesh a multilingual or bilingual state. The intermingling of bilingualism and diglossia here becomes too important to explore in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

In the few years that have been elapsed since Ferguson (1959) first advanced the term diglossia it has not only become widely accepted by sociolinguists and sociologists of language, but it has been further extended and refined. Initially it was used in connection with a society that used two or more languages for internal (intra-society) communication. The use of several codes within a single society (and their stable maintenance rather than the displacement of one by the other over time) was found to be dependent on each code's serving functions distinct from those considered appropriate for the other. Whereas one set of behaviors, attitude and values supported and was expressed in-one language, another set of behaviors, attitudes and values were fully accepted as culturally legitimate and complementary (i.e.nonconflictual) and indeed, little if any conflict between them was possible in view of the functional separation between them. This separation was most often along the lines of a High (H) language, on the other hand utilized in conjunction with religion, education and other aspects of high culture, and a Low (L) language, on the other hand, utilized in conjunction with everyday pursuits of hearth, home and work. Ferguson spoke about H and L as superposed languages.

If one applies the same concept in the context of Himachal Pradesh then one finds many issues related to this phenomenon. If one carefully observes the political functions that are organized in the state, then one again finds that these politicians and their supporters use a language that is what one can call a High language. This is evident from the understanding of their speeches by the common folk who use a low language. The common folk are unable to understand them completely since this language contains some words which are not in their repertoire. Even if the people are not able to understand these politicians are not the subjects of fun. It is also found that highly educated people use a language with their friends, which is again a high language. Whereas when they talk to common folk they use a language that we can call as a low language. The politicians whenever go to people's houses they speak a Low language and the high language is only used in political gatherings which is influenced by other languages existing in the community especially Hindi and English.

## **2. Speech Communities Characterized by Both Diglossia and Bilingualism**

All the language communities could be divided into four quadrants depending on the existence of diglossia in these communities. According to Joshua A. Fishman:

*The first quadrant refers to those speech communities in which both diglossia and bilingualism occur. At times such communities comprise an entire nation, but of course this requires very widespread (if not all pervasive) bilingualism. An example of this type of nation is Paraguay, where almost the entire population speaks both Spanish and Guarani. (30-31)*

According to Fishman all these observations lead to the conclusion that many modern speech communities that are normally thought of as monolingual are, rather, marked by both diglossia and bilingualism if their several registers( speech varieties related to functional

specificity (Halliday) are viewed as separate varieties or languages. Here in Himachal Pradesh, there are two languages i.e. Pahari and Hindi which are used by the people. People use Hindi with unknown people and Pahari with their friends and relatives. This is an excellent example of bilingualism existing in Himachal Pradesh. As every language has varieties therefore one can say that these two languages have high and low varieties depending on the situation or context where they are used. One can also talk about the language spoken by a language teacher which will never be used by the ordinary person and hence there is a wide difference between these languages spoken on the basis of the need of the hour. This kind of situation is known as diglossia. Same language with two varieties exists in these situations.

### **3. Diglossia Without Bilingualism**

There are situations in which diglossia exists whereas bilingualism is generally absent (quadrant 3). Here two or more speech communities are united religiously, politically or economically into a single functioning unit notwithstanding the socio-cultural cleavages that separate them. At the level of this larger (but not always voluntary) two or more languages or varieties are recognized as obtaining. Whenever single language is used then there are always varieties or different registers. This is the situation of diglossia without bilingualism. When educated people speak Kangri language, this language is quite different from the language spoken by common man. When the same educated person is talking to common folk, he or she is using different kind of language.

### **4. Bilingualism Without Diglossia**

Here one can see even more clearly than before that bilingualism is essentially a characterization of individual linguistic behavior whereas diglossia is a characterization of

linguistic organization at the socio-cultural level. Under what circumstances do bilinguals of similar cultural extraction nevertheless function without the benefit of a well understood and widely accepted social consensus as to which language is to be used between which interlocutors, for communication concerning what topics or for what purposes? Under what circumstances do the varieties or languages involved lack well-defined or protected separate functions? Briefly put these are circumstances of rapid social change, of great social unrest, of widespread abandonment of prior norms before the consolidation on new ones. Such cases are again many in the scenario of Himachal Pradesh.

### **5. Neither Diglossia Nor Bilingualism**

Only very small, isolated and undifferentiated speech communities may be said to reveal neither diglossia nor bilingualism (Gumpertz 1962 and Fishman 1965). Given little role differentiation or compartmentalization and frequent face- to-face interaction between all members of the speech community no fully differentiated registers may establish themselves. Given self-sufficiency no regular or significant contacts with such speech communities may be maintained. Nevertheless, such groups-be the bands or clans- are easier to hypothesize than to find. As Fishman has said that such situations are easy to hypothesize than to find If one thinks in terms of this one can think of temporary situation which are not always there but for some special purpose such situations are created. This means these are situations which are not of dominant existence and hence could be neglected but it could not be said that these situations cannot exist.

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