

Diglossia in Ancient India

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1. Introduction

The rich variety of languages spoken in Modern India, with representatives of several language families (Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, and Munda, as well as English) has sparked much interest in the ramifications of language contact in India, and South Asia in general. In particular, the relationship of some Indian languages spoken within the same speech communities has been said to be diglossic: Gair (1968) and De Silva (1974) have proposed that the relationship between the literary and colloquial varieties of modern Sinhalese (spoken in Ceylon) is diglossic.

Like its present day counterpart, ancient India was a multilingual area. Not only were the ancestors of modern Indo-Aryan languages (namely Sanskrit and the Prākritis) spoken in the same region, but also the forerunners of modern Tamil and Munda. Diachronically speaking, Sanskrit (both Vedic and Classical) is considered Old Indo-Aryan, and the Prākritis are traditionally considered Middle Indo-Aryan. But many (e.g. Emeneau 1966) have noted that Sanskrit and Prākrit were also spoken during the same time period.

Although Indo-Aryan scholars have continually referred to the Prākritis as the popular dialects and to Sanskrit as the language of the learned, the possibility of diglossia existing in ancient India was not discussed in depth until Hock and Pandharipande (1976).¹ Even so, later scholars have not expanded on the hypothesis of diglossia during ancient times; Deshpande (1979) discusses instances of conflicting sociolinguistic attitudes in ancient India, but does not provide direct evidence for or against diglossia.

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the evidence (presented primarily by Hock and Pandharipande) in favor of a diglossic relationship involving Sanskrit and the Prākritis in terms of Ferguson's original 1959 definition.² In making their claim that Sanskrit and Prākrit were used in diglossic situations as early as the time of the Rig Veda, Hock and Pandharipande give three types of evidence. They present as the best-known evidence the language differentiation in the Sanskrit drama, in which Sanskrit was used by characters representing the higher castes and various Prākritis were used by characters representing the lower social castes.

Also cited as evidence are various passages from the primary Sanskrit literature, most notably from the writings of the grammarian Patañjali (c. 150 B.C.). Patañjali notes in referring to Pāṇini (1.1.1., 259:13) that there are differences between the sistabhāṣā, the language of the learned, and the lokabhāṣā, the language of the common people. The Nāṭyaśāstra, the oldest treatise on Sanskrit drama (attributed to Bharata, c. third century A.D.), gives factors which determine whether a character may or may not use

Sanskrit. The important factors were social status, caste, occupation, and social context. The level of education was an important factor, for well-educated people were to use Sanskrit.

Hock and Pandharipande mention briefly, as a third type of evidence, the occurrence of so-called *hyper-Sanskritisms*, hypercorrections of Sanskrit (or, in most cases, Prākṛit) forms which are intended to avoid patterns found in Prākṛit.

The evidence supplied by the ancient Indian commentators and grammarians provides strong evidence for, if not diglossia, at least some level of conflict between the two language varieties. Such evidence will not be disputed here. What is open to question, though, is the evidence from the Sanskrit drama of the period 100-1000 A.D. It appears that the drama may not be a reflection of the actual structure of ancient Indian society. On the other hand, though, the evidence provided by hyper-Sanskritisms can be shown to be more important to the argument for diglossia than what Hock and Pandharipande claim. This paper contains the results of a systematic investigation of hyper-Sanskritisms.

2. The Evidence from the Drama

The Sanskrit drama provides evidence for, at the very least, the literary coexistence of Sanskrit and Prākṛit. In general, Sanskrit was used by characters of the higher social castes; within the same play, various types of Prākṛits were used by characters of lower social groups, which included comic characters and women. According to Rājasekhara (c. 900 A.D.), a dramatist who had a special interest in language, Prākṛit is "smooth" (hence, its general use by women) while Sanskrit is "harsh" (hence, its general use by men.) Although the Nāṭyasāstra gave elaborate rules for the use of language in the drama, such rules were by no means rigid. A considerable amount of variability existed, particularly in the use of Prākṛit.

Authority figures such as kings and generals were to use Sanskrit; and as might be expected, Brahmins were also to use Sanskrit. Some female characters used Sanskrit: the chief queen, the ministers' daughters, and occasionally Buddhist nuns, female entertainers, women artists, and allegorical female characters. Without fail the descriptions of battles, peace negotiations, and omens required the use of Sanskrit.

On the other hand, the Prākṛits were used by women other than those mentioned above, as well as by men of lower rank. Particular dialects were ascribed to particular types of people, although the use of a particular dialect differed from author to author. Saurasēnī was generally used by women of "good family", their servants, and middle class males. Māgadhī, another well-known Prākṛit, was used by men living within the women's apartments, diggers of underground passages, bartenders, and, interestingly,

by the hero in times of danger (possibly expressing his "feminine", emotional side). Gamblers used Avanti and Dāksinātyā. Sometimes, two varieties of Prākṛit were used within the same play: Kālidāsa (c. 400 A. D.) used Saurasenī in prose, Māhārāṣṭrī in verses.

However, according to one of the earliest scholars on Sanskrit drama, Sylvain Lévi (Lé théâtre indien, 1890), the drama could not have reflected a diglossic situation. The plays, in his view, were originally composed in Prākṛit. As a result of the rise of Sanskrit as the language of literature as well as religion, the drama developed a mixture of the two varieties. Moreover, Lévi argued that "India . . . was never anxious for contact with reality, and it is absurd to suppose that the mixture of languages was adopted as a representation of the actual speech usage of the time . . ." (quoted in Keith 1924: 46).

But the evidence so far is that the drama was not secular in origin, but religious, arising from epic recitations. Moreover, in the work of the earliest known Sanskrit dramatist, Aśvaghōṣa (c. first century A.D.), Prākṛit appeared mainly in the dialogue, while Sanskrit appeared mainly in the verses. Thus, it appears that in the early dramas, Prākṛit was introduced into what was essentially a Sanskrit drama, in order to reflect the status of the inferior characters.

Other arguments can be made that the language usage in the drama cannot be due simply to an imitation of the real life situation. The Prākṛits of the later dramas were in some respect different from the Prākṛits spoken in everyday situations. As early as 400 A.D., the Prākṛits used in the drama began to take on artificial, literary forms. Reference is made to vibhāsās, stereotyped variants of the "more normal" Prākṛits, which refer to some literary Prākṛits. For example, people of menial occupations used certain Prākṛits: herdsmen used Sābarī or Abhīrī; charcoal burners, hunters, and carpenters also used Sābarī. (But the existence of literary forms does not necessarily mean that the Prākṛits used in the drama are completely unreliable as evidence; in a study of Irish literary dialects Sullivan (1980) argues that literary dialects can reflect characteristics of the actual speech.)

Moreover, there is evidence that the drama appealed to only a limited Indian audience and was intended to be viewed only by members of the higher social classes. As early as 900 A.D., chāvās, translations of the Prākṛit portions into Sanskrit, were common. No evidence exists for translations of the Sanskrit portions into Prākṛit, which suggests that the dramas were written mainly to be viewed by those who knew Sanskrit, i.e. the learned. Keith (1924: 242, 369-371) argued that the Sanskrit playwright's works were aimed mainly at the learned. Using (in part) information from unpublished texts, Balbir stated that ". . . the Sanskrit drama perhaps was never a light amusement of everyday life . . . it is obvious that the Sanskrit drama was intended to be a drama of the elite, enjoyed by qualified persons . . . a refined product religiously presented as an offering before a discriminating audience . . ." (1962: 44)

The drama could only be appreciated by a special group of people who were not only trained to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of the drama, but who could also be empathetic with the characters on stage. Appreciation for the drama could only be cultivated by a certain amount of study. The ideal spectator had to be knowledgeable about many things, among them the "rules of dialects . . . (and also) grammar" (Balbir, quoting from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*). Citing Lévi, Balbir states that "all the spectators are not apt to relish the rasa ['taste, feeling']; it is a sort of prize one has to deserve after an assiduous study of poems and healthy and delicate impression accumulated from the previous births." These people are referred to by various terms in the primary literature: as preksaka, sāmājika, sabhya, and sabhāsada.

Sabhāsada refers to 'an assistant at a meeting or assessor in a court of justice.' Preksaka means 'looking at, viewing or intending to view', as well as 'spectator, member of an audience'; but it could also have the meaning of 'considering' or 'judging'. Sāmājika is a term that was neutral in meaning, meaning 'spectator, member of or assistant at an assembly'. Sabhya could be neutral in meaning as well, meaning 'being in an assembly hall or meeting room, belonging to or fit for an assembly or court'; it could also, however, mean 'suitable to good society, courteous, polite, refined, civilized, not vulgar, decorous' (as speech); or 'a person of honorable parentage'. Such spectators were, for the most part, members of the higher social classes.

It was essential that audience members be well-qualified to view the Sanskrit drama, for the audience members decided whether the play was a hit or not. Every ancient Indian audience had a sabhāpati (literally 'audience-ruler'), the guest of honor, who made the final decision as to the success of the play. The sabhāpati had advisors to guide him in his decision; each advisor was a specialist on a particular aspect of drama. Also present at the Sanskrit drama were "assessors", people of various occupations whose job was to evaluate the acting of individual performers. What is of interest here is that grammarians were also present as assessors.

The common folk also attended dramas; their opinions on the success of the play were acknowledged, but were not respected. According to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the audience was divided into two types: divine and human. The divine refers to the "cultured audience who generally take interest in deeper and more subtle aspects of a dramatic end as such are above ordinary human beings" (Balbir quoting translation from Ghosh, p. 513, fn. 17 & 15). The human element refers to the common people who were appreciative only of superficial aspects of the drama, and not of the deeper aspects.

Certainly the Sanskrit drama was something that was staged only on special occasions, such as military victories, festivals honoring the gods, or weddings. The playhouses (the nāṭyavesma, nāṭyagrha, and preksāgrha) are described in the literature as having elaborate seating arrangements, with the best seat in the house given to the sabhāpati. In some instances, they are referred to as "palace-theatres", which may indicate that some plays were staged within makeshift theatres within the royal palaces.

Given that the Sanskrit drama was viewed by a limited audience, the bilingual nature of the Sanskrit drama does not provide conclusive evidence for diglossia. Stronger evidence for the high social status assigned to Sanskrit comes from hyper-Sanskritisms.

3. The Evidence from Hyper-Sanskritisms

Linguists have devoted a fair amount of attention to hypercorrections, the use of a form based on attempts to avoid forms found in low prestige dialects. DeCamp (1972) mentions various examples of phonological hypercorrection in American English, such as /r/ insertion in some San Francisco dialects, or Jamaican Creole substitution of /θ/ for /t/ in words such as /fɪlθr/. In such forms, there is an effort, conscious or not, to avoid using forms which are phonologically similar to low prestige forms, even if they are not low prestige pronunciations. /r/ insertion appears to have originated from an attempt to avoid using what could appear as /r/ deletion; the /θ/ for /t/ substitution resulted from an awareness of the converse substitution in low prestige dialects. In addition, Labov (1972) describes hypercorrections in terms of the frequency of usage of correct forms; the middle class is likely to use prescriptively correct forms more often than higher social classes.

In this discussion, I am using the term *hypercorrection* in a more general sense than what has been traditionally used: to refer to any morphological change which originates as an attempt to avoid using forms which contain phonological patterns found in a low prestige dialect. Since the original forms do not violate phonotactic (or syntactic) rules, such "corrections" are unnecessary from a structural viewpoint; hence, they are *hyper*-corrections. Traditionally, hypercorrections have been used to refer to prescriptively/etymologically incorrect forms which originate in such manner, but prescriptive or etymological correctness/incorrectness is unimportant. What is important is the social forces behind such modifications.

Perhaps the best examples of such forms found in a language not usually considered a living language are found in the hyper-Sanskritisms, phonological hypercorrections (limited to certain lexical items) which originated as modifications of Prākṛit forms, or of Sanskrit forms which contain patterns found in Prākṛit. Some, if not all, Sanskrit speakers must have been aware of the phonological differences between Sanskrit and the Prākṛits. In a few instances, Prākṛit words which are borrowed into Sanskrit are modified to sound more Sanskritic. For example, Sanskrit has a noun *utkuruta-* 'dustheap', which originates as a hypercorrection from the Prākṛit form having the same meaning, *ukkurudi-*. The Prākṛit reflex of Sanskrit *tk* is *kk*. From a phonological standpoint, there is no motivation to change the *kk* sequence to *tk* because *kk* can occur in Sanskrit, as in Skt. *kakkola-* 'a species of plant'. The only motivation for such a change, if not due to loan phonology, is a social one: Sanskrit speakers wanted to avoid using the *kk* sequence which, in principle, could be perceived as a Prākṛit sequence.³

In some cases, words which were Sanskrit in origin were erroneously perceived as Prākṛit and modified so as to be "more Sanskrit". *Utsuka-* is a modification of Sanskrit **ucchuka-*; which comes from Old Indic **icchuka-*. Since the *cch* sequence in **ucchuka-* is identical to the *cch* sequence which is the Prākṛit reflex of Sanskrit *ṭṣ*, the Sanskrit form changed in a direction away from (what was perceived as) Prākṛit.

I examined all cases of hyper-Sanskritisms (primarily) from two sources. One of the earliest works which refers to hyper-Sanskritisms (and uses the term *hyper-Sanskritism*) is Bloomfield and Edgerton's work on Vedic phonetics (1932: 20). The influence of Prākṛit on Sanskrit is manifested in two ways: first, by Prākṛitisms, changes in Sanskrit forms in the direction of Prākṛit. Many writings in Vedic Sanskrit (including the Rig Veda) contained unusual Sanskrit forms which are phonetic variants that follow sound patterns in Prākṛit. For example, the form *tvāstr-* 'creator' has a variant form *tvāstri-*, which appears to be influenced by the occurrence in some Prākṛits of *ri* (or *ru*) for Sanskrit *ṛ*. Secondly, the opposite may happen: the Sanskrit form may have a variant form which is modified in a direction away from Prākṛit-like forms, or toward a variety of Sanskrit which cannot be perceived as having any Prākṛit influences, as in the hyper-Sanskritisms. The hyper-Sanskritisms cited in Bloomfield and Edgerton appear to be hypercorrected forms of Sanskrit forms erroneously perceived as Prākṛit. It is these types of hyper-Sanskritisms which Hock and Pandharipande cite as evidence for diglossia.

Mayrhofer (1956) takes a different approach to hyper-Sanskritisms. He defines a *Hypersanskritismus* in the following way:

Perhaps still more frequently than the undertaking of the pure or almost unchanged dialectal forms was also the case that these have been again adapted falsely to the high dialect. . . . In several cases . . . we encounter strange *Rück-Sanskritisierungen* of such Middle Indic (or, even only to be regarded as M[iddle] I[ndic], in truth correct Old Indic) words and these *Rückbildungen* are again a fact, which the Old Indic etymology by all means has included. (my translation of Mayrhofer 1956: 9)

In volume I of Mayrhofer's work, I examined each entry to see whether it could be attributable to a hyper-Sanskritization.⁴ (Unfortunately) Mayrhofer uses five terms to refer to such hypercorrections: *Hypersanskritismus*, *Rück-Sanskritisierung*, *Rückbildung*, *falsche Sanskritisierung*, and (occasionally) *Sanskritisierung*. These are distinguished from Prākṛitisms ([*ein*] *Prākṛitismus* or *dialektische Formen*). Mayrhofer is mainly concerned with modifications in Prākṛit forms which eliminate certain patterns found in Prākṛit. However, such modifications are, from a social standpoint, the same type of modifications that occur in Bloomfield and Edgerton's hyper-Sanskritisms.

In examining hyper-Sanskritisms, I found that they are not limited to only one or two categories, but that there were apparently many *types* of hyper-Sanskritisms that took place. This has two important implications. First, the occurrence of such types suggests that hypercorrection may play a greater role in morphological change than previously thought. Many have acknowledged that language change can arise as a result of speakers' tendency to regularize, as in analogical change. Occasionally morphological changes occur which involve apparent reversals of established sound correspondences. The best explanation for such reversals, especially in situations involving literary and colloquial variants, is hypercorrection. Thus, social factors can play an important role in accounting for changes in the phonological shape of words.⁵

On the basis of the similarity in the types of forms found, as well as the variety of types, it appears that hyper-Sanskritisms are not a "grab-bag" group of words whose phonetic shape cannot be explained, but rather are words which reflect an actual sociolinguistic phenomenon in ancient India. It could not simply be a coincidence that all of the patterns found involved a change from (apparent) "Prākṛit" to "Sanskrit"; the only possible motivation for such changes is hypercorrection. Though there is no semantic pattern in these forms, the hyper-Sanskritisms fall into a set of distinct groups, as follows:⁶ [note: unless otherwise indicated, the original forms are Middle Indic; forms which are indicated as variants come from original Vedic forms; MI = Middle Indic, OI = Old Indic.]

Modifications of Consonant Sequences:

a. One of the Prākṛit reflexes of Sanskrit ts is c(h) (frequently doubled to cch), as in Skt. matsara-, Pkt. macchara- 'cheerful; intoxicating'. cch is a possible (and common) word-internal sequence in Sanskrit, as in gaccha- 'tree'. A number of hyper-Sanskritisms were found involving ts for c(h)/cch:

gutsa- from guccha- 'bundle'
utsuka- from *ucchuka-, OI icchu-, 'restless, anxious, longing for'
utsādana- from ucchādana- 'rubbing'
kudymatsī-/kudymatsya- from *kudemac(h)- 'house lizard'
jugupsa- 'avoids, detests' from MI *jugucchu- (Pāli jigucchā-),
'abhorrence'; desiderative of gup- 'protect'.

b. Prākṛit occasionally has (k)kh for Sanskrit ks, as in Skt. bhikṣu-, Pkt. bhikkhu- 'monk'. In Apabhraṃsa, such a change occurs regularly, as in Skt. ksatriya-, Apam. khattiu- 'warrior'. (k)kh was possible in Sanskrit, as in kṣākhāti '(s)he laughs'. Nonetheless, Sanskrit speakers substituted ks for (k)kh in some words:

aksauhini- from MI *akkhohini-, Pāli akkhobhani-
'complete army'

ksātra- from khātra- 'breach, tunnel'

ksiv- from khiv- 'spits'

rūksa- from MI rukha-, OI vrksa- 'tree'

ksvel- from khe- 'leap, jump, play'

c. The Prākṛit reflex of Sanskrit tk is kk, as in Skt. utkara-, Pkt. ukkerō, 'heap.' kk is a possible Sanskrit sequence, as in kakkola- 'a species of plant'. I found one example of a semantically related hypercorrected form: utkuruta- for ukkurudī- 'dustheap'; also, muktā- from *muttā-, Pāli, Pkt. muttā-, OI murtā- 'pearl'.

d. Prākṛit kk can also arise from Sanskrit rk, as in Pkt. akka-, Sanskrit arka- 'ray, flash of lightning; sun.' In one hyper-Sanskritism, rk is substituted for kk: kurkuta- from older, literary kukkuta- 'cock.'

e. In some hyper-Sanskritisms, tt became st(h): kandostha- from Pkt. kamdotta-, kamdutta-, OI kandata- 'blue lotus'; adyustā- from MI addhutta-, OI ardhacaturtha- 'three and one-half'. Numerous examples of tt occur in Sanskrit: atta- 'watch-tower; market.' sth did not regularly become tt in Prākṛit, but compare st > tth in forms such as Skt. drsti-, Pkt. ditthi- 'sight'.

f. Prākṛit shows bbh for Sanskrit dbh, as in Skt. sadbhāva-, Pkt. sabbhāva- 'good nature.' One type of hyper-Sanskritism involved dbh for bbh: adbhis/adbhyas (instr/dat, abl pl. of ap-) from *abbhis, abbhyas 'water'. A compound form abbhaksā- 'living upon water' shows that bbh can occur in Sanskrit.

g. Sanskrit rv became vv in Prākṛit, as in Skt. sarva-, Pkt. savva-, 'all.' vv became rv in hyper-Sanskritisms:⁷

urvarita- from uvvaria-, 'left, left over'.

carv- for OI *cavv-, 'grinds with the teeth, chews'

h. In one hyper-Sanskritism, rg comes from gg, as in argala- from MI aggala-, OI *agra-la- 'going beyond'. gg is a possible sequence in Sanskrit, as in the compound diggaḥja- 'one of the elephants in the four quarters (who support the earth)'.⁸

Modifications of Individual Consonants:

i. Dialectally in Prākṛit, d was substituted for t in a limited set of words, all of which are forms of the second person singular pronoun, e.g. dāva for tāvat 'your.' In some words, Prākṛit shows d for Sanskrit t, as in Skt. parita-, Pkt. parida- 'around.' A few Prākṛitisms involved the interchanging of voiced stops for voiceless stops, as in the case of edagvā-

for etaḡvā- 'of variegated color, shining (horses)', and piga- for pika- 'cuckoo'. Hypercorrections in the other direction occur as well: devi- '(perhaps) nursery term for mother' has the variant form tevi-.

j. Some Prākritisms show v for ṡ, as in janovāda- from OI janāpavāda- 'gossip, ill report'. The converse hyper-Sanskritism occurs: kapāta- from kavāta- 'leaf of a door.'

k. Prākṛit regularly shows h where Sanskrit has aspirated stops, as in the following: Skt. sukha-, Pkt. suha- 'pleasure'; Skt. laghuka-, Pkt. lahua- 'small one'; Skt. pathika-, Pkt. pahia- 'traveller'; Skt. nidhi-, Pkt. nihi- 'treasure'; and Skt. abhinava-, Pkt. ahinava- 'fresh'. Some Prākṛitic forms showed a substitution of h for aspirated stops, as in kakuha- from kakubha- 'high, eminent, great'; gahana- from gambha- 'deep'. The corresponding hyper-Sanskritism of dh from h occurs:

gudhera- from guhera- 'protecting'
avadhamsa- from Pkt. ohamsa-, OI *avagharsa- 'red sandal'

l. In some Vedic forms, j was substituted for original ḡ (especially before y): dyut- has the variant ḡyut- 'shine'; original daha, imperative of han- 'strike, kill', became jahi. The opposite hypercorrection occurs as well: ḡvā- 'bow string', has the variant dvā-.

Vocalic Hyper-Sanskritisms:

m. Prākṛit frequently reduced word final -as (-ah) to -o, as in Skt. drumas, Pkt. dumo, 'tree.' Final -o occurred in Sanskrit as a result of a sandhi rule involving the change of final -as to -o before voiced consonants, as in devo gacchati (from underlying devas gacchati). As might be expected, as is substituted for o in hypercorrections:

amas for OI *amo 'this', nom. sg.
adas for OI *ado 'that', nom. sg.

n. Prākṛit occasionally shows i (and sometimes a) in place of vocalic r, as in Skt. drdha-, Pkt. dadha- 'firm'; Skt. amṛta-, Pkt. amia- 'nectar' and Skt. prākṛta-, Pkt. pāua- 'Prākṛit'. Numerous Prākṛitisms show a substitution of i for vocalic r as in ghinnate from OI *grbhñāti, third singular present of grabh- (grāh-), 'takes'. Some hyper-Sanskritisms have r interchanged with i or u:

kṛcchra- from *kicchra- 'evil, bad'
masṛna- from MI masina-, OI mṛtsna- 'soft, mild'
(gotra)bhrd, a variant of gotrabhid 'opening the cow-pens of the sky' (ōf Indra and Brhaspati's vehicle)
ḡaivātrka- from OI *ḡaivatu-ka- (vrddhi of ḡivātu-), 'long-lived'

rccharā- 'courtesan' from accharā- 'Apsaras' (name of female divinity)

ghusrṇa- from Pkt. ghusina- 'saffron'

o. The Prākṛit dialects occasionally had forms with ru or ri for Vedic r̥ (paralleling the modern pronunciation), as in bhṛumi- for bhṛmi- 'whirlwind'. There is at least one hyper-Sanskritism corresponding to this: prsvā- occurs as a variant of pruśvā- 'drop of water, rime, ice'.

4. Conclusion

The issue is whether Sanskrit and the Prākṛits, which were used by speakers within the same speech communities, could be accorded diglossia status. Certainly there is evidence for the existence of a high and low variety, with Sanskrit holding the position of high prestige and Prākṛit, low prestige, as Hock and Pandharipande argue. But the evidence from the Sanskrit drama does not conclusively prove the existence of diglossia, since the drama was written mainly for audience members who were essentially the upper crust of society and, as a possible consequence, did not accurately portray actual language usage. It is also likely that the use of Sanskrit and Prākṛit in the drama, especially in the later works, was merely a matter of literary tradition, rather than a depiction of the real-life situation (Burrow 1973: 60; cf. also the occasional stereotyped use of Southern accents for inferior characters in American English).

The hyper-Sanskritisms, however, are stronger evidence for diglossia. Since neither the absolute number of hyper-Sanskritisms found nor the absolute number of hypercorrection patterns provide conclusive evidence for diglossia, my intention is not to provide a statistical argument for diglossia. There is no "magic number" of hypercorrected forms or patterns which conclusively indicates that speakers viewed each variety as having different social status. Moreover, the number of hyper-Sanskritisms found in Mayrhofer's dictionary does not provide a figure for the token frequency of *words* which underwent such hypercorrection. Some forms occur more frequently than others. In addition, the existence of hypercorrections in itself does not signal diglossia, since hypercorrections (of both phonological and morpho-syntactic nature) occur in non-diglossic situations, such as American English.

But if hypercorrection played only a minor role in accounting for morphological change within a language, then one would not expect to find many different types of hypercorrection. Certainly the occurrence of only one or two patterns could not be used as evidence for differing social attitudes toward the dialects. The large variety of hyper-Sanskritisms, with numerous different patterns, strongly suggests that there were conscious efforts on the part of Sanskrit speakers to avoid using forms which sounded Prākṛitic.

It appears that the Prākṛits were not simply the dialects used by the *populi*, but were varieties that had low social standing. Sanskrit was, in

addition to being the language used by the learned, a variety that held much greater prestige than the Prākritis. Thus, in much the same way in which ancient Indian society was stratified, Sanskrit and the Prākritis were also socially differentiated.

Notes

My thanks to Brian Joseph for his comments on earlier versions of this paper.

1. De Silva (61-62) argues that, as early as 800 B.C., Vedic and Classical Sanskrit were used diglossically, with the Classical language as the high variety and Vedic as the low variety.

2. Ferguson's definition of diglossia, in its entirety, is as follows:

. . . 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 literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation. (1959: 336)

In this discussion, I am using a simplified version of Ferguson's "classic" definition: namely, situations involving a variety which is assigned high social status, while the other variety is regarded as having low status by speakers. This simplified version appears to be the sole criterion used by Hock and Pandharipande in their analysis (113); they do not discuss criteria other than prestige. The criterion of function, with mutually exclusive tasks assigned to each variety, is a natural consequence of the occurrence of high and low varieties.

Also, this simplified version represents the essence of Ferguson's definition, which distinguishes diglossic situations from cases involving regional and stylistic variation. The two varieties must have a moderate amount of divergence, in the sense that they must be different enough so as not to be styles, but they must be similar enough so as not to be unrelated languages. Ferguson's definition differs significantly from Fishman's (1972) and Fasold's (1984) later modifications. Fishman agrees with Gumperz's argument (1961, 1962, 1964a, 1964b, 1966) that diglossia involves two functionally differentiated language varieties of *any type*, regardless of their degree of divergency. According to Fishman, "diglossia is a characterization of the social allocation of functions to different languages or varieties" (1972: 102). Hence, the functional difference between the varieties is more crucial to Fishman (and Fasold, who agrees with Fishman) than their prestige. The only criterion which all have agreed on is function, with only slight overlapping of the social tasks assigned to each variety.

Hence, Fishman (by implication) and Fasold (explicitly) include regional and stylistic variation. But there are no real high or low varieties in such cases; speech styles do not carry the same social connotations that true "high" or "low" varieties do. Both Fishman and Fasold's views trivialize the notion of diglossia, since any stable situation in which two or more varieties are spoken within the same speech community would be diglossic.

My goal is not to argue for diglossia involving Sanskrit and Prākṛit in terms of all characteristics stated by Ferguson; I leave that to present and future Sanskrit scholars.

3. Burrow (1973: 61) points out that such modifications (which he terms [false] Sanskritization) abound in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, which is essentially a Sanskritized Prākṛit. Here, many Prākṛit words are modified to take on Sanskrit patterns, as opposed to merely substituting the equivalent Sanskrit word. E.g. Pkt. bhikkhussa, gen. sg. of bhikkhu 'monk' is changed to bhikṣusya, thus "undoing" the changes from Sanskrit to Prākṛit. (Skt. śy became ṣ in Pkt. as in Skt. śasya, Pkt. śassa 'his'; cf. also the Sanskrit equivalent form bhikṣoḥ.) The discussion centers only on changes in Vedic and Classical Sanskrit, although the evidence from Buddhist Sanskrit does not detract from the argument.

4. Mayrhofer is less certain of the origin of some forms than of others (*vielleicht Hypersanskritismus*). With the exception of some forms which Mayrhofer explicitly stated could not be hyper-Sanskritisms, I considered any form that could be a hypercorrection to be an actual hyper-Sanskritism.

5. Andronov (1977) invokes hypercorrection as an explanation for certain morphological changes in Dravidian. (Only one of his examples is an actual hypercorrection; the remaining appear to be due to folk etymology or analogy.) The colloquial varieties of Tamil and Malayalam show an alternation in roots between i/ə and between u/o, with the high vowels lowered to their mid counterparts when the vowel in the following syllable is a. Literary Tamil and Malayam, however, show no alternation; only i and u occur under this condition. Earlier scholars have disregarded these facts because they would involve the following sequence of events: first, Proto-South-Dravidian contained high vowels which were lowered before a syllable containing a. Then these mid vowels were raised in Proto-Tamil-Malayalam, followed by lowering in colloquial Tamil and Malayam, but not in the literary forms. However, there is no motivation for such a chronology.

According to Andronov, hypercorrection is the only logical explanation. Vowel lowering occurred only once, in Proto South Dravidian. Educated Tamil and Malayam speakers felt that such lowering was "incorrect" Tamil. In the early stages of Tamil, e and o could occur before syllables containing a which were not derived from i or u, but which were originally mid vowels. Speakers of what came to be known as literary Tamil (the high variety) retained the original high vowels before a, and raised the original mid vowels before a so as to not sound like speakers of the colloquial variety.

6. This list is not by any means a complete list of hyper-Sanskritisms.

7. I have been unable to find any attested Sanskrit form containing vv. This is somewhat unusual because v, which, like y, is a semi-vowel, can occur as a geminate (savyāsanabhogās, 'lying, sitting, and eating'). But there are situations in which vv could potentially occur. Whitney (section 228) mentions that consonants (except for spirants preceding vowels) could optionally (and sometimes obligatorily) be geminated after r (and, for some grammarians, h, l, or v). Citing Hock and Pandharipande (p. 116), Brian Joseph pointed out to me that gemination in taunts was prescriptively incorrect (putrādini, not puttrādini 'cruel mother'), implying that Sanskrit speakers *did* geminate consonants in such forms. Also, two secondary sources (Coulson 1976: 24 and Kale 1969: 10) give ligatures for vv. However, they cite no forms containing this sequence; perhaps these ligatures are hypothetical.

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