

Language and society
ASSIGNMENT -2

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Definitions :-

Variable is defined as an inconsistency or disagreement that a particular form of language may exhibit from an abstract standard

A linguistic variable is a linguistic item which has identifiable **variants**, which are the different forms which can be used in the same environment by different groups of people or in different environments by the same individual .

The variants are the specific value of the variable that can be used .

Most of the examples of variables in languages are inspired by pronunciation or phonology .

It can be 2 different phones used as different variations of a variable or even the absence of one the phone .

The variable can be as subtle as just difference of quantity of nasalization of a vowel , quantifying their relative frontness or backness, tenseness or laxness, and rounding or unrounding and moreover more than one dimension may be involved, for example, amount of nasalization and frontness or backness .

Eg. A residents of haryana region speaking hindi tend to elongate the vowel like

[pen] is pronounced as [pe:n]

The variants of a variable may be inspired by phonology , morphology , syntax or semantics

Eg. तुझको तन्ने are variables used as morphological linguistic variants in haryanvi accent of hindi .

According to labov's study in 1972 the linguistic variable are of 3 Types :

- **Indicator** :- An indicator is a linguistic variable to which little or no social import is attached. The difference in the variants of an indicator variable is generally very less and hard to notice .

For example, some speakers in North America distinguish the vowels in “cot” and “caught” and others do not and is not connected to any social variable

- **Marker** :- a marker is a linguistic variable which is quite noticeable and potent carriers of social information.
Labov observed in his study that listeners often observe the marker and react in a discrete way .

For eg -> The G dropping in english while using continuous tense like singing and singin’

For eg -> like the variants [j] and [z] in words like जहाज़ and जहाज

- **Stereotype** :- A stereotype is a popular and, therefore, conscious characterization of the speech of a particular group with a linguistic variable .Stereotypes need not be true or confirm reality , actually most stereotypes are far from truth .
Eg.

Social Variable :- using the above classification we can define the Social variable to be variable which must relate the variants in some way to quantifiable factors in society, for example, social-class membership, gender, age, ethnicity,etc

Linguistic variables may correlate with social variables like gender , class , ethnicity , situational switching, and can even form a stereotype .

Eg. associating a particular variable to a class of society ,

For example, deletion of final stops in clusters like the [d] in a word like cold, in speech among Blacks in Washington, DC is a stereotype .

Convention to represent a linguistic variable .

Variable represented as ()

Variants if phonemic represented as []

Eg a variable (g) in singing or singin'

(g): [g] or Ø

(‘Ø’ represent absence of that sound)

NOTE:-

1. Wherever standard hindi is mentioned it refers to the textbook hindi taught in school textbooks .
2. X is used in place of Y indicates X is the variable used in indori accent and Y is the variable used in standard hindi .

Examples of linguistic variables in hindi (with special reference to Indori accent)

1. Variable = (s)

Variants = [s] , [n]

(s): [s] or [n]

Examples :- different pronunciation from the text book hindi

- इन्ने [inne] is used instead of इसने [isəne]
- किन्ने[kinne] is used instead of किसने [kisəne]
- जिन्ने [jinne] is used instead of जिसने [jisəne]
- उन्ने [unne] is used instead of उसने [usəne]

Eg. तुझे किन्ने बोला खाना खाने के लिए ।

2. Variable = (n)

Variants = [t] , [n]

(n): [t] or [n]

Examples :- different pronunciation from the text book hindi

- इत्ती [itti] is used instead of इतनी [itəni]
- उत्ती [utti] is used instead of उतनी [utəni]
- जित्ती [jitti] is used instead of जितनी [jitəni]
- कित्ती [kitti] is used instead of कितनी [kitəni]

Eg इत्ती सी बात पर गुस्सा नहीं करते ।

3. Variable = (raha)

Variants = [rəha] or [riya]

(raha):[rəha] or [riya]

Examples :-

Main khaana kha raha hun .

Main khaana khariya hun .

NOTE:- also the gap between kha and raha is not visible, it is spoken together like khariya hoon .

Examples :-

[piriya] in place of [pi] [rəha]

[soriya] instead of [so] [rəha]

[ariya] instead of [araha]

Detailed Study and Analysis through survey of Indori Accent .

Hypothesis :- The hypothesis maps the indori accent(hindi language) linguistic variables to many social variables .

- **Native Place** :- Most people consider the speakers to be either from rural area or migrant from rural areas
- **Identity** :- the people don't associate their identity with the accent and consider this variety as “wrong hindi” while altogether speaking it !
- **Situational switching** :- The people in indore tend to switch the accent to indori while talking casually to friends /family and switch to the text-book hindi in formal matters
Because this accent is considered less prestigious than “standard” hindi
- **Class** :- The indori accent is looked down by the non - indori accent speakers as the language spoken by the poor .

To verify this hypothesis as true /false , a diverse survey was conducted across Indore .The survey included people from different age groups ranging from age 8 to 60 and across people of different classes and occupation .

The survey contained an audio file of an indori accent speaker , who used the above mentioned linguistic variables .

Also an interview was conducted with one of the residents to know more about her perception regarding the indori accent .

The survey form could be found here [Form_Link](#)

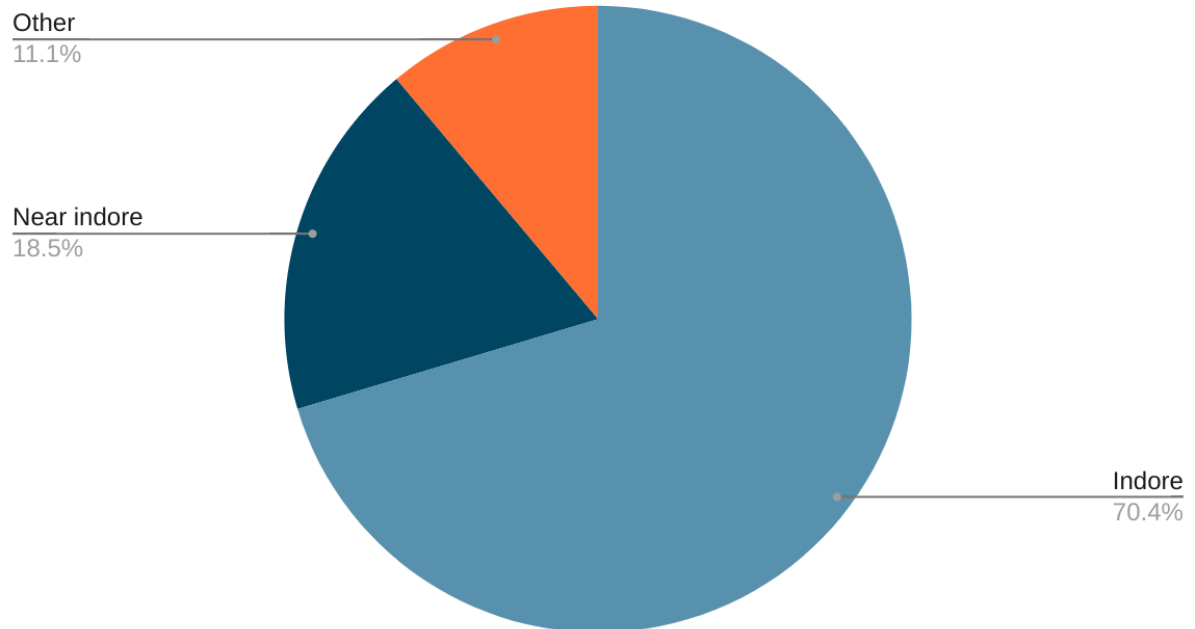
The responses sheet of the survey can be here [responses_Link](#)

Hypothesis 1 .Most people consider the speakers to be either from rural area or migrant from rural areas

Native language analysis :- according to the survey 70% of the responses

Identify this variety as spoken in indore and around 18% people identify it as language spoken near indore

Geographical location



But when they were asked this question

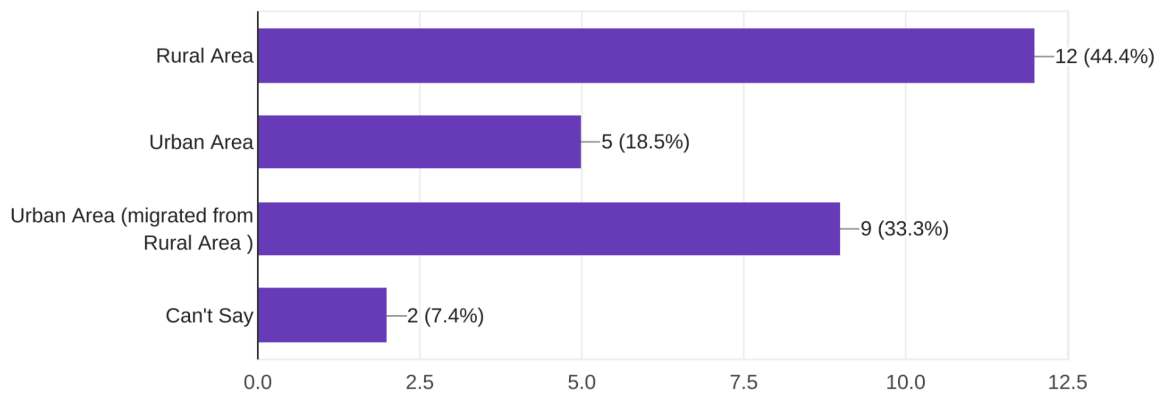
Q Can you infer that the person is from :-

- Rural area
- Urban area
- Urban area (migrated from rural area)
- Can't say

The responses were

Can you infer that the person is from :-

27 responses



This question statistically proves the hypothesis that most indore people (77%) perceive the indori accent speaker as either a person living in a rural area or migrated from a rural area .

During the interview with an indori accent speaker whose grandparents migrated from nearby areas and who works in a bank confirmed this that she tries not to speak this variety in front of her colleagues as they will think she is from a rural area even when she is born and brought up in indore .

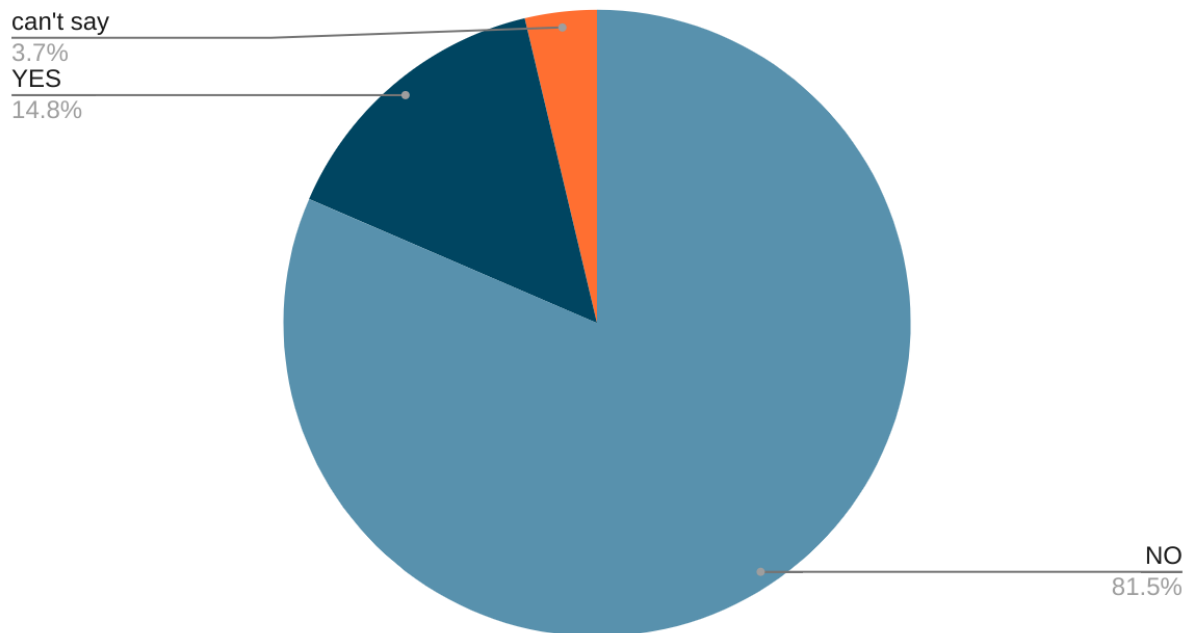
Hypothesis 2.

The next hypothesis is that the people of indore does not perceive there identity as the indori variety speaker and perceive their language as “wrong” as the textbook hindi taught in schools does not have this variety .

According to the survey when this question was asked

Q Do you think the speaker is speaking Hindi Correctly ?

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- Analysis

more than 80 % of people feel that the language they speak is not the correct hindi and still speak it . The question was asked in The interview to find the reason for the following and the answer suggests that the reason

can be the variety of hindi in formal education is different which leads to the perception of indori variety speakers to tag the indori accent as “wrong”.

The interviewee even said that she never uses these variables of indori accent while talking to someone outside indore as they might think that she doesn't know hindi properly .

The survey results verify the hypothesis that the indori people do not perceive their accent as legitimate accent and tag it as wrong due to the difference in the hindi used in formal education .

Hypothesis 3

The hypothesis is that the indori accent speakers are perceived to be poor .The question was asked in the survey

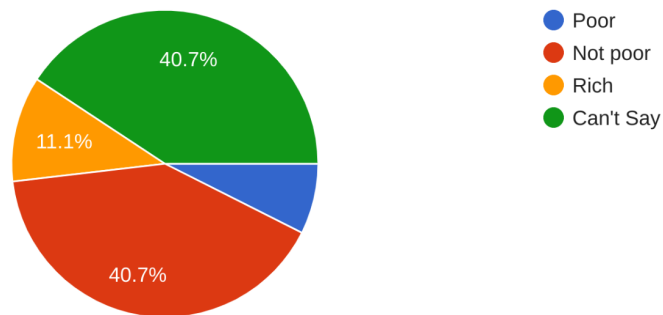
Q According to you the speaker is

- Poor
- Not poor
- Rich
- Can't say

But the survey gave very diverse results

According to you the speaker is

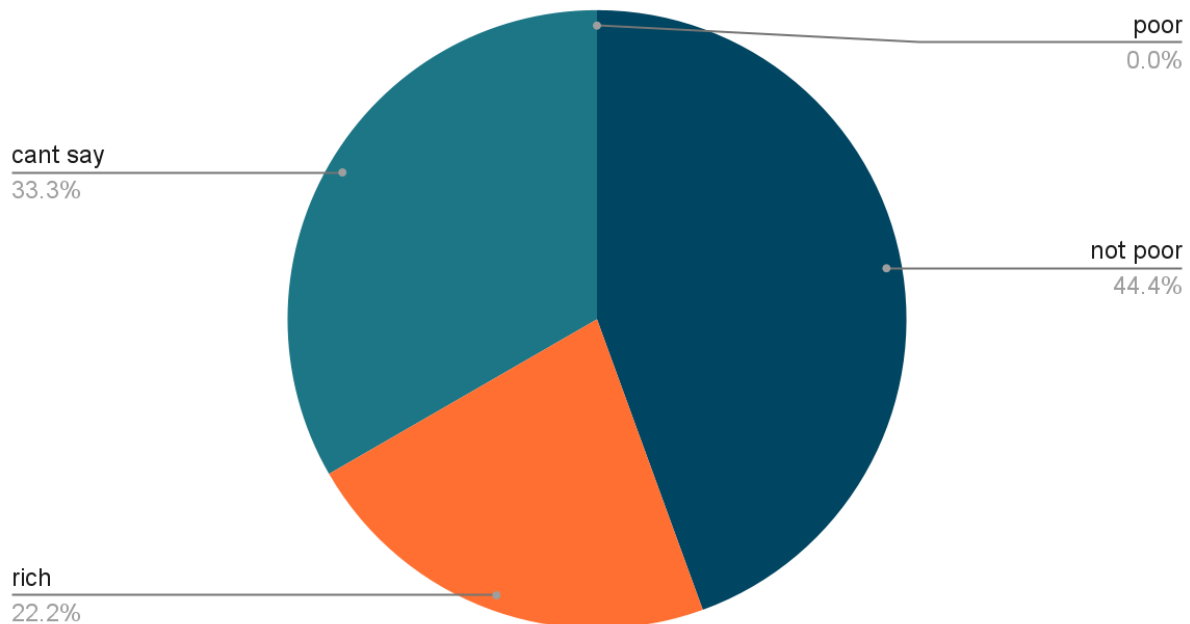
27 responses



We then consider only non-indori accent speakers so as to know the perception of non - indori speakers about the indori accent

And surprisingly none of them believed that indori language speakers are poor

according to you the speaker is :-



When the same question was asked to the interviewee , she took a long time to answer and said that she was trying to associate it with a class but she can think of many examples of rich , poor , middle class speaking this dialect .

So we conclude that there exists no relation between indori linguistic variable and social variable of class .

Hence the hypothesis is FALSE .

Hypothesis 4 .

Situational Code switching :- The hypothesis is that people of indore tend to switch between the indori variety and the “standard” hindi which is taught in schools according to formal and informal situation .

We asked the question

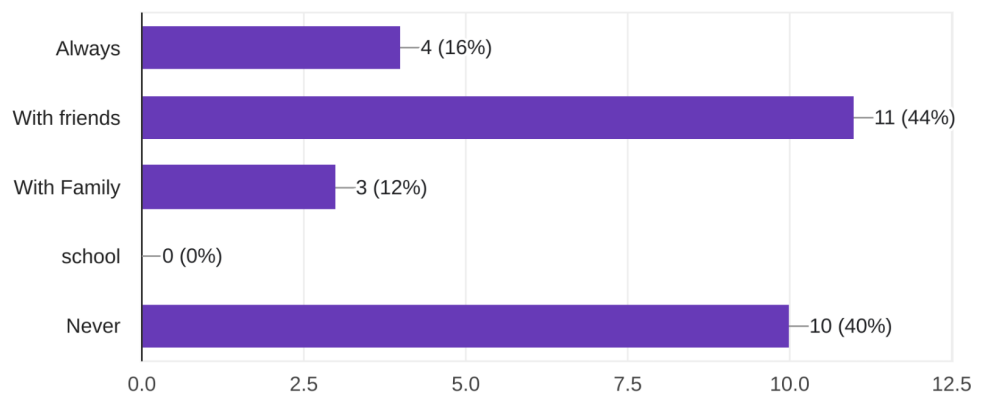
Q Do you use this dialect :-

- Never
- School
- Friends
- Family
- Always

Multiple answers were allowed for this question but most of the people who spoke this variety said they use it with friends / family and 0% people said they use it in school .

Do you use this dialect :-

25 responses



During the interview the interviewee explained how she refrained herself from using these variables at her bank as it sounded more informal and while talking to her old school friends she felt more comfortable with using these variables as she was not concerned about politeness while talking to friends .

So we conclude that people do situational code switching according to situations and they tend to use the indori accent more in informal situations

Hence the hypothesis was correct

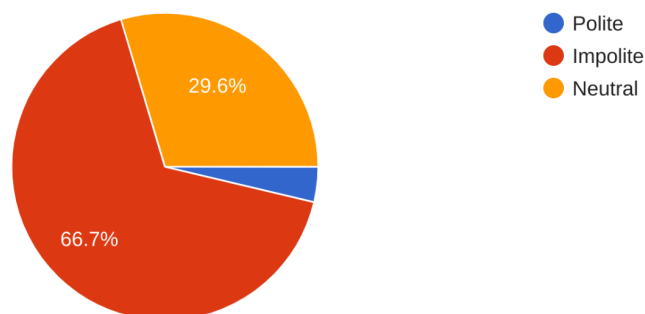
To know the reason of this type of code switching we also asked in the form the following question

Q Do you find the Speaker's language :-

- Polite
- Impolite
- Neutral

The results were surprising as approximately 70% considered the variety as impolite and even the speakers who always used this variety termed it impolite or neutral .

Do you find the Speaker's language :-
27 responses



And in the hypothesis it was assumed that the situational code switching happens only because “standard” hindi was considered more prestigious but the

survey results show that the code switching happens also because the indori variety is considered impolite

During the interview of an indori variety speaker when she was asked about which language she would use while consoling someone or while emotional talks she replied “Standard” hindi because according to her indori variety sounded more aggressive .

Hence the hypothesis of code-switching is true but it also depends on a factor that indori variety is considered impolite which was earlier not hypothesized .

CONCLUSION

We conclude from our detailed study about the survey and the interview that

1. Most indore people (77%) perceive the indori accent speaker as either a person living in a rural area or migrated from a rural area .
2. Most people do situational code switching according to situations and they tend to use the indori accent more in informal situations , the reason being that indori accent sounds more impolite .
3. There exists no relation between indori linguistic variable and social variable of class as the results and interview both conclude that this indori variables are used by all classes .
4. People of Indore do not perceive their accent as legitimate accent and tag it as wrong due to the difference in the hindi used in formal education .

Observer's Paradox :-

The survey and the interview result was collected without any bias but there is always possibility of the observer to inject some of his / her views from the study so unknowingly there maybe some small points where observer paradox couldn't be controlled . But in this study the observer (me) is also the part of the society where the study is conducted so the possibility of bias is less as I share mostly the same perception as the community .

Speech community

A speech community is defined very differently by different researchers belonging to different schools of thought .

Rather we will define features of this community and then look whether they are speech community according to different schools of thoughts .

Features of the Indore community :-

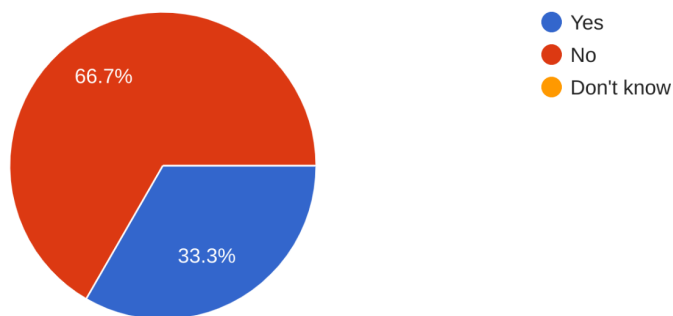
1. Mutual intelligibility :- both the standard hindi and the indori accent hindi is understood by most people

During the survey a question was asked

Q Did you find it difficult to understand the audio ?-

Most of the people replied NO even if they never use the Indori accent

Do you think the speaker is speaking hindi Correctly ?
27 responses



2. Frequency of interaction :- since we hypothesized and proved above that the indori accent is not associated with any social class hence there is no seclusion of any indori language speaker and standard hindi speakers so the interaction is very frequent .
3. Norms :- Since the accent is not associated with any class and the interaction is frequent as well the norms are more or less similar throughout the community .

Since the true definition of speech community varies across the globe

We define the speech community to be a community which has variety/ies of language present which are mutually intelligible , the social norms of the community are similar and the frequency of interaction is subsequent .

This definition is a mixture of definitions provided by many renowned researchers like Charles Hockett , John Gumperz , Hudson ,etc

According to the following definition the Indore Community is indeed one speech community where 2 varieties exist namely standard hindi and indori variety hindi which are mutually intelligible .

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Thanks for reading!
