



Multilingualism in India

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Introduction

D. P. Pattanayak

Inequality has many faces. Giving recognition to a single language variety as standard creates a cadre of people who through various controls gain from the acquisition, processing, storage, transmission, retrieval and other manipulations of the language. Similarly, giving recognition to a single language as the language of education, administration and mass communication in a plurilingual society bestows advantages on the speakers of that language. As the recognition of standard requires that cognitive strategies and discourse styles are learned through special schooling, so does acceptance of a unilingual standard in a multilingual world. With the advent of literacy a special group was created who eked out their living by the preservation and interpretation of written information. In the case of a monolingual standard in a plurilingual world, the elite was twice removed from reality as the choice of a single language as sole medium of communication usurped the right of different language speakers to participate equally in the developmental process of the state or society concerned. It further limited this societal resource to the cleverer among the manipulators of the standard.

Whether, as in some cultures, we emphasise the distinction between child language and adult language, or treat child language as apprentice to the skills and practices of adult language, the difference is a matter of degree. In neither case is attention given to the cognitive and societal reorganisation or transition necessary on the part of a child to enter the world of literacy, and of the standard. Every child, irrespective of its sex, parental education and language, has to make the transition from home language to school language. However, it must be noted that the strategies needed for such transition would largely depend upon the code distance between the variety spoken at home and that in school, or in the case of two languages the convergence or divergence between the languages concerned. To name this cultural difference for all as cultural deficiency for some is to divert attention from issues. To treat the characteristics of written code which is

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elaborate and explicit as characteristics of a particular social class is, to say the least, discriminatory.

The adults who grow up with oral socio-cognitive strategies, but lack discourse strategies appropriate either to the literate or the standard, have to be provided not only with diverse discourse strategies but also with devices linking the two. In a multilingual society where the communication zone is shared by many languages it poses added questions and creates added problems. The discontinuities in communication existing among different oral and different literate modes need bridging as between sociocognitive strategies and discourse strategies. How to move from contextsensitive language use to context-free language use, how to move from the oral interpretation style to the somewhat decontextualised literate interpretation style are issues which must be discussed in this context. Movement from the prosodic and intonational cueing to a lexical syntactic cueing marks the progression of a child. For an adult, the progression is from multimodal oral cues to multimodal written cues.

It is said that functionality is a major feature of language. Defined functionally, Bhojpuri or Mewati are L1, languages of cognition, whereas KhaRiboli provides institutional identity for those who are classified as Hindi speakers. One can similarly say that Cheshire or Devonshire are L1, whereas RP provides institutional identity for English speakers in the United Kingdom. From another perspective one can speak of four functions of mother tongue: auxiliary (teaching Telugu to Hindi speakers), supplementary (English in Japan), complementary (societal bilinguals, as in India), equative (bilingual education programmes, where both languages are given equal importance).

There could be different ways of approaching equality in education in a multicultural situation, which for convenience can be seen as sequences of bilingualism.

1. Reciprocal bilingualism leading to the transformation of the total system of education. Bilingualism characterises the mainstream of education and side streams are not distinguished. The Welsh system of British education is said to have achieved this to a great extent. All types of schools, elementary, secondary (modern, grammar or comprehensive) and tertiary education are bilingual.

- 2a. Systemic modification leading to transformation of parts. This results in a series of bilingual programmes rather than an integrated system of bilingual education.

The Gaelic speakers in Scotland and the system in the United States of America come in this category.

2b. Another aspect of systemic modification is 'positive discrimination' in favour of historically disadvantaged groups. This requires a distinction between bilingual education and minority education.

3. Separate system or systems of bilingual education parallel to the main stream. This is said to lead to a segmented system of education. The Flemish-Walloon rift in Belgium and French-English tension in Quebec and Canada come under this heading.

4. Linguistic apartheid providing for different tracks for different ethnic groups.

South Africa, which mandates separate development for different groups, comes in this category. In this system some element is more prestigious in the total system.

The approach to blacks in the USA, and linguistic minorities in the heartland of USSR come under this. Paying better salaries to teachers, ensuring better teacher/pupil ratio, providing better grants come under this heading.

Fishman & Lovas (1970) speak of four broad categories of bilingual education.

1. Transitional bilingualism, which aims at language shift. No support is given to the mother tongue and no attention is given to fluency and literacy in both languages. In America Spanish is used 'to adjust to school' until skill in English is developed to the point that it can be used as medium of education. No consideration is given to the institutional development of Spanish.

2. Monoliterate bilingualism, which develops aural/oral skills in both languages but literacy in one. In the American context mother tongue is used as link between home and school, but the system does not encourage use of mother tongue in the context of work, government, religion, book culture. This leads to language shift.

3. Partial bilingualism, which permits use of mother tongue restricted to ethnic group or cultural heritage. Mother tongue is grudgingly used for social sciences and humanities, not for science, maths and technology.

4. Full bilingualism aims at maintenance of both languages. It aims at development of all skills in both the languages in all domains. This is supportive of minority languages.

Deveriev (1974) argues that 'language policy should aim at the full development of the human being as well as the full development of each language community and region.' Glyn Lewis says that, 'This statement is meaningless. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the achievement of such a double aim, but that consummation is impossible.' He further goes on to say that 'Deveriev implies that individual and group aspiration are not only compatible but synonymous', he imagines that 'the consequences of achieving the one are identical with the consequences of achieving the other. In fact, so far as concerns a democratic society, they may be irreconcilable.' (Glyn Lewis, 1981)

Whether or not Deveriev implied what is suggested, the fact remains that Glyn Lewis sees individual and group aspirations to be in perpetual conflict. He also sees human beings, language community and language regions to be in conflict. He does not understand that in multilingual settings where functions are allocated to different languages, a non-conflicting type of societal bilingualism ensues. (Srivastava, 1976)

In the West many books are written on bilingualism. They view bilingualism as a static structure where two languages are at war with one another. They do not see that under the pressure of heteroglossia or polyglossia situations change and decisive movements take place in the lives of speech communities. They do not see that bilingualism is an abstraction, the nature, content, function and domain of which are constantly changing in relation to one another and in relation to other structures in society. Each language is heteroglossic in the sense of the complex stratification into genres, registers, styles, sociolects, dialects, and mutual interanimation among these categories. Each state or country is heteroglossic in the sense that it contains many such structures which provide differing identities to various sociolinguistic groups. In the dialogic relationship between languages, one trying to extend its influence, another trying to avoid, negotiate or subvert that influence, an equilibrium is reached which holds societies together. In the recontextualisation of borrowed lexical and semantic features, discourses are reinterpreted and assume new meanings which revitalise languages. The tension between the highly patterned and the highly diverse language, speech community and region constantly leads to readjustments, which cannot be captured by a linear and binary view of elements, but needs a cyclic and spiral perspective.

The unity of mankind must be built upon a recognition and acceptance of mankind's diversity and not merely upon the diversity of one social group or another; upon the diversity that exists internally in each group itself. It is this diversity of both

kinds that creates and recreates societal multilingualism and that makes it part and parcel not merely of society but of humanity *per se*. (Fishman, 1978: ix)

There is a good deal of ambivalence in the writings of Fishman. In spite of the lofty ideals expressed about multilingualism, Fishman in most of his writings has chosen the camp of usurpers of mother tongue rather than the users. Western scholars are sensitive to the use of language and dialect and are allergic to the use of mother tongue, ethnic language and community language. It is not at all strange that social scientists in the West permit variation on the axes of age, sex, economic status, but do not admit variation in language. Language, which is the primary expression of diversity, is, therefore, completely ignored.

Mother tongue is the expression of primary identity and of group solidarity. One is identified with a linguistic, ethnic, religious or a cultural group through one's mother tongue. It is the language of early concept formation and the language through which the environment gets a habitat and a name. The designation or nominal function of language, which names objects, events and stages, is a crucial function on which the superstructure of further learning is built. The early socialisation function, identity function and psychic function are rooted in the mother tongue. Myths and symbols, systems of beliefs and practices are transmitted naturally through the mother tongue so that living and learning become a seamless process. Mother tongue anchors the child to culture, the loss of which results in the loss of intellectual and aesthetic creativity and results in intellectual impoverishment, emotional sterility and cultural perception blind spot. For example, the three dimensionality of kinship terms in Indian languages links the limited ego with the social ego. Their substitution by generic English terms like uncle, aunt, cousin not only neutralises this perception but creates strains in the system.

The majority mother tongue is always in a privileged condition. Because its standard form is taken for granted as norm, all minorities are required to conform to this. Because of this attitude, minority languages are called community languages, mother tongues, ethnic languages, dialects, and language varieties. English in the UK, for example, is not a mother tongue, not an ethnic language, and it is taken for granted that there is very little dialect variation in the language. This is absurd. A language, unless it is a dead or petrified language, has to be the mother tongue of some speakers. Variation is the sign of any living organism and language cannot be an exception. When AMMA statement on 'Multicultural and anti-racist education today' says that, 'We have concluded, however, that we could

not support the concept of exclusive mother tongue teaching throughout a child's school life' (p. 34), it obviously excludes the majority mother tongue, English. Nobody is worried about the separateness of the Englishonly educated child in a multilingual, multicultural setting. If English children are sensitive to their multicultural environment, then they also could make an effort to study a language of the neighbourhood. Sensitivity is a result of goodwill as well as knowledge. If there is neither goodwill nor adequate knowledge about various languages and their speakers, then the language teaching/learning process is bound to be vitiated.

If we consider minority mother tongues, it would be ridiculous to suggest that those who divide the spectrum into two colours are colour-blind or cannot discriminate shades of colours elsewhere. There is no doubt that those who grow up in categories which provide for two divisions of the spectrum instead of seven, 32 divisions of snow instead of two words, snow and ice, 20 divisions of the wind instead of wind and air, and many divisions of rains, have different perceptions of life and culture.

The logic underlying the principle of relativity expounded by Whorf distinguishes between language and concept as a 'relationship of a "whole to part"' (Lucy & Schweder, 1979). Such a view does neither deny the ability of a person to change his linguistic repertoire, status or both, nor does it take a static view of language. While the categories organising experience into concepts do not exhaust the linguistic potential of a person, it cannot be denied that 'ontology is a cultural inheritance reflected in the way members of a speech community to one another' (Lucy & Schweder, 1979: 603).

The question of use of English in the context of the UK by dialect speakers and minority language speakers needs to be discussed here. English is spoken in different regional accents in the UK, e.g. Devon, Cheshire, Midlands, Northumbria, East Anglia. Unless this is appreciated, English spoken with Jamaican and Indian accents would continue to be considered deficient and would be used as a discriminatory feature. From their variety through the regional standard to the academic standard of English is a progression which must be seen as expansion of ability to cope with the peer group and the wider group. For example, 'A Yorkshire child may say *nowt* and *summat* both among friends and the family, but may switch to *nothing* and *something* in the classroom. It is "regular" in West Indian speech to say *he go* rather than *he goes*, just as some regional English usages dictate *he do* rather than *he does*' (Sir John Kingman, 1988). However, it may be noted that the higher SES groups are likely to use more English and the maintenance of their mother tongue is likely to be far less in comparison to

those in the lower SES categories. Their attitudinal urge for cultural identity may be expressed in favour of maintenance of the language. Thus one could find situations where (a) retention of mother tongue is perceived to be impeding social mobility and therefore generates linguistic insecurity, and (b) where social upward mobility provides linguistic security and a favourable attitude towards retention or revival of mother tongue. These are related to (a) where loss of mother tongue does not loosen ethnic cohesion. Although mother tongue is given up in the name of communication efficiency and social mobility, emotional attachment to the group is maintained. And (b) where loss of mother tongue does loosen ethnic cohesion resulting in the loosening of the bond between ethnic content (language) and emotional attachment solidarity.

When one looks at the language scene in the UK from this perspective one is filled with anger and anguish at the subtle monolingual colonialism, and anguish at the doubtful loyalty of the community groups in maintaining their languages and cultures. Anger at the following statements by multiculturalists:

The goal of education for culturally different children should be to produce a bi-cultural child who is capable of functioning both in his sub-culture and in the mainstream. (Bartz and Bartz)

The education appropriate to our imperial post cannot meet the requirements of modern Britain. (1.11) The curriculum of the schools must also reflect the needs of the new Britain. (1.12) Our society is a multicultural, multiracial one and the curriculum should reflect a sympathetic understanding of the different cultures and races that make up our society. (10.11); more recently a committee of enquiry was set up to look into 'the education of children from ethnic minority groups'. (Department of Education & Science Green Paper, 1977)

These statements seek to segregate the majority from the minority. This does not distinguish culture of deprivation and privilege from mere bringing together children from different culture groups.

One feels anguish and agony when one looks at the views of educationists, parents, teachers and suffering students. Anguish at the confusion of teachers and parents as to whether they are assimilationists or preservers of separate cultures.

Swann says, 'The English language is a central unifying feature "in being British".' Although English may take some unifying function as lingua franca, the real unifying factor is respect for multiplicity.

Those who desire conflict-free education must understand that colourblindness is not likely to achieve this aim for them. People have to be told that there are those who divide the spectrum into two and those who divide it into seven. Neither of them is colour-blind. It is difference in perception.

Use of language can become a major factor in creating unequal societies in multilingual contexts. As long as this inequality persists education cannot be conflict free. The assumption that variation is disintegration is unfortunate. Such an attitude equates different with deficient. It must be emphasised that it is not the recognition, but non-recognition of different identities that leads to disintegration. Multilingualism can thrive only on the foundation of respect for the different.

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1

A Demographic Appraisal of Multilingualism in India

B. P. Mahapatra

Linguistic diversity, or multilingualism, is found to be more the rule with the vast majority of present-day nations than not, and it is claimed to be of 'enormous consequence for the very maintenance of a nation-state' (Lieberson, 1975: 48). It is only vaguely understood how the nation-states have reached this situation, except by pointing at such accidental processes like immigration, colonialism and territorial conquests. Lieberson elsewhere claims that, 'It is as if there are two clusters of nations, with one cluster consisting of pre-World War II nations that are generally more developed and less diverse than the second cluster of post-World War II nations' (1974: 37). With reference to the latter group of states, what needs to be appreciated is that the very basis of nation-making has changed.

Linguistic diversity is not merely reached by accidental processes but is inherited and is an integral part of the nation-making philosophy and history for many (Glyn Lewis, 1972: 17). India is such a state. Sir G. A. Grierson identified 179 languages and 544 dialects for India in his *Linguistic Survey of India* carried out between 1886 and 1927. India inherited this language multiplicity and the 1951 census the first carried out after the country reached independence listed 845 languages including the dialects, 60 of which (13 scheduled languages, 23 tribal languages/dialects and 24 other Indian languages/dialects) were spoken by not less than 100,000 persons each for the redefined territory known as the Union Republic of India (Census of India, 1951).

A much more dependable account of the language multiplicity in India was presented in the 1961 census based upon the language classificational scheme of the erstwhile *Linguistic Survey of India*. The list presented 193 classified languages corresponding to 1,652 mother tongues actually returned. The list was exclusive of unclassified and foreign mother tongues. The languages were identified as belonging to four families of languages

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Austric (20), Dravidian (20), Indo-European (54), Tibeto-Chinese (98) and one of doubtful affiliation. There has been more than one attempt if not to wish away this diversity totally at least to underplay its magnitude to a more acceptable position. For example, Ishwaran (1969: 124) says, 'This bewildering variety of languages may be misleading if it is not noted that 91% of the population speak one or the other of the 15 languages specified in the Indian Constitution'. In fact, in 1981 the percentage of the speakers of the 15 scheduled languages had risen to 95.58% of the total household population. Table 1.1 gives the scheduled languages for India in descending order of speakers' strength with percentage to total household population. (See, Note on the language data, Census of India, 1981: 3).

TABLE 1.1 *Scheduled languages in descending order of speakers' strength*

<i>Language</i>	<i>Number of speakers</i>	<i>Percentage of total population (excluding Institutional population)</i>
1. Hindi	264,188,858	39.94
2. Telugu	54,226,227	8.20
3. Bengali	51,503,085	7.79
4. Marathi	49,624,847	7.50
5. Tamil	44,730,389	6.76
6. Urdu	35,323,481	5.34
7. Gujarati	33,189,039	5.02
8. Kannada	26,887,837	4.06
9. Malayalam	25,952,966	3.92
10. Oriya	22,881,053	3.46
11. Punjabi	18,588,400	2.81
12. Kashmiri	3,174,684	0.48
13. Sindhi	1,946,278	0.29
14. Assamese	70,525	0.01
15. Sanskrit	2,946	

No census was taken in Assam.

Further, it can be seen from Table 1.2 that except for a few small states such as Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Sikkim, and a few union territories such as Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Mizoram, all the states are overwhelmingly dominated by the scheduled languages.

TABLE 1.2 *Distribution of 1981 household population by scheduled languages (inclusive of variants grouped under each)*

<i>India/State/Union Territory</i>	<i>Total household population (excluding Institutional household population)</i>	<i>Speakers of Schedule VIII languages and the percentage to the total household population</i>	<i>Speakers of other languages and the percentage to the total household population</i>
India	661,497,149	632,290,615 (95.58)	29,206,534 (4.42)
<i>States</i>			
Andhra Pradesh	53,175,277	52,754,352 (99.21)	420,925 (0.79)
Assam (No census was taken)	69,638,725	65,440,524 (93.97)	4,198,201 (6.03)
Bihar			
Gujarat	33,919,882	33,361,388 (98.35)	558,494 (1.65)
Haryana	12,873,434	12,861,460 (99.91)	11,97 (0.09)
Himachal Pradesh	4,257,299	4,084,570 (95.94)	173,005 (4.06)
Jammu & Kashmir	5,947,575	4,325,961 (72.74)	1,621,338 (27.26)
Karnataka	36,839,222	34,801,429 (94.47)	2,037,793 (5.53)
Kerala	25,244,369	25,024,913 (99.13)	219,456 (0.87)
Madhya Pradesh	52,000,069	47,884,931 (92.09)	4,115,138 (7.91)
Maharashtra	62,230,282	59,153,116 (95.06)	3,077,166 (4.94)
Manipur	1,409,239	32,570 (2.31)	1,376,669 (97.69)
Meghalaya	1,326,748	181,113 (13.65)	1,145,635 (86.35)
Nagaland	747,071	69,726 (9.33)	677,345 (90.67)

(table continued on next page)

TABLE 1.2 (continued)
India/State/Union
Territory

India/State/Union Territory	Total household population (excluding Institutional household population)	Speakers of Schedule VIII languages and the percentage to the total household population	Speakers of other languages and the percentage to the total household population
Orissa	26,171,262	23,535,237 (89.93)	2,636,025 (10.07)
Punjab	16,723,153	16,689,494 (99.80)	33,659 (0.20)
Rajasthan	34,130,701	32,518,743 (95.26)	1,611,958 (4.74)
Sikkim	308,262	19,570 (6.35)	288,692 (93.65)
Tamil Nadu	48,089,281	48,041,159 (99.90)	48,122 (0.10)
Tripura	2,034,242	1,459,299 (71.74)	574,943 (28.26)
Uttar Pradesh	110,549,826	110,506,761 (99.96)	43,065 (0.04)
West Bengal	54,207,652	51,570,921 (95.14)	2,636,731 (4.86)
Union territories			
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	178,885	143,748 (80.36)	35,137 (19.64)
Arunachal Pradesh	597,862	103,037 (17.23)	494,825 (82.77)
Chandigarh	440,837	437,301 (99.20)	3,536 (0.80)
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	101,818	31,213 (30.66)	70,605 (69.34)
Delhi	6,174,632	6,136,683 (99.39)	37,949 (0.61)
Goa, Daman & Diu	1,059,012	446,406 (42.15)	612,606 (57.85)
Lakshadweep	39,709	33,687 (84.83)	6,022 (15.17)

(table continued on next page)

Table 1.2 (continued)

<i>India/State/Union Territory</i>	<i>Total household population (excluding Institutional household population)</i>	<i>Speakers of Schedule VIII languages and the percentage to the total household population</i>	<i>Speakers of other languages and the percentage to the total household population</i>
Mizoram	476,439	43,523 (9.14)	432,916 (90.86)
Pondicherry	599,384	597,780 (99.73)	1,604 (0.27)

This situation, however, does not make India or the states linguistically less diverse, but merely shifts the attention from imponderables to a more acceptable arena of a competing few. The census tables give the break-up for the scheduled languages (see Annexure, Census of India, 1981) for India and the states and the union territories. Table 1.3 shows the scheduled languages with their 'demographic centres of gravity' (see Kloss & McConnell, 1984: 15).

A second argument that is usually advanced by linguists (Khubchandani, 1978; Pattanayak, 1981: 44) in the name of the 'existing realities in the country is that communication in India is unimpaired in spite of the great linguistic diversity. Pattanayak (1981: 44) claims that 'if one draws a straight line between Kashmir and Kanyakumari and marks, say, every five or ten miles, then one will find that there is no break in communication between any two consecutive points. Communication breaks down only at extreme points of the scale'. Being in no position either to prove or disprove this statement, however, the question that the linguist would like to ask first is: is India communicating in languages, and no dots and dashes involved in it? Both Pattanayak and Khubchandani agree that communication in India is in languages and the latter goes on to say that, 'bilingualism serves as a communication bridge between different speech groups'.

The only official estimate of bilingualism in India is the decennial census of India. But both Pattanayak and Khubchandani find the census statistics of Indian bilingualism as per the 1961 census totally frustrating and Pattanayak rejects it outright saying that, 'The country average of 9.70% of bilingualism gives a distorted picture of the facts'. Khubchandani says,

TABLE 1.3 *Scheduled languages with their demographic centres of gravity, 1981*
State/Union territory

<i>State/Union territory</i>	<i>Total Schedule VIII languages percentage to the total house-hold population</i>	<i>Single largest language and the percentage to total household population</i>
<i>States</i>		
Andhra Pradesh	99.21	Telugu (85.13)
Assam (No census was taken in 1981)		
Bihar	93.97	Hindi (80.17)
Gujarat	98.35	Gujarati (90.73)
Haryana	99.91	Hindi (88.77)
Himachel Pradesh	95.94	Hindi (88.95)
Jammu & Kashmir	72.74	Kashmiri (52.73)
Karnataka	94.47	Kannada (65.69)
Kerala	99.13	Malayalam (95.99)
Madhya Pradesh	92.09	Hindi (84.37)
Maharashtra	95.06	Marathi (73.62)
Manipur	below 25%	
Meghalaya	below 25%	
Nagaland	below 25%	
Orissa	89.93	Oriya (82.83)
Punjab	99.80	Punjabi (84.88)
Rajasthan	95.26	Hindi (89.89)
Sikkim	below 25%	
Tamil Nadu	99.90	Tamil (85.35)
Tripura	71.74	Bengali (69.59)
Uttar Pradesh	99.96	Hindi (89.68)
West Bengal	95.14	Bengali (86.34)
<i>Union territories</i>		
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	80.36	Bengali (24.68)
Arunachal Pradesh	below 25%	
Chandigarh	99.20	Hindi (55.11)
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	30.66	Gujarati (23.84)
Delhi	99.39	Hindi (76.29)
Goa, Daman & Diu	42.15	Marathi (25.18)
Lakshadweep	84.83	Malayalam (84.51)
Mizoram	below 25%	
Pondicherry	99.73	Tamil (89.18)

On the basis of the fact that only 9.7% of the total population of the country claims to be bilingual that means virtually 90% of the population claims to be monolingual according to the figures provided in the 1961 census one is led to the conclusion that the degree of interaction among 200-odd speech groups must be pretty low and the diversity of languages must be putting up strong communication barriers in the growth of a nation. (Khubchandani, 1978)

Happily enough, the gross rate of bilingualism in India is on the increase as in 1971, i.e. 13.04% of the total population as against 9.7% in 1961 claims to be bilingual. Bilingualism can be viewed in two ways: (1) bilinguals who are part of mother tongue strength, and (2) second language speakers who are added to the strength of a mother tongue. In the Indian context, English sets the highest limit for (2), i.e. 99.24% of English speakers are second-language speakers. For other Indian languages second language strength is marginal. Only four languages Assamese (17.1), Kannada (17.55), Tamil (10.89) and Tulu (19.03) could claim a 10% and above addition to their strength by second language speakers. For a large number of languages the addition is almost nil, i.e. there are no non-native speakers of these languages. Therefore, Indian languages in general reach their strength mainly by native speakers of the language a fact which perhaps could have been reasonably countered by citing the case of Hindi the first claimant for the position of the national link language, but for the recent decisions taken by the Government in changing the definition of Hindi (see flyleaf, c-v, Mother-Tongues of the 1971 Census; see also Mahapatra, 1986a).

The other dimension of bilingualism, i.e. (1) above, can be measured on a three-point scale of high-average-low. This scale has no strong rationale behind it except for the fact that national average of bilingualism is fixed on 13.04%. The higher and lower limits are fixed based on this average (Census of India 1971, Part II-c(iii), Vol. I).

Table 1.4 might help us to re-examine the myth of Indian bilingualism created by the national average; rather it goes on to show that communication in terms of bilingualism is not a national issue and cannot be solved by promoting one or more languages at the national level. In fact, contrary to the view held by some, the trend of bilingualism following the census statistics is reasonably healthy and at the same time community centred and need based. It might not show any national goal, but it is highly purposive in the sense that if India is communicating it is doing so in no extra-linguistic means and in terms of a highly developed pattern of