

SOCIO LINGUISTIC STUDY OF LAMBADA IN TELANGANA: AN OBSERVATION

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Abstract

Linguistic variables help sociolinguists study the subtle ways in which language reflects social identity. Multilingualism is the norm in most societies across the globe where speakers regularly use multiple languages. Sociolinguistics examines how people navigate these languages, choosing which one to use based on social context. Lambadi is an Indo-Aryan language of the Lambada community, which is essentially script-less, and is bound to be expressed in the scripts of host languages like Telugu, Hindi, etc. Majority of the educated Lambadas can't be identified by their dressing patterns but they can be identified through their language, pronunciation and accent. Old generation of Lambadas are identified through their dressing pattern whereas new generation of Lambadas are identified through their Language, vocabulary and pronunciation. In course of time as they adapt changes in their life style, their language and culture also influenced due to the impact of cultural and linguistic hegemony of other dominant and powerful languages in the society. The present paper try to discuss socio linguistics of Lambada tribe in Telangana.

Key words: Socio linguistics, Multilingualism, Lambada community, Language, pronunciation

Introduction

Sociolinguistics studies these dialects to understand how they serve as markers of social identity and how they evolve over time. The choice to speak a certain dialect is not only a linguistic decision; it reflects social affiliation and may influence how a speaker is perceived. The concept of social dialect shows that language is deeply intertwined with societal structures, from class to regional loyalty.

A core concept introduced by Labov who wrote (2008): "It begins with the simple act of noticing a variation that there are two alternative ways of saying the same thing". Linguistic variables are aspects of language that differ among social groups or in different settings.

Linguistic variables help sociolinguists study the subtle ways in which language reflects social identity. Each small variation in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar can carry significant social meaning, shaping how individuals relate to one another within their communities. Multilingualism is the norm in most societies across the globe where speakers regularly use multiple languages. Sociolinguistics examines how people navigate these languages, choosing which one to use based on social context. This choice often reflects power dynamics, as some languages hold higher social status than others.

Languages are constantly evolving, and sociolinguistics examines the social forces driving language change. Some language changes, like the adoption of new slang, are driven by cultural trends. Others, such as the influence of immigrant languages, reflect broader social shifts. Sociolinguists study how new forms of speech emerge, spread, and become mainstream, showing language as a dynamic, socially driven phenomenon.

Sociolinguists examine how accents develop, persist, and influence social perceptions. Sociolinguistics provides insights into the social functions of language, revealing how our words, accents, and dialects reflect our identities and relationships. Understanding these dynamics helps us see language as more than a tool for communication; it's a mirror of society. In the next blog, we'll dive into language choice in multilingual communities, exploring how individuals navigate multiple languages in daily life and what these choices reveal about social norms and power.

Language is social-cultural geographical phenomenon. There is a strong relationship between, culture and society. It is in society that man acquires and uses language. When we study a language, we have to study its dialects, socio lects, idiolects and other varieties. That is why language should be studied according to the geographical and cultural area, in which it issued, the speakers who use it, the listeners for whom it used, and the purpose for which it is used, besides the linguistic components that compose it. Only then the study of a language is complete and comprehensive. So language must be looked at not only form within but also from without, we should study language from the points of view of both form and function in culture. Socio-linguistics is the study of speech functions according to the speaker, the hearer, their relationship, and contact, the context and the situation, the topic of discourse, the purpose of discourse, and the form of discourse. It studies the causes and consequences of linguistic behavior in human societies it is concerned with the function of language, and studies language from without. Thus we see a unique bond between language and culture.

According to Saussure(2002):“There is an absolute relation between language and culture”

Language with its different varieties is the subject matter of socio-linguistics. Socio-linguistics studies the varied linguistic realizations of socio-cultural meanings, which in a sense are both familiar and unfamiliar and the occurrence of everyday social interaction which are nevertheless relative to particular cultures, societies, social groups, speech communities, languages dialects, varieties, styles. Not only from one individual to the next but also from one sub-section of speech- community (family, village, town, and region) to another. People of different age sex social class occupation or cultural groups in the same community will show variation in their speech. Thus language varies in geographical and social space.

Lambada language & Society

Lambadi is an Indo-Aryan language of the Lambada community, which is essentially script-less, and is bound to be expressed in the scripts of host languages like Telugu, Marathi, Hindi, etc. In this study researcher intend to understand the language attitudes of the

Lambadi community towards their mother-tongue with respect to dominating language Telugu. Many linguists have established the fact that the language loss occurs predominantly when young people start to adopt a new language which can lead to behavioural consequences like prejudices towards their own language causing inhibitions in social interaction with the people of their own community.

Banjara is the term commonly used for the different varieties of Banjara speech community throughout India. It is majorly spoken in the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and many others in India. Banjara is also known as Lambada, Lambadi, Lambani, Sugali, etc. It belongs to Indo-Aryan language family but geographically majority of the community spread in the southern part of India where the Dravidian languages are dominantly spoken.

Sociolinguistic situation of India can be described as a multilingual and multicultural. As India is a multilingual and multicultural country in nature, the minority languages are in a serious threat to be extinct. Therefore, there is an urgent requirement to have a serious look at the reliable information about the situation of minority languages in India and to react accordingly on the documentation and preservation of them..

Review of Literature

There has been some works that have been done by various linguists, scholars and anthropologist on language verities and various aspects of Banjara life style. It is pertinent here to discuss some of them.

Sub jugated Nomads-The Lambada sunder Role of Nizams.by Bhangya Bhukya

A grammar of Lamani by Ronald L. Trail. In this dissertation the writer describes the grammar of Lamani language such as phonology, types of sentences, clauses, word, stem and lexicon etc. a detailed description of grammar was given by the writer. Castes and tribes of south India written by Edgar Thurston gives a clear description of tribals in south India. He describes that the word Lambada is originated from Sanskrit word 'Lavan' which means salt.

Lambada Language

Lambada is a tribal community and used to migrate from place to place in the forest area for settlement. Their dressing pattern, language, culture, speech pattern, food habits, and life style are unique and completely from the other community people. The language spoken by lambadas is also called "Gorboli". The speech patterns of Lambadas vary among individual's of men and women, educated and uneducated, among old and new generation of Lambadas. Speech patterns also differ based on their age, gender, sex, class and social background. Lambadas are known for their peculiar dressing pattern and ornaments worn by them in the society. Majority of the educated Lambadas can't be identified by their dressing patterns but they can be identified through their language, pronunciation and accent. Old generation of Lambadas are identified through their dressing pattern whereas new generation of Lambadas are identified through their Language, vocabulary and pronunciation. In course of time as they adapt changes in their life style, their language and culture also influenced due to the impact of cultural and linguistic hegemony of other

dominant and powerful languages in the society. So they fear that their language and culture may get influenced in the near future in the name of modern languages. Due to the influence of Telugu and English language in the society, Majority of the educated Lambadas use Telugu and English words in their speech. In course of time this influence may leads to forget their mother tongue language and adapt other language, which are used by the majority powerful and dominant members of the society. On the one hand, old generation of Lambadas still use older words in their speech and on the other hand new generation of Lambadas who are educated use Telugu and English words in their conversation which can't be understood by the older generation of Lambadas.

After some years when the old generation of Lambadas passes way them the old usage of words will disappears with them. This may happen in the near future so in order to preserve the language and culture of Lambadas they should pass their language and culture and preserve it.

Telugu words used in Lambada

Badi (school), mancham(bed),Nulaka, Naawari, Bandi(vehicle), Toata (any garden), Ekaram (acres), Davakana (hospital), Dastha(sack), Rail(train), Jhanda(flag), Kaapi(notebook), Pusthakam(books), sabbu(soap), kuragayalu(vegetable), khurchi(chair), Peeta(a small chair), jatha(two), Dada(grief), santha (market), ka:luva(canal), Thalapi(doors), saamaam(item) etc.

Hindi words used in lambada

Paani(water), pad(studing), ham(we), duud(milk),jaada(more), ghar(home), jha:d(tree), lada:i(qurrel), kaam(work), darwaaja phul(flowers), khad(gross), bha:g(garden), gaadi(vehicle), haath(hand), rastha(road), kaagad(paper), thel(oil), Jodi(pair), naseep(fate), naral(coconut), raath(night), etc.

English words used in lambada language

Room, Road, Switch, Phone, Bill, Bathroom, Glass, Tiffin, Hotel, Bridge, Tent, Dress, TV, Seat, Bucket, Box, Fan, Wire, Cover, Tape, Break, and Penetc. there are many more technological and scientific words which are regularly used in the day to day life. These words do not exist in lambada language these words are purely borrowed from English language

Translated words for Relationship used in Lambada and English and Telugu

Lambada	English	Telugu
Bha	Father/dad	Naana/Baapu
Yaadi	Mother	Amma
Beta	Son	Koduku
Beti	Daughter	Kuthuru/Bidda
Daadi	Grand mother	Nayanamma
Daada	Grand Father	Thatha
Bhai/Bhain	Cousin	Sodarudu/Sodari
Bodi	Niece	Kodalu
Banju	Nephew	Alludu
Mama	Uncle	Mama
Bhayi	Sister	Akka/Chelli
Bhiyya	Brother	Anna/Thammudu

Words are borrowed from other languages.

For many years lambadas dwelled in the forest areas and used to migrate from one place to another in search of livelihood and settlement, so they are also called nomads. They were completely isolated from the main stream society for many years. They didn't have proper communication and aware of other languages. When they gradually came to the main stream society, they have adapted new culture, tradition and also to some extant other languages from the main stream society. When they started communication with other community people, they slowly started to adapt new vocabulary and language from non-lambadas. This led to linguistic and cultural hegemony of dominant and powerful languages over minority languages in the society. Gradually when they started living with other community people in due course of time they started borrowing many words which are not existed in lambada language. Borrowing words from other language signifies the hegemony of other language and culture.

Conclusion

Sociolinguistic situation of India can be described as a multilingual and multicultural. As India is a multilingual and multicultural country in nature, the minority languages are in a serious threat to be extinct. Since lambada language and culture has been influenced by other dominant and powerful language and culture in the society. So some of the lambadas fear as if, their language is going to be lost its identity in the near future. In some urban areas, lambadas are gradually and unknowingly trying to change their language and culture in the name of modernization and development. Therefore, there is an urgent requirement to have a serious look at the reliable information about the situation of minority languages like Lambada in Telangana India and to react accordingly on the

documentation and preservation of them..

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