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Source: *Bulletin of the Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute*, 2004-2005, Vol. 64/65 (2004-2005), pp. 249-259

Published by: Vice Chancellor, Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute (Deemed University), Pune

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42930650>

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARATHI LINGUISTICS AT THE DECCAN COLLEGE

SONAL KULKARNI-JOSHI

I

The following review attempts not a brief history of linguistic studies of Marathi at Deccan College, but tries to give the reader an overview of the aspects of the Marathi language that have received attention from scholars at Deccan College between 1939 and 2005. With this aim in view I have classified the works of research available to me under five main headings, as follows: *

1. Historical/Comparative Studies of Marathi
2. Formal Descriptions of Marathi. This category includes -
 - i. Phonetic/phonological descriptions and analyses
 - ii. Morphological and syntactic descriptions
 - iii. Semantic descriptions
 - iv. Semiotic descriptions
3. Marathi Dialectology
4. The Social Dialectology of Marathi. This category includes -
 - i. Ethnolinguistic descriptions and analyses
 - ii. Sociolinguistic descriptions and analyses
 - iii. Language variation and change in

Marathi

5. Applied Linguistic Studies. This section includes -
 - i. Teaching/learning Marathi
 - ii. Marathi lexicography
 - iii. Marathi stylistics
 - iv. Issues in translation.

In section II of this article, I have made a limited attempt to trace the development of research within each of the five categories while describing in some detail the contribution of some of the works in each category.

II

1. Historical/Comparative Studies

With the revival of the Deccan College as a postgraduate and research institute in 1939, linguistic studies got a firm footing in the University of Bombay and, later on, in the University of Poona, of which Deccan College became a constituent research institute (1948). The emphasis of linguistic studies was on the historical study of the Indo-Aryan languages, both ancient and modern, within the larger perspective of Indo-European studies. The neglected field of Middle-Indo Aryan languages, which included the inscriptional

* Readers will find a bibliography under these five headings at the end of the article.

Prakrits and Pali and the late Apabhramsa stage, was intensely cultivated. This interest is reflected in the large number of doctoral theses and staff publications generated in this department during this period. Significant contributions to this effort at elucidating the history of the Indo-Aryan languages are the Wilson Philological lectures delivered by S.M. Katre (1941 published in 1944), A.M. Ghatage (1961 published in 1962) and M.A. Mehendale (1966 published in 1968).

Investigations of the development of Marathi using the historical-comparative method include the following. R.N. Vale's thesis (1945) deals in detail with the verbal composition in Marathi and compares it with Gujarati, Hindi and other New Indo-Aryan (NIA) languages. He compares the etymologies of the auxiliaries found in each language and traces the development of the auxiliaries in Old Indo-Aryan through Middle Indo-Aryan down to the compounds in NIA. This comparative survey then extends its scope to include the development of verbal composition in Indo-Dravidian languages (data from Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu are used). Independent evolutions for verbal compositions in Indo-Aryan and Indo-Dravidian are suggested.

The nature of learned borrowings from Sanskrit into modern Indo-Aryan languages with special reference to Marathi is studied in Gokhale's (1957) doctoral thesis. J.J. Molesworth's *Marathi-English Dictionary* published in 1857 is used as the principal source of information. The discussion in the thesis includes the phonology of the loan words in Marathi, their semantics and their grammatical genders.

2. Formal Descriptions of Marathi

Among the available formal descriptions and analyses of Marathi, Kalelkar's 'Dhvanivicara' (first published by the Deccan

College in 1955) in Marathi may be cited as the book with which publication of writing in Marathi of Modern Linguistics began. The book discusses the articulatory mechanism of speech sounds, sound change and the manifestation/expression of speech sounds in writing in the context of the Marathi language. The first synchronic study of the phonology and the morphology of Marathi is found in Kelkar (1958). Here he describes the "educated colloquial" variety (*sushikṣitaboli*) of Poona. The author often makes reference to the syntax, the semantics and the lexicon of Marathi to complement the structures he describes here. Another outline of the Marathi sound system is found in Jha (1977). The author's explicit purpose here is to "introduce the sounds of Marathi to non-Marathi speakers using simple, non-technical terms". There are four sections to this work: the first section gives a brief outline of the organs of speech and the mechanism of sound production; the second session describes in detail the sounds of Marathi; section three provides phonetic drills for Marathi sounds, and section four is a short note on the writing system of Marathi.

A phonological and notional analysis of the prosodies in Marathi is found in Kelkar, 1992. The author also discusses the stylistic and pedagogical implications of the prosodies.

Among the syntactic descriptions of Marathi produced at the Deccan College, must be mentioned Dhongde's (1985) book-length contribution – *Tense, Aspect and Mood in English and Marathi*. This non-historical comparative study of the verb in Marathi and in English succeeds in (1) bringing out the peculiarities of the two languages, (2) giving a better equipment for establishing translation rules between English and Marathi and for identifying teaching points in teaching English to Marathi speakers and vice versa. The study incorporates a survey of the temporal, aspectual, and modal notions as well

as their *formal* expressions in the two languages.

Brief sketches of the phonology, morphology, syntax and the vocabulary of Marathi are found in Kalelkar's 1965 monograph *Marathi*. A fuller treatment of the phonology (segmental features), morphology, syntax and semantics of the language are found in Dhongde's (1983) *arvachin marathi*. Kelkar's (1964) paper on 'Marathi baby talk' analyses the phonology, grammar and lexis of the language when used by adults in speaking with children.

Semiotic treatments of the Marathi phonology, grammar, and lexicon are found in Kelkar, 1977 and 1997.

3. Marathi Dialectology

A wealth of research on the dialects of Marathi was produced at the Deccan College in the 1960s. In his 1962 article in *Indian Linguistics*, Ghatage had lamented the meagre information available on Marathi dialects other than Konkani. His subsequent *Survey of Marathi Dialects* (1963 - 1972) generated valuable information on dialects like Konkani of South Kanara, Konkani of Konkan, Kudali, Kunabi of Mahad, Marathi dialect of Cochin, Warli of Thana, Marathi of Kasargod, and Gawdi.

Ghatage uses a set format to describe the dialects included in his survey (an outline of this format is reproduced below). The description begins by introducing the geographical spread of the dialect in and outside Maharashtra. For some of the dialects, he has provided the major distinctions between standard Marathi and the dialect, and those between the older and younger generations of the dialect speakers.

Chapter 1: The formal descriptions of the dialects begin with word-level phonology; this includes vowels, consonants, vowel clusters,

consonant clusters, and syllabic patterns, followed by phrase-level phonology, including such phenomena as dropping the final vowel, shifting of nasalization, elision of stops, allophonic variation, geminated consonants, etc.

Chapter 2: The morphology (i.e. the categories of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs and numerals) of the dialect is described next.

Chapter 3: Syntactic features such as the subject, predicate, complement and particles are included here.

Chapter 4: Texts in the particular dialect and their English translations are provided.

Chapter 5: Sentences in the particular dialect (more than three hundred sentences for most dialects) and their glosses in English are provided.

Chapter 6: Vocabulary items are listed along with the grammatical gender and the gloss in English. These items are provided in the Devanagari alphabetical order.

The survey of Marathi dialects was taken up again at the Deccan College in the late 1990s by R.V. Dhongde. Aided by the Rajya Marathi Vikas Sanstha, Bombay, the pilot survey included dialects spoken in Aurangabad (1997), Sangli (1997), Solapur (1998). Varieties of Marathi spoken outside Maharashtra in Howrah, Benares, Tanjore and Indore were also included in the survey.

4. The Social Dialectology of Marathi

Among the studies of ethnolinguistic interest may be cited Iravati Karve's study of Marathi folksongs (1939), her study of kinship usages (1939), L.S. Katre's study of kinship terms in Konkani and Kardile's doctoral research in progress – *An Ethnolinguistic Study of Mahadeo Kolis in Maharashtra*. The analyses of kinship terms reported by S.B. Kulkarni (1966, 1967) and his study of the *ukhane* of the Varli tribe must also be men-

tioned here.

Language variation observed in Marathi in the form of social dialects has also been studied at the Deccan College. This includes varieties of Marathi spoken by particular castes such as Karhadi Marathi, Mangi Marathi, Chitpavani, Marathi of the Leva-Patidars, etc.

Quantitative–correlative studies of language variation and change with reference to Marathi are found in Apte (1962) and Kulkarni-Joshi (2001). M.L. Apte conducted a sociolinguistic study of social variation found in Mumbai Marathi. Using the Labovian notion of the 'sociolinguistic variable' Apte investigates the correlation between the extent of acculturation (i.e. language standardization) among non-Brahmin speakers and such social factors as the extent of urbanization and socioeconomic class. This interest in discovering systematic sociolinguistic patterns in language use is taken up again in S. Kulkarni-Joshi's (2001) research. Her study focuses on the factors facilitating the use of standard and non-standard Marathi among high-school children in the city of Pune. The effects of the child's social class, caste, parents' education, the social composition of the child's peer group in the school and the child's orientation toward the dominant school- culture on linguistic acculturation are examined statistically as well as qualitatively.

A project on minority language communities was taken up at the Deccan College by R. V. Dhongde (reported in Dhongde, 1995 and in Dhongde et al, 1989). The survey focuses on (1) the Marathi-speaking Gujarati community in Pune, (2) the Marathi-speaking Bengali community in Mumbai and (3) the Marathi-speaking migrants from Maharashtra in Madhya Pradesh. The data collected include recorded conversations on a range of topics, responses to a questionnaire, speaker-attitudes to language, and a check of the infor-

mant's knowledge of vocabulary items listed under semantic fields such as 'the kitchen' (including utensils, food grains, spices, etc), 'water' (including terms referring to rain, taste of water, idioms involving the word 'water'), 'colour terms', 'emotions and feelings', 'the daily outside world' (including the informant's job, social groups, etc.).

5. Applied Linguistic Studies

Language teaching/learning

A course for teaching Marathi to non-Marathi learners has been put together in *Learn Marathi - Marathi shika* by Dhongde, Ranade and Jha (1988). The course uses an eclectic (grammatical + functional) language syllabus and is meant for beginners. The course aims to teach the Marathi required in everyday encounters.

More's (2001) doctoral research identifies the language needs of speakers of Marathi by observing instances of code-switching, code-mixing and borrowing in spoken and written communication. His findings have been shown to carry implications for designing ESL (English as a Second Language) syllabi at the primary-, middle- and high school levels and for junior and senior colleges in Maharashtra.

Lexicography

Kelkar's paper 'The Anatomy of a Dictionary Entry' (published in two parts -1968, 1969) provides linguistic insights for the format of an entry in an unabridged dictionary. He proposes a two-part entry heading and a five-part body of the entry followed by supplementary information. Examples of thirteen Marathi lexemes are provided in the second part of the paper.

Dhongde's *English-Marathi Dictionary* was published by the Oxford University Press in 1997.

Stylistics

A range of publications by R.V. Dhongde (1991, 1993a, 1996, 2002) and the volume edited by Dhongde and Kelkar (1984) demonstrate how the principles of western stylistics could be used in the critical appreciation of Marathi literature. These works do not merely provide information in Marathi about the literature available in English, but they also develop new methods for the application of the principles of stylistics to Marathi criticism.

An integration of the insights provided by classical Sanskrit writers and modern western writers in the field of stylistics is found in Pundalik (1989). Such an integrated framework is used to find solutions to some nagging questions in stylistics – the individuality of the poet, how is a poem distinguished

from a non-poem, what decides the superiority of one poem over others, and so on. Jawale (1991) investigates how comprehension of language at the poetic level is different from the comprehension of language in ordinary usage. He identifies the particular nature of the difficulties encountered by undergraduate students in comprehending Marathi and English poems while testing the framework proposed in western stylistics by I. A. Richards.

Translation

Using the translations of literary and non-literary texts, Chingre (1986) discusses the linguistic and socio-cultural issues in translating from English into Marathi. Problems arising out of language-specific styles are also investigated.

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