

Linguistic Diversity of Marathi in Maharashtra: Review Article

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Abstract- This review article explores the linguistic diversity of Marathi in Maharashtra, highlighting regional interpretations, dialectical nuances, and historical influences. It delves into the impact of cultural, social, and geographical factors on the language, examining how Marathi has evolved and diversified across different communities and regions within the state. The abstract also touches upon the significance of linguistic diversity in shaping the rich shade of Maharashtra's cultural identity, furnishing perceptivity into the dynamic nature of Marathi as a language. The earliest known inscriptions in Marathi date from this period, and over time, it evolved as a distinct language. It developed from the Maharashtrian Prakrit, which was spoken in the ancient region of Maharashtra. Marathi has a rich literary tradition with works dating back to the 13th century, including the writings of Saint Dnyaneshwar. It continued to evolve and develop over the centuries, with various influences from Sanskrit and other languages.

Indexed Terms- Deshi Marathi, Kokani Marathi, Varhadi Marathi, Khandeshi Marathi

I. INTRODUCTION

Marathi is an Indo-Aryan language predominantly spoken in the western Indian state of Maharashtra and neighboring regions.

It is an ancient language with roots dating back to the 8th century. The earliest known inscriptions in Marathi date from this period, and over time, it evolved as a distinct language. It developed from the Maharashtrian Prakrit, which was spoken in the ancient region of Maharashtra. Marathi has a rich literary tradition with works dating back to the 13th

century, including the writings of Saint Dnyaneshwar. It continued to evolve and develop over the centuries, with various influences from Sanskrit and other languages. Marathi has a long and diverse history, making it one of the oldest languages in India. It is one of the 22 officially recognized languages of India and has a rich literary and cultural heritage. Marathi script is written from left to right and is similar to Devanagari, the script used for Sanskrit and several other Indian languages. Marathi has a diverse range of dialects, but the standard form is based on the dialect spoken in Pune. It boasts a vast body of literature, including poetry, prose, and theater, and has made significant contributions to the arts and entertainment in India.

• Various Dialects of Marathi in Maharashtra:

Marathi, the vibrant language of Maharashtra, boasts a spectrum of dialects that reflect the state's rich cultural diversity. Deshi Marathi, the standard variety, finds its roots in urban centers like Mumbai and Pune and forms the literary benchmark. In contrast, Konkani Marathi, along the coastal Konkan region, bears the coastal influences of Konkani, imparting it with a unique coastal flavor. Varhadi Marathi, spoken in Vidarbha, offers its own distinctive vocabulary and pronunciation. Khandeshi Marathi, prevalent in the Khandeshi region, showcases the influences of Ahirani and Gujarati. Ahirani, a recognized dialect, finds its home in specific regions and carries localized nuances. Marathwada Marathi, rooted in the central Marathwada region, showcases its own linguistic features. Finally, Malvani Marathi, in the coastal Malvan and Sindhudurg regions, incorporates elements from the Konkani language. These dialects contribute to the linguistic tapestry of Maharashtra, providing a diverse range of expressions, vocabulary, and regional identity, while

maintaining mutual intelligibility with standard Marathi.

Here's an introduction to some of the various dialects of Marathi spoken in different regions of Maharashtra:

a. Deshi Marathi:

This is the standard form of Marathi spoken in urban areas like Mumbai and Pune. It serves as the literary and media standard for the language. It is considered the standard form of the language and is used in literature, education, administration, media, and formal communication. Deshi Marathi is written in the Devanagari script, like many other Indian languages. A significant portion of Marathi literature, including poetry, prose, and theater, is written in Deshi Marathi. Notable authors and poets, such as Sant Tukaram and Pu La Deshpande, have made contributions to this literary tradition.

b. Konkani Marathi:

Predominant in the Konkani region along the coast, it's influenced by Konkani and has a distinct coastal flavor. This dialect has significant influence from the Konkani language due to its geographic location. The Konkani influence is most noticeable in the vocabulary and phonetics of Konkani Marathi. The coastal setting of the Konkani region imparts a unique flavor to the dialect, with words and phrases related to fishing, seafood, and maritime culture being prominent. Konkani Marathi includes words and expressions that are specific to the region's culture and environment. It may also incorporate words from the Konkani language.

c. Varhadi Marathi:

Hailing from the Vidarbha region in eastern Maharashtra, Varhadi Marathi exhibits unique vocabulary and pronunciation. Varhadi Marathi is predominantly spoken in the Vidarbha region, which includes cities like Nagpur, Amravati, and Akola. It is the dominant dialect in this part of Maharashtra. One of the defining characteristics of Varhadi Marathi is its unique vocabulary and pronunciation, which may differ from standard Marathi. It includes words and phrases specific to the Vidarbha region. The dialect has distinctive phonetic features, such as variations in the pronunciation of certain consonants

and vowels, which distinguish it from other Marathi dialects. Varhadi Marathi is an essential part of the cultural identity of Vidarbha, and it plays a significant role in local arts, music, and literature.

d. Khandeshi Marathi:

Spoken in the Khandesh region of northern Maharashtra, it reflects influences from languages like Ahirani and Gujarati. It is primarily spoken in the Khandesh region, which includes cities like Dhule, Jalgaon, and Nandurbar in Maharashtra. It also extends into some parts of Madhya Pradesh.

This dialect incorporates words and phrases influenced by languages like Ahirani and Gujarati. The dialect has been influenced by the Ahirani language, which is spoken by the Ahir community in the region, as well as Gujarati, due to the proximity to Gujarat. These linguistic influences are reflected in the vocabulary and phonetics of Khandeshi Marathi. Khandeshi Marathi exhibits phonetic variations that set it apart from standard Marathi, including differences in pronunciation and accent. The dialect is integral to the cultural identity of the Khandesh region and plays a vital role in local arts, music, and folklore.

e. Ahirani:

Primarily spoken in the Ahirani region, which includes parts of northern Maharashtra and some areas of Gujarat. It's considered a dialect of Marathi with local variations. Ahirani Marathi is predominantly spoken in the Ahirani region, which includes cities like Dhule, Nandurbar, and Jalgaon in Maharashtra, as well as some areas of Gujarat. It is also spoken by the Ahir community, which is prominent in the region. The dialect has been influenced by the Ahir community's language, culture, and traditions, contributing to its distinct vocabulary and expressions. Ahirani Marathi incorporates vocabulary that is specific to the region, including words influenced by the Ahir community's language and lifestyle. The dialect may have unique phonetic characteristics, including variations in pronunciation and accent, which distinguish it from standard Marathi. Ahirani Marathi is an integral part of the cultural identity of the Ahir community and the Ahirani region. It plays a vital role in local arts, music, and folklore.

f. Marathwada Marathi:

Found in the Marathwada region of central Maharashtra, it showcases distinctive linguistic features. Marathwada Marathi is primarily spoken in the Marathwada region, which includes cities like Aurangabad, Nanded, and Latur. It is the dominant dialect in this part of Maharashtra. One of the defining characteristics of Marathwada Marathi is its unique vocabulary and expressions, which may differ from standard Marathi. It includes words and phrases specific to the Marathwada region. The dialect may have distinctive phonetic features, such as variations in the pronunciation of certain consonants and vowels, which distinguish it from other Marathi dialects. Marathwada Marathi is an integral part of the cultural identity of the Marathwada region and plays a significant role in local arts, music, and literature.

g. Malvani Marathi:

Common in the Malvan and Sindhudurg regions along the Konkan coast, Malvani Marathi incorporates elements from the Konkani language. Malvani Marathi is primarily spoken in the coastal areas of the Malvan and Sindhudurg regions in Maharashtra. It is also influenced by the culture and language of the Konkan region. Due to its coastal location, Malvani Marathi has significant influences from the Konkani language, which is also spoken in the Konkan region. This influence is especially noticeable in its vocabulary and phonetics. Malvani Marathi incorporates vocabulary and expressions that are specific to the coastal lifestyle, fishing, and seafood. It may also include words from the Konkani language. The dialect may have distinct phonetic features, including variations in pronunciation and accent that reflect its coastal setting. Malvani Marathi is an integral part of the cultural identity of the Konkan coast and plays a vital role in local arts, music, and literature, particularly in folk traditions.

These dialects enrich the linguistic tapestry of Maharashtra, offering diverse expressions, vocabulary, and pronunciation specific to their respective regions while still being mutually intelligible with the standard Marathi dialect.

II. METHODS AND MATERIAL

1. Phonology of Marathi-Hindi contact in Eastern Vidarbha –

Multilingualism and bilingualism are likely to be common phenomenon throughout the world. There are so many languages spoken in the world where there is much variation in language over short distances. These variations develop differences of between the languages. In the language contact situation, speakers of different languages interact in their respective languages and influence each other. This type of situation mostly occurs near the border area of any two or more than languages. Language contact situation mostly occurs in the border areas because of migration and business communication language. This type of situation does responsible for the formation of new pidgins, creoles that start with the code-mixing and code-switching. The impact of Hindi language can find at each and every level of language and deeply affected the Phonology, Morphology and Syntax in course of time. [1]

2. Phonotactic frequencies in Marathi-

The analysis of phonotactic frequencies in Marathi reveals that breathy sonorants are underrepresented in the language. This is consistent with the pattern observed in other languages in Nepal, where breathy voiced obstruents are retained while breathy sonorants are lost. In Marathi, back rounded vowels and bigrams involving back-rounded vowels are disfavored. The study highlights the importance of understanding phonotactic probabilities in language processing and contributes to psycholinguistic and behavioural research. The Marathi portion of the EMILLE/CIIL corpus was used for the analysis. The corpus consists of 2.2 million words and is part of a larger collection of South Asian language corpora. The analysis of a written corpus is a crucial first step in identifying phonotactic patterns. The token frequency and type frequency of consonants in the corpus are discussed. The results show that breathy sonorants account for less than 1% of the consonants. The retention of breathy voiced obstruents in Newari and the Kiranti family suggests that breathiness is more likely to be preserved in obstruents than in sonorants. [2]

3. Synchronic Variation and Diachronic Change in Dialects of Marathi-

This paper explores linguistic variation and change in Marathi, specifically focusing on the relationship between synchronic variation and diachronic developments in the language. Traditional dialectology has shifted to incorporate sociolinguistic methods and quantitative analysis based on large corpora. The study examines the synchronic variation in the object-marking case in Marathi and confirms the connection between synchronic gradience and diachronic gradualness in language change. The availability of an electronic corpus of spoken Marathi will enhance comparative and cross-linguistic study. The study analyses dialectal data from Chandgad and uses a combination of written and spoken sources to uncover transitions in the diffusion of linguistic features. The study concludes that synchronic gradience is both the result and the cause of diachronic gradualness. [3]

4. Development of Marathi Language Speech Database from Marathwada Region-

The paper describes the development of speech databases in Marathi language for agriculture and travel purposes. It discusses the selection of speakers, recording environment, and software used. The databases consist of isolated words and continuous speech samples. The development process faced challenges in finding agriculture-related information in Marathi and convincing speakers to provide samples. The speech databases are phonetically rich and can be used for developing a speech recognition system. [4]

5. Comprehensive Study of Marathi Dialects in Satara Region-

IJFL (2021) reports that this text discusses the concept of dialects and focuses on the Marathi language. It mentions the study of dialects in the Satara region and the creation of a database for solving criminal cases using dialectology. The study collected audio samples and identified different dialects. It also highlights the variations in spoken language in different areas of Satara district. The text emphasizes the importance of forensic linguistics in criminal investigations, particularly in Maharashtra. [5]

6. Comparative Study of Marathi Dialects in Kolhapur and Satara Region-

This study focuses on the dialect similarities and differences between the Kolhapur and Satara regions of the Marathi language. The sample was collected through auditory analysis and compared to standard Marathi. The study aims to find significant differences between regional languages. The collected data includes call and audio recordings, which were analysed using pen and paper. Dialectology can be used in forensic cases to reconstruct crimes based on recordings found at the crime scene and identify the suspect's region. [6]

7. Comparative Study of Marathi Dialects of Migrated People of Satara Region-

Human migration involves people moving from one place to another with the intention of settling permanently or temporarily. Migration to a country with the same language as the origin country is higher than to a destination with a different language. The project aims to study the variation in dialects of migrated people in Satara. Factors such as bilingualism, language, and dialect variation are influenced by migration. The study found significant differences in the Marathi language of migrants in Satara. Factors like education, age, culture, and duration of migration affect bilingualism and dialect. The project aims to create a database of dialect variation for police investigation and analyse the variation in Marathi language of migrants. [7]

8. Development of Isolated Words Speech Database of Marathi Words for Agriculture Purpose-

Speech is the most common form of communication between humans. There is a need to develop systems using Indian languages, particularly Hindi, which is the national language. The Technology Development for Indian Languages program has initiated a project to develop voice interfaces in six Indian languages. Marathi is one of these languages and has the fourth largest number of native speakers in India. The development of a speech database for Marathi words is being carried out in Maharashtra. The data collection process involves selecting speakers from different demographics and recording their speech in various environments. PRAAT, a software tool, is used for labelling and analysis. The goal is to develop a robust automatic speech recognition system. [8]

9. Aspect in Marathi in a Cross-dialectal Perspective-

This study examines the aspectual system in regional varieties of Marathi and compares it with the standard dialect. The focus is on the synchronic variation in the aspectual systems of Chandgad, Shirol, and Yerla villages in Maharashtra. The study finds differences in the use of 's' plus present tense to show habitual in Shirol data. There is also a systemic difference in the progressive aspect. The study uses a multi-pronged approach to analyse the data and compares it with the standard dialect. The findings suggest that the aspectual system does not vary in regional dialects of Marathi. [9]

10. Simplification: A Case of Phonetic Salience of Consonant Clusters in Marathi-

Milind Pedhekar (2023) reported on simplification. Cluster simplification is more evident in the speech of speakers of Ahirani, a dialect of Marathi. They find it difficult to pronounce clusters in English standard form and do not consider it prominent. The study focuses on the production of consonant clusters in English by speakers of Ahirani in the Northern region of Maharashtra. The study population includes illiterate and semi-literate individuals. The rule-based and syllable-based approaches to cluster simplification are discussed. The study highlights that cluster simplification is more common in initial positions and less prominent in final positions. Overall, the study contributes to understanding how English is assimilated in Indian speech society. 12 native speakers were included in the analysis. However, "The study collected data from 12 participants on their production of consonant clusters in English. There is potential to gather more examples of clusters. The study had a smaller number of female speakers compared to male. The participants included both literate and illiterate individuals, but their numbers were not comparable. The data also revealed other simplification processes, but the analysis focused on cluster simplification," admit the investigators. [10]

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The diversity of the Marathi language in Maharashtra reflects many dialects, each with unique

characteristics influenced by history, culture and geography. Research has identified various languages such as Varhadi, Ahirani, Konkani Marathi and Malvani Marathi, each exhibiting unique vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. The linguistic variety of Marathi in Maharashtra is charming. Marathi, as a language, well-known shows variations in vocabulary, pronunciation, and syntax throughout extraordinary regions of the kingdom. Dialects like Varhadi, Ahirani, Konkani Marathi, and Malvani Marathi exhibit this range, motivated by ancient, cultural, and geographical factors. Additionally, Marathi spoken in urban areas may additionally vary from rural regions because of the affect of other languages and dialects. This linguistic richness provides depth to the cultural material of Maharashtra.

CONCLUSION

The verbal diversity of Marathi in Maharashtra stands as a vibrant shade that weaves together literal, artistic, and social vestments. Since its establishment as the sanctioned language in 1674, Marathi has played a vital part in the artistic and erudite development of the state. The admixture of different perspectives and verbal traditions enriches Maharashtra uniquely. Marathi, with its rich erudite and artistic heritage, has contributed significantly to the intellectual and cultural geography of the region. This verbal diversity not only reflects the history but also shapes a dynamic present and holds the pledge of uninterrupted growth and invention in the 21st century.

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