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LANGUAGES

AND

*THE LINGUISTIC PROBLEM*

BY

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THE *Linguistic Survey of India* enumerated 179 languages and 544 dialects, but there are only 15 major or literary languages, eleven of them Aryan and four Dravidian in origin; the prehistoric Austric languages also survive in many remote areas, and there are pockets of the more recently introduced Sino-Tibetan speeches. In this pamphlet the author surveys the historical development and present importance of these four speech-families, and goes on to consider whether there is a need for an Indian 'national language'. His prescription is a simplified Hindi or Hindustani, written in the Roman script. This script is in use among the largest number of people in the world, and a combination of the scientific Indian arrangement with the Roman letters will produce a nearly phonetic alphabet, easy to read, write and print: it would also solve the Nagari-Persian script controversy. This simplified and romanized Hindustani would be used in pan-Indian contexts only, and would not in any way displace High-Hindi, Urdu or the culture-language, English.

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# LANGUAGES AND THE LINGUISTIC PROBLEM

*How far is there a Linguistic Problem in India?*

WITH an area as large as Europe without Russia and a population resulting from the commingling of various peoples and forming a fifth of the human race, India is naturally a land of many languages. In earlier times diversity of language was not much of a problem, as the masses were content with their dialects, and the upper classes who ran things managed with Sanskrit in Hindu India and Persian in Muslim times. The diversity of language was not then so much pronounced. Now the theory of a common language as the basis of nationality is disturbing some of us; the masses have now to be approached in the languages they speak or understand—the English of the intelligentsia is useless for them; and the various provincial languages have been developing their literatures for the last thousand (or few hundred) years and have come into prominence. We feel that we ought to have a common language for the whole of India as the symbol of a common Indian nationality, which would both check the centrifugal or fissiparous tendency of the provincial languages and meet the unsympathetic argument that India cannot be a single nation with so many languages. Such a language has actually been proposed in Hindi (Hindustani); and one main problem with many Indian politicians and thought-leaders has been how far and in what way we can make it the ‘national language’ of India.

As things stand, multiplicity of language is no bar to nationhood, a polyglot state using according to convenience one or more of its languages. Leaving aside the oft-quoted

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example of Switzerland, we find that some of the most important states have many languages, Britain (with English, Welsh and Gaelic, besides dialects of these) included. France, Spain, Soviet Russia, China, Mexico and the states of Central and South America, Canada, South Africa, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Eire and Afghanistan are polyglot states, some of them having two officially recognized languages. So the case is not so hopeless for India; particularly when the tale of her languages and dialects—179 and 544 respectively according to the *Linguistic Survey of India*—has to be taken with a good deal of reservation. For of these 179 'languages' (the separate enumeration of 'dialects' is irrelevant as they come under 'languages') 116 are small tribal speeches belonging to the Tibeto-Chinese speech-family which are found only on the northern and north-eastern fringe of India and are current among less than one per cent of the entire population of the country; and some two dozen more are similar insignificant speeches belonging to other language groups, or are really languages not belonging to India. It should always be borne in mind that in a vast country like India it is the languages of the large, advanced and organized groups that matter. Small tribal dialects, or even the languages of some large groups of culturally advanced peoples, have a place only within the tribal or local life; for a wider life, a great cultural language becomes a necessity, like English being indispensable for Gaelic or Welsh speakers in Britain, or French for Provençals, Basques and Bretons, in France. For literature, for education, for public life, we have only 15 major or literary languages in India, and even this number can be reduced to 12 if we take note of the very close affinity among some of them. These languages are: the two literary forms of the great Hindi or Hindustani speech of north India, viz. (1) High-Hindi and (2) Urdu, which really are one speech split into two by two totally different scripts,

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(3) Bengali, (4) Oriya, (5) Marathi, (6) Gujarati, (7) Sindhi, (8) Kashmiri, besides (9) Panjabi and (10) Nepali, which agree very closely with High-Hindi, and (11) Assamese, which is very like Bengali; and the four great Dravidian speeches of the south, viz. (12) Telugu, (13) Kannada, (14) Tamil and (15) Malayalam.

The great fact should be specially stressed that Hindi (*Hindustani*) acts as the most natural interprovincial link among speakers of the different Aryan languages (Nos. 1-11, as above, besides other non-literary speeches) of the north. Thanks to it, Indians over the whole of north India and a good part of the Deccan do not feel the barrier of speech, at least in elementary conversation, e.g. in travelling, from the Burma border to the Afghan frontier and from Kashmir and Nepal to Mysore; a little knowledge of it, acquired without effort, is enough; and this Hindi (*Hindustani*) speech is understood in the bigger towns and pilgrimage centres of the south as well.

The above facts and considerations help to mitigate the problems to which multiplicity of language would otherwise give rise in the national affairs of India. The linguistic problems of India briefly are these: the rival claims of English and the mother-tongue in higher education and in administration; the question of a common scientific and technical terminology for as many languages as possible; the place of Hindi (*Hindustani*) in the interprovincial life; and the solution of the High-Hindi v. Urdu controversy, which is just the Hindu-Muslim question on the linguistic plane, embracing script and higher vocabulary.

### Race and Language in India: Historical Survey

Probably no kind of man evolved from some type of anthropoid ape on the soil of India, but India became the home of various races which came from outside, and was a

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great clearing-house for various peoples. The oldest people to have settled in India were a **Negroid** or **Negrito** race from Africa, who died out leaving very little trace: they survive with their language in the Andaman Islands. The **Proto-Australoids**, long-headed, dark-skinned, snub-nosed, then came from Palestine, and they furnished some of the present-day lower classes all over India; they passed into Ceylon, and through Burma and Malaya into Australia. Their language does not survive. Next we have the **Austrics**, long-headed, comparatively fair, straight-nosed, who settled largely in north India, and mingled to some extent with the Proto-Australoids. According to one view, they came from Indo-China; but another view, which seems to be the more likely one, regards them as a very old branch of the Mediterranean race who came to India through Mesopotamia in prehistoric times. These Austrics developed their culture in India, and groups of them passed into Burma and Indo-China, into Malaya and Indonesia, and even beyond, into the islands of Melanesia and Polynesia. They mingled outside India with Negritos, with Proto-Australoids and with Mongoloids, and their language changed to Mon and Khmer and other speeches in Indo-China, into Malay and its sister-speeches in the islands of the Indian archipelago, and into the various Melanesian and Polynesian dialects. In India, Austric speakers of the plains have entirely abandoned their original speech for the Aryan language which came to the country after 1500 B.C., the latter itself being modified by them to some extent; and they have been transformed into the present-day masses of northern India—along with the Dravidian-speaking peoples who came to live with them later. Austric dialects survive in India in some out-of-the-way places, in the hills and jungles of central and north-eastern India. Austric speakers do not form more than 1.3 per cent of the total population of India, numbering some five millions in all.

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Indian Austric languages are in three groups: (i) the Kol or Munda group, including Santali (over  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions,<sup>1</sup> the largest tribe in India speaking an aboriginal language), Mundari (650,000), Ho (450,000), and a few others, beside Korku (160,000), Savara (196,000) and Gadaba (44,000); (ii) Khasi in Assam (234,000); and (iii) Nicobarese (10,000). Austric speakers must learn some contiguous Aryan language, Bengali or Bihari, Oriya or Marathi, or Hindi. Their speeches, which have a value for the philologist, were reduced to writing only in the nineteenth century by Christian missionaries. Khasi and Santali have been recognized by the University of Calcutta as 'minor vernaculars', but there has been recent and widespread penetration of most Austric territory by Aryan speakers, and Santals and others are forced to be bilingual. The ultimate disintegration of Austric and Aryanization of the Austric speakers are inevitable.

Following the Austrics, we have Dravidian speakers coming to India before 3500 B.C. They are believed to have comprised two distinct races with one language, the long-headed civilized Mediterraneans and the short-headed Armenoids from Asia Minor. These Mediterranean Dravidians are believed to have come from the Ægean Islands and Asia Minor, and were of the same Ægean race as in pre-Hellenic Greece; and in India they built up the great city culture of Sindh and south Panjab (c. 3250-2750 B.C.). They spread over western and southern India, and penetrated into Gangetic India also, where they came in touch with the Austrics, hostile or friendly. They with the Austrics supplied some of the fundamental bases of Hindu religion and civilization, and when the Aryans came and

<sup>1</sup> Figures as in the census for 1931, and occasionally on the basis of the *Linguistic Survey of India* estimates for 1921, as 1941 census figures are not available. Total population of India, excluding Burma: over 338 millions in 1931, and nearly 389 millions in 1941.

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spread over northern India, the Dravidians and the Austriacs both accepted the Aryans' language, and the three groups of people, Austric, Dravidian and Aryan, were fused into one people, the Aryan-speaking north Indian Hindu of ancient times. The diversity of speech in north India was perhaps the Aryan's opportunity to spread his language: he was not so successful in the south, with its solid blocs of Dravidian languages. At the present day, the Dravidian languages are mainly confined to the south, with some remnants in northern and central India, and they are current among some 71 millions, forming 20 per cent of the Indian people. There are four great literary or cultivated Dravidian languages, viz. (i) Telugu or Andhra (over 26 millions), (ii) Kannada or Karnata (over 11 millions), (iii) Tamil (nearly 20 millions in India + 2 millions settled in Ceylon) and (iv) Malayalam or Kerala (over 9 millions), besides a number of uncultivated speeches—Tulu (152,000), Kodagu or Coorgi (45,000); Toda (600); and Gondi (1,865,000) in the Central Provinces, Hyderabad and Madras province; Kandh or Kui (586,000) in Orissa; Kurukh or Oraon (1,038,000) in Bihar and Orissa, and Malto (71,000) in the Rajmahal Hills; besides Brahui (207,000) in Baluchistan, a remnant of the great Dravidian bloc of western India. The speakers of all these uncultivated Dravidian speeches must learn some other contiguous language, so that these four literary languages alone count in the Dravidian family—Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam. Tamil has a rich and extensive literature, to be mentioned for originality and variety after that of Sanskrit, which goes back to the early centuries of the Christian era; Kannada literature is almost equally old, and Telugu literature goes back to *c.* A.D. 1000; while Malayalam, a younger sister of Tamil, is the youngest of these literary speeches. Tamil has preserved the old Dravidian character best, in roots and in words; but all these four



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freely go to Sanskrit, the classic and religious language of India, for words of higher culture. Their Sanskrit vocabulary furnishes these Dravidian speeches with a very manifest common platform with all the great literary languages of the north, excepting Urdu.

Although the Sino-Tibetan or Tibeto-Chinese speakers, belonging to the Mongoloid race, came after the Aryans, it is best to consider them here. They appear to have spread from their primitive home in north-western China about the middle of the first millennium B.C. into Tibet, and in the subsequent centuries they penetrated through the Himalayas and through Assam into the Himalayan regions and the plains of north and east Bengal and the hills and plains of Assam. They were all in a backward state, and they contributed very little in the evolution of Indian culture. Tibetan and Burmese became literary languages through contact with Indian Aryan literature. In the plains the Sino-Tibetan tribes (e.g. the Bodos) gave up and are giving up their languages for modern Aryan speeches, Bengali and Assamese, and in Nepal the Aryan Nepali is ousting them. Excepting Newari in Nepal and Meithei or Manipuri in Manipur, there has been no literary cultivation. Spoken by some four millions in the inaccessible hills and mountains of Assam and Nepal, these languages account for only 0.85 per cent of the Indian population; and although Manipuri (392,000), Lushei (60,000) and Garo of the Bodo group (230,000) are recognized by the University of Calcutta as 'minor vernaculars', the bilinguality of the Tibeto-Chinese speakers and the consequent disappearance of their dialects is a matter of time.

Finally, we come to the great Aryan speech of India, our great spiritual and cultural link with the West. The primitive Indo-Europeans, of whom the Aryans were a branch, developed their language and culture in the Eurasian tracts

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south of the Ural mountains c. 3000 B.C., and one band of them came to the northern Mesopotamian regions c. 2500 B.C., from where they passed on to India via Iran. It is believed that the Indo-European speakers too, like the Dravidians, were made up of two distinct races, the Nordic long-headed Indo-Europeans proper, and the short-headed Alpines; but although these Alpines are an important element in the population of India, being prominent in Gujarat and Bengal, it is not absolutely certain that they spoke some form of the Aryan speech. The Aryan speech came in various waves from the west, and it gradually spread over the Panjab and the Ganges valley, Dravidian and Austric speeches receding before it, so that gradually the whole of north India, including Assam, and a good deal of northern Deccan became Aryan in speech. The Aryan speech in its earliest phase (*Old Indo-Aryan*) in India is represented by the language of the *Rigveda*, compiled probably in the tenth century B.C., but portions of it are much older. A younger form of this old Aryan speech in India became established as Sanskrit, the great religious and culture language of Hindu India, by 500 B.C. The later spoken forms of the Aryan speech, in the stage known as *Middle Indo-Aryan*, are represented by the various Prakrits (including Pali) and Apabhraṅsas of the period 600 B.C. to A.D. 1000, after which these develop into the *New or Modern Indo-Aryan* languages of the present day. Sanskrit became the great vehicle of ancient Indian culture, and it spread into the lands of 'Greater India'—Burma, Indo-China and Indonesia, and Serindia or Central Asia of ancient times—and was studied in Tibet, China, Korea and Japan also. It has become the natural feeder of all Indian languages, whenever they wanted new words, for the last 2,500 years.

The Aryan speech-family is the most important in India, numerically, culturally and in all other ways. It is current

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among 257 millions and more, accounting for over 73 per cent of the population of India. The more important Indo-Aryan speeches have been classified as follows:<sup>1</sup>

*I. North-Western Group:* (1) Hindki or Lahnda or Western Panjabi, 8½; (2) Sindhi, 4.

*II. Southern Group:* (3) Marathi, 21 (with Konkani, \*1½).

*III. Eastern Group:* (4) Oriya, 11; (5) Bengali, 53½; (6) Assamese, 2; (7) the Bihari speeches, \*37, viz. (a) Maithili, \*10, (b) Magahi, \*6½ and (c) Bhojpuriya, \*20½.

*IV. East-Central (Mediate) Group:* (8) Kosali or Eastern Hindi (Awadhi, Bagheli and Chattisgarhi), \*22½.

*V. Central Group:* (9) Hindi Proper or Western Hindi (including 'Vernacular Hindustani', Khari-boli with its two literary forms High-Hindi and Urdu, and Bangaru; and Braj-bhakha, Kanauji, and Bundeli), \*41; (10) Panjabi or Eastern Panjabi, 15½; (11) Rajasthani-Gujarati, consisting of (a) Gujarati, 11; (b) the Rajasthani dialects, 14; and (c) Bhili dialects, 2.

*VI. Northern or Pahari Group:* (12) Eastern Pahari or Nepali, ?6; (13) Central Pahari, including Garhwali and Kumaoni, \*1; and (14) Western Pahari dialects, 2.

The above are the languages of the Indo-Aryan group of the Indo-Iranian or Aryan branch of the Indo-European speech-family. Another Aryan group is the Dardic (believed by some to be descended from the Aryan dialect of the Alpine short-heads), under which come some speeches of the extreme N.-W. frontier of India, viz. Kashmiri (nearly 1½ millions) and Shina (68,000), and a few others like Kho-war or Chitrali, Bashgali and Pashai, spoken by much smaller numbers in inaccessible mountain regions between

<sup>1</sup> The figure after the name of a language or 'dialect' indicates the approximate number of millions speaking it. An asterisk\* indicates *Linguistic Survey* estimates. The disagreement of the total of these figures with 257 millions as the number of Aryan speakers for 1931 is due to the non-inclusion of Iranian and Dardic speeches in the list given here which is for Indo-Aryan only, and to the disagreement between the Census figures and the *Survey* estimates, which latter have in some cases to be given preference.

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India and Afghanistan. Two languages of the Iranian group of Aryan also belong to India—Pashto (of N.-W.F. Province, over  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions, with more Pashto-speakers in Afghanistan), and Balochi (628,000). Four great linguistic families are thus represented in India: the Austric, the Dravidian, the Indo-European (Aryan), and the Sino-Tibetan. There are fundamental differences in structure and vocabulary among these, but contact among them for 3,000 years and more, particularly through masses of Austric, Dravidian and Sino-Tibetan speakers adopting Aryan, has led to the imposition upon each other, or to common evolution in spite of original differences, of a number of common characteristics which may be called specifically Indian and which are found in languages belonging particularly to the three families Austric, Dravidian and Aryan (e.g. the 'cerebral' or retroflex sounds like *ṭ*, *ḍ*, *ṛ*, *ṇ* and *ḷ*; the use of 'post-positions' in the declension of the noun; similarity in the structure of the verb; compound verbs; 'echo words'; etc., etc.). Overlaying their genetic diversity, there is thus in Indian languages at the present day an Indian character, which forms one of the bases of that 'certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin', that general Indian personality, which has been admitted by even Sir Herbert Risley, otherwise so sceptical about India's claim to be considered as one people.<sup>1</sup>

### The Present Position

The Austric and Tibeto-Chinese speeches have no importance—their speakers must be bilingual with some Aryan language, although they might be encouraged to retain and cultivate their tribal speeches. The same may be said for the uncultivated Dravidian languages—for their speakers

<sup>1</sup> cf. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, 'The Unity of India,' *Modern Review*, November 1942.

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bilingualism in one or the other of the four Dravidian cultivated languages, or in some Aryan speech, is equally inevitable. Tamil and Malayalam are said to be mutually intelligible to some extent, but it may be said that there is no interprovincial Dravidian speech for all of these. Among the Aryan languages, as enumerated on p. 11, Hindi or Hindustani is the great inter-lingual link, and that is a great advantage. All the Aryan speeches again are not of equal importance. At the present moment, the eleven great literary languages noted above (pp. 4-5) serve people speaking the languages and dialects noted at p. 11. Like speakers of Provençal accepting French, Hindki (Western Panjabi), Panjabi, Rajasthani, Bhili, Western Pahari, Central Pahari, Kosali or Eastern Hindi, and Bihari speakers have adopted High-Hindi or Urdu as their languages of education, literature and public life. As in Provençal in earlier days, there are early literatures in most of the above speeches, particularly in Rajasthani, in Kosali, and in the Maithili form of Bihari; and there is in some cases a desire to set up some of these as literary languages once again, beside the current fifteen literary languages—notably among some Maithili, Konkani and Rajasthani and even Bhojpuriya speakers. Even if these came to be established as literary speeches in their respective tracts, the position of Hindi (Hindustani) as the interprovincial language would not be seriously assailed.

Hindi (Hindustani) is certainly the representative modern Indian language. It is the natural *lingua franca* of 257 millions, besides being understood by a few millions more; and in either of its two forms, High-Hindi and Urdu, it is the literary language of over 140 millions. It is thus the third great language of the world, coming after Northern Chinese and English. We shall have more to say about it later. After Hindi (Hindustani), we must mention Bengali; considering the number of people using it as their mother-

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tongue, Bengali is the seventh language of the world, coming after Northern Chinese, English, Russian, German, Japanese and Spanish. (Hindi or Hindustani is the *home-language* of a much smaller number than Bengali.) Bengali has acquired a certain pre-eminence as the language of Rabindranath Tagore, and it is a well-cultivated and expressive speech, with a rich modern literature. Oriya and Assamese agree closely with Bengali, but they have developed independent literatures. Assamese is a minority speech in its own province, and the Assamese intelligentsia refuse to be overwhelmed by the numerical superiority of the sister-speech Bengali and are carrying on a vigorous literary life. Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuriya are very closely related to Bengali-Oriya-Assamese, but their orientation has been towards Hindi, although a movement for re-establishing Maithili in its home districts seems to be gaining ground. Kòsali or Eastern Hindi gave to India a poet like Tulasidasa (sixteenth century), but its literary activity is all but gone, and it is now under the shadow of Hindi (Hindustani). Panjabi and Hindki speakers of the Panjab cultivate a little (Eastern) Panjabi, but otherwise they have declared for Hindustani (Urdu mainly, and a little High-Hindi). The Sikhs mostly cultivate (Eastern) Panjabi, employing the Gurmukhi alphabet (a script related to the Nagari of Hindi) for it. Rajasthani and Gujarati were one language up to 1600 with a common literary tradition, which was developed by Gujarati which became an independent language, but Rajasthani speakers, not having evolved a literary language to bind the dialects, accepted High-Hindi during the last century and are now enthusiastic supporters of it. Gujarati has now one of the most advanced Modern Indo-Aryan literatures, side by side with those of Bengali, Marathi and High-Hindi and Urdu. The Western and Central Pahari dialects, not much cultivated except for songs and ballads

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have attached themselves to High-Hindi. Eastern Pahari is the language of Nepal, where it is spreading among the Tibeto-Burman tribes. In the south, Marathi has a rich literature; and Konkani, closely connected with it, is written in the Roman script by the Christians of Goa; attempts to set up Konkani as a separate literary language appear to be half-hearted, most Konkani speakers up till now using Marathi. Kashmiri is a Dardic speech, profoundly influenced by Indo-Aryan and Sanskrit, which is not much cultivated, its speakers easily taking to Urdu (and High-Hindi, among a few Hindus).

If the single spoken language known variously as Hindi, Hindustani, Hindusthani and Khari-boli, as a member of the Western Hindi group of dialects, was not in the unfortunate situation of being split up for literary purposes into two languages, by different scripts and difference in higher vocabulary, the unification of the country by a single common language would have been an easy process. The speakers, if Dravidian, would not find much difficulty in accepting it for interprovincial purposes, as Hindi as a New Indo-Aryan speech has approximated itself very largely to the syntactical and other speech-habits of Dravidian; and the large Sanskrit and Prakrit element in the Dravidian languages would form another bond of union between the Aryan Hindi and the speeches of the Dravidian south.

### Hindi, Hindustani or Hindusthani, Khari-boli, Urdu

When the Turks and Iranis from Afghanistan conquered north India in the 11th-13th centuries, their onslaught seemed to be breaking up the old cultural tradition of Hindu India. At that time, in the matter of language, there was (in addition to the sacred language Sanskrit) a literary speech, based on late Middle Indo-Aryan (Apabhraṃsa) as spoken in the Panjab, in western U.P. and in Rajputana-

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Gujarat, which was current all over Aryan India from the Maratha country to Bengal; and there were the spoken dialects. This literary language, patronized in the courts of the Rajput princes, suffered a check, and its traditions were taken up by Rajasthani-Gujarati and the Braj-bhakha dialect of Western Hindi, which Turki and other foreign Muslim influences could not reach. The Panjab was the first Muslim province in India, and Panjab Muslims and Hindus evidently had some preponderance after the Turki power was established in Delhi. The Turki Muslim court and its entourage at Delhi used for ordinary conversation (if they did not speak Persian or Turki) the local dialect of Delhi, which happened to agree with the Panjabi dialects in some important matters. In this way, the speech of Delhi, with a certain amount of influence from the Panjab dialects, developed into a language of some importance. Persian words naturally began to have a place in it, though at first there was no conscious attempt to Persianize the Indian language. In later times, its connexion with the Delhi court gave it the prestige of a standard speech—the Indian speech *par excellence* for conversation if not for literature, and it acquired the name of *Khari-boli* or 'standing speech', the other forms of spoken dialects (and literary speeches too) coming to be known as *Parī-boli* or 'fallen speech'. At first there was no literary life in it. A Hindu or a Muslim desiring to cultivate the north Indian vernacular would write in Dingal, i.e. Rajasthani, in Braj-bhakha, or in Awadhi or Kosali (Eastern Hindi), according to the area where he lived. But the Khari-boli gradually invaded the domain of literature, in the Panjab, the U.P. and contiguous tracts, and in Kabir's writings (15th century) we find a mixture of Khari-boli in his Braj-bhakha. Thus the way was being prepared for the use of pure Khari-boli in literature, and the impetus came from the south in the 17th century.



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North Indian Muslims speaking Panjabi and other dialects began to settle in the Deccan as a ruling class from the 14th century onwards, and at Golconda and Bijapur and elsewhere they developed a literary language, independently of north India, using as its basis Panjabi and other speeches running close to the Khari-boli of Delhi (15th-16th centuries). This came to be known as *Dakanī* or *Daknī*, the Deccan or Southern speech, which was thus a *colonial speech* set up as a literary language. From the beginning, it employed the Persian script, and its vocabulary, at first purely Indian (vernacular Hindi and Panjabi, and Sanskrit) gradually became more and more Persianized. Dakni gradually took Persian literature as its model, in metres, in subject-matter, in turns of expression, in everything. Towards the end of the 17th century, the example of this Dakni speech reacted on the Khari-boli of Delhi. The Delhi speech, like other north Indian dialects, was in general called, from the days of the first Muslim conquerors of India using Persian, the *Hindī* or 'Indian speech', or *Hindawī* or *Hindwī*, i.e. 'the Hindu speech'. When it was taken to the Deccan by the Mogul armies in the 17th century, it acquired the name of *Zabān-e-Urdū-e-Mu'allā*, 'the language of the exalted camp' or 'court', which in the 18th century became shortened to *Zabān-e-Urdū*, or simply *Urdū*. North Indian Muslims discovered the possibilities of this Delhi speech emulating Dakni, and Urdu as a language for literary purposes thus came into being in the 17th-18th centuries, as an Indian speech using the Persian script, preferring a Persianized vocabulary and seeking inspiration from Persian literature and the atmosphere of Islamic faith and culture. It is thus a Muslim form of a Western Hindi dialect. North Indian Urdu has now ousted Dakni, and is used by the Muslim ruling class in Hyderabad State, which has become an active patron of Urdu.

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The Hindus of the Western Hindi districts and elsewhere were familiar with Khari-boli, and when they took to writing in it they maintained the original leaning of the language for its native Hindi and Sanskrit words and employed the native Indian Nagari script, and in their hands this Hindu form of Khari-boli took shape as High-Hindi, or Nagari-Hindi, during the second half of the 18th century. The old name Hindi or Hindwi, latterly only Hindi, came to be restricted to this Hindu form of the language. Another name came to be used for the Khari-boli in its neutral form at the close of the 17th century—*Hindūstānī* or *Hindōstānī*, i.e. the speech of Hindustan or the north Indian plains, as contrasted with *Dakni* of the Deccan; doubtless this name first arose in the Deccan. It was quickly Indianized to *Hindusthānī*, substituting the Indian *sthān* 'place' for the Persian *astān* or *stān*, a cognate word with the same meaning. Outside of these two written styles High-Hindi (an Anglo-Indian name) and Urdu, Khari-boli or Hindustani (Hindusthani) has continued to be used as a spoken language by both Hindus and Muslims, but as it deals mainly with the simpler affairs of daily life its words steer a middle course between too much Sanskritization by cultured Hindus and too much Persianization by cultured Muslims, leaning just a little more towards Persian words as the result of the influence of the Muslim courts and officialdom in its evolution. At present, this last trait makes many Muslims of India and most Europeans think that by *Hindustani* we should mean *Persianized Urdu*; but many Indian nationalists now seek to use the word *Hindustani* to mean the Khari-boli basis of both, which is to help in bridging the ever-widening gulf between the two.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Indian term *Hindusthānī* is colloquially current among very many Hindus in the U.P., and in Rajputana, Central India, the Central Provinces and Bihar, although Hindi spelling in Nagari enjoins the

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Like almost all new Indo-Aryan speeches, Hindi or Hindustani is a *borrowing* speech, not so much a *building* one. Sanskrit was its natural source for borrowing, as much as Latin is for French and Italian. But the Muslims of foreign origin, with the *conquistador* spirit, had no knowledge of or use for Sanskrit, and Persian was for them the familiar Islamic speech, with its plethora of Arabic words and its Arabic script. Muslims of Indian origin also took up this ideal, particularly in the centres of Muslim power and culture, but they did so after some centuries of hesitancy. It was not so easy to adopt a foreign orientation so quickly. A few Hindus connected with the Muslim courts also accepted (at first in their official life) this new tradition.

In this way, out of the same language grew two literary speeches, alien to each other in script and in higher vocabulary; and they started their rival careers as soon as they developed prose literatures, under English auspices in Calcutta from the very first decade of the 19th century, and began to be employed in schools and in public life. With the entry of those who spoke or used them into the field of politics, and with the ugly development of Hindu-Muslim communalism, High-Hindi and Urdu became symbols of this conflict. Each is going its own way; intense Persianization on the one hand, and almost equally intense Sanskritization on the other: so that in their more elegant forms, one would be unintelligible to the speakers of the other, although it must be said that while High-Hindi has generally recognized a large vocabulary of naturalized Perso-Arabic words, Urdu usually does not show that liberal attitude towards native Hindi and Sanskrit.

Persian form *Hindūstānī*; and *Hīndūsthānī*, with *th* rather than *t*, is the only form current in Bengal, in Nepal, in Gujarat, in the Maratha country, and in the Dravidian south: and it implies a spoken language nearer High-Hindi than Urdu in its vocabulary.

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The speakers of the Aryan languages who do not belong to the Western Hindi area, or have not learnt grammatical High-Hindi or Urdu, besides others (e.g. Austric and Dravidian speakers, Afghans, Europeans, Chinese, Tibetans, Burmese, etc.) when they employ Hindi (Hindustani) as a *lingua franca* or as a *palaver speech*, speak it in a simple form in which some of the knottier points of grammar are omitted (e.g. feminine gender of nouns, adjectives and verbs; plural by inflexion; and the concord of the transitive verb in the past with the object); and it is affected largely by local vocabularies and idioms. This form of simplified Hindustani has been called *Bazaar Hindi* (*Bazaar Hindustani*) or *Basic Hindi*, or *Laghu Hindi*; and this Bazaar Hindi is the real interprovincial speech of the masses: it is also becoming the home-language of certain groups in our polyglot towns, outside the Western Hindi area.

### Communication Speech and Culture Language: English

The pre-eminence of Hindi (Hindustani) in its various forms is not the result of an accident, but it is due to the cultural and political importance of the area known in ancient times as the Midland (*Madhya-dēśa*), including present-day eastern Panjab and western U.P., from old Indo-Aryan times. This place was the heart of Aryandom where the first synthesis of the pre-Aryan and Aryan cultures took place through Brahmanism, and the speech of this area in successive ages, as Sanskrit, as Sauraseni Prakrit and Pali (Pali belongs to this area and not to Magadha or Bihar), as Sauraseni Apabhraṅsa, as Braj-bhākha, and finally as Hindi, was the natural communication speech and culture language for the whole of Aryan India and beyond. The centralized Mogul administration also helped to strengthen the speech of this area. At the present day, however, Hindi (Hindustani) is not a culture speech for Bengalis, Oriyas, Gujaratis,

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the people of the Maratha country or of the Dravidian lands; but it is a great communication speech, particularly in its simplified Bazaar Hindi form. High-Hindi and Urdu are of course literary languages for Panjabis, Rajasthanis, Biharis and the U.P. people, and others; and High-Hindi has appropriated to itself the entire literary culture of the dialects or languages which have accepted its tutelage—of Rajasthani, of Panjabi, of Kosali, of the Bihari dialects, of Western and Central Pahari. For higher culture, Indians go on the one hand to Sanskrit or to Persian and Arabic, and on the other to English.

The place of English in present-day India is unique. It is the language of administration, and of higher education, and because of that, it is the most potent source of inspiration and influence for all Indian languages. It is the window through which we get air and light from the outside. It is the foreign language now most widely known—3½ millions out of 28 millions of literates (in a population of 338 millions) were literate in English in 1931: the number must have increased considerably in 1941, when we have over 47 million literates in 389 millions. Besides, another 319,000 consisting of British sojourners and residents, Eurasians and some Indian Christians are English-speakers at home. The importance of English is well known: spoken by nearly 200 millions as their mother-tongue, it is the administrative language for nearly 500 millions in the British Empire and some 140 millions under the United States of America: besides, it is studied as a culture language by millions in China, in Japan, and in other countries of the four continents. English is now the most important vehicle of world culture. It has become the second language with most of our intelligentsia, frequently of greater importance to them for mental and spiritual pabulum than any other speech. It has fostered science and letters, and the struggle

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for political and economic freedom in India. In our own interest, we cannot abandon English. English must remain the most important language after the mother-tongue (or the literary language adopted in its place) in Indian education, for cultural reasons, even if the administrative necessity ceases.

Many Indians advocate the acceptance of English as the interprovincial and national speech of India. But that will hardly be possible: a little over only 1% of the Indian people declared itself as literate in English, and both sentiment and practicability are against it. To try to make the masses not going in for higher studies English-speaking would be waste of time, energy and money, while it will be far easier for them to acquire Hindi (Hindustani) for interprovincial purposes, as they pick it up now. English should be made compulsory not earlier than the high school stage, and its place should be made in such a way that it can lead easily to scientific and technical studies and research. For the ordinary boy or girl, a sound education through the mother-tongue (or the accepted literary speech) will help to develop the faculties better than wasting years over a difficult foreign tongue, access to which nevertheless should be available to all during the high school stage.

### Need for a Pan-Indian 'National Language'

In my opinion, such a need really exists: to have an Indian language, over and above English, as the 'national language' of India, will not be a useless decoration, costing the people time and energy. We require an Indian speech, understood and usable by the largest number, as a symbol and expression of the unity of the Indian state. All state business of a pan-Indian character can be carried on in it without duplication, when its knowledge has become much more widespread than now. Such a language will be very necessary to check the centrifugal forces which, with the setting up of autonomous

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language states, will certainly become strong and will jeopardize pan-Indian unity. Unless counterbalanced by a certain amount of very necessary centralization, which a pan-Indian language will help, there will be a strong tendency to disintegrate and disrupt the unity of India which is the result of its geography, its economy, its culture. Provincial Autonomy, or Pan-Indian Unity: which is more vital for the well-being of India as a whole? History has shown that centralized empires or states were the background for the greatest periods of India, in political power and in cultural achievement, as under the Mauryas and the Guptas, under Harsha-vardhana and under the Moguls. For this, the essential administrative and educational departments should be on a centralized, all-India basis: much along the lines of the present imperial or all-India services, with a far greater degree of interprovincial posting of officers. One single army, one single system of higher civil service and police, one all-India system of education, and one final authority in the shape of an all-India parliament—these alone will be able to maintain and foster Indian unity. And here we have the need for an Indian language, which we must have for both utility and sentiment.

Such a language need not (and cannot in the first instance) be a culture language. English or the simplified form of it, Basic English, or Esperanto (which has no soul as an artificial language and has been created in an exclusively west-European atmosphere) will not be suitable for us in India.

As things stand, Hindi (Hindustani) alone has the greatest claim to be this national language. If it were the case of Hindu India only, then Sanskrit, as suggested by Dr F. W. Thomas of Oxford, might be employed once again, as it has been for thirty centuries; a simplified Sanskrit would not be then an impracticable thing, as I have seen Arya Samaj preachers from the Panjab speaking simple Sanskrit listened

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to by Bengali audiences in public squares and understood generally. But Muslim sentiment, and the feeling of many Hindus not attuned to the atmosphere of Sanskrit, would not subscribe to this. Nor can we think of any other modern Indian language—Bengali as the next important language included. Bengali habits of pronunciation, and the fact that Bengali has two styles, literary and colloquial, make it highly unsuitable for the rest of India. A rich literature is no great recommendation for a language to be a *lingua franca*; rather it is the energy of those who use it, and their power to expand and to control things. Its value in commerce is also a great factor. Moreover, Hindi (Hindustani) has already become the symbol of a great idea, the idea of Indian unity, which Bengali or any other modern Indian speech lacks. And it is largely the national speech of India *in esse*. Two Indians not knowing English will ten to one address each other in this, in a more or less pidgin form, perhaps, but still it will be Hindi. Talkies in it made in Calcutta and Bombay run for weeks in a hundred towns of India and are enjoyed by Marathas, Bengalis, Sindhis, Nepalis, Oriyas and Telugus and even Kannadigas and Tamilians almost as much as by people who use High-Hindi and Urdu.

### Limitations of Hindi (Hindustani)

Unfortunately, Hindi (Hindustani) suffers from the great handicap of being broken up into two mutually opposed literary languages differing in script and in higher vocabulary, and its grammar is somewhat complicated. High-Hindi and Urdu make it a house divided. Although the grammar is identical, and the common words are the same, with different scripts and attendant diversity of learned vocabulary, a most harassing reduplication is wasting the time, money, energy and temper of the people.

The crux is in the script. With the Persian script, the



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Muslim feels his Urdu is an 'Islamic language'; with the native Nagari, it becomes a Hindu speech to which he cannot give his allegiance. The Hindu will not give up his national alphabet. No compromise is possible between the two scripts, so fundamentally different are they from each other. The Congress in despair has declared for 'Hindustani' as the national language of India (not Hindi or Urdu), which can be written in either script.

There must be a single script, if a single language is to stand. Since there is no immediate prospect of agreement in favour of either Persian or Nagari—though nationalism should be expected to decide for the national script—the Gordian knot may be cut by bringing in a third script, a neutral one, the Roman, to take the place, of both, not only as a way out of the impasse, but also on its own merits.

### Indiân (Nagari), Perso-Arabic and Roman Scripts

The Perso-Arabic script, in which Urdu is written, is a very imperfect system of writing when used for a non-Arab language. Absence of proper indication of short vowels, paucity of necessary vowel letters, mere dots as the most important part of a number of consonant letters, and frequent ligatures of contracted letters—these are its great drawbacks. Arabic (and Persian) calligraphy in its various styles, Kufi and Naskh (and Nasta'liq), has no doubt a beauty of its own, but the script cannot be read fluently unless one knows the language well: *bnd* does duty for *band*, *bend*, *bond* and '*bund*', and *sld* for *sold*, *solid*, *salad*, *slid*, *sullied*, leaving the reader to find out the proper word from the context. Its character makes it like shorthand writing, which is a quick hand but sometimes very difficult to decipher. The dots and the curtailed forms of the letters are not good for the eye. The alphabet is foreign to India, and the major community in India cannot be expected to feel very enthu-

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siastic about it. Outside of Urdu, Sindhi and Kashmiri, Indian Muslims do not use it either for their mother-tongues. Panjab and U.P. Hindus have largely revived the use of the native Nagari during recent years. It should certainly be in use among those Muslims who wish to retain it, but its imposition on the entire Indian body politic cannot be justified. We should note that Muslim Turkey has abandoned it for the Roman.

The Perso-Arabic script at a liberal computation cannot claim more than 30 millions, mostly in north-western and north-central India, but the Nagari, or Deva-nagari, the most widely used Indian script, is in use among 140 millions and more. The 55 millions of Bengalis and Assamese, the 11 millions of Oriyas, and the 65 millions of Dravidians using Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam, and the Sikhs using Gurmukhi, all employ scripts which are but different forms of the Nagari, speaking generally; and the Nagari is the accepted all-India script for Sanskrit, the sacred language of 240 millions of Hindus (1931). The numbers using it, its origin as being derived from the prehistoric Indian script of Sindh and the Panjab of the 4th millennium B.C. through the Brahmi alphabet of 300 B.C., and its being the most scientific script in the world in the arrangement of its letters on a phonetic basis, are great points in its favour. It is a full alphabet, with letters for all the vowels and consonants of Indian languages. But it has its drawbacks. Strictly alphabetical in its conception, in its use it is syllabic, the unit in a written word being a whole syllable made up of a consonant or consonants combined with a vowel, and not a single sound. Vowels have two forms, initial and post-consonantal. Ligatures abound in which fragmentary forms of the consonants feature: these take a good deal of time to master. Its 50 letters (16 vowels and 34 consonants) in all their combina-

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tions require at least 450 separate types in printing: the total number of ligatures would be over 750. The shapes of the letters are complicated, and quick writing is not easy, although the script has a sculptural beauty.

The strictly alphabetical principle and application of the Roman script and the simple shapes of its letters are a great recommendation for it *vis-à-vis* the Nagari.<sup>1</sup> The letters are never curtailed, and vowels and consonants have equal footing. A combination of the scientific Indian arrangement with the Roman letters will give us an almost perfect alphabet. We must remember that the Roman is used by the largest number of people in the world.<sup>2</sup>

A voluntary acceptance of this Indianized Roman script need not hurt our national susceptibilities. It would be just

<sup>1</sup> We have to take note of the Roman script in its original application in the strictly phonetic orthography of Latin and Italian, and not in the complex, irregular and unscientific spelling of modern English.

<sup>2</sup> Capped and dotted letters required to extend the Roman alphabet for Indian languages are a great drawback, and this can be removed by having a number of separate symbols to be added to a letter to give the required new letter by combination. This will enable the ordinary 26 letters required for English to do also for all Indian languages. Thus, for the retroflex *t, d, n, l, ʃ* we may have *t', d', n', l', s'*; for *ś, ñ* we may have *s', n'*; *a, i, u* with two dots for length instead of *ā, ī, ū*; *ṅ* for nasalization; etc. The letters, arranged on the scientific plan of the Nagari alphabet, will be given Indian names (i.e. *k, g, h* will be named *aś ka, ga, ha* and not *kay, jee, aitch*; *kh* will be read in Hindi as *ka-par-ha kha*, etc.) I have discussed the matter elsewhere in detail (in 'A Roman Alphabet for India', *Calcutta University Journal for the Department of Letters*, 1935, and in *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, Gujarat Vernacular Society, Ahmedabad, 1941). With the above devices, and eschewing capitals (using an asterisk before proper names), some 40-50 different letters and types will serve all Indian languages in writing and printing; and the types will be available in all presses. With italic forms added, the total number of types will not exceed 100.

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like the metric system, the European clock, the Christian era, and other matters of convenience. The spirit of the Indian script—its scientific arrangement and its names for the letters—will be there: only we substitute letters with simpler shapes, and with the widest currency in the world. The advantages in spreading literacy, and in printing, and the resolution of the script controversy, are matters to be considered; the solution is well worth trying.

Roman Urdu is the second official language in the Indian army. The All India Radio in its English programmes is using Roman for Indian languages.

For the present, the Roman script may be adopted for Hindi (Hindustani), in a simplified grammar if possible, as used in interprovincial contexts. It will make the language very easy to learn, particularly among the southerners. High-Hindi and Urdu will continue to be written in Nagari and Perso-Arabic as now, as provincial or communal speeches.

But sentiment against a fresh foreign alphabet may be too strong. Failing the Roman script the next best solution for a pan-Indian Hindustani would be the Nagari as the most widely used script of India.

### Higher Vocabulary: Sanskrit, or Perso-Arabic?

As has been said before, most Indian languages are now *borrowing* rather than *building* languages, and they fall into two groups according to their feeder speeches: (i) borrowers from Sanskrit—High-Hindi, Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Marathi, Gujarati, Nepali, Panjabi (Gurmukhi), and Rajasthani, Maithili and the rest; and the Dravidian speeches, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil (the last keeps to its original Dravidian roots and words to a greater extent than the rest, but still Sanskrit is indispensable for it); (ii) borrowers from Persian (including Arabic)—Urdu, Sindhi, Kashmiri; and Pashto and Balochi.

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Although High-Hindi uses freely all naturalized Perso-Arabic words, Urdu generally behaves as if Sanskrit, its own grandmother or grand-aunt, and one of the three great languages of the ancient world (Sanskrit, Greek and Chinese), did not exist in India. It would be difficult to persuade the entire Indian people to accept a language which ignores Sanskrit and which goes to Persia and Arabia for its words of higher culture.

The following bases of a compromise for High-Hindi and Urdu will meet with the approval of all: (i) Build necessary words with native Hindi (Hindustani) words as far as practicable; (ii) Keep all naturalized foreign words of a general or special import—several thousands of them—even when Sanskrit or native Hindi equivalents occur, words which occur in the earlier writers claimed by High-Hindi, e.g. Kabir, and in the best writers of modern High-Hindi knowing Urdu, e.g. Prem Chand; (iii) Do not borrow unnecessarily from any source.

For necessary borrowing, Nagari Hindi and Persianized Urdu must for the present go their own ways, until better sense prevails. For the proposed National Hindi (Hindustani) for the whole of India, the following suggestions are offered: (i) Pan-Indian Hindustani is not an 'Islamic speech' like Urdu: native Hindi elements failing, we should not go to a foreign country for words which can be supplied by Sanskrit; (ii) Names of new *objects* and *processes* may be European and international; for *ideas*, we should have our own words; (iii) The door should be kept open for all Arabic and Persian words relating specifically to Islamic religion and culture.

The growing tide of nationalism is making the Turks get rid of unnecessary Arabic and Persian words from their language, and the Persians (Iranis) are similarly reviving native Aryan words in place of the alien Arabic. Indian Muslims should revise their attitude towards pure Hindi and

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Sanskrit words, especially when the religious vocabulary of Islam remains untouched. Persianized Urdu would be a real hardship for nearly four-fifths of India; only the people of Sindh, of the Panjab and Kashmir, and of western U.P. will feel at home in it—and even most Hindus and a good many Muslims there will prefer the racier native vocables: as much as the earlier Muslim poets of Hindi and Dakni did.

The principle of *laissez-faire*, after the Roman script has been adopted, should finally settle the question of vocabulary. A single script will make the language a single speech addressed to all the communities, and the widest intelligibility will decide the right course.

### Simplification of Hindi (Khari-boli) Grammar

Bazaar Hindustani (p. 20), the real interprovincial speech of the masses, has so simplified the grammar of the language that it can be written on a postcard. Certain things like the grammatical gender of nouns, adjectives and verbs, so characteristic of Hindustani, are unknown to a good many languages of modern India, and speakers of these languages, as well as even those of languages retaining this grammatical gender (e.g. Marathi, Gujarati, Rajasthani, Sindhi, Hindki, Panjabi, Nepali) find Hindustani habits in these matters irksome. Grammatical gender is eschewed; and the plural forms are similarly not used in Bazaar Hindustani. Then, all verbs in the present and future, and the intransitive verb in the past, refer to the subject, taking gender and number affixes corresponding to it; but the transitive verb in the past has concord with the object in the matter of gender and number affixes, the subject being put in the agentive case. All this is simplified exceedingly in Bazaar Hindi. Thus, *bhāt* 'rice' is masculine and *dāl* 'lentils' is feminine in Khari-boli: *bhāt acchā banā hai* = 'the rice is well cooked', but *dāl acchī banī hai*. Bazaar Hindustani would say, *bhāt, dāl acchā*

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*banā hai*. For so many forms, *main jāūngā* (fem. *jāēngī*) 'I shall go', *ham jāēngē* (fem. *jāēngī*) 'we shall go', 2nd person *tū jāegā* (*jāegī*), *tum jāogē* (*jāogī*), respectful *āp* or *āp-lōg jāēngē* (*jāēngī*), 3rd person *wuh jāegā* (*jāegī*), *wē jāēngē* (*jāēngī*), Bazaar Hindi has one form only—(*ham*, *ham-lōg*, 2nd person *tum*, *tum-lōg*, *āp*, *āp-lōg*, 3rd person *wo*, *wo-lōg*) *jāegā*; so for *āyā*, *āye*, *āyī*, *āyīn* 'came', Bazaar Hindi uses a single form *āyā*; for *main-nē bhāt khāyā* 'me-by rice he-was-eaten = I ate rice', and *main-nē rōṭī khāī* 'me-by bread she-was-eaten = I ate bread'; we have *ham bhāt khāyā*, *ham rōṭī khāyā* 'I ate rice, I ate bread'.

By accepting this kind of Hindi with simplified grammar, we give the imprimatur of authority to what is already very largely the practice. Outside of the Western Hindi area, people will be glad to have this simplified Hindi recognized. A body of experts from different parts of India should meet and fix the minimum of grammar. Those who speak correct Hindustani need not feel alarmed that their language will go to ruin. This simplified Bazaar Hindustani will be a 'concession language', the speakers of which will not have occasion to spoil the well of Khari-boli undefiled as they are doing now everywhere outside of the Western Hindi area. The experiment is well worth making, by declaring this simplified Hindi or Hindustani valid in all transactions of an interprovincial pan-Indian nature.

### Conclusion

The proposed solution for the main linguistic problem of India is therefore this: the 'national language' of India should be a simplified Hindi or Hindustani, written in a modified Roman alphabet arranged like the Nagari alphabet, retaining all naturalized Persian and Arabic words and admitting fresh vocables from those sources in specific Islamic contexts, but with a frank affiliation to Sanskrit for necessary

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words which cannot be created out of native Hindi elements or conveniently borrowed from English. Romanization appears to be the vital point in the solution of the problem.

This simplified Roman Hindi or Hindustani is to be made an optional subject of study in schools and colleges, and for Government officials, with all proper encouragement; it should not be made compulsory in educational institutions, as in that case it will be felt as a burden and a handicap, which would turn enthusiasm to hostility. If this additional language is imposed upon non-Hindustani areas, another Indian literary language should similarly be made obligatory in the Hindustani area.

The problem of language in India, after all, is not of first-line importance. Largely with Bazaar Hindustani, and to a lesser extent with High-Hindi and Urdu, three forms of the same single Protean speech, and with English, our all-India affairs are going on without any hold-up. Some 15 (or even 20) great literary languages for the whole of India with its 390 millions, with a pan-Indian interprovincial speech in Hindi (Hindustani)—and English as a great culture language—this is not a position to despair at; considering also that all these languages give but provincial expressions of a great culture, and whether Aryan or Dravidian or Austric, are in possession of a pan-Indian character and quality.