Language and Linguistics in India

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A trained linguist who knows something about Indian languages, Dr O L Chavarria-Aguilar is at present engaged in writing a scientific grammar of the Marathi language. It is the author's firm belief that the problems India faces with regard to language are unique and that in solving her difficulties India cannot look to other nations for guidance—as she could in the framing of her Constitution—for no other nation has ever been confronted with even closely analogous language problems. Their only logical and adequate solution lies in their being studied and attacked strictly within the national context.

The following paper will form a part of a book which is to be brought out shortly by the Deccan College.

In any study of India's present day language problems, due consideration must be given, I believe, to certain aspects of the history of grammatical studies in India. India can boast of a longer, more continuous tradition than probably any other nation in the world. Antedating the Christian era by many centuries and continuing without appreciable gaps up to the present, the pedigree of the Indian grammarian is unrivalled. The greatest single contributor to the science of language in India, in fact, the greatest linguist of us all, was undoubtedly Panini, whose Astadhyayi stands quite alone as the most perfect single descriptive analysis of any known language. The countless commentaries on and imitations of his grammar of Sanskrit, its unique place in grammatical studies today and the influence it has had on Indian grammatical tradition, are but small tribute to the measure of Panini's genius. Panini may be gone, but he is far from being forgotten. And it is unlikely that he will ever be forgotten as long as men, not only in India but in other parts of the world as well, interest themselves in the study of language.

It is, however, in a sense unfortunate that Panini is remembered solely in terms of his grammar of Sanskrit. Succeeding grammarians in India have failed to appreciate, or have overlooked, or have neglected another, perhaps even more significant aspect of Panini's work: his method of investigation. Panini's fame rests today almost entirely on his having composed the best of all Sanskrit grammars; the rigidly scientific nature of his work and the marvellous analytical methods underlying it are almost totally ignored. While there was much writing on Panini himself and on his work, and much more writing about grammar, there was never any concerted effort to apply Panini's methods, and Indian grammarians never again produced a descriptive analytical grammar in the true Paninian tradition. There were many attempts to do so, and some very worthy ones, such as the Pali grammar of Kaccayana—often said by tradition to be the same Katayana who wrote the first commentary on Panini—and Hemacandra's Prakrit grammar. But on the whole, while Panini's results, the Astadhyayi, were accepted, his methods were all but totally forgotten.

No Study After Panini!

This has had some rather serious and unfortunate consequences. While an interest in historical and comparative linguistics never lagged in India, the analytical study of language practically ends with Panini. The study of language as language, as a worthwhile end in itself, of language as a purely formal system, never caught on. Thus while there was speculation about language, there never was a serious attempt to pursue farther the rigorous methodology of analysis and description to which Panini had given such perfect expression, and the Indian grammarian, like his counterpart in Greece and Rome, never quite achieved a full understanding of the nature of language.

Now we can probably agree that in order to deal with a problem or even to talk about it, some knowledge of the nature of the problem, of what the problem entails, is desirable if not indeed essential. In practically every field of human endeavour we expect a person to know what he is talking about and we may even demand that he produces credentials to prove that he is competent to deal with or talk about a given subject. Such, however, is not the case when it comes to questions of language. All of us consider ourselves to be more or less competent language experts (usually more), though our credentials consist merely of the fact that we can all speak at least one language fluently. We have not the slightest hesitation to plunge headlong into the most awesome language questions, and to discuss language with aplomb and assurance. But since very few of us ever take the pains to observe language as language, to try to understand the nature of language, our credentials are false and our assurance the assurance born of profound ignorance.

In short, when we talk about language most of us have not the faintest notion of what we are talking about, but we can qualify as language experts simply because everyone else is as ignorant as we on the subject, prey to the same general misconceptions about what constitutes language. If this smacks of the peevish grumblings of the academician, consider for a moment some of India's language problems. If ever a nation was faced with the urgent need fully to understand language, with the need to approach and deal with language with the assurance born of understanding rather than of ignorance, it is modern India. No other nation in history has ever been faced with language problems of the magnitude of those which India faces today. Almost everywhere there seem to be problems of one sort or another, of greater or lesser dimensions which involve language considerations more or less directly.

No Analogy with Other Nations

Before reviewing some of India's major language problems—and these are so numerous that only a few can be taken up here—a digression is in order.

It has been fashionable for a good many years while discussing India's language situation and the problems arising from it, to draw analogies with other nations. The parallels most often cited are Switzerland and the Soviet Union; recently Japan was dragged into the picture. Now if there is one thing that the makers of analogies must be made to see and see clearly is that India cannot expect to profit greatly from language problems and their solutions elsewhere in the world. The problems that India faces with regard to language are unique, and their only logical and adequate solution lies in their being studied and attacked strictly within the national context. In solving her language difficulties India cannot look to other nations for guidance—as she could
in the framing of her Constitution
— for no other nation has ever been
confronted with even closely analo-
gous language problems: In the
interest of economy I shall cite only
one or two points in an attempt to
show how the oft-cited analogies are
inapplicable.

SWISS HAVE NO NATIONAL LANGUAGE

First with regard to Switzerland.
Let us not even consider such obvi-
ous differences as those of relative
area and population. The important
point that most of our analogy
makers seem to ignore is that Swit-
zeland has no single national lan-
guage. The historical circumstances
that gave birth to the Swiss Fede-
reration were strong enough completely
to ignore linguistic differences, and
Switzerland as a nation survives to
the present day, strong and unified,
without a national language — with-
out that, is a single language to
serve as the symbol of Swiss national
identity. Four languages have equal
status within the borders of Switzer-
land. Moreover, three of these—
French, German and Italian—have
always been on an equal footing
while the fourth, Romansch, was
fairly recently given equal status.
The first three have been employed in
development problems. Its three
principal languages are among the
most important languages in Europe,
languages which in their own right,
beyond the borders of Switzerland,
are the fully developed expression
of high degrees of integrated cultural
achievement.

SOVIET UNION HAS

The analogy with the Soviet
Union is just as inapplicable to
India as that of Switzerland, though
in one sense, for exactly the oppo-
site reason. Russia does have and
had since long before the revolution
a single national language: Great
Russian. This is the language that
served as the all-Russia medium of
communication in pre-revolutionary
days, and it has that same status
today. It was the language of Tols-
toy, Pushkin, Dostoevsky and Turge-
nev; of Gorki and Lenin, and it is
today the language of Russian
science and technology. It is not
necessary to dwell on language
policies of the Soviet Union. I
merely wish to point out that the
Soviets were never faced with the
need or the desire to replace the
language of the Czarist regime with
another.

JAPAN HAS ONLY JAPANESE

The analogy with Japan was
drawn recently in an attempt to
promote the use of Hindi, the
national language of India. It was
claimed that if Japan could achieve
great cultural, industrial and com-
mercial progress through the medium
of her own indigenous language,
Japanese, India could certainly do
the same through Hindi. This ana-
logy is so transparently ill-suited that
the only reason I bring it up is to
point out the lengths to which some
language partisans will go, either in
total ignorance or total disregard of
facts (though no doubt with the
very best of intentions), to bolster a
particular argument. Japan has and
has had for countless centuries only
one language—Japanese. It has
developed as the sole medium of
literature, of science, industry and
so on—in short, as the sole medium
in all spheres of Japanese society and
culture.

As the only language, Japanese has
enjoyed a position in Japan which has
never before been enjoyed by Hindi
nor by English either—in India. Hindi
cannot in actual practice be said to be
the national language of India, though it is so recognized by the
Constitution, in the same sense that
Japanese is the national lan-
guage of Japan. German of Germany,
French of France, and so on. Hindi
as the national language of
India is a goal at which to aim and
not an actual reality. Furthermore,
neither Japan, nor Russia, nor Swit-
zeland, nor any other nation, ex-
cept perhaps Pakistan, has ever been
faced with the problem of deli-
berately replacing one common,
rather widely employed—at least
officially—language with another.

WHAT INDIA MUST CONSIDER

Let us now take up some of the
problems more or less directly in-
volved in language that India must
consider. We might first take up
the most obvious, if not necessarily
the most important, feature of
India's linguistic situation: the great
number and variety of the languages
spoken in India. This is, of course,
at the bottom of all language prob-
lems in this country, for if there
were but a single language there
would be no language problems, or
at least, those that might exist would
have different dimensions and admit
of easier handling. The Indian
Constitution lists 13 languages, not
including Sanskrit, as major or
regional languages, but this is far
from giving us the full picture.
The languages of the Eighth Sched-
dule represent only two language
families, the Indo-Aryan and the
Dravidian, while in India there are
languages of four linguistic stocks
actually spoken: the two just cited
and the Austro or Munda and the
Tibeto-Burman. Furthermore, the
Constitution in the Eighth Schedule
does not list English, though that
language is very prominent in Part
XVII. And it is a fact, regardless of
the feelings against it among cer-
tain sections of the population, that
English was and still is one of the
most important languages in India.

CLAIMS OF MAITHILI AND SINDHI

What, for example, are we to do
about Maithili, for which recogni-
tion as a regional language and a
separate political status are now
being sought? And what is to be
done about the claims of Sindhi?
Granted that there is no longer a
Sindhi State in India, and that there
is no geographically definable region
where Sindhi is the recognized
medium—though recently a group
of Sindhis has demanded a part of
one of the existing states for the pur-
pose of establishing a Sindhi state
therein. Granted even that the Sin-
dhis themselves cannot agree on
whether to employ the Devanagari
or the Peno-Arabic script. Still
there are some 40,000 Sindhis in
Bombay alone who claim that lan-
guage as their mother tongue and
who are not likely to give up that
claim lightly—no more than a Sikh
is willing to give up Punjabi in the
Gurmukhi script, or a Maharas-
htian give up Marathi.

EXTREME SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

This merely serves to point up
the fact that there is an inordinately
high degree of linguistic self-con-
sciousness in India, and this, I
believe, even more than the very
obvious fact of the luxuriant variety
of languages in India will make for
serious difficulties in the solution
of problems of a linguistic nature.
We need not go far to seek evidence
for this language consciousness.
The Constitution of India is doubt-
less the only document of its kind
containing extensive and rather ela-
borate language provisions and safe-
guards. In the realms of education
and politics language is given a sta-
ture which it enjoys nowhere else
in the world today.

Again, we need not go very far
to find the evidence. Various states
in the Union have recently made
important decisions on language
policies in administration and the
courts—Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pra-
desh, Vindhya Pradesh, Rajasthan,
Hyderabad, and so on. We have
seen the tensions and the unplea-
IN THE LIMELIGHT

The set is ready .... the star takes her place ....
the cameraman is on the alert .... and the
director in the chair signals for "Lights" .... and all
around the set and from above it streams the
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The promise of linguistic provinces itself has, implicitly or explicitly, been a strong and prominent plank in practically every political platform for the past 30 years or so. There have been important decisions made in all parts of the nation regarding the medium of instruction at the secondary, college and university levels. Recently, here in Bombay State we have seen legal proceedings involving language policies of the state government, and I am certain that we have yet to heal the end of it.

200 YEARS OF ENGLISH

A very real and very urgent problem is that relating to the development of the national and the regional languages. India, for the past two hundred years or more, has been governed through the medium of English, and it is so today. Because of this the indigenous languages were not able to develop fully. In administration, national as well as local, there was a point beyond which the Indian languages were not employed. In the supreme court and in the high courts, proceedings were carried on in English. India's system of government and her legal system were essentially alien plants that were nurtured through the medium of the givers of those plants: English. (Though it must be said to the credit of India that those plants struck deep roots and have flourished.) In the educational system, which too was essentially foreign, English prevailed in the upper standards generally and throughout the college and university levels.

But it cannot be properly said that the Indian languages did not develop. They did, but along the same lines that they had been developing for centuries previously. It is true, however, that they did not develop in the essentially new spheres of human activity that would today enable them to deal completely and adequately with the modern world, for those new spheres were carried to India through the medium of English and remained the almost exclusive domain of that language. As a result, it cannot be denied that the Indian languages today—and this applies to Hindi and to the regional languages equally—cannot adequately cope with certain aspects of modern civilization; their vocabularies for science and technology, for example, are woefully under-developed. In their present condition, then, Hindi and the regional languages cannot adequately replace English; neither in administration, nor in the courts, nor in higher education, and to push them abruptly into tasks for which they are ill-equipped is to do them a great disservice.

CURRENT SPOKEN LANGUAGES ALONE CAN REPLACE ENGLISH

I do not wish to be understood as arguing for the retention of English. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Besides, it is not my place to do so; I am but an observer, and a guest in India. I fully realize that the replacement of English is inevitable for several more or less valid reasons, and that it can only be replaced by the languages of India—the current spoken languages of India. But the fact remains that the national and the regional languages must first be given the opportunity to develop properly—that is, they must first be provided with the necessary tools in order that they may deal adequately with what are to them essentially new realms of experience and which have hitherto been the more or less exclusive preserve of English. The tools to which I refer are nothing more, in reality, than properly developed and wisely selected additions to existing lexicons in terms of vocabularies to cover the sciences, law, technology and so on—vocabularies, in short, to account for the experiential data of those phases of human endeavour from which the Indian languages have hitherto been excluded because of the virtual monopoly of English. This, and a little time for practice to become familiar with the new tools, are all that is needed. However, let us not assume that this is all there is to the whole problem or that its solution is limited to this and therefore simple. Political considerations, among others, have seriously complicated the matter.

LANGUAGE HAS STRUCTURE, NO GENIUS

In discussions relevant to the need for extending the vocabularies of the Indian languages much ado is made about the danger of interfering with their individual genius, Now I am not sure I know just what the genius of a language—any language—is. But if by genius is meant the over-all structure of the language and its formal processes, in other words, the way in which it goes about the business of fulfilling its functions as a means of communication and as a system of symbolic reference, then we need have no fears on its account. We can add words to a language, that is, we can enlarge or even alter to a degree its cultural content, but this in no way affects the formal structure of the language.

Take, for example, the case of Hindi and Urdu. In their extreme manifestations these two forms of speech are mutually unintelligible. Take all the Sanskrit from the one and the Persian and Arabic from the other and you have Hindustani. Hindi and Urdu are in effect simply two different forms somewhat artificially developed, of a single language, Hindustani, the one over-Sanskritised and the other over-Persianised. The situation is reminiscent (to me, at least) of the story in the Hitopadesha of the man who dressed his donkey in a tiger skin. The moment this pseudo-tiger saw another donkey, he brayed and revealed himself for what he was: a mere donkey. Buried under the cloaks of Sanskrit on the one hand, and of Persian-cum-Arabic on the other, lurks, hardly recognisable, a single donkey, Hindustani.

For example, you may if you so choose use darya instead of nadi, but if so you must still say darya-se and not something else, for then you are speaking neither Hindi nor Urdu nor Hindustani. So if you choose to use pustak instead of kitab, punish instead of admi talib 'ilm instead of vidyarthi, and so on. Regardless
your choice of vocabulary you can only use that vocabulary within the prescribed formal patterns of Hindi-Wu-Hindustani. Darya and nadi occupy the same position relative to se and to all other words and particles in the language with which they commonly occur, regardless of their ultimate origin. The recommendations made not so long ago at a conference held in Poona that "there should be a common gender in the use of the Hindi word," that "the use of ne as in mai-ne should be abolished" and that "Hindi should accept Sanskrit rules of grammar and etymology or should arrive at some uniformity from the study of linguistics of the regional languages" are sheer and utter nonsense. They betray not only a woeful lack of any scientific linguistic knowledge, but the complete absence of a realistic approach to language. Do away with gender in Hindi, abolish the use of ne and give Hindi the seven cases of Sanskrit and you no longer have Hindi. You have an illegitimate Sanskrit, intelligible only to its creator (if indeed to him); a sort of poor man's Indian Esperanto. There are already enough languages in India, it seems to me, without attempting to add to the list a monstrosity of the sort proposed. Furthermore, Hindi and the regional languages have problems enough and to add bodily violence to these is to add insult to injury.
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STRIVING FOR PURITY AND REGIONALISM

But I think perhaps I do know what is really meant by the genius bit language that is so often cited. At least, it seems that this consideration has something to do with another which we might call language purity. I do not pretend to know just what this is either, but its manifestations are familiar. In Hitler's Germany it gave birth to such words as Fernsprecher, that is, a 'far-speaker' to replace 'telephone', which was not 'Aryan.' This phenomenon manifests itself in some of the publications of the Royal Spanish Academy which persists in categorising practically all words of American Indian origin current in American Spanish dialects as 'vulgars' and 'barbarisms.' It manifest itself in India in attempts to provide the Indian languages with vocabularies wholly derived from Sanskrit (except in parts of the South where it manifests itself as a process of de-Aryanisation), even to the extent of wanting to replace such common words as 'station,' 'photo,' 'mez' and a host of similar words which are today as much a part of the Indian languages as they arc of the donor languages. It 'sherbet' any the less acceptable in English became it derives ultimately from Arabic and not from Germanic or Indo-European? These strivings for an unattainable 'purity' in language are merely symptomatic of another, more serious aspect of the language problem in India: the well developed and apparently increasing linguistic nationalism.

In keeping with nationalist trends throughout the world India felt the need for a national language to serve as the symbol of national unity and national identity. But India was faced with rather unique and perplexing problems in this connection. For one thing, India did not have but a single language, nor even one language spoken natively by more than a significant minority of the population. Then again, the one all-India language was non-Indian and owed its predominance in commerce, government, higher education and so on to the fact that it was the language of the foreign rulers, until 1047, of the Indian sub-continent. The retention of English, in any sphere, was quite inconsistent with and a thorn in the side of a strong nationalist sentiment in India, and its replacement was early constituted as one of the important goals in the nationalist movement. And it is a curious fact that since English was the most widely used and understood language, at least among the educated and the intellectuals, the campaign for its abolition has been carried on, up to the very present, largely through the medium of English itself.

HINDI NOT PUT UP EARLY ENOUGH

One of the most unfortunate aspects of the language phase of the nationalist movement was that no language was early enough put up as the all-India medium, the language that was to serve as the symbol of Indian national identity and unity. While in their struggles to constitute for themselves sovereign political entities, the Irish had Gaelic and, the Zionists had Hebrew as the unquestioned symbols of their national aspirations and sentiment, India had only Hindi—Hindi Hindustani as Gandhi used to call it—which by no means was universally acceptable and which came upon the scene comparatively late.

Hindi was put forward as a candidate to fill the role of national language only after regional linguistic self-consciousness had already been aroused and played upon by the largely politically oriented considerations of the linguistic provinces movement. Hindi as a candidate was first mentioned by name in April of 1920 by Gandhi. In that year both Gandhi and Lokmanya Tilak had come out strongly for an all-India medium whose eventual task would be to replace English in all those spheres in which that language was paramount. Gandhi had at the time specified that it should be Hindi, but it was not until 1925 that the Congress adopted Hindi as the future national language of India. Even so the selection was not received with universal rejoicing, and as late as 1949, a few days short of the second anniversary of the independence, the Congress Working Committee having met to decide upon the question of the national language, had to leave the matter open. It was about two months after this that the Constituent Assembly, not without bitter opposition accompanied by cries of "linguistic imperialism," finally gave official recognition to Hindi as the official language of the Indian Union. But the fact remains that Hindi is still far from being the de facto national language of India. Parts of South India are still antagonistic, and here and there is heard a voice crying in the wilderness for Sanskrit, while we are not without an occasional plea for the retention of English.

LINGUISTIC PROVINCES

The idea of the linguistic provinces, on the other hand, was given a coherent form by the 1920 session of the Congress, when the Pradesh Congress Committees were reconstituted on the basis of language. And it is a fact that linguistic factors in provincial realignment were evident as far back as 1894, when Mahesh Narayan of Bihar began agitating for the separation of Bihar from Bengal, a step that was finally taken by the Government of India in 1911. It is not my intention here to go into the relative merits of the linguistic provinces movement. I merely wish to point out that by the time the rather amorphous and ambiguous ideal of an Indian language to replace English was concretised with the selection of Hindi, regional linguistic consciousness had already begun to assert itself rather strongly. This, as much as any other single factor, has worked against a wider acceptance of Hindi. Continued over-emphasis on the integrity, or the sovereignty, or the right to self-determination of the regional languages, can lead not only to the total eclipse of any hopes that Hindi will eventually become the de facto national language of India, but may also seriously affect the fabric of all-India unity.

It is unfortunate, but in considering India's language problems one cannot ignore their political implications, although one may remain aloof from active participation in politico-linguistic agitation. Consider the effect that hasty, ill-considered and essentially politically biased decisions with regard to language are bound to have, and indeed have already had, on the very important problems of education and the development of the national and regional languages. Because of an almost fanatic insistence that English be replaced almost overnight, the regional languages are being pushed into tasks for which they are but poorly equipped. Because of the haste with which they are being pushed forward, the problem of their proper development cannot be given the thought and consideration and the thorough analysis which it not only deserves but which are indispensable to it.

DELIBERATE VS GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT

In this connection a very important consideration arises almost at once which will have to be taken into account. The question has been asked whether a language can be developed consciously, deliberately, in the light of all our knowledge about language the question is not
There goes the signal. And slowly many hundreds of tons of freight and food, people and post, move off into the Indian country-side. To keep her lines of communication open, India is spending about two annas of every Five-Year-Plan rupee on the railway system—the largest in Asia. And that amount is for rehabilitation of existing tracks and rolling stock only—more money will be found for the expansion of the railway system which will be necessary to meet the demands of the increased industrial activity.

The railways of India haul more tons of oil more miles than all other forms of transportation put together, and make it possible for the oil industry to transport their products across the vast distances of the country. We, in turn, supply Indian Railways with a great many petroleum products essential for their operation, such as lubricants, cutting, furnace, diesel and quenching oils, kerosine and also petrol for their motor transport.

BURMAH-SHELL ... IN INDIA'S LIFE AND PART OF IT
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unreasonable. Such an undertaking has never before, at least not to my knowledge, been attempted, and certainly not on the scale that India’s problems require. Language has always developed gradually, its cultural content increased and was enriched as the experience of its speakers broadened. We can, on the basis of historical evidence, as on reasonably evolved theories, explain the growth and development and even changes in the cultural content of language. Language is a marvellous record of the cultural history of a people. But we cannot do the same for the formal characteristics of language; we know that these change over a more or less extended period of time, so that we have at different historical stages essentially different languages. We can, by comparing various stages of a language, show what these stages consist of, but any attempt to explain why language changes in its formal characteristics is so much wasted energy. We simply do not know why; we can only show how.

CULTURAL CONTENT AND FORMAL STRUCTURE

We have no reason to believe that we cannot within the existing formal structural features of the Indian languages explore and satisfactorily organize any new cultural experiences. In fact, we may proceed on the assumption that the formal apparatus of the Indian languages is perfectly capable of dealing with any new cultural experiences to which their speakers might be exposed. The problem then is restricted to considerations having to do with the cultural content of the Indian languages. Historically the broadening or enriching of the cultural content of languages has come about through the contact of their speakers with new experiences or has grown out of their needs continually to explore and reorganize their own experiences. In the one case the cultural content of language is enlarged quite often by borrowing words from other languages, in the other it may be done by extension or recombination of existing forms.

The situation in India is rather unique in that the new cultural experiences, in science, technology, law, etc., that impinged upon a small proportion of the population were conveyed and dealt with almost exclusively through the medium of English. Since that fully developed and thoroughly familiar tool (to those, at least, upon whom these new experiences impinged) was available for the purpose, the Indian languages were not called upon to deal with and to share in these new realms of experience and their development along certain lines was thus totally precluded, or at the most, was only marginal.

PROBLEM OF WIDENING CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

What India is faced with in her wish to develop her own languages to replace English in every sphere of human activity, is the necessity to expose the Indian languages deliberately, somewhat artificially and at a greatly accelerated pace, to the new cultural experiences with which they will be expected to cope. To say, as I did earlier, that what is involved is essentially the need to broaden and develop the lexical resources of the Indian languages, and to give them time to become proficient in their use is, while true, greatly over-simplifying the matter. There are a host of other, very relevant considerations. For one, the haste with which the Indian languages are being pushed to take over unfamiliar jobs, for which they are not as yet properly equipped, makes the need for their development doubly urgent. There is no longer an unlimited amount of time for those on whom this task will fall, or has fallen. And a very pertinent corollary to this, is the question as to whether India does have the properly trained people, sufficient in number to take on this task. I think not. Then again there is the very important question of the direction in which this development is to be carried out. Because of what I can only term linguistic chauvinistic tendencies, this has already become a real problem. Will not, for example, the attempt arbitrarily to replace wholesale, recognized international scientific terminologies with pseudo-Sanskrit or pan-Dravidian vocabularies, prove an unnecessary hindrance to India’s need for continuing contacts in science and technology with the rest of the world? I think it will. And note that in India itself, because of misguided, narrow language loyalties there is a danger of factionalism, of fractioning and of wasteful, unintelligent duplication.

DISPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING NEEDED

What, it seems obvious to me, is most urgently needed in India today is a thorough, dispassionate understanding of language. I do not wish to intimate that India in this regard is in any way different from other nations, nor that her people are any the less aware of what constitutes language; than those of any other nation. However, no other country in the world has language problems of the magnitude of those facing India, so that elsewhere the need for a thorough understanding of language problems, though it would indeed be desirable, does not immediately arise. Now the above statement may seem pertinent when made of a culture in which language studies boast of a tradition and a continuity evidenced nowhere else in the world. But I have previously distinguished carefully between historical and comparative linguistics and writing about language on the one hand, and descriptive analytical linguistics on the other, and this distinction must be borne in mind. Historical linguistic studies are concerned with the past not only of language but of peoples. These cannot solve the problems presently before us. The need today is to understand language in terms of the present and, indeed, of the future. We can understand language fully only when we study language in and for itself. Historical linguistic studies cannot give us this. The need is for the analytical study of language, the study of language as language, an end in itself and not merely a means. And this study, it will be found, will prove itself an invaluable aid in understanding language generally, whether we wish to concern ourselves with language in historical, comparative or purely analytical terms (essentially the realm of the grammarians), or in terms of its social, cultural and political implications.

"BACK TO PANINI"

This article may be said, in a sense, to constitute a plea—a plea for the revival of descriptive linguistic analysis in India. While I am an enthusiastic partisan of progress, seldom holding with any of the many back to the values of our forefathers' movements which seem to crop up periodically in all parts of the world, I should like very much to see started in India a "Back to Panini" movement. That is, I should like to see done again in India the kind of linguistic work of which the Astadhyayi is doubtless the most perfect example of all time anywhere. And I seriously feel, as a linguist, that only through the study of language as language can we understand this phenomenon, that there exists a unified, coherent and necessary to the solution of India's language problems cannot be achieved: