

Many Voices of Bengali

The Diverse Linguistic Ecosystem of West Bengal

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award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jadavpur University

By

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Declaration

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This thesis, titled **Many Voices of Bengali: The Diverse Linguistic Ecosystem of West Bengal**, submitted by me for the award for the degree of the Master of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institute.

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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Many Voices of Bengali: The Diverse Linguistic Ecosystem of West Bengal** being submitted by **Abahan Datta** for Master of Philosophy degree in School of Languages and Linguistics, Jadavpur University has been written under my supervision during the session 2018-2019. This work has not been submitted elsewhere for degree.

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Dedication

To my Teachers

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Preface

This paper is a study of the different dialects of Bengali that exists in West Bengal. The official language of the state is Bengali. A standard dialect has been commonly observed in and at the periphery of the capital city Kolkata. But there are other dialects in the states which prevail amongst the speakers of different districts ranging from Sunderbans to the Himalyas. These dialects have large number of speakers. But when Bengali is referred elsewhere, only the standard dialect is taken into account. This 'importance' or 'preference' is given due to the number of speakers and the power of the dialect. This dialect is used as the lingua franca and it is the medium of instruction in the schools. That is why, 'status' of this dialect to the speakers is high. Many speakers of the other dialects, especially the younger generation is taking up the standard one. In other words, they are forgetting their own dialect. Various socio-political reasons function behind this phenomenon. The paper tries to investigate those reasons with the backing of sociolinguistic theories. Mainly the 'status' of a language is discussed elaborately. Other theories were also narrated. This leads to break the concept of a monolingual West Bengal, as linguists state: monolinguality is a myth. But the aggression of one dialect is taken into the discourse while making points regarding linguistic imperialism. Analytically, multilingual situation has been presented here. Lastly, it suggests that why diversity is needed for any stable system. It is true for linguistics as well as ecology.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

“If bee disappeared off the face of the earth, man would only have four years left to live.”

(‘The Life of the Bee’, Maurice Maeterlinck)

Bengali (endonym Bangla) is an Indo-Aryan language spoken by the Bengalis in South Asia. It is official and most widely spoken language of Bangladesh and second most widely spoken of the 22 scheduled languages of India, only behind Hindi. In 2015, 160 million speakers were reported for Bangladesh, and the 2011 Indian census reported another 100 million speakers. The official national language of Bangladesh is Modern Standard Bengali or Literary Bengali. It serves as the lingua franca of the nation, with 98% of Bangladeshis fluent in Bengali (including dialects) as their first language. In India, Bengali is the official language of West Bengal, Tripura and the Barak and parts of Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. It is also the most widely spoken language in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal, and is spoken by significant minorities in Jharkhand, Bihar, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Odisha. With approximately 250-300 million total speakers worldwide, Bengali is usually counted as the sixth most spoken native language in the world by population. In 2009, elected representatives in both Bangladesh and West Bengal called for Bengali to be made an official language of the United Nations.

Regional variation in spoken Bengali constitutes a dialect continuum. Dialect continuum is a spread of language varieties spoken across some geographical area such that neighbouring varieties differ only slightly, but the differences accumulate over distance so that widely separated varieties are not mutually intelligible, i.e. speakers of different but related varieties can understand each other). That happens across large parts of India for Indo-Aryan languages. Linguist Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay grouped these dialects into five large clusters: Rarhi, Bangali, Kamrupi, Varendri and Jharkhandi. Many alternative grouping schemes have also been proposed. The south-western dialects (Rarhi) form the basis of modern standard colloquial Bengali. In the dialects prevalent in much of eastern and south-eastern Bangladesh (Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet division), many of the stops and affricates heard in West Bengal are pronounced as fricatives. Western alveolo-palatal affricates *ca*, *c^ha*, *ja* correspond to eastern *ca*, *c^ha*, *ja*. The influence of Tibeto-Burman languages on the phonology of Eastern Bengali is seen through the lack of nasalized vowels and alveolar articulation of what are categorised as the 'cerebral' consonants (as opposed to the post-alveolar articulation of West Bengal). Some variants of Bengali, particularly Chittagonian and Chakma, have contrastive tone. Differences in the pitch of the speaker's voice can distinguish words. Rangpuri, Kharia Thar and Mal Paharia are closely related to Western Bengali dialects, but typically classified as separate languages. Similarly Hajong is considered a separate language, although it shares similarities to Northern Bengali dialects. Thus, the discussion regarding dialects of Bengal can continue.

During standardisation of Bengali in 19th century and early 20th century, the cultural centre of Bengal was Kolkata, founded by the British. What is accepted as the standard form today in Both West Bengal and Bangladesh is based on the West-Central dialect of Nadia district,

located next to the border of Bangladesh. There are cases where speakers of Standard Bengali in West Bengal will use a different word from a speaker of Standard Bengali in Bangladesh, even though both words are of native Bengali descent. For example, the word salt is *nun* in the west which corresponds to *lbbon* in the east. Bengali dialects can be thus classified along at least two dimensions: spoken vs. literary variations, and prestige vs. regional variations. Spoken Bengali exhibits far more variation than written Bengali. Formal spoken Bengali, including what is heard in news reports, speeches, announcements, and lectures, is modelled on 'cholti bhasha'. This form of spoken Bengali stands alongside other spoken dialects, or 'ancholik' Bangla (regional Bengali). The majority of Bengalis are able to communicate in more than one dialect – often; speakers are fluent in 'cholti bhasha', one or more 'ancholik' dialect, and one or more forms of 'gramyo' Bangla (rural Bengali), dialects specific to a village or town. To a non-Bengali, these dialects may sound or look different, but the differences are mostly in phonology and vocabulary, not so much grammatical one. One exception is the addition of grammatical gender in some eastern dialects. Many dialects share features with the so-called Shadhu Bhasha or 'pure language' (high variety of literary Bengali), which was the written standard until the 19th century. Comparison of Bengali dialects gives us an idea about archaic forms of the language as well.

Now, we can articulate the question which we want to raise in this thesis. The entire research is based on these explorations, and seeks to answer the following problems.

Firstly, we have to understand the domain of Bengali language in the region of West Bengal. Apart from being an official language, this research will try to find out the vast territory of the spoken varieties. Because, written or documented language generally revolves around a cultural or political centre, but a vast region remains untouched by it. These regional

varieties live within their own forms and expectations and truly represent the whole scenario of a language region.

Secondly, the research question focuses on the present conditions of the different dialects of Bengal. How do these varieties prevail and what is the main tension between the standard and the non-standard ones? We have recorded and accessed archives to represent those data of the several dialects of Bengali. This documentation can be helpful to understand the actual demography.

Thirdly, discussing about standardisation, we have to understand the process of dominance by the standard colloquial Bengali. With the help of a theoretical framework, we can investigate the questions of 'why' and 'how'. Central point will be the grasping of the powerful.

Fourthly, we have to understand how relation between prestige of the standard and regions work. It is evident that 'status' is important amongst the speakers, but how does that influence in real utterance would not be measured until and unless we can gather data and analyse it through a comparative study. This work is done rigorously to address the actual question.

Fifthly, going by Robert Phillipson's theories we tried understand linguistic imperialism. It is a pertinent question that whether imperialism in language is only a metaphor or a full-fledged process. Vast study of West Bengal can help to realise that.

1.2 Objectives

During standardisation of Bengali in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the cultural elite were mostly from the regions of Kolkata, Hooghly, Howrah, 24 Parganas and Nadia. The standard form today in both West Bengal and Bangladesh is based on the West-Central dialect. While the language has been standardised through two centuries of education and media, variation is widespread, with many speakers familiar or fluent in both their socio-geographical variety as well as the standard dialect.

Dialectal differences in Bengali manifest themselves in three forms: standardised dialect vs. regional dialect, literary language vs. colloquial language and lexical (vocabulary) variations. The name of the dialects generally originates from the district where the language is spoken. While the standard form of the language does not show much variation across the Bengali-speaking areas, regional variation in spoken Bengali constitute a dialect continuum. Mostly speech varies across distances of just a few miles. Speeches take distinct forms among the religious communities too. Apart from the present dialects, there are a few more which have disappeared. For example, 'Bikramapuri', Sātagāiyā' (this is the name used in East Bengal for the dialect of South-western Rarh region). One of the main objectives of this work is to document the diversity prevailing in the vast domain of colloquial Bengali. Diversity makes any heritage or culture rich. That's why, this work tries to uphold as many as the forms of Bengali. Recordings have been done and archives have been accessed for this documentation.

While doing this work, discussion on preservation and balance will be taken into account. In this case, a metaphoric notion can be placed to understand the sociology of language. Here

comes the term 'ecolinguistics'. The word 'ecology' can be defined as the scientific analysis and study of interactions among organisms and their environment. It is derived from the Greek word 'oikos' meaning house, '-logia' (study of) suffix has been added after it. So, 'ecology' literally means 'study of house'. Ecology is an interdisciplinary field which includes Biology, Geography and Earth Science. It includes the study of interactions that organisms have with each other, other organisms, and with abiotic components of their environment. It is a term which was first used by Voeglin, Voeglin and Schutz (1967) in an article on the 'language situation' in Arizona. The term was taken up by Einar Haugen, who pioneered the form of linguistics which used the metaphor of an ecosystem to describe the relationships among the diverse forms of language found in the world, and the groups of people who speak them. 'linguistic ecology' or 'language ecology' or 'ecolinguistics' looks at how languages interact with each other and the places they are spoken in, and frequently argues the preservation of endangered languages as an analogy of the preservation of biological sciences. Apart from the metaphoric notions, some argue this as a form of Sociolinguistics.

1.3 Aims and Scope

Prestige is the level of regard normally accorded a specific language or dialect within a speech community, relative to other languages or dialects. The concept of prestige in sociolinguistics provides one explanation for the phenomenon of variation in form, among speakers of a language or languages. Prestige varieties are those varieties which are generally considered, by a society, to be the most 'correct' or otherwise superior variety. The prestige variety, in many cases, is the standard form of the language though there are exceptions, particularly in situations of covert prestige where a non-standard dialect is highly valued. Sociolinguistic prestige is especially visible in situations where two or more

distinct languages are in use. It is also noticed in diverse and socially stratified urban areas, in which there are likely to be speakers of different languages and dialects interacting frequently. The prevailing view among contemporary linguists is that regardless of perceptions that one specific dialect or language is 'better' or 'worse' than its counterparts, when dialects and languages are assessed 'on purely linguistic grounds, all languages — and all dialects — have equal merit'. During the documentation process, prestige motive of linguistics is very important as the variations and shifts are analysed under the arching of this thought process.

Linguistic imperialism, or language imperialism, a phenomenon that occasionally occurs, defined as 'the transfer of a dominant language to other people'. In other words, this language 'transfer' happens because of imperialism. The transfer is considered to be a demonstration of power — traditionally, military power but also, in the modern world, economic power — and aspects of the dominant culture are usually transferred along with the language. In modern world, linguistic imperialism may also be considered in the context of international development, affecting the standard by which organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank evaluate the trustworthiness and value of providing structural adjustment loans. Since the early 1990s, linguistic imperialism has attracted attention among scholars of applied linguistics. In particular, Robert Phillipson's 1992 book 'Linguistic Imperialism' has led to considerable debate about its merits. Phillipson found denunciations of linguistic imperialism that dated back to Nazi critiques of the British Council, and to Soviet analyses of English as the language of world capitalism and world domination. Though it should be noted that criticism of English as a world language is rooted in anti-globalism.

1.4 Data Collection and Method of Study

One important aspect of Sociolinguistics is setting. People do not speak the same way in all places. Be it social gathering, or quarrelling, or teaching, or explanation of law, or newspaper, language changes according to situation. In different scenarios, these various linguistic styles are termed as 'Register'. English linguists termed it as 'language according to use'. According to Russian linguist Dmitri Rosenthal, students hailing from dialect regions use High German in universities, but speak his or her own dialects at home. In rural areas of West Bengal, where diglossia (several dialects used together) prevails, the field of exercise of the two languages is different. They use their own dialect or mother tongue (example Santali, Toto, Kurukh) in household. That is their mode of communication. Santali or Toto or Kurukh is their first language (L1). Bengali is their mode of communication with the outer world. In schools, the medium of instruction is Bengali. This is their language of need. Bengali is their second language (L2). It is also evident that 'status' plays an important role in case of language. Language variation resonates the components of the society and their pride. Thus, a language gains multiplicity. Bilingual situation can prevail in two cases, one for the class dialect and the other for the speakers of 'marginal' languages. In West Bengal, as the official language is Bengali, more or less everyone has to have a basic knowledge of that. But the other languages, especially indigenous ones, present in the state become marginalized due to the pressure exerted from Bengali. In many cases, this is forceful learning.

Apart from the speakers of standard colloquial Bengali, code shifting happens. As example, the speakers of Rajbangsi language and Kamrupi dialect have the typical characteristics of code shifting. Sometimes they mix and match and other times they shift to Bengali, being

concerned about the receiving end. Talking to the people of various districts, particularly phonological features have been collected. Some words are used in comparison the standard dialect to understand the differences.

1.5 Literature Review

In his 'Linguistic Imperialism' Robert Phillipson raised several questions regarding the almighty position of English language worldwide. Under that light, he discussed in which means the colonisation is done. His questions are such – Why have other languages, with few exceptions, not prospered? How and why has the position of English been strengthened? What has been the role of foreign experts on language, in promoting this development? What arguments have been used to justify the continued use of the former colonial languages? Whose interests do the present policies on language in education serve? What kind of long-term accountability is there for projects involving educational aid? How can we, in both theoretically informed way, relate the global role of English, and the way in which language pedagogy supports the spread and promotion of the language, to the political, economic, military, and cultural pressures that propel it forward? The first two chapters set the scene descriptively by looking at English as the international language 'par excellence', at professional and ethical aspects of aid, at English in different parts of world, at how international languages are promoted, and at opposition to the dominance of English. The following two chapters present the theoretical framework for the analysis. Chapter 3 deals with the theory of linguistic imperialism, and present the key concept 'linguicism'. Chapter 4 reviews earlier work in those areas.

This book aims therefore at unearthing some of the historical, political, and intellectual roots of the language pedagogy. A major concern of the empirical parts of the book is the colonial linguistic inheritance and the developments of the 1950s and early 1960s. At that time, applied linguistics and English Language Teaching (ELT) expanded in a specific manner – the winds of change of decolonization blew life into that kind of profession. The book also reflects the fact that professionally and personally Phillipson is multilingual and live in Denmark, where English is a ‘foreign’ language. Here one cannot help appreciating that English is the medium for a massive impact from a variety of sources. Phillipson’s theoretical approach has been substantially influenced by working for a decade with Tove Skutnabb-Kangas on theorizing language and power, relationships between dominant and dominated groups, and minority education. Their work has attempted to integrate the perspectives of those dominated (female, immigrant, mother tongue a ‘small’ language) and the dominant (male, dominant group, mother tongue an ‘expansionist’ language), and where the goal of such scientific work is both analysis which can promote increased justice for both groups.

He explored why English has become the dominant international language and how language pedagogy has contributed to its hegemony. A case study of one aspect of language planning for Namibia is included in Chapter 9. ELT is also a billion pound business, described in an ‘Economist Intelligence Unit’ study of English as a ‘world commodity’, in a report written to promote strategies for capitalizing further growth industry (McCallen 1989).

Finally, a comment from the editor of ‘Oxford English Dictionary’ will unravel the planning. Editor Berchfield says English has also become a lingua franca to the point that any literate educated person is in a very real sense deprived if he does not know English. Poverty, famine, and disease are instantly recognized as the cruellest and least excusable forms of

derivation. Linguistic deprivation is a less easily noticed condition, but one nevertheless of great significance. In one word: English for all.

In the book 'Bhasha Jijnasa' author Sisir Kumar Das argues that different workspace needs different varieties of language. That is the key reason behind choosing a standard dialect. This is purely asserted and historically just an accident. Today we can see that the intellectual society of West Bengal have acknowledged the language of Kolkata. Not that this kind or variety is the most 'developed', but the reason behind accepting it is historical, political and economic. From the mid eighteenth century the prosperity of Kolkata city and port had far ago established it as a financial centre. It was established as the capital of new rulers and centre of education. These factors ultimately resulted to the linguistic dominance. Hypothetically, if Murshidabad became the capital of the Englishmen, and if it became the economic and cultural centre, then the Bengali of Murshidabad would have this kind of dominance. The main point is every language has different gloss, it has phonological and grammatical differences in separate areas, and not one area is stronger, developed (or feeble, backward) than all the others. In the course of history, one dialect is standardised. This is the sole reason behind a standard (or non-standard) dialect.

In most countries, people have to learn at least two varieties of a language. One is the form of his or her region, which is the native language or mother tongue, and the other is the standard. The first one is used in his household, and the other one in his educational sector, official works and communication with other regions. These are dialects. But no one should think that the standard form is the 'language' and others are 'dialects'. Actually, the form we are calling as 'language' is a total shape of different dialects. Further, that is the abstract impersonation of different dialects. Where is Bengali spoken? Who speaks? Answer is,

Bengali is spoken in a specific geographic region, where most inhabitants speak that language. Alternative answer can be, in a geographic space people speak different languages in different regions, and these are mutually understandable. That is why different languages are recognised as different forms of a same language. Bengali of Kolkata, Meidinipur, Bankura, Birbhum, Malda, Dhaka, Barisal, Chittagong – all are different from each other, but they are mutually understandable and that is the reason of recognition as same language. So, every language is Bengali, or different forms of Bengali. If we accept the second point then further question raises that which form is the root, and which dialect is mostly identical with it? Which one dwells at the farthest?

Actually, no specific dialect can be said as 'main', all are Bengali. What we understand as Bengali language is the abstract form of these 'Bengali'. So, standard Bengali is not the only Bengali. If Bengali means as the language of the Bengali people, then it is the general form of a language which is used by 120-130 million speakers. When we discuss about Bengali, we actually analyse any one of its dialect. Generally it revolves around the standard one, but discussions can happen over non-standard dialects too. We also try to find out a common area of all the dialects. If this area can't be imagined then it is not possible to build up the duality of dialect and language. Dialect means regional differences of a language. These differences are phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic. This area can't always be determined by geo-political boundary. Suppose, when we arrive at the western border of West Bengal, it can't be said that we have reached the border of Bengali and territory of Hindi now goes on. Language domain may be extended beyond that. So, definite geographic territory of dialect is impossible to identify.

While documenting and discussing various dialects of Bengali, we have to remember these aspects presented at different points of time by Phillipson and Das. Otherwise, the political process taking place, which subtly gains a power with underline of philosophical reasoning, can't be fully understood.

Finally, while preparing the documentation part of the thesis a collection of different dialect from 'Korak' magazine helped. Not only it archived the forms but discusses about the dominance and disappearance of few. In the introduction, it is clearly states that the main language of West Bengal is Bengali. This language has various forms. There are huge dissimilation between the language of extreme south-west and northern region. Language of Sunderbans is odd to the habitats of Himalayas. This kind of regional differences of a same language prevails through the vast region of this state. But comprising such variety, every language is Bengali.

Generally, while referring Bengali, we mean the standard colloquial dialect. This is an artificial language which was created in Kolkata and surrounding areas. Though, escaping the writing type boundary, it gradually became the language of the speakers. So, this language flourished and extended its areas. Moreover, the regional varieties also prevailed over time. Speakers of several regions use their own features.

Linguists note that in every seven miles distance linguistic features change. West Bengal may be a perfect example of that. Here, language change happens in different social groups, religion and district. Moreover, new lexicon is developed in specific areas.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Acrolect

The discipline of sociolinguistics is a descriptive study of the effect of any or all aspects, including cultural norms, expectations and context, on the way language is used. The term 'Sociolinguistics', first became familiar at United States of America in 1952. After that, in 1964, a conference was held on Sociolinguistics at the University of California. The essays that were read at the conference were edited as a book by William Bright. He gave a definition of the term 'Sociolinguistics' in that book. That is: "...linguistic diversity is precisely the subject matter of sociolinguistics." (*Sociolinguistics: William Bright*) He also told that this 'diversity', precisely language diversity is not geographical or regional. This is actually related with the social hierarchy. So, it can be explained that sociolinguistics discussed about the usage of the language of the society which is related to the structure of the society. The outlook of the society about different language and language community is also the discussed aspect of sociolinguistics.

One of the aspect of sociolinguistics is the descriptive sociolinguistics. Here the main point is that diversity, pointed by Bright. Another stalwart linguist J. A. Fishman commented on this topic: whenever we are describing language-sociology we have to seek an answer. That is, who speaks (or writes) what language (or what language variety) to whom and when and to

what end? The focal points of this question are 'who speaks', 'what language', 'to whom', 'when' and 'to what end'.

Let us first focus on the speaker. While analysing his argument, Bright showed seven 'dimension'. One of that is the speaker. Bright marked it as sender. The 'sender' concept was taken from American linguist Dell Hymns. In an essay titled 'The Ethnography of Speaking' Hymns wrote the character of language is dependent on three parties: sender, receiver and setting. According to him, these are the 'conditioning factor' of a language. So, it is necessary to know the social identity of a speaker. We should know that the speaker belongs to which class of the society, how much is he/she educated, what is his/her occupation. Mostly important is to know that the speaker is 'he' or 'she' i.e. the gender. Apart from that age, family history should be known. In the traditional Indian society, it is important to know about the religious and caste identity too. If all the answers are known, then we can analyse the evidence of the speaker's language or 'sociolect'. The dialect rests upon the society, so it is named so.

Now, if we come to the division of society, then we know that it is vertical i.e. it is like a multi-storeyed building. The topmost floor is acquired by the most educated and cultured people. They have their own language forms. The floor which lies at bottom lives the poorest people. They are uneducated. Their language also has own form. But interesting is the floor that exists in between these extreme two. If we can analyse this model, then it would be easy to understand the language use of the different parts of society. But this is not right to think that this social hierarchy is absolute. There is a party called setting. One speaker can change his linguistic form according to the setting. In the middle class society it is very often that a boy is using different forms of languages with his teacher compared to

the friends. This evidence proves that the social identity is not absolute or self-contained. It is recognised that one of the variables regarding language change is the change of social class. The social identity of the sender is only one factor while discussing about sociolect.

Here comes the second social identity, receiver. In this point comes the question: 'to whom'. Fishman also identified the importance of this question. He stated that it is very important that a particular form of language is uttered in front of whom. In Bengali, we have three kinds of addressing regarding receivers. This addressing depends upon age, relation and obviously social class. It relatively transits from *apni*, *tumi* and *tui* as the receiver is changed. In the aspect of descriptive sociolinguistics it is important that whom a sender is talking to. Language strictly depends upon the hearer.

According to the thoughts of Bright, the third party is setting. It is place where a particular form of language is used. We speak different kind of language in seminar, quarrelling, teaching, courtroom, newspaper. Every location has its own environment of language. A group of English sociolinguist named this phenomenon: Language according to use i.e. dialect or form of language use changes according to the setting. 'Language according to use' has been termed as 'Register'. Linguist Dietmar Rosenthal showed evidence that dialect of some German students changes from university and home. This is also evident in Kolkata too. The students who come from different districts to the capital city speak in the standard dialect in the university campus. But whenever they return home they start to speak in their own dialect. According to the formatting of Dietmar, the own language of the speaker is his/her 'social variety'. But the language that is articulated in interaction, in institutions, at workplace, at formal meeting, is 'functional variety'. This is definitely the change of use due

to the change of context. So, the registers are actually some functional varieties. Fishman showed some evidence of register. The 'setting' influences the language use so much.

When the language or dialect is shifted according to the shift of situation or setting, it is termed as 'code switching' by the sociolinguists. This is an important discussion regarding sociolinguistics because this topic of 'switching' is significant in posing the theories of the subject. This aspect incorporated the articulation within the setting. Because all the topics that one speaker is saying cannot be bold within one form of language. So, 'switching' happens. Fishman noted that not only language forms, but also languages change in multilingual conditions. As an example, the Dutch people who live in the city of Brussels at Belgium hail from the Flemish community. Sometimes they don't even use a single Dutch word in their language. In definite setting they speak French also. Mainly two kinds of French are heard there. One is the office language and other one is the aristocratic one. Third one is the French that is heard at the locality of the Flemish. This is the language of the market. Sometimes they use Dutch too. Actually this depends upon the setting.

The multi-storied structure has been described previously. The dialects and sociolects which deal with 'code switching' is arranged in this vertical manner. On the top of the order lies the Standard form. And at the bottom lie that language which is least respected according to societal norms. In the middle stories there are many varieties. But if we focus on the social communication, there are only two types: standard and non-standard. It is evident that the social respect of the standard form is more than that of the non-standard. Here comes a point of the psycholinguists. They noted that the 'prestige standard form' of any Indian language does not have 'inherent aesthetic or linguistic advantage' than the non-standard dialects. Actually the respect for the standard depends upon the cultural and

historical reasons, which is definitely extra-linguistic. But it is not possible to use the standard form everywhere, if anyone wishes to. Suppose, in a picnic which is organised based on a regional fraternity should hear the language of that dialect. If someone speaks standard language there, that will be unnatural there. When it comes to the question of solidarity of community, then using standard is not right. Linguistic diversity has been respected there. The respect for the standard dialect may be left at home at that time.

But this have to be admitted that standard has the highest status. But this problematic has more dimensions. Because, the people of one society does not always bounded within that one. They cross the domain of the mother tongue. In our linguistic condition we can see that according to the concept of respect for language, specific situation use Sanskrit, Arabic or English. Here these languages are observed as more respectful than the mother tongue. This concept grows due to various social reasons. Scholars noted the most respectful language in a terminology called 'Acrolect', literally means 'highest language'.

2.2 Diglossia

Sometimes it is seen that there are more than one Standard language. A competition is noticed between the two in that case. In the case of Bengali, Sadhu Bhasha and Chalit Bhasha ran side-by-side till 1950. Before 1914 Chalit Bhasha was solely used for writing the dialogues of a drama and letters. In the other sections of the society, Sadhu Bhasha has unilateral dominance. After 1950, the exercise of Chalit Bhasha increased. After the date of 22 March, 1965 when the newspapers discarded Sadhu Bhasha, that variety gradually became limited. It has been replaced as the standard after that. But when there is a situation of competition, that particular environment is termed as 'Diglossia' by linguist

Charles Fergusson. This is his definition: "Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for the most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation." (*Word Magazine: Charles Fergusson*) Fergusson himself also exemplified the Sadhu bhasha (as High Bengali or HB) and the Chalit bhasha (Standard Colloquial Bengali or SCB). He also showed instances of Arab, German-speaking Switzerland, Haiti and Greece. If we consider the situation of Arabic, we can see that countries in the Arabic sphere (such Iraq, Egypt, Sudan) speaks their own dialect which is not understandable by the other community. Respective countries observe their local Arabic as the standard dialect. But when they go to Masjid for religious speeches or lectures at the university takes the shelter of a universal Arabic, which can be understood by the whole Arab world. This language is based upon the Holy Quran. As the children or the common people do not understand this language, this is taught as a foreign language to them. These are definitely cases of Diglossia. The language in the higher story has more respect, this is the thumb rule. Formality and occasion are related with it. In Bengali, we may hear the announcement of a football tournament has been delivered in Sadhu Bhasha. The reason is same.

The term of 'Register', which was mentioned previously, should be elaborated now. In the group of English linguist, Michael Halliday told that Register helps to understand the variety of language use more than language and dialect. According to the, if dialect is 'varieties according to user', then Register is 'varieties according to use'. That means the language

variety due to experience or subject is the 'Register'. It is clearer in the written form. That is why writing style of scientific essays differ from the recording of religious feeling.' If we return to the formulae of Bright and Fishman we notice that Register is the variety created due to the influence of receiver of the message and setting. This variety can happen within different dialects. But it happens more in the written forms.

While trying to find the different layers of the society, the concept of 'sociolect' and 'register' are conceived. Just like that the concept about different layers of a society got clarity. Some scholars admit that the layer division of the society has not been done scientifically here. So, in the society of West Bengal the sections such as 'upper middle class', 'mid middle class', 'lower middle class' does not get clarity. These are just done according to use. Many other variable come here such as black, immigrant, rural dwellers which gets unaddressed. But the language diversity which is marked by the society (Bright calls it extent of diversity) is the main topic of descriptive sociolinguistics.

It is a point that at first sociolinguistics was a discussion of the standard form. The forms which are not familiar were considered as 'other'. Some ridiculed it as distortion of the actual form, some noted those as 'jargon' or 'cant'. Ranging from the scholars to the common people, everyone was snob about the standard form. Speakers or pleaders of 'other' languages felt shy about that. So, if one language was not enough respected, it was not considered for research at the scholarly level. But the outlook started to transform from the beginning of the twentieth century. Sociolinguists started to say vocally that every language is of the same value. Not only the various level or layers but also the languages of different fields got recognition. As example we can say about the language of the criminal world. Descriptive sociolinguistics started to discuss about those variations.

2.3 Contact and Shifting and Attitude

When languages of different parts of the world get into contact, a mixed language is born. Generally, that type is needed for business. This is a topic of discussion of descriptive sociolinguistics. This mixed language is termed as 'Pidgin'. Now, what is the meaning of that word? This word is spelled as 'Business' in simple English. But in the articulation of Chinese people the word took such a form. These pidgin languages are mainly trade languages. When habitats of different native speakers gather at one city to port for the sake of business they have to take a common mixed language. At that time they discard their mother tongue for the sake of occupation. But this should be noted that pidgin can never be a mother tongue of anyone. This is language for special use and a second language (L2). From the ancient times many pidgins were created in different parts of the globe. And this process is still on i.e. pidgin are created nowadays too. Now, the word pidgin word developed from the native speakers of Chinese. They were generally compelled to speak English while doing business at the cities like Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai. A pidgin was further developed in Melanesia and New Guinea region. In this archipelago region, different tribes speak different languages. The problem is that one island does not understand the language of other island. But when a pidgin developed there, it was helpful for the native speakers of the different islands. So, that pidgin developed as the standard language of New Guinea. In the Borneo island of Indonesia a Portuguese based pidgin developed. This is also observed at West Africa. Several evidences can be cited from the historical timeline. The Turkish labours living in Germany developed a German based pidgin for their own sake. Now, we should come to the further developed level of pidgin i.e. 'Creole'. When a pidgin becomes the first language (L1) of a community, then it is considered as creole. This is considered as a

native language. People dwelling in the islands of West Indies have their own creole. Within that, the creole of Jamaica is well known to everyone. Mauritius Island of Africa also speaks a creole.

But language diversity is not the only discussion of descriptive sociolinguistics. Another layer of this discussion is what the speakers think about their own language. This is to be considered that how the different social classes, using different dialect and sociolect think about their language. What they think about other's language should also be taken into account. One part of the analysis should be the vastness and diversity of the languages present in the society. The other part is the account of attitude of the speakers towards that diversity. We can cite some example. In 1970 Professor Howard Giles did an experiment. He played a tape to some secondary school students of England. It played some samples of English language. It consisted of recording from different regions: Queens English (that is the highest standard form known as Received Pronunciation or RP), Irish, German and West Indian English, regional English of Somerset and South Welsh, London's Cockney accent and English of Birmingham City. After that they were questioned that amongst the range of speakers who is the most cultured and educated? More clearly it was questioned that which kind of language is the best? After the answers were received a thumping majority was seen for the RP. Some voted gathered in favour of Somerset and South Welsh, most disrespected are the Cockney and Birmingham city accents. Sometimes these experiments also follow 'matched-guise' method. There one man/woman speaks different languages but it is not informed the hearer. After the language diversity is tested among the common people as a form of experiment, then we can get the thoughts of speakers.

Nowadays, another phenomenon of sociolinguistics is getting very important. That is the concept of situational shifting or code switching. It discusses that how a speaker shifts from one sociolect to another one. This theory is influenced by the 'setting' discussed by Bright. Fishman termed this as 'situation'. In the case of India it is assumed that a person is equipped with more than one language except the native one. So, bilingualism or polylingualism is a primary condition in this present linguistic environment. Every time it may not be different languages but it should be different dialect or sociolect. When a speaker fulfils this condition he/she is marked as 'bidialectal'. But this is obvious that knowledge of every language would not be equal. But a speaker has to use different languages known y him/her while handling different situations. This condition can be compared to the Fleming speakers of Belgium discussed previously. So, we can infer that a speaker has a hold on different languages and dialect. Then he/she has the knowledge of how to articulate it accurately. This knowledge is termed as 'sociolinguistic communicative competence' by Fishman. John Gumperz elaborated the point: 'the individual's ability to speak properly'. This argument is different from the 'competence' conceived by Noam Chomsky. It is vaster. Chomsky only stated about the competence of acquiring one, uniform language. But Fishman stated that a speaker of the society does have one language only, but he/she has a 'linguistic repertoire'. A speaker has grab on many languages and dialect. So, this power is more diverse. If one has control over more than one language or dialect, then that speaker would shift or switch his language according to the situation. This is normal. This is a part of discussion in the discipline of descriptive sociolinguistics.

William Labov has created a method of discussion for the situational shifting within languages. He introduced the concept of variable rules. In the Transformational-Generative

(TG) Grammar two types of language rules are imagined: obligatory and optional. Obligatory rules are where the conditions of the rules are fulfilled, the rules should be applicable. Optional rules are where if condition is present then the rule may be applicable or not. Labov established the concept of 'more possible' and 'less possible' beside the 'yes/no' binary. Variable rules are that type of rules application of which varies from absolute certainty to absolute improbability. Some rules of a 'lect' has more possibility, some has less. If we count the frequency, then we can get an estimation of the dimension of possibility. It is theoretically important because instead of the competence of sole language by Chomsky, the main concept of variable rule is to assert the variability as the right of human. But this concept is not enthusiastically accepted by all.

Apart from that the societal relation and class division between grammar of a language and lexicon is reflected. In Bengali its example is the addressing with *apni*, *tumi* and *tui*. In French there are also diverse forms of addressing. That can be analysed by this logic. So, linguistic attitude is one of the discussion points of descriptive sociolinguistics. What opinion do we possess about the language, dialect and application is discussed. This is also noted that what contrary or tricky situations arise in the society.

2.4 Dynamics

Dynamic Sociolinguistics generally looks into the sociolect from the historical perspective. It discusses about the origin, evolution and extension or contraction of sociolect. Fishman had done this discussion mainly taking the profile of one human. Precisely he observed how the 'repertoire' or language inventory of a person changes over time. It is generally seen that two languages come into contact. When one language community shifts and start to live

within a different language community, the language of the first community experiences some changes. In these cases emerges Bilingualism. The point is that some communities have to speak two languages. If the situation is like that many members from one language community lives on a foreign soil then it is possible to try to preserve their native language. But they have to use the language of that society in which they are dwelling daily. So, the situation is that the communities use both the language with same efficiency. Fishman termed this condition as 'Stable Bilingualism'. But if the community is not so large then their language domain gradually encroaches and at one particular time it is lost. As the new generation has been brought up in the circumference of a new society they get their language from that periphery. This situation is termed as 'Unstable Bilingualism'. In this domain the mains discussion is about language maintenance and death. The stability or instability of languages depends upon the usage of language i.e. what functions of the social spheres are fulfilled by which language. The language which is used in schools, colleges, offices, courts, finances becomes the principal language and the language of the 'external' communities become feeble. In United States of America this happened amongst the immigrant community. They have to adopt English on every sector of livelihood. In case of the culture, all the diverse forms of German, Greek, Italian, African etc. are subverted by the pressure of 'Americanization'. This is one of the main reasons for forgetting the native language. But some 'pockets' of other native languages are still alive. As example we can say about the German and Norwegian groups living in Minnesota, the Spanish-speaking Mexicans and Puerto Rican living in the southern states of US. The Chinese are very conservative about their language. Wherever they are present in US, are able to preserve their language. This is felt if someone visits the China towns at San Francisco and Los Angeles of US.

Generally it is observed that unstable bilingualism is familiar case in monolingual country. On the other hand stable bilingualism is seen on the multilingual countries. That is why English learned people of India have a stable bilingualism within the sphere of English and mother tongue. It is because the functional areas of the two languages are different. It is important that in some cases the possibility of displacement of English is high. That phenomenon is familiar in Ethiopia. Mother tongue Amharic is gradually displacing English there. Fishman informed of such a situation in Canada. In the Quebec province, it was stable bilingual condition between French and English. But nowadays the French-speaking people are doing all their official works in French. So, many scholars think that English will be displaced. If we look at the theory of Fishman we can understand that dynamic sociolinguistics is similar to the concept of diachronic sociolinguistics conceived by Bright. To establish his work Bright travelled in many villages of Karnataka with AK Ramanujam. There he got evidence of linguistic difference between the different castes of people and developed formula of language evolution.

This point should be ended with the experiment done by Labov. Location of this famous experiment was the island of Martha's Vineyard at the state of Massachusetts in the US. There he experimented about utterance of *ai* and *au* utterance amongst the fishing community. He noticed that the younger generation has changed their accent while the older generation have not. He made an inference that younger generation is changing under the influence of the foreign tourists because they think that their accent have a higher status. On the other hand, the older ones are proud of their own culture and accent. Discrimination is done due to these ideas. A marvellous example of this point would be the son of a fisherman living in Chilmark city. This son once moved out of the city to find a

better occupation, but being unsuccessful he returned to his native place. His accent is far more nativized than his father or grandfather! Thus Labov pointed out that in the case of accent there is a tension between imitating a status and being poised to own society, culture and pride. These factors effect mostly on language change.

2.5 Applied Sociolinguistics

According to Fishman the last part is applied sociolinguistics. This is a great aspect of the society. According to Bright this is the seventh dimension in the list. There are lot of similarities and dissimilarities in the points of Fishman. Bright proposed a type of application, which can be termed as 'diagnostic' application. That is seeing the symptoms of language it is possible to detect the features according to the variation of class and caste. Bright also raises some question from the historical perspective: In different social situation, are the formulae and characters of language change are different? Does different sociolects of a same language changes through different sequence? How the history of language is affected when two sociolects come in contact? These are all indexes of diagnosis. The main aim is to find, discover and describe.

But Fishman means something different while referring 'application'. He generally tells about planned application. This application is not deterministic, this is controller. This idea generally engulfed with the welfare of society. Development and correction of the teaching method of mother tongue, better fruitful process of teaching other languages, deciding translation-policy, innovation, refining and correction of writing system, decision about medium of education in different layers, deciding about levels of language-teaching, spelling reforms, standardisation of the writing language, planning about national language and

lingua franca: all these discussions are within the sphere of sociolinguistics. Even in 1956, the geographical state division of India has been created according to the polity of applied sociolinguistics.

2.6 Language Planning

When an administration of a specific area or nation consciously takes some decisions regarding curving the situation and elements of the language or languages of that particular area or nation, that is known as language planning. So, the points that should be present in language planning are: a. language-area: a kind of country or nation where multiple languages are spoken, b. a person or institution who has the power to take decisions regarding language policy i.e. writer, administrator, university, academy etc. c. Measures would be taken to change overt and covert structures of language. 'Status' of that language is determined while its corpus is enriched.

In the western world, many scholars can't imagine a situation beyond the monolingual area. We can understand that problem from the definition given by Weinstein: "Language planning is a government authorized long-term, sustained, and conscious effort to alter a language's function in society for the purpose of solving communication problems." (*Language Planning in Francophone Africa: Weinstein*) Let us point out the incompleteness of this statement. 'Government authorized, long-term, and sustained' terms does not have clarity. These should be explained categorically. And it is not necessary that the 'purpose' of language planning would always be 'solving communication problems'. Sometimes specific decision regarding a language is planned from an emotion. In India, after independence

from the British, this happened. To eliminate the foreign language and placing a language as its alternative was the point behind promoting Hindi as the national language.

Now, the 'primitive' definition of language planning was 'planned action regarding language resources' (*Jernudd and Das Gupta, 1971*). This definition focused on the resources only. This does not say anything about role or place of a language. Christian (1988) discussed different definitions. He commented, the area of language planning is still not well defined. Suppose, Einar Haugen defines language planning as 'a set of deliberate activities systematically designed to organize and develop the language resources of the community in an ordered schedule of time.' It is evident that this definition is created on the basis of monolingual situation. According to Das Gupta the problem of the definition is, not only the development of 'corpus', but also the development of 'status' is important while language planning. But that point is not incorporated within the definition. Also he has objection with the point 'ordered schedule of time'.

In case of Bengali, the concept of administrator or establishment in language planning did not persist previously. There are some examples of some eminent person doing this job. Syamacharan Gangopadhyay proposed that 'Chalit Bhasha' should be used as the language of text books. Pramatha Chowdhury launched a movement regarding the convention of using 'Chalit Bhasa' in literature. So, language planning is not only addressing the 'problem' of multilingualism, but also dealing with issue like language development, language cultivation, formation, treatment, management, modernization and correction.

If we seek the question, that why language planning is needed, then we get the domain of language planning. It becomes clear that language planning is needed due to some language

problem. It may be monolingual or multilingual in nature. First we take an example of a monolingual nation. Ideal example would be Bangladesh. Before gaining sovereignty the sole language of the region Bengali was in conflict with the national language Urdu that was imposed upon them. Actually, at that time establishing the Bengali language was establishing the status of the native people. At that juncture, a historically monolingual region became heated with the conflict of multilingualism. So, monolingual nations can also face the 'problem' or crisis of bilingualism. But what is the problem of bilingualism? Within a variety, role of one language have to be determined. Several crises brew up while framing this job. The role of language in the society and state should be determined. It is not possible to place all languages in all fields. That time it is decided that which language is more enriched and which is feeble. What are the roles? The nature of these jobs is of two types: Horizontal and Vertical. Let us take the example of Sanskrit and Arabic. These two languages are the driving languages of the two main religious groups of South Asia. As they persist parallel they exist in the same plain. Their relation is 'vertical'. They are used in ornamentally and in the religious jobs. But they are not observed in the speech. They people, hailing from the two different groups use different languages for daily use, such as Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Punjabi, Gujarati, and Bengali etc. So, Sanskrit and Arabic have a higher status than these regional languages. Relation with these languages is 'horizontal'. One language took a higher plane than the regional ones. This leads to the conflicts and debates and policy framing of language planning too. The power of one language is related to its status. In linguistics, it is not admitted that one language is 'better' than the other one. Linguists say that regarding the 'possibility' every language is equal. But it is true that at one point of time, role, status and prosperity of any language varies from the other.

This inequality leads to status planning of a language favored by the state. It is evident that all the languages do not enjoy the same respect from the speakers of a multilingual region, so a language-order is made up. Obviously it is made upon the premise of a definite perspective. This would not be the same for different occupations. Sociolinguist, politician, author and common people observe it in his own way. In the part of 'Languages of the Union' in the Twelfth Chapter of Constitution of India, in between the Articles 343 to 351 a specific language order is mentioned. That is:

1. Official Language: English and Hindi.
2. Regional Language: Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Assamese etc. (official language in state level)
3. Language of 'Democracy': Common man can apply in any language

Apart from that in the Eighth Schedule (from Article 344(1) to 351) eighteen languages have been recognised. Those are Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Konkani, Kashmiri, Manipuri, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.

This ordering is completely administrative. From the perspective of sociolinguistics, the speakers are categorised in different way by linguist John Gumperz. This initiates from the less complex societies to more complex societies. He showed the following layers as example:

1. Language of the hunter and secluded group
2. Language of a large tribe
3. Language of complex administration and economically categorised society

He divided these languages in two categories: general language and special language. Special language is not understood outside the community. These are generally code languages. If some groups want to be distinguished, then this can be used. Sometimes the language of few or local dialect also have distinctive features. Standard language lies above this layer. Some scholar also point out the dialect of one speaker i.e. idiolect. And the language planners mention about the role of the First Language (L1). In 1951 experts prepared a report about the position of mother tongue. An order was mentioned there:

1. Indigenous Language.
2. Lingua Franca.
3. Mother of Native Tongue.
4. National Language.
5. Official Language,
6. Pidgin.
7. Regional Language.
8. Second Language.
9. Vernacular Language.
10. World Language.

According to this we can order the languages generally prevail in the domain of India. The order would be:

1. National language: Hindi, English
2. Scheduled Language: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Hindi, Tamil
3. Most used language: 41 languages as medium of instruction, 58 languages as topic of teaching, 87 languages in the mass media
4. Local tertiary language: 190 language forms, 1652 'mother tongue' (1961 census)

This is obvious that these points are developed out of administrative power and hierarchy. Apart from that there are social power equations too. As we have seen in the examples of

religious affairs. This arrangement of column and status is mainly dependent upon the state power and the planners appointed by them.

But whenever the 'status' of a language is mentioned in a society everyone starts to think about the richness of it. How can we understand about that? We have got a definite organised questionnaire:

a) Does the language have its own writing system? Is the writing system compatible in print? How planned is its spelling order?

b) Does the language have enough vocabulary to express diverse concept of academics? Does it contain many terminologies?

c) Is there any dictionary to standardise the norms of the language to the students and intellectuals?

d) Are the grammar rules written which can be taught in the education system?

e) How enriched is the literature of the language?

Answering these questions can lead to 'corpus planning' of any language. This term was first used by Heinz Claus. He described role planning as: "changes by deliberate planning to the actual corpus or shape of a language."

So, it is now clear that graphicization, modernization and standardization are the main tools while planning and framing a language policy. In the case of Bengali this policy is adopted several times, for spelling and grammar. While doing this only the standard Bengali was

taken into account. Gradually the regional dialects got less important as the whole concentration got on this.

2.7 Imperialism

Discussing about imperialism we should point out some question raised by Robert Philipson. “Why other languages, with few exceptions, not prospered?” “How and why has the position of English been strengthened?” “What arguments have been used to justify the continued use of formal colonial languages?” (*Linguistic Imperialism: Robert Philipson*): These are only few. Author raises such questions.

We know that conquering another nation i.e. extending own territory to another’s is called imperialism. Now, in the modern capitalist world, territorial extent is not needed for imperialism. If a capital captures the market of a new area, it can be interpreted that it invaded a new area. Economy is the driving force behind the society. Language works in the same formula. One cannot physically feel the territorial extent of another nation. But their languages are extending day by day. Such as the British people left India 70 years ago, but English did not. We study in English and give some justifications about that. We may not engage in value judgement but this is true that there are several logics behind English being one of the main languages of the country. Some say it was medium of education, some say it as lingua franca of this multilingual.

Philipson also critics the various terminologies used in sociolinguistics. He writes: “Two of the most central labels in colonialist cultural mythology are *tribe* and *dialect*. They both express the way the dominant group differentiates itself from and stigmatizes the dominated group. They therefore form part of an essentially racist ideology. The rule is that

we are a nation with a language whereas *they* are tribes with dialects.” Concepts of higher and lower ‘status’ are made up like this. And while analysing it these norms are not broken.

2.8 Language Space

Discussing Iraq war, David Harvey argues that the US evidently seeks to impose by main force on Iraq is a full-fledged neo-liberal state apparatus whose fundamental mission is to facilitate condition for profitable capital accumulation. According to neo-liberal theory, the sorts of measures that Paul Bremer outlined are both necessary and sufficient for the creation of wealth and therefore for the improved well-being of whole populations. It is this freedom, interpreted as freedom of the market and trade, which is to be imposed upon Iraq and the rest of the world.

It violently repressed all the social movements and political organisation of the left and dismantled all forms of popular organization (such as the community health concerns in poorer neighbourhoods). The labour market was ‘freed’ from regulatory or institutional restraints (trade union power, for example). French Economist Gerard Dumenil and Dominique Levy argue that neo-liberalism was from the very beginning a project to achieve the restoration of class power to the richest strata in the population.

Harvey notes that what former Chilean President Augusto Pinochet did through coercive state violence was done by Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher through the organization of democratic consent. On this point, Antonio Gramsci’s observation that consent and hegemony must be organized ahead of revolutionary action is deeply relevant. A crisis of capitalism was interpreted as a crisis of governance. Actually, at several times it is mentioned that economics are the method, but the object is to change the soul. Thus

another base of the society – speech of the people – varies and changes over the time.

While understanding the changing dynamics of economics, we can study the inhabitants' changing speech pattern.

CHAPTER 3

HOW THE REGIONS SPEAK

3.1 North 24 Parganas

The 24 Parganas were not divided until 1 May, 1986. So, the north and the south parts of these 24 Parganas should be taken into account consecutively. As these two districts have urban-affinity their administrative divisions are very important. North 24 Parganas have five sub-divisions: Barasat, Barackpore, Bongaon, Basirhat and Bidhannagar.

Bidhannagar is an elite township attached with Kolkata. So, it has no such specific linguistic characteristic which is different from the standard colloquial form. But the economic class which generally dwells there are the richest ones of the state. These elite people loves code-mixing of some kinds. English and Hindi words mix up in their speech patterns. Somehow it can be addressed through their maintaining of status. Presence of Hindi-speaking community is also not negligible there. So, this area prefers itself to be called as 'salt lake', not Bidhannagar.

The other four sub-divisions have a common characteristic. All these towns are encircled with villages. The occupation of the villagers is mainly agriculture. Barackpore is little different. Places such as Bijpur, Naihati, Jagaddal, Noapara, Titagarh, Khardah, Belgharia, Baranagar, and Dumdum were known for its industries. Actually it was the glorious times of the British period. Then, the banks of the Hoogly River were considered as the Jute industry belt. But after that it saw a steep decline. But, most of the population of Barackpore is

somehow connected with the industry. The standard colloquial Bengali is familiar here. Also, many people come here from the neighbouring states for jobs. They generally speak Hindi. They are also compelled to speak Bengali. It is a known fact that some Tamil families live at Barackpore for half-a-century. It is a linguistic diversity where Tamil mixes up with Bengali. Barackpore is such a place.

The position of the North 24 Parganas district is very strategic. It borders with Bangladesh i.e. an international border. After India gained independence in 1947, a flow of people regularly entered this district to find some shelter. They are mostly concentrated in Bongaon, Barasat and Barackpore. People who come from Bangladesh have their own regional dialect of Bengali, which is commonly called 'Bangla Bhasha'. In Bengali textbooks, this dialect is observed as 'Bongali'.

There are some tribal communities in this district. They came from the regions of Chhotonagpur. Santhal, Ghasi, Munda, Bhumij, Bediya, Kurmis are frontrunners in this particular case. They concentrated in Basirhat. They have their own linguistic characteristics. Not only that, they have their very own culture too. These speakers have some definite features

From the above dwellers we can categorise the language usage of North 24 Parganas in some specific categories. The following linguistic data has been collected from the Linguistic data has been collected from the essay 'Uttar Chabbish Pargana: Bhasabhasa Bhashakatha' by Kalyan Mandal. He categorically documented the phonological, morphological, syntactic and special features observed in this dialect.

a) Standard Colloquial Bengali: Like every corner of West Bengal, this language has the highest influence in North 24 Parganas. This is the language of books, magazines. This is the language of any kind of media. So, it has a constant aggression on different dialects. These dialects are getting removed every day by this aggression. Actually it is the language of print. So, it gets a strong foothold everywhere. That is why it gradually possesses the speakers.

b) 'Bangal' Language: 'Bongali' is one of the five main dialects of Bengali considered by the linguists. This 'Bangal' language contains all the phonological and morphological features of 'Bongali' dialect. Nowadays, it is the standard dialect of the people of Bangladesh. But there are communities in West Bengal who speak this language. But this strong dialect is today in the threat of extinction. Reason is the power of the Standard dialect. But there is some phenomenon. Like the elderly people speak this kind of language in their home. But the younger generation gradually forgot it. Some people forgot it compulsorily for maintaining the status.

c) Mixed Language: Mixed language consists of generally three different languages: Bengali, Hindi and English. Apart from that many provincial languages of India is mixed up with the standard colloquial Bengali. These mix-ups give birth to a new form. But these forms do not have a particular area. It is scattered all over the district. As this form does not have a form which is universally recognised by all of the speakers, it does not have a standard form also.

d) Language of the Muslim community: Though Muslim community does not have their own language in this district, but the culture and religious practices have some particular terminology which is not present in other religious groups. These words are generally derived from Urdu, Arabic and Persian. Though, living together for centuries made the

language closer to the standard form. A good example is *Pani*. In standard colloquial Bengali the word for water is *Jal*. But this community terms it as *Pani*. This is to mention that in Bangladesh *Pani* is used widely. Some particular words specifically used by the Muslim community of North 24 Parganas follow: *Janaja, Jaynamaj, Fajar, Johar, Achhar, Magrib, Esha, Halal, Monajat, Murshid, Kalma, Mahabbat, Moyajjem, Roja, Gosol, Gost, Nasta, Doya*. These words have a degree of familiarity in the Hindu community also, but these are engaged in the daily livings of the Muslims.

e) 'Sundari' Language: Detail description of this language is needed. This is the language of Sunderbans. Some parts of the North 24 Parganas fall in the Sunderbans. There are total six block administrations in this region. Amongst the local dialects of Sunderbans, 'Sundari' language is the standard dialect. The dwellers of this forest region are connected with the occupations like fishing, woodcutting and honey collecting. We can see that all these occupations are anyhow connected with the forest. Their language can actually be identified as local dialect, as stated by Leonard Bloomfield. As it is the language of Sunderbans it is called as 'Sundari' Bhasha. It is on the verge of decay in front of the steady growth of Standard colloquial Bengali.

List of phonological features:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>aromb^ho</i> > <i>aramb^ho</i> 'start' | 5. <i>c^han</i> > <i>c^hæn</i> 'bath' |
| 2. <i>k^hoti</i> > <i>k^heti</i> 'harm' | 6. <i>jak</i> > <i>jag</i> 'herb' |
| 3. <i>k^hɔma</i> > <i>k^hæma</i> 'forgive' | 7. <i>mejaj</i> > <i>mejak</i> 'mood' |
| 4. <i>mɔʃa</i> > <i>moʃa</i> 'mosquito' | 8. <i>jamaɽa</i> > <i>jamaɽa</i> 'shirt' |

9. *tak* > *t^hak* 'rack'

10. *nouko* > *louko* 'boat'

One sound is changed placed in the middle position of a word (eg 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Vowel goes down and front in the table of cardinal vowel (eg 1, 3), remains at same level but goes to front (eg 2) goes up (eg 4) and back (eg 5). Unvoiced sound becomes voiced (eg 6, 8) and unaspirated becomes aspirated (eg 9). Sometimes sound changes in the word final position (eg 7). Nasal intonation is dropped at the initial (eg 10).

List of morphological features:

11. *amader* > *amago* 'our'

17. *jabe* > *jaba* 'you go'

12. *tomader* > *togo* 'your'

18. *kɔlom die* > *kolomde* 'with pen'

13. *tader* > *tago* 'their'

19. *gac^hete* > *gac^hette* 'on the tree'

14. *or* > *urir* 'his'

20. *dek^hbo* > *dæk^hpo* 'shall see'

15. *eṭa* > *eḍa* 'this'

21. *junbo* > *fonbo* 'shall hear'

16. *ramke* > *ramere* 'to ram'

22. *c^hilo* > *c^helo* 'was present'

Possessive marker changes from 'der' to 'go' (eg 11, 12, 13). Some case markers are also have a different style to articulate. They are positioned in the same place, but the form is totally different (eg 16, 17, 18, 19, 20). Minor sound change happens too (eg 22).

Sundari language has many of its own words. These are more or less common in their vocabulary. But these are greatly unfamiliar in the standard colloquial Bengali. The above mentioned nouns, pronouns, verbs have some familiarities in the city. But these words are

born in the culture of Sunderbans. Local idioms and proverbs have some influences on these also. Naturally, the standard Bengali which developed according to the rules of Sanskrit is not familiar with these. Here are some examples:

23. *kalanto* 'black'

25. *nuko* 'dry'

24. *pak^ha* 'oven'

26. *ṭiṅre* 'jealousy'

Few foreign language words are also nativized in Sundari language. Example:

27. *riḡibɔr* 'receiver'

28. *p^hɔtok* 'photo'

f) 'Kaiti-Kuiti' Language: It is a known fact that many people from the Medinipur districts came to Sunderbans over the time. They concentrated in the Basirhat sub-division. Their language is highly protected within their community. Though, this regional articulation can't be termed as dialect, but it has some distinct features. The locals termed this language as 'Kaiti-Kuiti'. This language is also in the verge of extinction in front of the aggression of standard colloquial Bengali.

Like every variation it has its own phonological and morphological features. Moreover,; some exclusive words are there, which can only be found in this vocabulary. Here are some examples.

29. *peila* 'comb'

31. *mei^hi* 'girl'

30. *hou^h* 'yellow'

32. *mɔddaṭoko* 'boy'

g) Tribal Language: This language is formed with a mix-up of Hindi, Bengali and languages of the indigenous people. This language is totally different from the standard colloquial

Bengali. Actually, a native speaker of the standard Bengali will not be able to understand this language properly. But this language still persists in the language sphere of West Bengal.

All these languages of North 24 Parganas are virtually decaying.

3.2 South 24 Parganas

This district is the southern part of the former 24 parganas. It is surrounded by North 24 Parganas, Kolkata, Hoogly and Purba Medinipur districts. The Sunderban Biosphere mostly lies here and the Bay of Bengal is in the south of this district. It consists of five sub-divisions: Alipur Sadar, Baruipur, Canning, Kakdwip and Diamond Harbour. Like the northern counterpart this district is also a blend of urban and rural areas. So, it has a mixture of population of two kinds. The people who speak the urban language have some polish in their usage of words and choice of the lexicon. On the other hand the people who dwell in the vilages have a more rough and tough speech. As we enter to the deep village areas of South 24 Parganas, the hardness of life can be understood there. It is not a general agriculture based land, but they had to struggle in the adverse climate of a mangrove forest. In this tropical forest there are dangers of wildlife. In their daily occupation they had to deal with it. Also, flood is like a routine every year. Whenever there are natural disasters, the most affected people are the villagers of South 24 Parganas. Due to socio-economic adverse condition, education has developed much here. As this sphere is not so well connected with the city, the speech community still has some features alive till date. But these words are mainly used within the people of same occupation. Peasants, potters, blacksmiths, weavers have their own language. So, the some old cultures still belong to these villages. People

from the same occupation live in same locality. Now, if we discuss about the distribution of population and areas of South 24 Parganas then we can see that some portion of this district is actually extended part of Kolkata. Behala, Baghajatin, Garia are actually parts of the 'greater' capital city. This scenario started to change from Baruipur-Sonarpur and Diamond Harbour and Canning has some features of the non-urban population.

Some scholars divide this district linguistically. They say that there is a major Muslim population in the eastern part. So, there is an influence of Urdu in their language usage. As the western part is bordered with Medinipur and Odisha, there is naturally some influence of these areas. The central part is the mixture of these two features. The southernmost part has its own form, which does not match with any of the previous ones. There are communities who are connected with the seas and oceans. So the whole lexicon of this district consists of words coming from a handful of languages such as English, Odiya, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Portuguese. So, some it is difficult to find the roots of some unfamiliar words. We can see these language features in the following paragraphs. This is to mention that some linguistic data has been collected from the conversation with the inhabitants of some particular areas of the region.

Phonological Changes from the Standard colloquial Bengali. The first list consists of some words are which is slightly deviated from their standard form. Mainly the conjunct sounds are broken up.

33. *skul* > *iskul* 'school'

35. *stri* > *istiri* 'wife'

34. *snan* > *esnan* 'bath'

38. *fukrobar* > *fukkurbar* 'friday'

39. *krome* > *kereme* 'gradually'

37. *goc^hie* > *goice* 'giving'

40. *b^hadro* > *b^haddor* 'decent'

41. *harie* > *haire* 'lost'

36. *fukaia* > *fuike* 'dried'

42. *furjo* > *fujjo* 'sun'

This second list consists of some words which has some phones eliminated in comparison to the standard form.

43. *ɔpurbo* > *purbo* 'beautiful'

48. *rasta* > *asta* 'road'

44. *napit* > *napti* 'barber'

49. *rod* > *od* 'sunshine'

45. *matal* > *matla* 'drunk'

50. *brihojpoti* > *bepoti* 'thursday'

46. *cetona* > *cenna* 'consciousness'

51. *goal* > *gol* 'cowshed'

47. *die* > *de* 'give'

52. *k^hɔbor* > *k^hor* 'news'

The third list is of the words where phones change their forms from the standard ones.

53. *kãc i* > *kõici* 'scissor'

58. *akkel* > *ekkel* 'sense'

54. *car* > *cair* 'four'

59. *bãka* > *bãka* 'curved'

55. *k^hɔmota* > *k^hæmta* 'power'

60. *bæt̪a* > *beṭa* 'son'

56. *b^hikk^ha* > *b^hikk^he* 'beg'

61. *konna* > *kone* 'daughter'

57. *kaste* > *keste* 'sickle'

62. *fjal* > *fæl* 'fox'

The following list is of the morphological variations of the dialect which has been observed in this district.

63. *ami* > *müi* 'I'

66. *kot^hae* > *kunṭi* 'where'

64. *tar* > *ʃæ* 'his/her'

67. *amader* > *amag* 'your'

65. *ek^hane* > *ekane* 'here'

68. *tader* > *tag* 'their'

In some places only some minor sound change happens, but in some cases the whole word is changed.

Moreover, there are some typical words that are used in this language. Though an outsider can understand the sentence or the sense of what they are saying, but it is impossible to understand some particular words. The list of these words will follow:

69. *bond^hu* 'tiger'

73. *kaṭa* 'honey'

70. *b^hafne kaṭ^h* 'kumir'

74. *g^hoṛi* 'sun'

71. *lota* 'snake'

75. *g^hug^hu* 'small boat'

72. *ap^hal* 'wave'

76. *dea* 'sky'

From these words we can see a common thing. All these words are associated with the livelihood of the dwellers of Sunderbans. In their daily hardship, these words come always. As they live by the forest they call it *mokam*, which literally means house. Forest is actually their house. They have specific 'pet' names for different animals which they face in daily life. No wonder that they are familiar only in a small community or in in one district which knows

their life. Some more examples of this specific kind of lexicon is in account. Like the standard colloquial Bengali it has words from Sanskrit as well as Arabic, Persian and English.

Apart from these words, there is specific lexicon for some specific events. Like, there is a ritual of hen fighting. That game has its own words. There are some common pet names assigned to people. Some duplication is in use always. And finally some words are there centring different occupations.

But all these specific word based languages are considered as only some codes now. The younger generation is not interested about preserving it.

3.3 Howrah

Apart from Kolkata, there are only few cities which are assigned as Municipal Corporation. Howrah is one of that. So, it is not to mention that Howrah is a big city. And this city is allied with Kolkata. Howrah station is the gateway of Kolkata. Crossing the river Ganges, one can enter Howrah from Kolkata. So, it is very obvious that standard colloquial Bengali of Kolkata will have a huge impact on the language of city Howrah. Plus many people migrated to Howrah from very old times. Their languages are different. Actually it is a multilingual city, just like Kolkata. The people of allied district such as Medinipur, Hoogly, Bardhaman, North and South 24 Parganas sometimes live here temporarily. In the rural section, there are strictly three fractions. The northern part is Udaynarayanpur and Amta, the southern part is Shyampur and the western part is Bagnan and Joypur. River Damodar flows through this third region. Differing from the urban area of the district, these rural areas try to save their language. Some sentences will be given in the following list. Comparison to the standard Bengali has been done there. The local dialects are selected arbitrarily from various regions

of rural Howrah. These points have been noted during a conversation with local dweller of the northern part of Udanarayanpur.

77. *b^horbelae pak^hi ḍake*
at dawn bird sing-pres

Bird sings at dawn.

78. *æk^hɔn kota jaccis*
now where go-pres

Where are you going now?

79. *fun judu gɔlpoṭa*
listen-pres just the story

Just listen the story.

80. *ami jabu ni*
I go-fut no

I shall not go.

From the above sentences we can understand the typical articulation style of the district.

Apart from the syntactic structure, phonological types are also revealed through these examples. In the next list, emphasis will be given on that, features will be discussed.

81. *uṭ^han > uṭ^hon* 'yard'

85. *gumoṭ > gumfo* 'sultry'

82. *ora >ɔra* 'they'

86. *nimɔntrɔn > nemontonno* 'invitation'

83. *kolji > kɔlfa* 'jug'

87. *baranda > baronda* 'balcony'

84. *ḍugḍugi > ḍubḍubi* 'percussion'

88. *fukno > fugno* 'dry'

In the word middle position a primary *a* sound is changed to *o* (eg 81, 87), here vowel goes to back position according to chart. Sometimes that affects the sound at the final position (eg 83). Sometimes it is the initial sound which changes (eg 82). In some cases, the sound changes its type (eg 84). Sometimes the conjunct sound breaks away (eg 86). The unvoiced sound becomes voiced also (eg 88).

These are some typical features which are familiar in rural Howrah belt. But there are chances that urban Howrah dwellers could not identify these words now, especially their younger generation. They are familiar with the standard dialect now. This happened due to their geographical proximity to Kolkata. There are easy chances when they could visit the state capital. This communication leads to the change.

3.4 Hooghly

At first Hooghly was developed as a river port. 400 years ago the Portuguese developed this place as a harbour. After that it was steadily developed by the British East Indian Company. Actually, the European people tried to reach Bengal through this place. They needed a strong base (such as port), so they chose Hooghly and developed it.

One of the rumours is that the Hooghly name also came from these European Sailors. At that Saptagram port was also very important. One day, when a ship was sailing to that port a sailor suddenly located a rural locality at the Bank of the river. There were many trees named hogla. Curious European asked the name of the tree. Locals replied 'hogla'. The word 'Hooghly' eventually came from hogla. But different opinions prevail. Some pointed out that 'Hooghly' word came from 'golghat' or 'gola'. But some documents show that the word Hooghly was there before the invasion of Europeans. So, nobody is much sure about the

origin of the name of the district. But for the linguistic features this debate about the etymology of the name is quite interesting.

This is widely known that there were some other European colonies in Bengal during the British rule. One of the centres which had such cosmopolitan character is Hooghly district. Portuguese, Dutch, French, Danish colonies were here. So, Hooghly has a very rich heritage as different languages and cultures came in a conjuncture here. As many imperialist powers fought among each other in Hooghly, there are some rhymes regarding that. Hooghly was also economically very rich during the British period. The jute industry stood gloriously on both the banks of Hooghly River. As industries flourished first townships of the undivided Bengal were established here. Konnagar, Rishra, Srirampur, Baidyabati, Champdani, Bhadreswar, Bansheria are some examples of that. People gathered in Hooghly from various parts of the country to work at the factories. So, languages like Odiya, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Punjabi and Hindi are familiar in different parts of the industrial belt. There are some tanneries in Hooghly. This industry was mainly dominated by the Chinese. A small community of them live here too. So, the linguistic situation of this district is very complex. Elements from different languages entered into Bengali here. The following is a list of that.

English: School, College, Chair, Table, Hotel, File

Portuguese: Anaras, Alpin, Alkatra, Peyara, Gamla, Balti

French: Kartuj, Bourgeoisie, Restaurant

Dutch: Iskapon, Ruitan, Haratan, Turup

Chinese: Kagaj, Tufan

These words entered Bengali. But they are articulated in different manner in different places. As it is an allied district of Kolkata, the standard dialect is more or less familiar here. Up to Chunchura, one can observe the standard dialect is not so much violated phonologically or morphologically. But as we go towards the regions near the districts of Nadia, Murshidabad, Bardhaman, Bankura and Medinipur we can see changes in the articulation. We can give a few examples from the essay 'Hooghly Jelar Itihas o Bhasha Parichay' by Pratapranjan Hazra. These are typical phonological features of Hooghly. While characterising the main five dialects of Bengali language, this type was denoted as 'rarhi' dialect. In Hooghly these phonological features can be observed particularly.

89. *kefto* > *kefta* 'krishna'

92. *dud^h* > *dud* 'milk'

90. *ratri* > *atri* 'night'

93. *rikfa* > *rijka* 'rickshaw'

91. *defi* > *difi* 'indigenous'

94. *tæksi* > *tæski* 'taxi'

Final sounds are changed sometimes. The cardinal vowel may be different (eg 89) or the aspirated sound become un-aspirated. (eg 92). In some cases, initial sound disappears (eg 90). Sounds in the middle position also changes (eg 91). Another phenomenon is important. Two sounds exchange their positions (eg 93, 94). But, as we proceed toward the state capital Kolkata, these special features are lost gradually.

3.5 Medinipur

Medinipur is not one district, but three: East and West Medinipur and Jhargram. The east-west bifurcation was done in 2002 and Jhargram was segregated in 2017. As it is a big region, these divisions were done. But the linguistic features of these regions are not so

much different from each other. The eastern part is mostly the coastal region. There are some big town and tourist destinations. Their features of language developed accordingly. The far western part i.e. Jhargram is mostly tribal inhabited area. As this area is densely covered with forest, this is known as Jangalmahal. This Jangalmahal region covers up to three districts of West Bengal. Jhargram is a part of it. This is obvious that life is hard there. This is a part of the Chhotonagpur Plateau also. So, in Jhargram we can see some hilly region.

But Medinipur has a feature different from that of the other parts of the state. People here try to preserve their dialect. In some regions it can be seen some people are speaking their dialects in home. But as they go to the outer world, their phonological features change. But the people of Medinipur generally maintain their speech everywhere. It is nearly same in home and the outer world.

I had a conversation with a local living in the far western part of Jhargram. From there, features of the regional dialect can be distinct. The following are some examples from which we can analyse the phonological features of the region:

95. *bene* > *bena* 'merchant'

97. *k^hoka* > *k^hɔka* 'child'

96. *dokan* > *dɔkan* 'shop'

98. *ɔk^hon* > *ek^hun* 'now'

Sound changes in various positions of the word in comparison to the standard dialect. It may change at the initial position (eg 98), middle position (eg 96, 97) or the final position (eg 95). Vowel position goes down and back (eg 95) and it goes down (eg 96, 97).

While discussing about the articulation of Medinipur some scholar divides it into four zones: west, south, east and north-central. As previously mentioned, if Medinipur is divided geographically, then the divisions would be exactly like this. The southern part is adjacent to the state of Odisha. Language of this population is highly influenced by Odiya. Some features of that language can be seen in their Bengali usage. In the western part, mainly live the tribals. Lodha, Shabar, Santhal, Munda, Kurmi, Mahato communities can be found here. Their dialect was identifies as the Jharkhandi dialect in the five main types of Bengali. Eastern part has many rivers. Agricultural field is also very strong there. So, words related to these the occupation of fishing and farming is familiar here. This area is also historically important. The famous harbour Tamralipta was established in this area. So, some aristocrat Bengali dialects can be found which eventually mixed up with the Odiya. The north-central region has an affinity to Hoogly district, because once this region was under the rule of the king of Bardhaman. So, the Rarhi dialect can be observed here. The Muslim population which dwells in Medinipur region has some specific feature. Their Bengali articulation has some influence of Urdu. Some people speak only Urdu, some speak a mixed one and others speak the local dialect. So, while discussing the features of the language of Medinipur their language does not need special discussion.

I shall give some syntactic structures from different parts of the district.

a) South:

99. *kic^hi* *din* *c^huṭi* *t^hila*
 some day holiday be-past
 Some days were holidays.

b) West:

100. *mui tor fɔŋge jamu nai*
I your-poss with go-fut No-neg
I shall not go with you.

c) East:

101. *rət^her din mɔŋkar ki anondo*
rath-day My-poss much happy
poss
I was so much happy on the day of Rath.

d) North-central:

102. *sɔhɔri jaoa b^hala*
town-loc go-pres good
It is good to go to town.

It can be analysed that there are not much demarcations between the features of several parts.

3.6 Bardhaman

It was previously discussed that the language of Bardhaman is the centre of the dialect 'Rarhi'. This is the place from where the dialect has emerged. So, there is nothing that can be identified as the language of Bardhaman. Moreover, Bardhaman region is now divided into two districts: East and West Bardhaman. As the eastern part is nearer to Kolkata than

the western one, the diversity of east is less. The areas of Kalna, Memari, Jamalpur is less diverse. These are aligned the Hoogly district. On the other hands, the areas of Ausgram, Kanksa, Katoa are rich in its own features. Apart from that the far western part has some regional features. It borders with the state of Jharkhand. Its features are more similar to that of the Jangalmahal i.e. Jharkhandi dialect. Hindi also plays an important role in the linguistic character of these far western areas. It can be seen that language of Bardhaman is sub-divided into areas which is not so similar to one another. In the case of Medinipur, we have identified some diversity. But Bardhaman has much more than that. But whenever we shall discuss the various features we are keeping that under one tent.

From a conversation with a person from West Bardhaman, the typicality of the language has been collected. Those are described in the following paragraph. Here are the phonological types of the language of Bardhaman:

103. *kæno* > *kæne* 'why'

108. *rat* > *ret* 'night'

104. *kɔt^ha* > *kɔta* 'talk'

109. *gugli* > *guguli* 'oyster'

105. *ekʈi* > *akʈi* 'one'

110. *bon* > *bun* 'sister'

106. *gɔm* > *gom* 'wheat'

111. *rekabi* > *ekabi* 'dish'

107. *peʈ* > *pæʈ* 'stomach'

112. *ac^he* > *ace* 'has'

Word final sound is changed from the standard dialect (eg 103), vowel fronting happens. Cardinal vowel in the middle position (eg 106, 107, 108, 110) and the initial position (eg 105) changes its form. Vowel position goes up (eg 106, 110), goes down (eg 107), goes up and

front (eg 108), and goes down (eg 105). Sometimes initial sound is eliminated (eg 111) and extra sound is inserted (eg 109). In some cases, the aspirated sound becomes un-aspirated (eg 104, 112).

Next, some morphological changes happen in this language. Mainly some sounds change regarding those forms. Following are some examples of it. Features of the dialect can be traced from there.

113. *dicc^hi* > *dicci* 'giving'

116. *efec^he* > *eice* 'came'

114. *k^hacc^hi* > *k^hac^hi* 'eating'

117. *amader* > *amadike* 'our'

115. *jacc^hi* > *jacci* 'going'

118. *toder* > *tadike* 'your'

Aspirated sound becomes unaspirated (eg 113, 114, 115, 116). In possessive, the suffix changes (eg 117, 118).

There are also some specific words and phrases used typically in the dialect of this area.

119. *auli mauli bōka* 'talking nonsense'

122. *hakuli bikuli* 'anxiety'

120. *gulgul kōra* 'itching'

123. *nafano* 'wasting'

121. *tikure ot^ha* 'shaking'

124. *gōṛal* 'kick'

Like Medinipur district, Bardhaman has some specific words based on one's occupation. The main occupation in these areas is agriculture. It is one of the districts which yield the most of the crops in West Bengal. Apart from that there are fishing communities in this district. We shall give a list of those specific occupation related words.

125. *munif* 'farmer'

128. *jɔlmaguri* 'oyster'

126. *paṭkoruni* 'homemaker'

129. *pēda* 'lie'

130. *dāṛa* 'irrigation canal'

132. *udomada* 'nonsense'

131. *amac^ha* 'small fish'

133. *kuṭe* 'lazy'

127. *kākuṛi* 'crab'

134. *sāgin* 'fantastic'

These kinds of words are commonly used in the vocabulary of Bardhaman. Also in their articulation, some accent and emphasis are totally their own. But the point is that these words are not understood in the neighbouring district too. So we can understand the exclusivity of the words. But the new generation is not so much familiar with these words. They identify themselves more with the words of Kolkata. There are no techniques which can preserve these words. So, it is the future that these would be gradually lost and become history.

There are some words which directly come from English and incorporated in the vocabulary. We can see which form it took. We are showing some examples to show that how variety of words are nativized to them.

135. *ilekṭiri* 'electric'

137. *jelo* 'shallow pump'

136. *ḍip ṭiukol* 'deep tubewell'

138. *hailiṅ* 'high yielding'

3.7 Purulia

Purulia was initially a little village, which gradually evolved to a city and eventually became a district headquarter. The district is also named after the city. It is the westernmost district of West Bengal bordering Jharkhand. This is to mention that it has well connectivity with the bordering state. Cities like Dhanbad, Hajaribag, Ranchi, Singbhum are well connected with Purulia district. There are some common features of the soil also. Underground water scarcity is a big problem here which emerges as a big problem during the dry season. The other side of Purulia district borders Bardhaman, Bankura and Medinipur regions.

According to the 1961 census 83.26 per cent people speaks Bengali, 10 per cent people speaks Santhali and 7 per cent speaks other languages. If we see the census over a time of half a century then an inference can be drawn: Bengali speaking people grew in this region in the twentieth century. This phenomenon is also interesting that more people have adopted Bengali as their First Language over this period of time. Moreover some tribal communities also adopted Bengali. In casual ways the speech of the rural areas are denoted as 'Manbhumia', which can be identified as a version of 'Rarhi'. Thus, it can be considered under the main dialects of Bengali. Some scholars differ from this opinion. They say that 'Manbhumia' has some similar features with the 'Bongali' dialect which is prevalent in the eastern part of Bengal, which is now Bangladesh. Apart from that, this local language has some features of Hindi also. The reason is Purulia region was within the Bihar (Now Jharkhand) state for a long time. After it is annexed to West Bengal the percentage of Hindi speaking people became 2.43. In the case of Santhali language there is no such influence of Bengali or Hindi on it. But it is evident that the numbers of Santhali speakers are decreasing in the district. There also people who belong to the Mundari tribe. They carry the language

called Mundari. Language of the Kurmi people is Kurmali. There is small community of Muslims who speaks Urdu.

Specific linguistic data of Purulia district has been collected from the essay 'Puruliar Janagosthir Bhasha' by Syamaprasad Basu. We shall discuss some features of that dialect. Here are some phonological features.

Following some phonological features of this language:

139. *k^haie* > *k^haiẽ* 'eat'

143. *dek^he* > *deik^he* 'see'

140. *jaie* > *jaiẽ* 'go'

144. *gec^hilo* > *geic^hilo* 'went'

141. *buṛha* > *buṛḥa* 'old'

145. *lok* > *lɔk* 'person'

142. *korbe* > *korbek* 'do'

146. *lal* > *nal* 'red'

An extra sound has been inserted in the middle (eg 143, 144) and sometimes it is aspirated sound (eg 141). In some cases the vowel is changed (eg 145). In the final position a sound is added (eg 142). Nasal intonation is an important phonological feature here. It comes in various words, may be at word final (eg 139, 140) or at the word initial position (eg 146).

Next, some morphological features are discussed with the help of examples.

147. *jɔle* > *jɔlke* 'water'

149. *na* > *nai* 'no'

148. *che* > *le* 'than'

150. *lokṭa* > *lokṭo* 'that man'

Case markers are changed in several different places (eg 147, 148). *e* becomes *ke* and the word *che* becomes *le*. Negative marker is also differently uttered (eg 149). Moreover this

should be mentioned that it is positioned before the verb, unlike standard dialect. Article is also changed (eg 150).

3.8 Bankura

It is evident that language of rural population is now influenced by the urban dialect or the standard dialect. On the other hand, in a special urban region, some words such as idioms, proverbs, emotional expressions can enter the lexicon from the rural culture. The so called 'Rarhi' dialect is distributed over the districts of Kolkata, East Medinipur, Birbhum, East Bardhaman and Bankura. But it has some own features which differ from the general or urban features of Rarhi. Some scholars divide this dialect in four regions: north, south, east and west. The language of Bankura can be kept in the western side. Language of Bankura district overlaps a zone of another main dialect too. That is Jharkhandi. The western part of the district, which is mainly tribal inhabited, can be observed this dialect. This region is a part of Jangalmahal, which has been discussed presiously. There are several tribes dwelling in the Chhotonagpur plateau. They are Santhali, Mundari, Ho, Kheria, Asuri, Shabar, Malpahariya etc. They possess different languages but share a common language-family. That is Austro-Asiatic. After the Aryan came, several languages started to blend with these such as Magahi, Bhojpuri, Maithili and Bengali. These languages come from a different language family named Indo-Aryan. Features of this several languages hailing from different language families mixed up and created a dialect, which is now predominant in Bankura.

The climate of western Bankura is quite similar to that of Purulia. The type of the soil and the weather has much connectivity. It is very dry. But the eastern part is greener, which is more familiar with the agricultural landscape of Central Bengal. Occupations also changes

due to this. One part has some importance of rivers in their daily lives like Kangsabati, Kumari, Dwarakeswar and Damodar. The other part gives importance to the hills like Susumia, Panchakut, Pareshnath and Belpahari. Apart from that there are class issues also which created a division in the language usage. The data got about Bankura regarding its language variety and culture has been collected from the essay 'Kathya Bhashar Bankura Jela' by Soma Mukherjee Pal.

The folk culture of Bankura has a long heritage. Jatra, Kabigan, Baul gan are enriched the culture of the district. In this case we can use some literary examples here to understand the linguistic features. Because, Bengali text of the medieval period like 'Srikrishnakirtan' and 'Manasamangal' comes from this part. We have to remember that these uses are now discarded in the urban dialect but rural Bankura still uses this. The following is a list of these kind of words which are exclusively used in this region.

151. *ɔʃkɔk* 'foolish'

156. *gator* 'body'

152. *aʃu paʃu* 'restless'

157. *g^hufa* 'learning by heart'

153. *icla* 'prawn'

158. *c^hær* 'thin'

154. *kɔʃga* 'tinned roof'

159. *jaʃ* 'cold'

155. *kaʃa* 'buffalo'

160. *ʃukdu* 'little'

Apart from these words there are many words in this language which are non-Aryan. A major bunch of words were formed under the influence of Odiya language. This is may be for the bordering Medinipur. It is previously stated that the language of Medinipur is quite

influenced by the language of the neighbouring state. Words come from Santhali, Kurmali and Kheriya also. The following are some examples:

161. *ḍahar* 'big road'

164. *c^haṛe* 'fast'

162. *ʃɔd^haṛ* 'fragrance'

165. *kāhu* 'where'

163. *maiṭ* 'soil'

166. *ɔɔb^he* 'everybody'

Next, the list is the phonological features of the dialect of Bankura.

167. *trino* > *tin* 'grass'

172. *ʃial* > *ʃiel* 'fox'

168. *edik* > *idik* 'this side'

173. *kac* > *kec* 'glass'

169. *boiṭ^hɔkk^hana* > *boṭ^hɔkk^hana* 'room'

174. *pa^hi* > *paik^h* 'bird'

170. *kol* > *kɔl* 'lap'

175. *caṛṭi* > *caṭṭi* 'four'

171. *pɔeʃa* > *pɔʃa* 'coin'

176. *pensil* > *pēisil* 'pencil'

In the word middle position sounds are dropped (eg 171), sometimes changed (eg 170, 172, 173) and jumbled up (eg 174). Change happens in initial position also (eg 168). In some cases several sounds are eliminated while uttering a word (eg 167). Some words become homophones (eg 175). Sometimes aspirated sound becomes un-aspirated (eg 169). Type of intonation also varies from the standard form (eg 176).

There is a specific language called 'Bankri' which is familiar in some rural parts of Bankura district. This is not influenced by Bengali or any other language of the urban people. It is able to preserve its characteristics till date. It also helps to keep the culture of the rural

people. Some idioms and proverbs are used in original form in 'Bankri'. Mainly the elderly people use this language. A good picture of this can be grandmother singing a lullaby to her grandson or daughter.

From the scholar we know that this is a rhyme about hunting. The tribal people of Bankura dwell in the Jangalmahal. So, hardship in the mountains and jungles are their daily lives. In this adverse condition hunting was their compulsion for livelihood. Then it became a ritual over a time. Grandmother is describing it to the new generation through rhymes. Language of the rhyme is also their own. We can understand this is a narrative about the hunting game. The older generation is telling the story to the younger ones. There are also the own songs of these people, known as 'Bhadu' song. There are many words which is used from their own vocabulary. The following are from some poems:

murɔder lai jima pɔca mac^he gima

man-poss no-neg limit rotten fish-loc power

Man has deficiency of enough power. (literal meaning)

This is to mention, that the moral values preached in this poems are heavily present within the community or tribes. That is why it is reflected in the poems. There are also repetitive forms to make these notions stronger. So, we can see that the colloquial form here is heavily influenced by the livelihoods. As the urban lifestyle is making inroads here, the very own culture is decaying.

3.9 Birbhum

The word Birbhum comes from the language of tribal. It consists of two words 'Bir' and 'Bhum'. 'Bir' means forest and 'Bhum' means habitat. So, the population lives in the forest

land is the actual inhabitant of Birbhum. They are the tribes of Santhal, Kol, Bhil, Munda. As they have to live in the forest for their livelihood it had a great impact on their language.

While discussing about the language and linguistic features of Birbhum the district can be divided in two parts: north and south. The scholars who study and research about folk culture can get many elements at Birbhum. These two parts are the resource. There is a third part also. It is the south western part which borders with Murshidabad district. In the list of main five dialects, Murshidabad falls under Barendri. This part of Birbhum has an influence of that dialect. In the northern region of Birbhum, the language has an influence of the “Bagri” region. These areas start from Rajgram, Murarai, Chatra, Nalhati, Lohapur, Bhadrapur, Bishnupur and extends up to Rampurhat and Mallarpur. The central part has localities such as Mayureswar, Dakshingram, Kotasur, Mahammadbazar, Patelnagar, Chouhatta and Saithiya. In the southern part there are places like Nanur, Kirnahar, Labhpur, Bolpur, Amodpur and Suri. There are some mining areas in Birbhum district. Just like the west Bardhaman this belt has an influence of Jharkhand. This is due to the reason of a different culture. Dubrajpur, Panchra, Khayrashol, Lokpur and Rajnagar are the main localities here. Here we are giving a list of the names of some villages. The phonological changes of the names and which are actually uttered should be noticed carefully. This is to mention that linguistic data are collected mainly from the conversation with villager living near Santiniketan.

177. *rudronɔgor* > *udlægor*

180. *naijorgram* > *niforgã*

178. *bijnupur* > *bijʈupur*

181. *trigram* > *tirgæ*

179. *srikriʃnopur* > *cʰikiʃtopur*

182. *bɔrɔla* > *bolla*

183. *notungram* > *lɔgã*

186. *majigram* > *majgæ*

184. *nɔlhaɽi* > *lɔlhaɽi*

187. *mɔhodori* > *mudro*

185. *sripur* > *c^hiripur*

188. *gɔŋgarampur* > *gãgoɽæ*

Nasal forms are strictly discarded in this typical articulation (eg 177, 178, 179, 183, 184, 186, 188). Some intonations are changed (eg 180, 181, 188). Conjunct sounds are broken up (eg 179, 185). In some places sounds are dropped and become homophone (eg 182, 187).

Now, two lists would be showed of the same words First would show phonological features of the northern region, second one is of the south.

189. *giec^he* > *gẽic^he* 'gone'

191. *efec^he* > *aice* 'where'

190. *kot^hae* > *kota* 'where'

192. *kouɽo* > *keɽo* 'box'

Nasal forms are seen in some cases (eg 189). More complex sounds are reduced to simpler ones (eg 190, 191). Sounds are changed in word middle position (eg 192).

193. *giec^he* > *gelc^he* 'gone'

195. *efec^he* > *alce* 'came'

194. *kot^hae* > *koti* 'where'

196. *kouɽo* > *kotta* 'box'

Where nasal form is observed in the north, sounds are replaced in the south (eg 193, 195).

Aspirated sounds are changed to un-aspirated (eg 194). Two different sounds become same sometimes (eg 196).

There are some specific words that are only used in this particular region. People hailing from other areas would not be able to understand this. Following are some examples:

197. *paut^{hi}* 'stairs'

200. *piræn* 'shirt'

198. *mokka* 'corn'

201. *ak^{ha}* 'oven'

199. *nidbo* 'sleep'

202. *kãkoi* 'comb'

These are the 'signature' words of Birbhum. If someone can't recognise a speaker of Birbhum otherwise, he or she will be pointed out by these words. As speakers of other district also do not use this, the exclusivity of Birbhum can be noticed easily. These words are also used in their culture also. The type of folk songs that are developed from this district consists of these words. But the younger generation, who is moving more towards the urban lifestyle, is not conscious about this heritage. There is concept of preservation of these 'signature' words of their own district.

3.10 Murshidabad

Murshidabad can be called the district of rivers. Several rivers flow in this area. On the north there is Ganges and the north-east Padma. In the south-eastern part there is Jalangi River. The district is practically bifurcated through the flow of Bhagirathi River. The western part is known as 'Rarh' and the eastern part is Bagri. Geography, climate, flora-fauna, crops, culture and ethnography are distinguished through this. Murshidabad has glorious past. In the Nawab period it was the economic hub of Bengal. The finance flourished centring this area. When the British came they first targeted this place to enrich themselves. During the British period the border of Murshidabad has been shifted several times. This shifting continued after independence also. Finally in 1979 Murshidabad got its stable demarcations. Due to this reason several dialects are mixed up in the language of this district. As the borders were

ever changing many people were included and excluded within the geographical territory. This led to the mixture. Mainly, 'Rarhi' and 'Barendri' dialect have important influence on the local linguistic features. Apart from that people came here from Bihar and the tribal areas of Jharkhand. Also some people of Jangalmahal shifted to this region. Actually, Murshidabad is not very far from Bihar and Jharkhand if we consider the state borders. So, in the early days when Murshidabad reigned through its glorious times many people came here for better chances and lifestyle. Murshidabad was the capital. The mint was situated here which plays an important role in the economy. Many merchants came here for trade. So, a mixed population had been developed in Murshidabad for centuries. Though it was a big city but in the ancient times the communication system was so much developed. So, the villages of this region lived with their own cultures and features.

While discussing about Murshidabad, we have to say about the 27 languages that were found in the field report. Eminent scholar discussed about these. These languages are mainly from three language families: Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and Indo-Aryan. An important Dravidian language in this region was Malpahari. But the field report gave different information. Languages other than Bengali are in the verge of decay. The number of tribal speakers also decreased day by day. We can say about the Kamrupi dialect as an example. Some Rajbangshi people lived here for long time. But gradually they lost their dialect and shifted to the standard colloquial. Some languages of the neighbouring states have also some speakers here. One important example is Odiya language. But today it virtually does not exist in this sphere. Because living in the state of West Bengal the newer generation preferred Bengali over their first language. They actually shifted from their mother tongue due to the peripheral linguistic condition. Due to this appropriation Murshidabad has less

number of bilingual people compared to other districts of West Bengal. The report says if we to a ratio with other part it would look like this, 8.85%: 3.07%.

At one time, Urdu was also considered as an important language. But it eventually faded away. This has a specific communal reason. Murshidabad is a bordering district to Bangladesh, which has majority Muslim religious community. After independence and partition, Urdu speaking communities shifted to the neighbouring country. If we see statistics, it is evident that Hindi speaking communities dropped from 5.06% to 1.49% over a time. This date started from 1931 and ended in 1961. The people dwelled in Murshidabad after this took Bengali as the medium of education. In Murshidabad Muslim speaking communities specifically lived at places like Bhagabangola, Jiyaganj, Ajimganj and Baharampur. If we go back 40 years, we can see that they speak in Hindi in their home. As it was the hub of Nawabi rule there are some aristocratic Muslim families in there district. Today they live mainly in Farakka and Suti. They had a culture if speaking Urdu at home. But they were actually bilingual. One field report noted that in their Hindi usage, many Bengali words started to enter.

This should be noted that linguistic data used in this section have been collected from the essay 'Murshidabader Lokbhasha ebong Kathya Bangla' by Saktinath Jha. The following are examples to show the proximity to Hindi.

203. *uska lar̥ka utpat kist^ha*
his-poss son disturb do-pres
His son is disturbing.

204. *tisko ham bola t^ha*

you I say do-past

I have told you.

We can see that how Hindi and Bengali lexicons are mixed up while uttering a sentence.

They are so mixed and matched that a particular form has been born in this place.

There is a community called 'Bind' dwelling in this district. They are economically weak and backward regarding education. Their main occupation is small peasant, agricultural labourer, vegetable monger and alcohol maker. The language feature has some similarities with Bhojpuri language. They live within the areas of Nabagram and Bhagabangola. But the younger generations are compelled to study in Bengali medium at school. This is evident that the kids from their community do not even recognise the Devanagari script used to write Bhojpuri language. But we should not forget that they have a rich culture in terms of Bhojpuri. They have their own songs. The songs now live within the older generation. This is to be noted that they can speak Bengali very clearly, just as their mother tongue.

The tribal people are now speakers of Bengali but they have their specific words used in between their Bengali lexicon. Here is a list of those words:

205. *kos* 'rice'

208. *jecha* 'bed'

206. *mirjai* 'shirt'

209. *chhipa* 'plate'

207. *dalci* 'bucket'

210. *lahari* 'snacks'

There is a community called Chain who makes up a population in this district. Many years ago they came from Central India and nowadays they live in the banks of rivers Padma, Bhagirathi, Bhairab. They also live in the islands in the rivers. Chains spread up to

Murshidabad, Maldah and Dinajpur districts. The total population may be near 30 lakh. Some scholars noted that Chains are close to the fishing communities. But they are also connected with agricultural field. They use a mixed language of Bengali and Hindi. Previously there were more communities who used these 'hybrid' languages. But over a period of time they disappeared. The Chains remained only.

Now we have to say something about the opinions of Grierson regarding the dialect of Murshidabad. He stated that the central dialect of Bengal, as spoken by the educated class, is that usually taken as the standard of the polite conversation. He also gave some example of Baul songs as example of the local dialect. As we have previously mentioned that it is important to follow the lyrics of Baul song to understand the dialects of Birbhum. Because when these local people write songs, many local elements are cultures are incorporated within it. From there we can trace some evidences of the dialect. While discussing about the different dialects of Murshidabad Sunitikumar Chatterjee divided the Rarhi dialect into two major divisions. Those are south-western and western. These divisions have further sub-divisions: western Rarhi is divided into western and eastern again. The dialect of Murshidabad falls under the eastern one.

If we come to the primary geographical division of the district that is the bifurcation by the river we get some linguistic features. The eastern part of Bhagirathi can be divided into three major parts. Farakka-Samsergunj-Suti area near Bihar border is one of that. Many Hindi and Urdu speaking people lives here. In the western part which is adjacent to the border has great influence of Hindi. Standard Bengali utterance *ami* (Me) is articulated as *hami* there. It is the influence of the Hindi word *ham* (Me). Some Hindi and Urdu words mix up with Bengali here. The eastern part has lesser influence of Hindi. Two, Raghunathpur-

Jangipur-Sagardighi has some Hindi influence. The word *hami* can be heard here, but with a faint utterance of *h*. But nasalisation is very common here. The word *hasi* (Smile) is pronounced *hãji* there. This accent extends up to the neighbouring district headquarter of Maldah. In the folk art forms of both the districts (Maldah and Murshidabad) these accents are familiar. In the border areas of Bhagabangola-Lalgola, Barendri dialect can be heard. Here are some phonological types of that:

211. *amon* > *amun* 'paddy'

214. *nie* > *lie* 'taking'

212. *fofur* > *sosura* 'father-in-law'

215. *cole* > *cɔla* 'going'

213. *jek^hane* > *sek^hine* 'there'

216. *grihɔst^ho* > *girɔst* 'houseowner'

Sounds are changed in the middle of the words (eg 211, 213, 215). Sometimes those are added at the final position (eg 212), sometimes discarded (eg 216). Nasal intonation is eliminated in some cases (eg 214).

Three, the areas of Barona, Khargram, Bharatpur, Kandi has influences of different parts. It has an influence of the Austro-Asiatic language family due the affinity to the Santhali language of the neighbouring Birbhum district. On the other hand, it has some influence of Rarhi of Bardhaman district. The most typical features can be heard in Kandi. following are some examples:

217. *tui* > *tu* 'you'

219. *doɽi* > *dori* 'rope'

218. *ora* > *ɔra* 'they'

220. *niec^he* > *nec^he* 'taken'

Final sound is dropped (eg 217) in some cases. Sometimes, sounds are changed in initial and final position (eg 218, 220). Stress becomes less in some places (eg 219).

In the middle of Rarh and Bagri region lies the areas of Lalbag, Baharampur and Nabagram. The phonological features of this place extend up to the border of Nadia where the localities of Beldanga, Naoda, Jalangi are situated. The features are the following:

221. *tula* > *tulæ* 'scale'

225. *bolc^hi* > *bulc^hi* 'speaking'

222. *peṭ* > *pæṭ* 'stomach'

226. *boḷ* > *bul* 'speak'

223. *poḷ* > *puf* 'pet'

227. *mohaḷe* > *moha^he* 'mister'

224. *boj^h* > *bu^h* 'understand'

228. *ukil* > *rukil* 'advocate'

Sound is changed in word final position (eg 221), it is changed in the middle (eg 222, 223, 224, 225, 226). Sound is added at the initial position (eg 228). Several sound changes in some cases (eg 227).

The following are some morphological features.

229. *ek^hane* > *ek^hane* 'here'

230. *kori* > *koriṅ* 'do'

Case marker is changed (eg 229). An extra sound is added at the final position (eg 230).

There are some specific words used in this dialect. Here are some examples:

231. *osara* 'balcony'

232. *b^hoiṭ* 'leg'

In the east banks of Bhagirathi River after the towns of Jiyaganj, Lalbagh, Baharampur the area of Bagri starts. In the northern region of Bagri, the localities of Lalgola, Bahagbangola and Raninagar are the places. Here the dialect of Jangipur is familiar which has some similarities with west-central regional dialects of Bangladesh. In the middle area of Bhagirathi and Padma there are places like Jalangi, Domkal, Hariharpara, Rejinagar. The small peasants and handicrafts workers are the main population. This region is also extended up to Nadia. Here some specific words are used which has high influence of Arabic and Persian. For that reason they are coined as Islamic. Some typical phonological features are also present in the regional dialect. Here are some examples:

233. *ɔnneʃɔn* > *ounneʃɔn* 'search'

238. *nouka* > *loika* 'boat'

234. *bon* > *bun* 'forest'

239. *tel* > *tæɪ* 'oil'

235. *k^hoka* > *k^huka* 'child'

240. *tetul* > *tætul* 'tamarind'

236. *dokan* > *dukan* 'shop'

241. *narkel* > *larkol* 'coconut'

237. *roga* > *ruga* 'thin'

242. *eʃa* > *eɖa* 'this'

Word initial sound is changed (eg 233) and in some cases it is the middle positioned one (eg 234, 235, 236, 237, 239, 240). Nasal intonation is discarded in some cases (eg 239, 241). Unvoiced sound becomes voiced (eg 242).

So, Murshidabad is a district where many kinds of people met. That has an impression on the language. There are refugee colonies in urban parts of the district. They have their own style of speaking. The handicraft workers have their own specific words. Other occupations like potter, fishermen, weaver have their own style. The Islamic religious community have

some specific words which are not familiar to the others. Apart from that there is a big pace of illegal business in Murshidabad. As it is a district adjacent to the international border smugglers are present there. They have their own codes. But as days are passing, all these are becoming the past only and their space is reducing.

3.11 Nadia

Some explains that the name Nadia came from the 'na' means nine and 'diya' means lamp. This is a popular notion that once a hermit illuminated nine lamps in an island in the Ganges. He did it as a part of his worship. Local people were attracted by that ritual and the name of the place came from there. From its very existence the district is the centre of religious excellence. Chaitanyadev was born here and Vaishnavism also flourished from Nabadwip. So, it has a rich cultural and literary legacy. Because, the medieval texts of Bengali developed at the time was the height of Vaishnavism. Concentrating on the geography of Nadia, we see that it is landlocked within the districts of Murshidabad, North 24 Parganas, Bardhaman and Hoogly. The eastern border is shared with Bangladesh. According to reports, 38 per cent people live in the bordering blocks. There are some towns in Nadia but the populations mostly concentrated in the villages. This is to be noted that literacy rate of Nadia is good.

The sharp population rise of Nadia can be analysed through logic. After the partition a big population shifted there for shelter from Bangladesh. This population have a constant rise alongside the past one. As it is a safe place and has good connectivity with Kolkata the migrants chose various places of this district.

According to the division of language Nadia can be accommodated within the sphere of Rarhi. Geographically it is the eastern part of Rarhi. Apart from that Bengali dialect also dominated several parts of the district. As different types of speakers came from various places and mixed up the impression is on the language. Some places share this mixed language. Important monarchs also hailed from this area. From Bakhtiar Khalji to Maharaja Krishnachandra, all makes up a rich history of the district. For that reason classical literary history is also strong. Sankrit, Arabic and Persian were important to its linguistic heritage. In the time of Islamic rule Bengali language has many Arabic and Persian elements. This language was described as 'Jabani Mishal' by Raygunakar Bharatchandra. Actually the aristocrat Muslim did not use Bengali at that time. They used only Persian. So apart from Nabadwip, many towns like Santipur, Birnagar, Kamalpur were important centres for teaching and learning. But in the lower class Bengali was the sole language used. After the battle of Plassey, the tradition of Nabadwip decayed. After that the language of Nadia developed with the help of Rarhi.

Linguistic data used in this section has been collected from the conversation of two people lives at a village near Krishnanagar. Here are some phonological features of the standard dialect of Nadia.

243. *niramij* > *niramijji* 'vegetarian'

247. *pott^ho* > *potti* 'diet'

244. *dud^h* > *dud* 'milk'

248. *debo* > *dobo* 'shall give'

245. *c^had* > *c^hat* 'roof'

249. *beroc^he* > *berucc^he* 'getting out'

246. *upokar* > *ubgar* 'help'

250. *meg^h* > *mæg^h* 'cloud'

251. *dokan* > *dukan* 'shop'

252. *kapor* > *kapur* 'cloth'

Sounds are added (eg 243) and changed (eg 247) at the final position. Sometimes they are changed in the middle position (eg 248, 249, 250, 251, 252). Aspirated becomes unaspirated (eg 244), voiced becomes unvoiced (eg 245) and unvoiced becomes voiced (eg 246).

The next will be a discussion about morphological features through some sentences.

253. *c^hagole* *g^haf* *k^hae*

goat-obj grass eat-

pres

Goat eats grass.

The extra case marker is added in this dialect. That is a variation from the standard form.

As the refugees entered Nadia in large numbers, its linguistic features has influence of the Bongali dialect besides Rarhi. Barishal, Pabna, Faridpur, Dhaka, Noakhali, Mymensingh, Chittagong, Kumilla has lots of influence on the language. But there was another phenomenon. The language of the refugees was also influenced by the local language. To maintain their working environments, these people started to become bilingual. Some specific features of the language of Nadia also developed. These mix ups can be understood through the following examples.

254. *tahole* > *taili* 'then'

256. *ɾɔkto* > *ɔkto* 'blood'

255. *mitt^ha* > *mitti* 'false'

257. *rajjo* > *rajji* 'state'

Several sounds are changed together (eg 254), becomes alike sometimes (eg 255). Final positioned sound changes in some cases (eg 255, 257). Initial sound is dropped (eg 256).

There is a handful tribal population in the Nadia district. They mainly communicate through Sadri language. This is an Eastern Indo-Aryan language. It is used as lingua franca amongst the tribal communities in the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Assam. It is not unfamiliar in Bangladesh too. Here are some words used by these communities.

258. *ɔɔn* 'eighty'

260. *moʈo* 'fat'

259. *laua* 'goard'

261. *ɔɔgaɽ* 'escape'

But nowadays this tribal population are getting accustomed with Bengali due peripheral pressure. From the education system to the market place, Bengali is the convention everywhere. So, they are compelled to change their lingua franca. Bengali is becoming their lingua franca as it is powerful over Sadri.

3.12 Malda

From Malda the linguistic feature of West Bengal starts to change more. The discussion was about the language of South Bengal till Murshidabad. But Malda is the place where we officially enter North Bengal. It can be called the southernmost part of North Bengal. This district is bordered with North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Murshidabad. Apart from that Malda shares international Border with Bangladesh. It also shares state border with Bihar. After the massive Ganges, Malda has several rivers flowing through it. Mahananda, Kalindri, Fulhar are some of that. According to the geographical division Malda can be divided into three regions: Barindo, Tal and Diyara. The Barind area lies in the northern and eastern part

of Mahananda River. The localities here are Gajol, Bamangola, Habibpur, Old Malda etc. These are the oldest habitats of the district. On the northern banks of Kalindri river lies the Tal area. Ratua, Chanchol, Harishchandrapur are the areas there. This area is mostly flooded during the rainy season. And the Gangetic plains are called Diyara. Kaliyachak, Manikchak, Ratua are the areas within that.

Whenever discussing about the demography of Malda district we can say there are large Muslim communities present here. After that there are Hindu communities such as Brahmbhat, Rajput, Khatri, Baishya, Baidya etc. According to the regions linguistic features change. We can distinguish these features in three sub-groups: a) Style of Barinda, Barin, Katal (This is common in Gajol, Bamangola, Habibpur, Old Malda) b) Style of Khotta This is common in Kaliachak, Manikchak, Ratua) c) Style of Chanchal (This is common on Chanchal, Harishchandrapur). We shall discuss the styles accordingly.

Some linguistic data are gathered from a conversation with a dweller from Malda town, which is located in the southern part of the district.

a) Barinda: These are the oldest habitats of Malda district. The ethnic group speaking Barinda are Koch, Rajbangshi, Palia etc. Their linguistic features are more or less similar with that of the Dinajpur, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, Cochbehar. There is a large Muslim community who speaks this language. Before independence, Malda district was formed in 1913. It was formed taking regions of Purnia from Bihar, Rajshahi from Bangladesh and Dinajpur. Previously it had good economic and administrative relation with Katihar, Bhagalpur, Rajmahal, Sahebgunj. So, the 'Bind's came from Bihar to settle here. The people of Musahar

community came from Jharkhand. They mainly migrated to Maldah in the second half of nineteenth century.

The linguistic features of this area are unique. Here are some examples.

262. *tɔbla* > *table* 'percussion'

268. *miṭ^ha* > *miṭ^hɔ* 'sweet'

263. *tɔk^hon* > *tek^hon* 'then'

269. *bie* > *beha* 'marriage'

264. *keho* > *kehu* 'someone'

270. *kæmon* > *kænoŋ* 'how'

265. *kapoɾ* > *kapuɾ* 'cloth'

271. *foja* > *foja* 'straight'

266. *maŋfo* > *mɔŋfo* 'meat'

272. *fokol* > *foɟol* 'everyone'

267. *maji* > *mɔji* 'aunt'

273. *dokk^hin* > *dok^hin* 'south'

Several sounds are changed together in some cases (eg 262, 270, 271). Sounds placed in the middle of a word changes (eg 263, 265, 266, 267, 271). Vowel position goes up and front (eg 263), goes up (eg 265, 266, 267) and goes down (eg 271). Unvoiced sound changes to voiced sound (eg 272). Sometimes the sound placed in the final position changes (eg 264, 268). Sound is dropped also (eg 273).

If we look at the morphological changes several points can be observed.

274. *bina* *ṭakae* *kam* *hɔbi* *ni*
 without money-obj work do-pres No-neg

Work will not be done without money.

275. *hamar* *tɔne* *carṭa* *muṭi* *ano*

me-poss for four puffed rice bring-pres

Bring four puffed rice for me.

276. *g^hoṛak eiṭe nie ejo*

horse- Here-loc bring come-

obj pres

Bring the horse here.

Morphological features: 1) Case markers are used before the noun. 2) Some case markers are unfamiliar. 3) Some case markers change.

Like every other regions, Malda has some definite words which are enclosed within their border. Those are specific to the district. These words are familiar in their folk culture. From there it came to the livelihood of the common people. Few examples are the following:

277. *k^hastana* 'tired'

279. *nahiri* 'breakfast'

278. *gan̄gi* 'water'

280. *mɔ̄sail* 'drawing room'

b) Khotta: In the ancient Magadh kingdom the language of the common people was Magadhi or Magahi. In the eastern borders of Magadh, the Purbi Magahi language was prevalent. This area was in touch with Bengal for financial and administrative reason. So, on the north-east region of Magadh, a mixed form of Magahi and Bengali was common. This was common in Malda too as it is the border of Bihar. Actually, the people dwelling in the western part of Malda district came from different parts of Bihar over the time. Grierson noted language of this region as an evolved form of Magahi and that is identified as Khotta. Eventually, Khotta was mixed up with Bengali in Malda. In the older generation of Chain community there are some evidences of Khotta. This is to mention that Khotta consists of

elements from languages like Maithili and Bhojpuri. There are different opinions regarding the origin of the word Khotta. Some say that the language of Kurmi people are called 'Kural'. Some pronounce this 'Kural' words as 'Kortha'. In the western areas of Manbhum, this 'Kortha' is called as 'Khotta'. The word can be found in the old tradition of Mangalkabya too.

Now, we shall discuss about some of the phonological variations of the language.

281. *gɔrom* > *gærom* 'hot'

285. *pa* > *pã* 'leg'

282. *ɔrda* > *pærda* 'curtain'

286. *nɔea* > *lɔea* 'new'

283. *ʃap* > *ʃãp* 'snake'

287. *nodi* > *lodi* 'river'

284. *hat* > *hãt* 'hand'

288. *apon* > *æppæn* 'own'

The vowels in the middle position of words changes (eg 281, 282). Nasal emphasis added (eg 283, 284, 285) and discarded (eg 286, 287) too. Duplication happens in some places (eg 288).

Then, some morphological characteristics are shown which are very different from the standard Bengali. Here are some examples:

289. *ami* > *hɔmmo* 'I'

291. *tu* > *tui* 'you'

290. *amra* > *hɔmrari* 'we'

292. *o* > *u* 'he/she'

Sounds are added in various positions in all the examples.

As it is a mixed language of two different regions, there are some specific words which is not known to the non-speakers of that community. Here are some examples:

293. *aṭapaḷi* 'close'

295. *kuṭum* 'guest'

296. *kʰɔlpa* 'tailor'

297. *bʰaij* 'sister in law'

294. *qʰolmɔl* 'loose'

298. *carak* 'lamp'

Due to the pressure of Bengali, these characteristics are in the verge of decay. It is used as lingua franca. At the village level administrative sections all the works are done in Bengali. So, these speakers have to learn that language for livelihood.

3.13 Dinajpur

After partition of Bengal, a part of Dinajpur was incorporated with West Bengal, naming the district West Dinajpur. On 1 April 1992 that district was bifurcated and two district were created: North and South Dinajpur. So, actually the district is trifurcated. Because the eastern part of Dianjpur exists in Bangladesh. But at one time it was one socio-economic region. So, there are cultural similarities as well as linguistic similarity. We are describing the location of Dinajpur considering the West Bengal part as one. Darjeeling district lies on the north and Malda on the south. It shares the western border with Bihar and the eastern with Bangladesh. In the northern part there is a small potion which borders Nepal.

While discussing the linguistic features Dinajpur should be divided into two regions: north and south. The agriculture based occupants generally hails from the Rajbangshi community. There is also a number of people from the Muslim religious community. Non-tribal

population is also not outnumbered. But the villages of Dinajpur are inhabited by the tribal. Munda, Oraon, Santhal, Kora, Lodha, Mahali people dwell here. As it is a border district of Bihar, there is a large Hindi speaking community too.

Now, if we come to the discussion of Bengali dialect of Dinajpur we find Kamrupi. The different communities, who speak Bengali, use this dialect. Actually it is the lingua franca of Dinajpur. This is noted that this dialect is familiar in the Bangladesh part of Dinajpur too. While surveying the different dialects of Bengal Grierson named this as 'Rangpur dialect'. Later, while editing the Linguistic Survey of India, he renamed it as 'Rajbangshi dialect'. From his writings: "The Rajbangshi dialect bears many close points of resemblance to the dialect of East Bengal." But Sunitikumar Chatterjee noted this language as the 'Northern dialect of Bengali' and showed its affinities with Asamiya language. According to Sukumar Sen, Rarhi and Barendri was one dialect presiously. Later, under the influence of Bangali and Bihari, the language of this region becomes detached from Rarhi. Some scholars noted its close relation with Pali and Prakrit language. They say that this may be the origin or the ore of Bengali. If we look into the literatures of medieval era, popular text 'Srikrishnakirtan' bears some features of the language of Dinajpur. In the heritage of Mangalkabya, this language can be found.

The linguistic datas that has been gathered in this section has been collected from the essay 'Bangla Bhashar Dinajpuriya Rup o Tar Uchchharan Boishishtya' by Dhananjay Ray.

Now, we shall discuss about some phonological characteristics of the dialect of Dinajpur. Following are some examples:

299. *kat^ha* > *kat^ha* 'talk'

300. *gola* > *gala* 'neck'

301. *goṛa* > *gɔṛa* 'root'

305. *fiffo* > *fif* 'follower'

303. *nɔbanno* > *nɔban* 'festival'

302. *joubɔn* > *joibɔn* 'youth'

304. *ɟɔmpotti* > *ɟɔmpoti* 'property'

306. *k^hub* > *k^hib* 'very much'

Sounds in the middle positions changes in different manners at different cases (eg 299, 300, 301, 305, 306). Duplication is eliminated (eg 302, 303, 304).

Morphological features that are seen in the dialect of Dinajpur are following:

307. *amar dɛa hɔe*

I-poss pity have-pres

I feel pity.

308. *tor kɔt^ha mūi buj^ha pahau*

your-poss words me understand Happen-pres

I have understood your words.

There are some specific idioms, proverbs and words used in the language of Dinajpur. The following is a list of those words:

309. *kalla* 'neck'

312. *c^hoa* 'son'

310. *haus* 'love'

313. *bonuf* 'wife'

311. *ut^hal* 'vomit'

314. *reji* 'knife'

Dinajpur has some area specific languages. Such as Balurghat region has 'Kotibarshiya' folk language, Raigunj has 'Birati' or 'Uttari' folk language and Islampur has 'Kaithi' or 'Suryapuri' folk language. The 'Kotibarshiya' language has some evidence in the fourteenth century epic titled 'Gorakkha Vijay Kabya'. Actually this is the one of the oldest language of this region. So it is known as the 'Mother of Native Tongue' of the area. 'Birati' or 'Uttari' is generally considered as the Indigenous language. It is a common tale that in the time of Mahabharata this land was the birthplace of King Virata. Thus, the language was named. The name 'Suryapuri' came from the area of 'Suryapur' situated in Bihar. The old community dwelling in this sphere are also known as 'Suryapuri' as it was a part of Bihar previously. It is noted that there are some familiar Urdu words present in this language like 'mehman', 'sharifa', 'turi' etc. There is also a language called 'Kayethi' which is present in this region. Not only Islampur its territory is extended up to Dwarbhanga, Bhagalpur, Munger etc. areas of Bihar. Though this language has its own script but it is written in different way in different places. According to the dominance of the local language it is written in Bengali, Devnagri or Urdu. In the old times the script was used in legal matters. The most notable point is that local people call it 'Desi Hindi' nowadays. But all these diversity is fainting day by day.

3.14 Cooch Behar

Tribals, Hindus and Muslims of Cooch Behar speak a dialect of Bengali language. There is a huge debate that what category should it fall into? Some consider it as Kamrupi. It is one of the five main dialects of Bengali language. But scholars note that it should be considered as Rajbangshi. Their logic is Rajbangshi language is extended from the lower Assam valley to the whole of North Bengal. In the 'Origin and Development of Bengali Language' Suniti Kumar Chatterjee noted Rajbangshi as Kamrupi language. On the other hand Grierson noted

the language of Cooch Behar region as Rajbangshi. They people who came from Bangladesh after the partition, speak in the local dialect also. Apart from the Rajbangshis there are many tribes. In the census of 1971 there was handful of tribal people seen in the district. There were 68 mech, 1891 Rava, 898 Garo and 3 Lepcha people. At that time number of Rajbangshi was 41, 8893. In 1991 the number increased to 86, 9578.

It is known from writings of many intellectuals that Cooch Behar kingdom was consisted a large area. Naturally many dialects prevailed over that vast region. Culture was vivid. In the course of time, as the kingdom crunched, the culture of Rajbangshis became prevalent. Though Rajbangshi is not considered as a scheduled language like Bodo, but it has its own features. The following are some of its phonological features. The data has been collected from the essay 'Cooch Behar Jelar Kathya Bhasha' by Ranajit Deb.

315. *aj* > *aji* 'today'

321. *langol* > *nangol* 'plough'

316. *pak^{hi}* > *pok^{hi}* 'bird'

322. *am* > *ram* 'mango'

317. *ɔfuk^h* > *afuk^h* 'illness'

323. *rand^{hi}* > *and^{hi}* 'cook'

318. *gɔla* > *gala* 'neck'

324. *poka* > *pɔka* 'insect'

319. *jɔnoni* > *jɔloni* 'mother'

325. *fad^{hu}* > *faud^h* 'saint'

320. *ɔbost^{ha}* > *abost^{ha}* 'situation'

326. *pata* > *pat* 'leaf'

The final sound of a word sometimes added (eg 315), sometimes excluded (eg 326). The sound of initial position changes (eg 317, 320), added also (eg 322). Sometimes it is the reverse: the initial sound is eliminated (eg 323). The sound situated in the middle position of

word changes (eg 316, 318, 324). Nasalisation is avoided (eg 319, 321). Jumbling up happens too (eg 325).

Next, some morphological features of the dialect will be shown through an example.

327. *kucbihar hate p^halakata b^hale dure*

cochbehar from falakata pretty far

Phalakata is pretty far from Coochbehar.

In this case, the marker has been changed from the standard form.

All these features are seen in various dialect of Cooch Behar. But as time is proceeding, they are becoming unfamiliar. The process of slow extinction is mainly seen in the urban and the semi-urban areas. People who are close to the culture of Kolkata also adopt the latter one.

3.15 Jalpaiguri

Jalpaiguri administrative district was formed in the British period on 1 January, 1869. After partition, some areas were included to Bangladesh. So, the area of the district became smaller. But culturally it is very diverse till date. As it is an important financial point and the gateway to the north-eastern India as well as Nepal and Bhutan, many kinds of people gather here. It shares two international borders. This district lies at the foothills of Himalayas. Many rivers such as Mahananda, Tista, Torsha, Jaldhaka comes down from the hills and flows through this district. It has also a large scale of tea estate.

The ethnography of this district is very much associated with forest, which is popularly known as the Terai region. In old times tribal communities from the Mongoloid ethnic background (such as Coch, Mech, Tharu) were the dwellers. According to Suniti Kumar

Chatterjee these dwellers entered India near a time of 1000 BCE. Apart from that many people accumulated in this district after the establishment of tea-industry. More tribal population came from Jharkhand. Labourer came from Nepal too. According to census there are estimated 18000 tea-labours in Jalpaiguri. There are 31 tribes live here. Among them Santhal, Munda, Mahali, hails from Austric group and Orao, Malpahari hails from Dravidian group. After partition people took refuge from the eastern part of Bengal which was then included into Pakistan. But within this dynamic sphere the Rajbangshi remained its dominance till date. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee has an opinion regarding the ethnography of the region. He said that the Rajbangshi are Mongoloid and Dravid and Austric mixed with them. After taking Hinduism, they discarded Bhot-Barmi and accepted Bengali language. Grierson had a similar opinion regarding this point. The fact is that at the end of nineteenth century the Koch community started to identify themselves as Rajbangshi. 1921 census report states: "... At the census of 1911 the Koches were enumerated as belonging to the Rajbangshi Caste. In the statistics of 1921, Koches are treated as separate from Rajbangshis. In 1901 many Koch in North Bengal were returned as Rajbangshis." There are Muslim communities belonging to Rajbangshi also.

As the Jalpaiguri district consists of various tribes, the linguistic diversity of the region is multi-dimensional. In 1961 census, Jalpaiguri was denoted as Multi-lingual district and it has 151 original languages. There are 8 foreign languages and 42 are unclassified. In the rest 101 languages 24 are scheduled language and 78 are dialects. 46 are from Indo-Aryan family, 19 are from Austric, 12 are from Dravid, and 24 are from Bhot-Barmi. According to 1971 census among these languages Bengali, Hindi, Nepali and Kurukh-Oraon has speakers over lakh. Munda, Santhali and Mech have speakers ranging from 20000 to 50000. Other languages

have speaker numbers less than 20000. According to modern statistics, Bengali (Rajbangshi or Kampuri dialect) speakers make up to 63.66% speakers of the district.

It is evident that though Jalpaiguri is a multilingual district, the principal language of this district is Bengali. In the urban areas Bengali is the language of majority, but it is minority in tea garden and hill areas. Some areas like Meteli, Nagrakata, Kalchini has mostly Hindi speakers. Nepali is the main language in the Birpara region. There is also a link language conventional in this region: Sadri. As the tea tribes have their own languages they need a common language to communicate with each other.

After gathering this information, I had a conversation with a school teacher in Chyangmari village situated in the Gorumara National Park. The phonological features are observed:

328. *ram* > *am* 'ram'

333. *gram* > *garam* 'village'

329. *rasta* > *asta* 'road'

334. *proja* > *pɔja* 'tenant'

330. *lal* > *nal* 'red'

335. *st^han* > *t^han* 'place'

331. *boka* > *bɔka* 'foolish'

336. *ɔim* > *ɔima* 'egg'

332. *dola* > *dɔhola* 'swing'

337. *forir* > *foril* 'body'

Sounds are dropped in the initial position (eg 328, 329, 335) and added at the final position (eg 336). Nasal tone has been discarded (eg 330). In some cases, sounds are changed in the middle position (eg 331). Counjunct sounds are rejected (eg 333, 334).

Following morphological features are observed, which can be found in the following sentences.

338. *mui baʀi jai*

I home go-pres

I go home.

339. *til tʰaki tæl hɔe*

little from big happen-pres

Big things happen from little ones.

340. *jɔlote macʰ tʰake*

water-loc fish live-pres

Fish lives the water.

Moreover, there are specific words used in the regional dialect of Jalpaiguri. Scholars note that these words are incorporated in their lexicon from Kamtapuri language. As specific observation is not done on this occasion, examples are not shown.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS

1.1 Observation

While terminating the observations, we should analyse the situation critically and based on the theoretical frameworks that have been proposed previously. It is evident that there will be a tension if two languages are used simultaneously. And this is true without exception, that the more powerful language will win the 'battle'. This is inevitable. There are definitely some reservations and affections for the native language. But ultimately that does not help a language to survive. The more powerful one would eventually conquer over the weaker one. Because, powerful has the state in its backing. Let us look at the different regional indigenous languages of West Bengal. It is impossible for them to fight with Bengali. The younger generation, who learns at the school, have to take Bengali as their medium of instruction. It is not by choice, but by compulsion. If a child learns every topic in Bengali, it is very spontaneous that he or she will adopt Bengali as his or her language. The older generation who do not have such enlightenment of education are more careful about restoring their native language. Moreover, they are not accustomed with Bengali so much. It is easy for them to maintain their own language.

If indigenous languages are replaced by dialects, outcome remains the same. Because the dialect communities are that kind of groups who does not use standard dialect as their native one. Let us show some examples. There are the mobile people such as business or service person. They have to deal with the market for daily earnings. As they deal in the

market, they speak in Bengali as it is universally accepted. They use it for their survival. The question of status also works within this frame. We can observe that the native speakers who came in contact with the outer world have not been able or conscious to restore their language. Those who went outside the community and observed standard Bengali usage definitely noticed that the people living in the higher social hierarchy use this language. The native dialects used by those communities whose 'standard' is not so high in the society. So, they are trying to imitate their language. Actually it is just imitating the culture of a 'superior' one. Language is a part of that act. Village near Santiniketan would be a perfect example of this. Older generation speaks Santhali there. They respect their cultures by arranging the house in traditional patterns, wearing clothes of the community and drawing tattoos on skin. Their Bengali is also not so fluent. It is heavily influenced by Santhali. Not only various Santhali words are mixed up in their vocabulary, but also phonological and morphological changes from the standard Bengali dialect are noticed. They are conscious about their language. On the other hand the younger generation speaks fluent Bengali. They study in Bengali medium and are more accustomed with the exposures around them, such as television and mobile phone. People who have to spend a long time outside the village for their occupation have fluency in Bengali too.

If we discuss this topic in a more analytical way then first we have to make a point on power. Because in the sociology of language takes a major role. The language having a higher status has relationship with the state power and the lower layers are compelled to use that. If some community does not use Bengali their vocabulary assimilates some words. Those words are used in between their Santhali language. Sometimes they may shift from speaking in native language to Bengali. Both kinds of 'code shifting' are noticed in that case.

Fishman described this phenomenon as situational shifting. The speakers are shifting from one language to another. Situation compels the speaker to do so. It is the need of the ambience. In a multilingual space like West Bengal this is mostly needed. Sometimes this is needed due to religious points. Such as Hindus use Sanskrit, Muslims use Arabic and few hill tribes use Tibetan in their religious affairs. So, this is clear that the domination of standard Bengali grew due to its political, religious and social power.

We should go by specific regions. In West Bengal the Standard Bengali is the 'big' language while the regional dialects are the small. Under the greed of the big, the smalls are in great threat. In the time of globalisation the aggression of the big are just escalated. People are Sunderbans are no exceptions. They are also attracted to the statuses of Bengali than that of Sundari and their regional dialect. The power of standard eventually leads to the extinction of several regional dialects. The case is same in Sunderbans and other regional dialects of Medinipur, Bardhaman, Nadia, Birbhum, Malda, Dinajpur facing a similar crisis. Here the case of Sanskrit, Hindi, Arabic, and Urdu should be noted. Though these languages are not as powerful as Bengali in the linguistic domain of West Bengal but they have a widespread presence across the border. So they are surviving due to their importance in the religious affairs.

If we come to the point of imperialism, it is evident that Bengali is eventually growing in the areas of other languages. The language sphere of Bengali in West Bengal is growing at the cost of reduction of the space of other languages. This can definitely be termed as 'linguistic imperialism'. The language are which was once governed by Santhali is now dominated by Bengali. One day will come when Bengali will be unilaterally used there. This is now admitted that there are major and minor languages in one space. Some languages are more

important the others. We should admit this discrimination. This is a free flow. It cannot, rather should not, be curved. But we should also admit that the community which speaks less important language are less relevant in the societal hierarchy. If someone has to gain importance in the society he/she has to know the 'epitome' language very well. If someone wants to go to the centre or 'hegemony' of any work, the language of the top order should be learnt. It is true no one can do the best job in West Bengal until he/she is fluent in Bengali. He/she may do something but that would be far away from the limelight. So, gaining importance in society is directly proportional to the learning of the language of dominance. One universal example will follow here. If someone wants to become a good scholar or intellectual in any subject, he/she have to learn English well. Otherwise finest work would be marginalised. Not being judgemental, the true incidents are only delivered here for the analysis. While, traversing the territorial extent of Bengali from the Sunderbans to Cooch Behar, this same logic can be used. Logic of governing a state is also familiar. Same language is helpful regarding that. So, from Sundari to Mech, all are appropriated with Bengali. Actually this is important that how a language is posed or projected by the state. Sometimes facing string movements the state gives important to specific regional dialects. But that is not the policy of the capital or imperialism. That is the compulsion of keeping the state system alive. Actually every state wants to promote one language. That promoted nationalism and keeps the nation as 'one'. That helps to run a safe government. If every district of West Bengal starts to speak its own dialect it will be tough for the hegemony of Kolkata to dominate all over territory. Some may want autonomy. That is why; language is the base of ruling a nation and Bengali is that tool in West Bengal.

At first there was a discussion about ecolinguistics. The analysis should be concluded with that point. West Bengal is taken as a linguistic ecology here where several languages dwell. There are various languages present such as a biodiversity or linguistic diversity. But as the diversity is under threat for the greed of the powerful, small languages are also under threat for the mighty one. The mighty ones may be the driving force of the society but they operate through language. They use powerful languages as their tool. So, the importance of this work is to keep archive diversity, which can help the voice for a stable ecosystem.

"There is by now a well-entrenched and very respectable branch of sociolinguistics which is concerned with describing the world of globalization from the perspective of linguistic imperialism and 'linguicide' (*Phillipson 1992, Skutnabb-Kangas 2000*), often based on particular ecological metaphors. These approaches... oddly assume that wherever a 'big' and 'powerful' language such as English 'appears' in a foreign territory, small indigenous languages will 'die.' There is, in this image of sociolinguistic space, place for just one language at a time. In general, there seems to be a serious problem with the ways in which space is imagined in such work. In addition, the actual sociolinguistic details of such processes are rarely spelled out--languages can be used in vernacular or in lingua franca varieties and so create different sociolinguistic conditions for mutual influencing." (*Jan Blommaert, the Sociolinguistics of Globalization. Cambridge University Press, 2010*)

1.2 Conclusion

This is evident that language is one of the bases of our society. In India, it is truer. After independence when the administrative divisions had been created as 'state', those were primarily based on linguistic preference of specific regions. India has two official languages:

English and Hindi. But many of the states have its own official languages which is different from the official language of the Central administration. Thus the federal structure is mostly dependent on the languages of the regions. As the nation is divided linguistically, it is evident that how languages play an important role in the administration. But there is other side of the coin. As the states are created on the basis of Majority language, locally one language is promoted and it appropriates the other smaller voices such as dialect, indigenous languages. In West Bengal this majority language role is played by the Bengali. But this paper tried to document the other languages present in the linguistic sphere of the state. It shown that how those languages are under threat as the territory of the standard Bengali is increasing. This paper is produced with the help of documents and theoretical backing both. This holistic work will help to understand how the languages other than Bengali prevails in West Bengal and what are their present conditions.

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APPENDIX

The three following charts interprets some data through pie chart which have been discussed in the thesis in details:

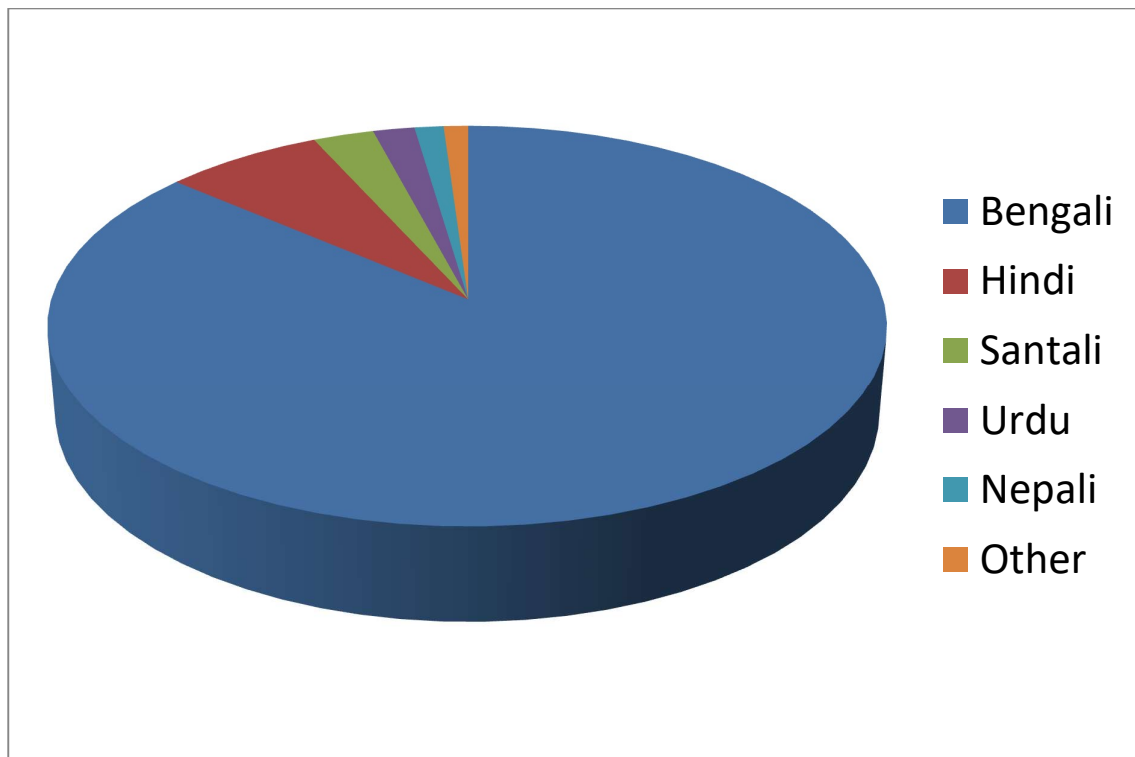


Fig 1: West Bengal language demography

Figure Representation: Bengali 86.22%, Hindi 6.96%, Santali 2.66%, Urdu 1.82%, Nepali 1.27%, Other 1.07%

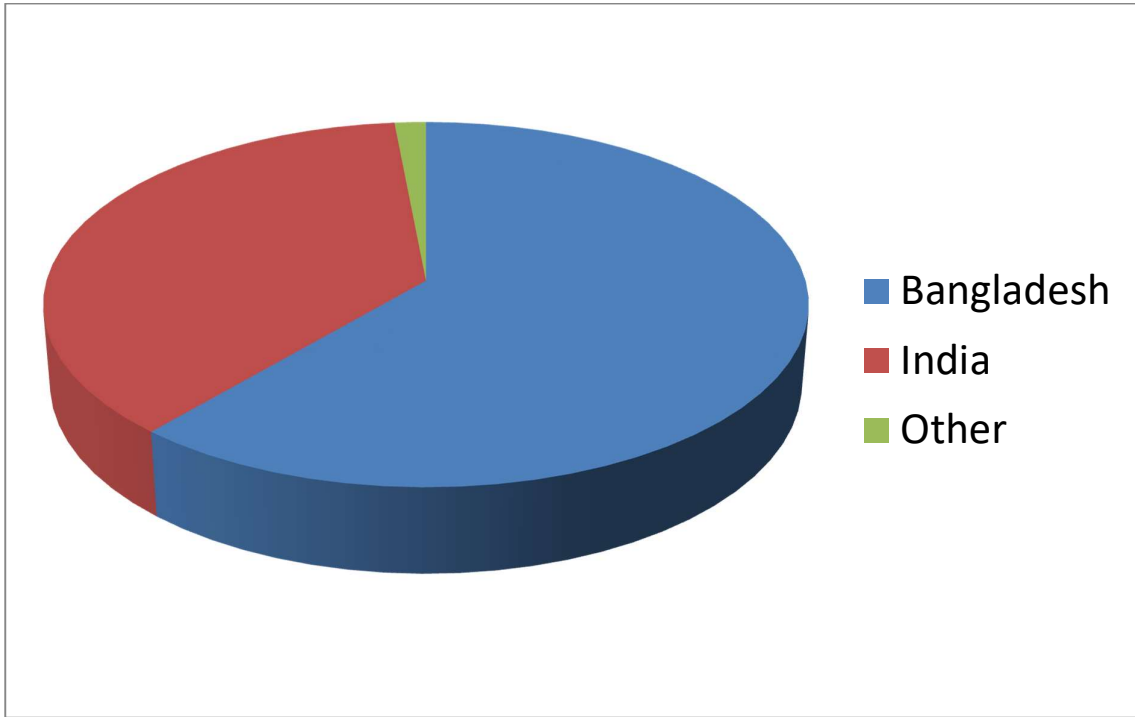


Fig 2: Distribution of Native Bengali Speakers

Figure Representation: Bangladesh 61.3%, India 37.2, Other 1.5%

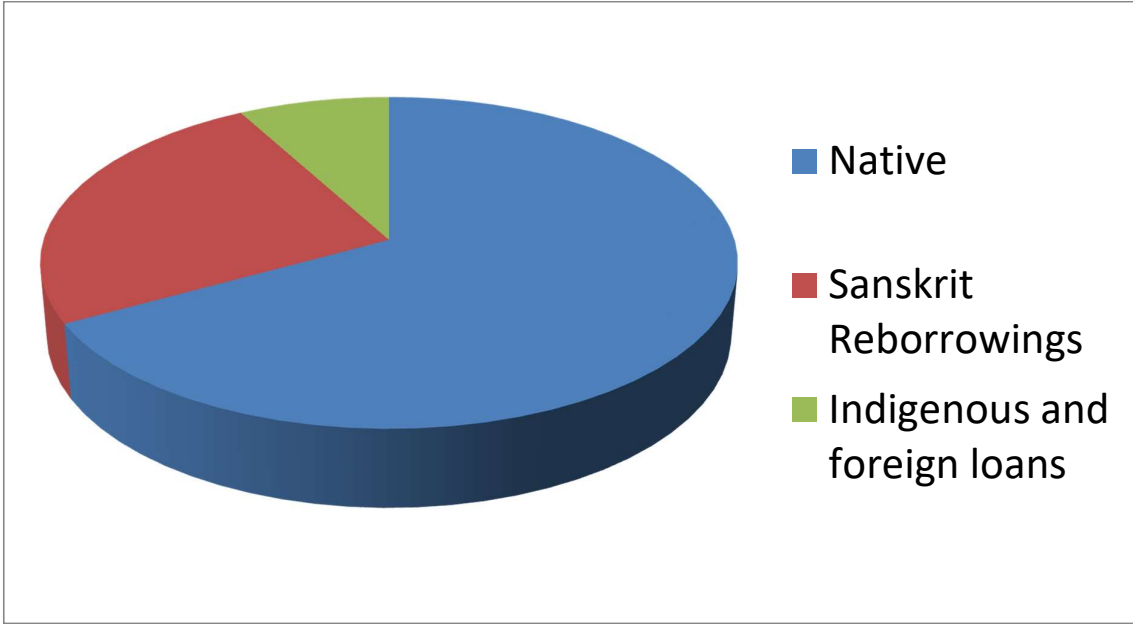


Fig 3: Modern Literary Vocabulary

Figure Representation: Native 67%, Sanskrit reborrowings 25%, Indigenous and foreign loans 8%