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Language in South Asia

South Asia is a rich and fascinating linguistic area, its many hundreds of languages from four major language families representing the distinctions of caste, class, profession, religion, and region.This comprehensive new volume presents an overview of the language situation in this vast subcontinent in a linguistic, historical, and sociolinguistic context. An invaluable resource, it comprises authoritative contributions from leading international scholars within the fields of South Asian language and linguistics, historical linguistics, cultural studies, and area studies. Topics covered include the ongoing linguistic processes, controversies, and implications of language modernization; the functions of South Asian languages within the legal system, media, cinema, and religion; language conflicts and politics; and Sanskrit and its long traditions of study and teaching. *Language in South Asia* is an accessible interdisciplinary book for students and scholars in sociolinguistics, multilingualism, language planning, and South Asian studies.

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Edited by

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William Bright (1928–2006)
Suniti Kumar Chatterji (1890–1977)
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Preface

This volume is the sixth in the series initiated by Cambridge University Press twenty-six years ago. The first book in the series was *Language in the USA*, edited by Charles A. Ferguson and Shirley Brice Heath (1981). The inspiration for the present volume on *Language in South Asia* came from Ferguson and Heath's pathbreaking contribution. It was the late Professor Ferguson who, in his inimitably persuasive way, suggested to one of the editors of the present volume the desirability and importance of a book on *Language in South Asia*. That was in the late 1970s, when *Language in the USA* was in the final stages of publication.

Charles A. Ferguson, affectionately called Fergi, was a committed scholar in South Asian linguistics in more than one sense. Thom Huebner, once a faculty colleague of Ferguson at Stanford University, succinctly summarizes Ferguson's ''longest standing interests'' in South Asia that goes back to 1945. It was then that Ferguson published his first article on South Asian linguistics. Since then, adds Huebner,

> he has published nearly twenty others, he has co-edited a major volume on the topic (Ferguson and Gumperz, 1960), and there has been at least one volume of South Asian linguistics dedicated to him (Krishnamurti, 1986). In ''South Asia as a Sociolinguistic Area,'' Ferguson highlights some features of language use that make South Asia unique. In the process he demonstrates how features of language use just as well as language structure can cluster in real relationships. Not only does the paper deepen the reader's understanding of the region, it also suggests that this type of research into the language situation of a larger geographical region can have implications for theories of language change and cultural diffusion in general. (1996: 21)

Huebner explains that what is characteristic of Ferguson's ''uniquely Fergusonian'' contribution and quality is derived from:

> his solid training in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and Oriental languages at the University of Pennsylvania, in descriptive linguistics there under Harris, and in the interest not only in language but also in the people who use it. That perspective is one that consistently looks for the relationship between diachronic language change and language development, phonology and syntax, social conventionalization and cognitive processing, and language universals and individual differences. (12)

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In his research and teaching, Ferguson was not committed to just one theory or methodology. That was evident in his unparalleled gift of academic leadership internationally. This volume is a modest attempt to celebrate Ferguson's contribution to South Asian linguistics as a teacher, as a researcher, and, indeed, as one of the promoters of linguistics in the subcontinent.

We express our gratitude and thanks to Indian linguists who trained a generation of South Asian linguists in the 1950s and beyond, following the Deccan College and Rockefeller Foundation initiatives of the 1950s for the teaching of, and research in, linguistics in the region. These include Ashok Kelkar, Bh. Krishnamurti, Prabodh B. Pandit, and Ravindra N. Srivastava. It is now the generation of their *śiṣyas*, encouraged and trained by them, who are in the forefront of South Asian linguistics, not only in South Asia, but internationally, and continue the *guru–śiṣya paramparā*.

We also want to celebrate the memory of those linguists who had initiated a new direction in South Asian linguistics in the 1960s in what was then East Bengal – a part of Pakistan. These linguists, along with other intellectuals and scholars, were cruelly assassinated in Dacca University during the Bangladesh Liberation War against Pakistan (1971). A generation of Bangladeshi linguists was lost.

We are grateful to many colleagues and friends who provided insights, suggestions, and critiques in planning *Language in South Asia* at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the United States, and at the University of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, India.

The chapters in this volume understandably do not cover all the dimensions of language in South Asian societies. *Language in South Asia* provides some selected facets of the issues that are articulated in current debates. It is our hope that this book, like the proverbial palimpsest that has been written over and over again, is yet another attempt in that direction.

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Abbreviations

Chapter 2

1, 2, 3	first/second/third person
acc	accusative
adjr	adjectivalizer
agr	agreement
comp	complementizer
dat	dative
decl	declarative
def	definite
det	determiner
dm	deictic marker
DO	direct object
dub	dubitative
emph	emphatic
epen	epenthetic
erg	ergative
fem	feminine
fut	future
inch	inchoative
incl	inclusive
inf	infinitive
io	indirect object
IO	indirect object
masc	masculine
mkr	marker
neut	neuter
nm	nonmasculine
nom	nominative
noz	nominalizer
O	object
obj	object
P	place adverbial

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perf	perfect
pl	plural
pred	predicate
pres	present
prog	progressive
pron	pronominal
pst	past
q	question
S	subject
SALs	South Asian languages
sg	singular
sub	subject
sx	suffix
T	time adverbial
tr	transitive
V	verb
vr	verbal reflexive
vrec	verbal reciprocal
y/n qm	yes/no question marker

Chapter 3

asp	aspirated
caus.	causative
dbl. tr.	double transitive
dir.	direct
f.	feminine
hon.	honorific
intr.	intransitive
m.	masculine
obl.	oblique
pl.	plural
poss.	possessive
sg.	singular
tr.	transitive
unasp	unaspirated
vd	voiced
vl	voiceless
voc.	vocative

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Chapter 5

SA	South Asia

Chapter 7

DNT	Denotified Tribes

Chapter 11

3rd	third person
B	Brahman
H-U	Hindi–Urdu
id.	–
Ka.	Kannada
Ma.	Malay
NB	non-Brahman
neut.	neuter
pej.	pejorative
Pkt.	Prakrit
S.Dr.	South Dravidian
sing.	singular
Skt.	Sanskrit
Ta.	Tamil
Te.	Telugu
Tu.	Tulu

Chapter 12

1st pers.	first person
2nd pers.	second person
3rd pers.	third person
ACC	accusative
DAT	dative
DET	determiner
fem.	feminine
fut	future
GEN	genitive
HABIL	habilitative

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hon	honorific
INFIN	infinitive
INST	instrumental
masc.	masculine
NEG	negative
PAST	past
pl	plural
Ptg.	Portuguese
sg	singular
NONFUT	nonfuture
Si.	Sinhala
SL Malay	Sri Lanka Malay
SLM Tamil	Sri Lanka Muslim Tamil
SLP	Sri Lanka Portuguese
Std.	standard
Ta.	Tamil

Chapter 14

C	Consonant
V	Vowel

Chapter 16

1S	first person singular
3SN	3rd person, singular, neuter
ACC	accusative
DAT	dative
hon	honorific
INF	infinitive
PASS	passive
PST	past
REL.PTPL.	relative, participle

Chapter 17

hon.	honorific
P-A	Perso-Arabic
S	Sanskrit

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Chapter 21

MSA	Modern South Asian
SA	South Asian

Chapter 24

acc.	accusative
Adj.	adjective
decl.	declarative
excl.	exclamation
hon.	honorific

Chapter 25

A	Awadhi
B	Bhojpuri
Be	Bengali
E. Hn	Eastern Hindi dialects
Eng	English
FH	Fiji Hindi
GB	Guyanese Bhojpuri
Hn	Hindi
IB	Indian Bhojpuri
M	Magahi
Ma	Marathi
MB	Mauritian Bhojpuri
OBH	overseas varieties of Bhojpuri-Hindi
SB	South African Bhojpuri
SH	Suriname Hindustani
Std Hn	Standard Hindi
TB	Trinidad Bhojpuri
UP	Uttar Pradesh
W. Hn	Western Hindi dialects

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Note on Transcription

The contributors to this volume have used more than one transcription system to represent the sounds of South Asian languages. For example, long vowels are represented either by a length mark over the letter or a colon after the letter, retroflexes are represented by the International Phonetic Association (IPA) symbols or by a dot under the letter, or a capital letter. Since all of these different systems will be encountered by readers as they go to primary sources, we have retained the different systems used by the contributors as long as they represent one of the more widely used systems.

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