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A Double-Nested Diglossia: Analysing the Linear Polyglossic References in *Hindi Bhasha*

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Abstract

Socio-political change plays a significant role in shaping language communities and linguistic diversity. As languages evolve across time and social contexts, speech communities develop multiple linguistic varieties that reflect cultural, historical, and communicative needs. Building on Charles A. Ferguson's concept of diglossia and John Gumperz's notion of double-nested diglossia, this study examines the polyglossic references embedded in *Hindi Bhasha*. It analyses the sociolinguistic evolution of Pure Hindustani into Baazari Hindustani through processes of phonetic change, lexical borrowing, and syntactic restructuring driven by multilingual interaction, trade, and urbanization. The study reorganizes naturally occurring linguistic examples into a coherent taxonomy to distinguish creolization from pidginization. Findings indicate that the Hindi spoken in urban North India exhibits a double-nested diglossic structure, shaped by the interaction between standardized Hindi, regional dialects, educational practices, and media influences. This linguistic convergence reflects the dynamic social and cultural realities of multilingual communities while preserving core Hindustani features. The proposed typology contributes to understanding language variation, contact-induced change, and the historical development of urban Hindi within a broader sociolinguistic framework.

Keywords: Language Varieties, Hindustani, Diglossia, Double Nested Diglossia, H and L languages.

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation and subsequent urbanisation have catalysed language changes. The systematic progression of language serves as evidence for this assertion. The linguistic progression includes the blending of dialects, the emergence of new words influenced by technology and culture, and the simplification of grammar in urban settings. Such shifts reflect how human interaction and migration shape linguistic evolution, highlighting the dynamic nature of language as a living system. In the

multilingual and stratified Indian landscape, language studies offer a unique resource for understanding complex language distinctions. A host of conceptual and empirical ideas initiated by Charles Ferguson and John Gumperz in the 1960s opened up new areas of sociolinguistic research. The chief official language of India, Hindi, is often cited as a classic example of diglossia. Calling this assumption into question the paper argues that Hindi is an example of a double-nested diglossia in its performative mode. This is evident when one begins to distinguish between Pure Hindustani and Bazaar Hindustani. Rather than fundamental grammar, the main differences between "pure" and "bazaar" (market/colloquial) Hindustani are in word origin, degree of formal purification, and social context. While "bazaar" Hindustani is the mixed, common spoken language of the streets, "pure" forms strongly incline toward high literary roots (Sanskrit for formal Hindi, Persian/Arabic for formal Urdu).

The samples taken here are from the Hindi spoken in the urbanised regions of North India. The researcher's early exposure to Hindi greatly aids in the explanation of these linguistic ideas through examples of common speech. The paper explicates how the creolization of standard Hindi occurred when Persian and Devanagari characters were used simultaneously for communication between Persian invaders and Indian communities. In short, using Persian and Devanagari characters simultaneously for communication between Persian occupiers and Indian communities eventuates the creolization of standard Hindi. A major change in the terminology and structure is forced upon standard Hindi as it gets converted into Bazaar Hindustani as a result of this. Standard Hindi is forced to expand its formation and vocabulary transforming it into Bazaar Hindustani. Hence is the polyglossic co-existence of many language varieties.

Diglossic Variations

A Double nested diglossia is identified when a multilingual society can distinguish between the High (H) variety and Low (L) variety of more than one language used by its members. Gumperz first used the term in his study "Linguistic and Social Interaction in Two Communities", of the Maharashtra dialect Khalapur where Hindi is the official language. Analysed as a nested diglossia, Hindustani reveals a sense of antiquity, continuity, and multicultural complexity owing to its connection with the Indo-Aryan language families. Language contact, both within society and between languages, is a central component of any diglossic analysis. Describing diglossia Ferguson says: "In many speech communities two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions" (Ferguson 1959). A diglossic situation neither creates a new language nor does it help in the development of a new language. Instead, it involves the coexistence of two distinct language varieties, where one is used in formal or high-context settings and the other in informal or low-context situations. This dynamic preserves the stability of both varieties without merging them into a single, distinct linguistic system over time. The divergence from a language's standard form initiates the development of a unique dialect, a phenomenon attributable to factors such as spatial isolation, social stratification, or the passage of time. Over time, these variations can contribute to the emergence of specialized lexicon, phonology, and syntax, thereby establishing a unique dialect. It is not uncommon for such variations to mirror cultural identity, and they may even progress to become separate languages.

Joshua Fishman's definition of diglossia adds more dimensions to this phenomenon. He expanded it beyond the traditional view of two distinct language varieties used in specific contexts to include situations where multiple languages or dialects coexist, with one often dominating in formal or prestigious settings while others are relegated to informal or subordinate roles. It broadens its applicability. Pointing to new possibilities he says:

"[D]iglossia exists not only in multilingual societies which officially recognize several 'languages' but also in societies which are multilingual in the sense that they employ separate dialects, registers, or functionally differentiated language varieties of whatever kind." (Fishman, 1967)

Thus, he identified that there could be more than two language varieties within a diglossic community. George Grierson, the pioneer of the modern scientific study of the languages of South Asia, explains as follows:

Hindōstānī is primarily the language of the Upper Gangetic Doab and is also the lingua franca of India, capable of being written in both Persian and Dēvanāgarī characters, and without purism, avoiding alike the excessive use of either Persian or Sanskrit words when employed for literature. The name 'Urdu' can then be confined to that special variety of Hindōstānī in which Persian words are of frequent occurrence, and which hence can only be written in the Persian character, and, similarly, 'Hindī' can be confined to the form from Hindi to Urdu of Hindōstānī in which Sanskrit words abound, and which hence can only be written in the Dēvanāgarī character. (Rahman 2011)

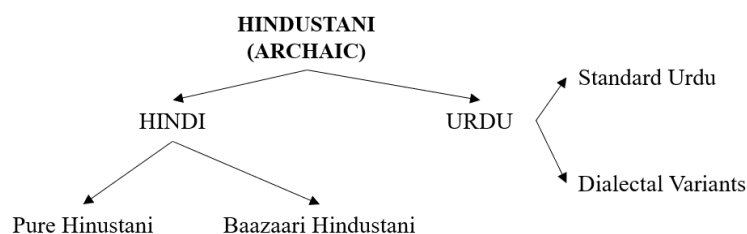
Thus, Hindi and Urdu emerged as dialects of a single language, evolving into pidgins that later became first languages. Historical, cultural, and political circumstances, including the Mughal period and British colonization, exerted an influence on the process. Hindi originated with a Sanskrit foundation, whereas Urdu integrated Persian and Arabic influences. Albeit sharing a common origin, divergent scripts and sociolinguistic circumstances resulted in their separation, yet a certain level of mutual intelligibility endures. As pointed out in *The Indo-Aryan Languages*:

At the colloquial level, and in terms of grammar and core vocabulary, they are virtually identical; there are minor differences in usage and terminology (and customary pronunciation of certain foreign sounds), but these do not necessarily obtrude to the point where anyone can immediately tell whether it is "Hindi" or "Urdu" that is being spoken. At formal and literary levels, however, vocabulary differences begin to loom much larger (Hindi drawing its higher lexicon from Sanskrit, Urdu from Arabic and Persian), to the point where the two styles languages become mutually unintelligible. (Masica 27)

Hindi/Hindustani is the third-largest spoken language in the world. It has two standard registers viz, Hindi and Urdu. The Khariboli dialect is the progenitor of both Hindi and Urdu. Serving as lingua francas in their respective regions, these languages are extensively spoken throughout India and Pakistan. The linguistic duality serves as an indicator of the subcontinent's shared cultural heritage. A double nested diglossic situation exists owing to the presence of high and low Hindi and Urdu at any given point in time.

But a striking feature of diglossia is the existence of many paired items, one H one L, referring to fairly common concepts frequently used in both H and L, where the range of meaning of the two items is roughly the same, and the use of one or the other immediately stamps the utterance or written sequence as H or L. (Ferguson 1959)

A balanced situation exists when along with the primary dominant language, usually the language of scholars, there is a more complex, rarely studied, grammatically different language superimposed on it. Coexistence can lead to linguistic interaction in which the dominant language influences the secondary language's structure and usage, whereas the latter retains unique elements which enrich communication in the process. Multilingual societies often experience such situations, which can provide insights into cultural and historical interactions.



The above chart prepared for this paper is a graphic representation of the arguments raised here. The evolution of Hindustani began in the early 11th century with the Persian invaders. Later, in the Mughal reign, it became the popular lingua franca. Along with the dominant Jatu or Bangaru dialects, Brajbhasha, Jaipuri, Marwari, Bhojpuri, etc, it was used for trade, religious, and legal purposes. During the 15th century, literary works appeared in Hindustani, improving the stature of the language. *Adi Granth* is an example of this archaic form of Hindustani. At the same time, the Mohemedian expedition led the language to spread to the southern parts of the continent. Using the Persio-Arabic script the founders of Urdu literature like Minaj Shah and Sultan Quib Shah popularised the language further.

By the 17th century the language split into Wali (very similar to present-day Hindustani) and the Rekhta (courtly literature). Rekhta was a mix of Persian and early Hindustani and was referred to as Hindavi or Dehlavi. Hence Hindi used across North India is a heteroglot, a hybrid language that has assimilated the resources of many dialects. Baazari Hindustani is one such dialect. The verbal repertoire of Hindi includes the various dialects of Hindi like Awadhi, Braj, Bundeli, Bagheli, Chhattisgarhi, Rajasthani, Kannauji, etc, as well as the two superimposed styles. Hence the present vernacular has evolved through its borrowings from multilingual sources, flexibility, and use in a vast geographical area.

Evolution in politics and society led to creolization. Interactions between diverse groups result in the blending of languages, cultures, and traditions. As societies undergo significant changes, creolization often creates new identities, practices, and social structures that reflect the dynamic interplay of diverse influences. A large majority of urban Indians use and understand Baazari Hindustani though it is not widely accepted in academic circles and has no claim to heritage. The elastic structure of Creolised Hindi, in terms of pronunciation, forms, vocabulary, idioms, or grammar, contributed to its acculturation merits. In addition to regional dialects like Bhojpuri Hindi, Lakhnowi Hindi, and Bambaia Hindi, ungrammatical Hindi is sometimes influenced by English. With its rich idiomatic expressions and complex syntactical order, foreign users have a difficult time learning the Pure Hindi language. For ease, such users adapted and popularised Baazari. Hind. Although both languages have forty-six letters, the former has thirteen vowels and thirty-three consonants, and the latter has eleven vowels and thirty-five consonants. The paper now proceeds to discuss a few select linguistic changes highlighting the process of creolization. Henceforth this paper uses abbreviated forms Std. Hind. and Baz. Hind. to indicate the terms Standard/Pure Hindustani and Baazari Hindustani respectively.

Native Language Interference & Phonological Conditioning

Baz. Hind. is a simplified linguistic variant resulting from the transformation of Std. Hind's native grammar by foreign speakers. One of the examples is the insertion of an additional long-voiced consonant /na:/ in yes/no questions. The root /na:/ is used as a suffix for affirmation in sentences. In /*tomhe: pə'ta: he: na:/*, the addition of the elongated long nasal /na:/ does not make a meaning change, but of course, it makes it appear more complicated and peculiar. The phonological and morphological conditioning of Pure Hind. is accelerated by such colourings. This acceleration is evident in how these colourings influence the adaptation of sounds and word structures, making them more contextually aligned with regional or cultural nuances. Such phenomena enhance the expressive capacity of Pure Hind. enriching its linguistic texture while preserving its core identity amidst evolving linguistic interactions.

In many contexts, native speakers substitute the Hindi phonemes with English and vice versa. This phenomenon is referred to as code-mixing or code-switching and is prevalent in multilingual societies. It is a recurring event for speakers proficient in multiple languages, as they synthesize their linguistic capabilities to articulate ideas more adeptly or to communicate cultural distinctions. These alterations may likewise indicate the impact of one linguistic system on the phonological framework of

another. The English word zero is an example. The /z/ sound in /ziərəʊ/ is substituted by Devanagari /dʒ/ and the English diphthong /iə/ is replaced by the elongated front vowel /i:/. The substitutes do not affect the mutual understanding. In Hindi, the Hindi speakers use /dʒ/ for /z/. The changes in consonants could be seen in words like *Zindagi*, *Zaroori*, and *Zyada*, which will be /zɪndəgi:/, /zəru:ri:/, and /zja:da:/. Many of these words are loan words from Urdu and are misrepresented in the English language with the sound /z/.

Apart from the /z/ sound, many other Hindustani sounds were modified under the influence of the English language. Similarly, the English semivowel /w/ and the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ sound are represented as /v/ in Hindi. /w/ in the English language is an open approximant, pronounced by strictly narrowing down of air stream, while /v/ is a voiced one pronounced with a closure of the vocal cords. But the speakers do not differentiate between the labiodental and bilabial sounds and pronounce them singularly as /v/ in Hindi. The use of /r/ instead of Hindi /d/ is another instance of incongruity. So Hindi *pakoda* will become English /pakora/. This happens because the Hindi language has a tapped /r/ rather than a trilled one, whereas English has both the tapped and trilled /r/ 's existence.

In addition to the consonant changes, the vowels in the English language change when they come to the Devanagari script. Hence one would find the short schwa (ə) in the first syllable of the Hindi word *aspatal*, rather than the voiced back vowel /ɒ/ as in /hɒspɪt(ə)l/. Likewise, an additional long vowel /I:/ is added to many words beginning with the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ as in words like school, spoon, etc. *Iskool* and *ispoon* are the outcome of such transformations. Since Devanagari is a phonetic language, vowel sounds are often explicitly represented, unlike English. Consequently, adaptations are made, such as the insertion or modification of vowels to conform to the script's structural requirements. These kinds of alterations are prevalent in loanwords, illustrating how languages adapt foreign terms to conform to their native phonological structures.

Influence of Vernacular Languages

The prime difference of grammatical incongruity lies in syntax and suprasegmental features of Std. Hind. Hindi, like many other Indian languages, has a syllable-timed rhythm. Hindi, like many other Indian languages, has a syllable-timed rhythm. This means that the rhythm of the language is based on the equal duration of syllables rather than stress patterns. As a result, Hindi often sounds more rhythmic and melodic compared to stress-timed languages like English. This characteristic influences its pronunciation and can make it easier to identify word boundaries. Baz. Hind. does not adhere strictly to the vowel length rule, whereas pure Hindustani does. An instance is observed in the sentence,

Tume (tumhe) kya mangtha ?

The absence of the long vowel /ma:/ in the third word illustrates the phonetic incongruity. Speakers of Baz. Hind. ignore such specific elements of speech. Moreover, the first word in the sentence is a perfect example of elision where the glottal sound /h/ disappears under the influence of labiodental nasal /m/. Std. Hind. users will pronounce the same sentence as

Tumhe Kya chahiye? or Tum Kya Mangthe ho ? to make it grammatically accurate.

Ve kaun? is another example of incorrect grammatical usage. Situations demanding quick communication often result in incomplete sentences. Baz. Hind.'s /ve/ is an abbreviated version of Std. Hind.'s /vah/. It is possible for the speaker of Baz. Hind. to use such imperative expressions due to the syntactical flexibility of the language. The demonstrative pronouns *ve*, *ye*, etc. are used as equivalents of noun/subject *vah*, *yah* in many contexts.

Std. Hind. displays higher levels of politeness and honour than the Baz. Hind. To make it more polite, Std. Hind. users add the inflectional suffix or vibhakti /ne/ or /ka/ to the noun and it will become the third person singular/plural pronoun *unhone* or *unka*.

As Baz. Hind. is not case-ending, an enclitic /to/ is attached to numbers. The suffix /to/ is used to specify the numerals. For example, speakers say *ek to*, *do to*, *teen to*, *char to*, to assert the quantity. As a result of the influence of eastern dialects, especially Bihari and Bengali, Baz. Hind. may exhibit this characteristic. Numerical expressions of this kind are abundant in Uttar Pradesh and Allahabad Baz. Hind.

Hum jayega is a colloquial expression of *hum jayenge*. Mumbai and Goa shore fishermen commonly use it in their dialects. The plural pronoun *hum* has a Sanskrit root and a rigid grammatical framework. But to meet occupational demands, people modify *hum*. In some parts of Himachal Pradesh and Bihar, people use the collective noun *hum* (indicating we) to indicate the singular noun *mein* (indicating I). For them, *hum kaam kerenge* is I shall do the work, rather than we shall do the work.

The suffixes /ni/, /ayan/, /ian/, /ika/ indicate gender differences in Std. Hind. as in *mastarni*, *chaudurayan*, *bandariya*, *lekhika*. Female nouns are suffixed ones. The /i/ case is added to some nouns to make them feminine. *chachi* – *chachi*, *mama-mami*, *kaka -kaki* are instances. In Std. Hind. *baath* is a feminine form and *meri baath* is the correct grammatical usage. But Baz. Hind. users do not distinguish between masculine and feminine words and use them as *mera baath*. *Chitti -khath*, are the other two words of which the distinctions are not observed in the Baz. Hind. The purpose of such digressions is to ensure mutual intelligibility rather than preserve grammatical complexity.

Migration and Real-life Experiences

Migration materialises the mutual contact of two unintelligible groups. As a result, Std. Hind.'s rich texture and sophisticated lofty style have been sacrificed to facilitate the understanding of such groups whose reciprocation is indistinct. The immigrants change the sublimity of Std. Hind. according to their indigenous cultural patterns. In course of time, second and third-generation immigrants will use only Baz. Hind. In other words, the accepted standard Devanagari Script of Brahmi origin will be changed into an improved version of a creole. Thus, the rigid formal pattern of the pure Hind. language seems to be reconstructed in Baz. Hind.'s many expressions. A language without complex grammatical rules is simple and charming. Hence, the speakers of Baz. Hind. are less worried about the allomorphic variations and neglect the various linguistic levels. The colloquial register allows the use of Hindi words, vernacular words, and foreign words freely.

The greeting words like *namaste* deteriorate to *are*, *yaar*, etc. Such informal expressions highlight the simplicity of the language. The replacement of a full sentence with monosyllabic words is common in Baz. Hind. To communicate the idea of excellence as "What an amazing performance," Baz. Hind. use the trisyllabic *badhiya*. Pure Hindi speakers use a syntactical pattern as *vah bahuth badhiya jagah hain*. This reflects how Baz. Hind. prioritizes brevity and efficiency in expression over formal structures. Such adaptations are influenced by the need for quick, relatable communication in everyday interactions. This trend also shows how language evolves to suit social contexts, blending traditional syntax with modern, colloquial simplicity to resonate with diverse speakers.

The social background of the speaker catalyses the usage of many regional words. The speakers tend to use bombastic loan words from Urdu and Arabic more in their everyday usage rather than colloquial words. This phenomenon is often influenced by education, exposure to literature, and cultural pride, as speakers associate such words with sophistication or tradition. However, this can sometimes hinder effective communication, as listeners unfamiliar with these terms may struggle to grasp the intended meaning, creating a barrier in informal or diverse settings. *Mulakath* (*baathcheeth*), *kitab* (*pustak*), *ithephak* (*achanak*) are some examples of this aspect.

The influence of various native languages brings about a change in Std. Hind. as in *chaya*, *chinthith* (Sanskrit), *vatan* (Persian), and *soorath* (Arabic) more commonly in speech. The third person plural *aap* is replaced by the second person singular *tum* in most situations. The Punjabi determiner *tusi* is used in many contemporary situations in place of *tum*. It is interesting to note that *tusi* is a term used to express familiarity and affection whereas *tum* denotes a less polite way of addressing. Std. Hind. has a large lexicon of lone words since it is a widely popular lingua franca, it is enriched by the rich ethnic diversity of each region. The abundant use of slang words in day-to-day speech is the next effect of its popularity of Baz. Hind. *bas*, *acha*, *bap Re bap*, *jugad*, *ghanta* are some examples.

Conclusion

Language communities experience linguistic diversity as a result of sociopolitical events. This is seen by the methodical evolution of language. It is discovered that human language repertoire is always changing. A diachronic sociolinguistic analysis of language use in a variety of social circumstances yields a plethora of information regarding the language's social bearing and place of origin. The majority of the time, a single speech community exhibits several linguistic variants. The many real-life situations urge simplifying ancient literature to make it more understandable to laypeople by removing complications. In other words, Numerous real-world scenarios necessitate simplifying ancient literature to remove complexities and make it easier for the general public. Consequently, the urbanized Hindi-speaking regions exhibit diglossic variants. Thus, there are resultant linguistic variations in the urbanised Hindi-speaking regions. People love to use Baz. Hind. because it is simple to learn and encourages community bonding and mutual understanding. This variant is often used in informal settings, fostering inclusivity and ease of communication among diverse groups. Its prevalence highlights how language adapts to urban dynamics, blending traditional roots with modern practicality. Consequently, Baz. Hind. serves as a bridge between regional dialects and standardised Hindi, enriching linguistic diversity.

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