- Part I -

INTRODUCTION
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0. A Brief Statement
1. The Place and the People
2. The Speech
3. The Scope of the Inquiry
4. The Selection of the Informant
5. The Data
6. The Types of Handicaps Experienced in Eliciting the Data.
7. The Methods Employed to Overcome Them.

§ 0. A Brief Statement.

The basis of the study is the speech of the people of the village of Kharapti from the Roha Taluka of the District of Kolaba lying closely to the south of the Bombay city along the sea-coast of Maharashtra.

§ 1. The Place and the People.

Kharapti is a village with an area of 1.0 sq. mile
and a population of about six hundred. It is situated two miles to the west of Roha which is the chief and the only town of the Roha Taluka¹ of the District of Kolaba. The river Kudalika, twenty-four miles from its mouth, separates Roha and Kharapti and meets the Arabian Sea at Revdanda. It has a stone wharf which can be used by boats. Except in the rains, the creek at the wharf is dry for about twelve hours in the day, and vessels can reach the pier for about an hour and a half at each tide.

The District of Kolaba is a longish stretch of land along the western coast of the Arabian Sea. It is otherwise bounded to the east by the ranges of the Sahya mountain and the District of Poona beyond that, to the north by the District of Thana, and to the south by the District of Ratnagiri. It has a sea-coast of about a hundred miles which is cut by a number of creeks of varying sizes. Being a mountainous region with an

1. Vide the Kolaba District Census Handbook (Based on the 1951 Census), Government of Bombay, 1952, pp. 390-393 (S.No.63) from the Primary Census Abstracts "which contains basic information in respect of every village and town" (cf. p.3).

2. Op. cit., p.4, from the Table A-I 'Area, Houses and Population.'
annual rainfall of 80 to 140 inches, it is not made by nature easy for communication purposes. However the government State Transport road services are being run to most parts of the district and new roads and bridges are being constantly built. The coastal communication is possible in launches except during the rainy season. An industrial town like Bombay is so close for this district that it can be reached generally within three to four hours either by road or by sea.

The main agricultural product of the region is rice and the district is aptly termed the Granary of Rice. "Rocha is a great rice market, large supplies being collected from the neighbouring country and sent in boats to Bombay." Among the means of livelihood next to the cultivation of rice the most important one is fishing which is carried in all seashore and creek-bank villages. The fishermen are all of the Koli caste, and almost all Son-Kolis.

"Kolis are found over the whole district, some in towns and inland villages but most along the coast.

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4. Vide Bombay Gazetteer, Vol.XI (Kolaba and Janjira), Bombay, 1855; under Kolaba; Ch.XIV (Places of Interest); Rocha; p.379.
Except a few hill Kolis in the inland parts, almost all are coastmen belonging to the tribe of Son-Kolis. 5  
Their chief calling is catching fish, both for local use and for the Bombay market. 6 Fish is also carried to Mahad which is a great fish market in the district of Kolaba. "The Kolis in most of the villages on the creeks grow hemp, and use the fibre in making their nets." 7 "They are much employed in the coasting trade as well as in the fisheries, and, during the monsoon, when native craft cannot keep the sea, they cultivate little holdings of their own or work upon other men's land." 8

Kolis being much employed in livelihood occupations are a very backward people in the sphere of education. A primary school is being run in the village of Kharapti, but this being a recent development most of the grown-ups there are illiterate.

People from Kharapti go for fishing through the creek of Kundalika the time for this depending upon the hour of the ebb and tide on each day. The womenfolk, in addition to their household activity, engage themselves in agricultural works and in catching crabs and small fish. In their free hours these people repair their nets and go for hunting or for wood-cutting.

They live in houses made of cane or brick. During the rainy season the water of Kundalika sometimes runs through the village of Kharapti, when they shift to Padum, another village half a mile away and situated on a small hill.

There being no market at Kharapti, for their daily necessities the inhabitants there are often required to visit Roha which for them is the nearest bazar place.

Their deity of worship is Khandoba whose temple at Karla (near Poona or Lonavla) every Koli will try to visit at least once in his lifetime.

Some years back they used to carry goods by sea from Roha to Bombay, but with the increase in the motor-truck services this business is on the decline. For them Bombay is quite a familiar place, but visiting Poona is something which they cannot even think of.

The activities in the recent years of the Central Government and of the State Government, such as the running of the national extension scheme, the community development project, the social welfare scheme, the programme of the compulsory primary education, starting of the co-operative societies, the sarvodaya scheme, the literacy drive, forming of the co-operative cottage industry centres, an experiment in the use of mobile van units carrying posters, distributing hand-bills and showing educative and recreational films, stimulating collective hearing of the news from the radio, development of the means of communication, construction of roads and bridges, encouragement to the holiday camps at centres of natural and historical or cultural importance, and such others are factors that are decidedly in some measure instrumental in bringing about a change in the entire life habits of the villagers in this part of the

country also. And, speech habits being a part of the
total human culture have not remained untouched.

§ 2. The Speech.

The speech of the people of Kharapiti is here
termed "Koli", to distinguish it from the standard Marathi
dialect. The term is adopted after the name of the
people who speak it, though the speakers themselves call
it "Marathi", which is a general term for the speech of
the people of Maharashtra.

Koli is a spoken dialect only. It is a dialect
of Marathi as it has enough similarities in the phono-
logical, morphological and syntactical features with
Standard Marathi.

10. The "Kōli" of Grierson is a sub-dialect of what he
calls the "Konkan Standard" dialect of Marathi,
as "spoken in Bombay Town and Island, Thana,
Kolaba and Janjira (Bombay)" : vide Linguistic
The "Koli" of the Census of India : Paper No.1,
1954 : 'Languages — 1951 Census' (Part I : 'All
India Tables', Table IV, p.15, Language number
369), with 3,106 as its total number of speakers,
divided as 94 in East India and 3,012 in Central
India, is obviously different from the "Kōli" of
Grierson (vide L.S.I., Vol.I, Part I : App.III : p.470), with 169, 186 as the total number of its
speakers and 10,166 as its speakers from the
Kolaba district alone (vide L.S.I., Vol.VII,
p.59).
The vocabulary is enough different to make it ununderstandable for a speaker of Standard Marathi, but with the knowledge of some items of it he can understand it fairly easily when spoken at a slow speed.

Some small hints like the replacing of Marathi /ʂ/ for Koli /r/\(^{11}\) in ununderstandable words helps him to predict their Marathi counterparts. E.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Koli</th>
<th>Marathi</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/vəɾ/</td>
<td>/ʋəʂ/</td>
<td>'a banyan tree';</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɡəɾi/</td>
<td>/ɡaʂi/</td>
<td>'a cart'.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nasalization is sometimes found over a complete utterance of Koli, but this feature is found varying with different speakers and as such is not significant. Intonation patterns are found different in the two dialects.

There is a high degree of similarity in the word order of the two dialects. E.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Koli</th>
<th>/yək vətɿ sʊsəɾ/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marathi</td>
<td>/ək hətɿ sʊsəɾ/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'There was a crocodile';

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Koli / to kam nay mini kelay /
Marathi / te kam nai mi kela/
'I have not done that work'.

§ 5. The Scope of the Inquiry.

By 'linguistic analysis' is meant a study restricted to the description of the phonology and the morphology of the speech as recorded with the help of the informant. Intonation, as it has a bearing on the whole sentence unit, is left out of the inquiry: intonation pattern at the word level is not phonemically significant.

The whole study is divided into the following:

Part I : Introduction
Part II : The Analysis

Chapter 1 : Phonology
This gives a statement of the number of phonemes, their distribution, their allophonic variations, and such other matters.

Chapter 2 : Morphology
Discussion in this chapter is primarily divided into three sections:
(1) Stems, (2) Suffixes, and (3) Particles.
(1) Stems are classified under the following heads:

(i) Substantives (themselves further classed into (a) Nouns, (b) Adjectives, and (c) Pronouns),

(ii) Verbs, and

(iii) Adverbs,

on the basis of the types of suffixes following them. Stems of each of these classes are further analysed according to their behaviour, and classifications are made as much as the collected material would permit. When found necessary a concord in the forms of stems is discussed.

(2) Suffixes are classified on three different bases:

(i) Whether they are or are not followed by a suffix.

(ii) What they follow.

(iii) Whether they produce a stem or a base.

(3) Particles refer to morphemes that are neither stems nor suffixes.
(4) Following the above treatment, the arrangement of stems and suffixes is described to some extent. The term 'word' is used here in its traditional sense.

Appendix:

This includes a few observations on the structure of the Koli speech in general and some detailed notes.

Part III: The Illustrative Material

Section 1: Sample Text

Some pieces from the data are given in the phonemic script as a sample of the speech. They are selected in such a way as to give a good representation of the structure of the speech. Translation, and, where necessary, structural notes are added.

Section 2: Vocabulary of stems

About 2,500 stems are listed in their alphabetical order with a reference in each case to their morphological class and to their semantic sphere as observed in the collected data.
§ 4. The Selection of the Informant

The data for the present analysis was collected from a few selected informants partly at Kharapti proper and partly at Poona where one of the informants was asked to come and stay for a period of about six months.

Shri Namdev Patil, who was first tried and then had to be rejected, was found varying highly in his speech which fact was indicative of his efforts to imitate the standard dialect. All the data collected from him was useful to suggest the possible effects of a contact with the literates and with the speakers of Standard Marathi.

Most of the data forming the basis of the study is collected from Shri Sonu Govind Bolkar. Shri Bolkar was illiterate but had visited Bombay many times as he was formerly working on a cargo boat. He was quite intelligent to grasp the ideas behind the questions put to him. He was selected from among five or six persons for the consistency in his speech—responses to the same questions put at different times. He would not switch over from the dialectal to the standard forms. He could not write even his own signature. Some of the data collected from him was checked with some other persons
of Kharapti before fixing him to be a representative Koli speaker. Sometimes he helped much by giving data on his own inspiration. He was quite able to narrate a story the next day on having heard it but once the previous day. He was very well conversant with the details of his twin professions of fishing and agriculture.

§ 5. The Data.

The data collected was of the following nature:

1. About 1000 words.
2. About 1000 phrases.
3. About 1000 single sentences.
4. Ten short stories (of about 50 sentences each).
5. Eight big stories (of more than 100 sentences each).
6. About 40 dialogues (most of these being given by the same informant by playing the role of the other speaker).
7. About 50 informative passages (varying in length from 10 to 100 sentences).
8. Twenty-five songs (collected mostly from the womenfolk).
§ 6. The Types of Handicaps Experienced in Eliciting the Data:

It would be necessary and useful to recount here some peculiar situations that had to be faced while eliciting the required data.

(1) Before eliciting the data the first thing found necessary was to convince the informants that whatever they told by way of information was not going to result in any type of harm to them.

(2) It took a long time to convince them (as they would generally feel too shy to agree to it in the presence of a literate person or a person from a prestiged class) to stick to their own speech which only was expected of them, and not to try to imitate the standard forms many of which they knew fairly well.

(3) As the informants did not know any third language all the data was to be elicited through the standard speech, which fact tempted them to offer the standard forms.
(4) Usually they did not seem to possess much imaginative power. They could think only of real situations and speak only on real happenings. Thus, while eliciting the verbal forms used during instruction one informant was asked, "How would you teach your child to swim?" The answer was, "A Koli child knows swimming by birth, and we never teach our child to swim." Thereafter other situations were given in order to obtain the forms.

(5) Some informants could not read pictures.

(6) Some others were unable to narrate stories.

(7) It was very difficult for some to give short accounts on topics like ploughing, fishing etc.

(8) Some could recite songs only on particular occasions.
(9) An approach to a lady informant was a bit difficult even for a lady if she was not earlier familiar to the person concerned.

(10) There were certain forbidden topics about which they would not like to speak in the presence of strangers.


The above description would serve to point out the situations responsible for restricting the field of collecting the data. The following methods were found useful to meet these.

(1) To ask the informant to name a thing by pointing at it.

(2) To ask him to enumerate varieties of fish, crab, trees, vegetables, ornaments, insects etc.

—— These two devices were of much use in obtaining word lists.

(3) To ask him to imagine a certain situation in which he was expected to speak for himself and for other persons.
involved in it, e.g. "Suppose, you are going to the market: what would you tell your son? What would he say in reply?" and so on, this finally succeeding in obtaining a short dialogue. — Some of the situations given to him were as follows:

1. The informant going to the market. (See Sample Text Piece no.1.)

2. The informant asking somebody to go to the market.


4. Entering a friend’s house at leisure.

5. The informant calling someone to go with him for wood-cutting.

6. An acquaintance of his, visiting his house. (S.T.P.3).

7. Children talking about him when he is away from the village.

8. His sick wife asking the daughter to cook for all the members of the house. (S.T.P.4).

9. Receiving the news of a relation getting married.

10. A son-in-law going to the house of his father-in-law.

11. A boy requesting the captain of a boat to employ him. (S.T.P. 5).
(4) To ask him to give a short account on some topics. — Some of the topics given were as follows:

1. The Poona Market.

2. Nets, their varieties, uses, etc. (S.T.P.10).

3. Fishing:
   — As carried in the river, sea, etc. (S.T.P.7).
   — Different ways of doing that (S.T.P. 8, 9, 11, 12, 13).

4. Description of a situation in which the informant faced a ghost. (S.T.P. 14, 15).

5. Paddy agriculture. (S.T.P. 16 – 20)
   — Varieties of rice,
   — Cutting the plants,
   — Ways of storing,
   — Removing the husk etc.

6. Heavy rains and the disturbance caused by them. (S.T.P. 21).

7. The ebb and tide.

8. To take a vow.

9. Festivals like the Divali (S.T.P.22), the Hindu New Year Day etc.

10. To ask to distinguish between two things, such as:
    — /kōyti/ and /kēeral/ (instruments used for cutting purposes),
    — sea-water and river-water.
(5) To ask him to sing songs.

(6) To bring him into some frame or paradigm and to ask him to fill in the blanks therein.

For instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The given construction</th>
<th>The expected form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. /mi aj khatay/ 'I am eating today';</td>
<td>/khain/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mi udya / 'I ..... tomorrow'.</td>
<td>'shall eat'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. /yak ghora/ 'one horse',</td>
<td>/ghora/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/leii / 'many .... '</td>
<td>'horses'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7) To ask him to answer a given question about a given word. — For instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The given word</th>
<th>The given word</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. /pbo ru/ 'chalk'</td>
<td>&quot;Of what?&quot;</td>
<td>/livesya/ 'the one used for writing'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. /pani/ 'water'</td>
<td>&quot;Where is it?&quot;</td>
<td>/deryan/ 'in the sea'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(8) Tape recording and mixing with people as much as possible, for the purpose of checking and clear understanding of some points.