Some Sociolinguistic Aspects of Deori and Tiwa

2.0 Introduction

The North East India is the abode of various Ethnolinguistic tribes along with the people of Aryan stock, who had migrated to this part from North and middle India long time ago. According to the Basic Statistics of North East Region (NEC, 1995), the 1991 census has reported 31 million populations in North East India which constitute 3.8% of total Indian population. In this entire area the number of tribes is estimated to be 130. Each tribe speaks their own language which is unintelligible to the very neighbor tribal groups. Although the Deori and Tiwa languages share the same language family, both the languages are mutually unintelligible. There has been a predominant notion among the laymen that most of the tribal languages are dialect, not language. This is also prevalent in the context of tribal languages of Assam. This chapter deals with some of the sociolinguistic issues which can easily defy the misconception of Deroi and Tiwa being two dialects of Assam and substantiate that these two languages can equally stand in their own as language. The chapter is arranged in the following order according to the convenience of the discussion.

1. Deori
   a) The origin of the word ‘Deori’
2. Tiwa
   a) The origin of the word ‘Tiwa’
   b) The origin of the word ‘Lalung’
3. Deori Speech community
4. Tiwa Speech community
5. Diglossia / Diglossic situation

---


Talukdar, B.N, Language Problem in the North East Region In Linguistic Situation in North East India, (ed) Mrinal Miri, 1982, P.49
6. Language shift and maintenance
   a) The plight of Tiwa
   b) The plight of Deori
7. Borrowing / Loan words, Code mixing and switching in the backdrop of contact situation
8. Code mixing and switching
9. Bilingualism, Societal bilingualism, Multilingualism
10. Kinship terminologies in Tiwa and Deori
11. Color terminologies
12. Urban and Rural form of language
13. Power and Identity through Language

2.1.0. Deori

The Deori people of Assam are basically a clan of great Tibeto-Mongolian group. This ethnic group is again divided into four subgroups viz, Dibongiyas, Borgonyans, Tengaponias and Patorgonyas. Out of these four sub clans Dibongias are the one who are still maintaining their culture, tradition and language. Patorgonyas are told to be extinct. No one of these community claims as Patorgonyas. Although some people still believe that their ancestors belonged to Borgonyas and Tengaponia clans, they hardly can speak Deori or feel as a member of Deori community. They got assimilated into the Assamese culture and lost their own culture as well as language by adopting Assamese language and culture and introducing themselves as Assamese people.

Deoris are also referred as Deori-Chutiyas which invites lots of controversies. People who claim as Deoris don’t want to be called as Deori-Chutiya by citing the reason that the term ‘Chutiya’ is a derogatory term and in terms of clan also they never belong to the Chutiya clan who once established the Chutiya kingdom in upper Assam. It was W.B Brown\(^\text{24}\) who first coined the name Deori-Chutiya in his grammar book on Deori Language along with two other sub groups of Chutiya. He reported that there were three

\(^{24}\) Brown, W.B. An Outline Grammar of the Deuri-Chutiya language spoken in Upper Assam, 1898.
main sub groups of Chutiya community. They are—the Deori-Chutiyas, the Hindu Chutiyas and the Ahom Chutiyas. Again Grierson\textsuperscript{25} (1903) in his monumental work “Linguistic survey of India” also mentioned the name Deori-Chutiya. According to him Deori is a sub group of Chutiya and he divided them as follows—the Hindu, the Ahom, the Borahi and the Deori Chutiya.\textsuperscript{26} Endle\textsuperscript{27}, another social scientist also supported the Grierson’s sub divisions of Chutiya clan. From then onwards the debate and controversy has been going on and on. Although there have been a lot of debates going on about the nomenclature, Endle asserts about the language that: “in all likelihood, the language of the Deori-Chutiyas gives us the purest and most archaic form of the Bara speech and there can be little doubt that in earlier times it was the dominant language of eastern Assam.”\textsuperscript{28}

The Deori people have been scattered sporadically in various places of Assam. But the main concentrations are found in Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Sibsagar and Jorhat districts of upper Assam.

2.1.1. The origin of the word ‘Deori’

The Deori people called themselves as ‘jimchaya’. The word ‘jimchaya’ has three morphemes and each one has different meaning. According to the common belief ‘jim’ means \textit{cold water}, ‘ch’\textit{a} means Sun which actually personifies \textit{male} and ‘ya’ means \textit{moon} which personifies \textit{female}. The Deori people believe that they were originated from mother Moon and father Sun.

Another legend says that ‘de’ refers to God or the \textit{Savior of Universe}, ‘u’ implies \textit{high} and ‘ri’ means \textit{rules and regulations}. It says that Deori people are those people who always exercise the rules and regulations of God and Nature.

\textsuperscript{25} Grierson, \textit{Linguistic Survey of India}. P.118
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid. P.118
\textsuperscript{27} R.S. Endle, \textit{The Kacharis}, 1911.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. P.5
Another belief says that ‘de’ means elder or respectable, who could be at par with the Brahmins of Aryan society, ‘u’ denotes yes and ‘ri’ stands for nature or character. So, the entire word can be paraphrased as a sound moral person, who is respectable and adorable.

The most acceptable and popular legend behind the name Deori is that they were the ‘Raj purohit’, the royal priest of Ahom Kingdom. In fact, one of the myths also says that their ancestors were the Royal Priest of King Bhismaka of Sadiya kingdom, who happened to be the father of Sri Krishna’s wife Rukmini. In Assamese language also the word ‘Deori’ refers to the class of priest who offers puja (prayer) to God in the temple. When people had to offer puja to kundimama, the christened God of Deori, they would go to that particular person, and through him everything would be offered to the God. The Deori would enchant the ‘mantras’ and bless them to fulfill their desire. Gradually the language of this class became the household language in their family and in due course of time got established as Deori language. Now, all the members of Deori people are not virtually priests, but can understand and speak their language.

2.2.0. Tiwa

There is a common belief among the Tiwa people that their ancestors had originally come down to their present abode from the Tibet region. But some of the octogenarians still believe that in their hoary past their habitats located somewhere near Allahabad on the bank of river Yamuna. And they were pushed out by the Aryan invasion and forced them to leave Allahabad, and took shelter in the Himalayan passes. Later on, they reached the Pragjyotish Kingdom of present Assam and established a principality which was known as ‘Tribeg’ in 1900 B.C.29 “The exact location of Tribeg could not be ascertained but in all probability this principality was somewhere near Kasua Gaon lying on the confluence of Borapani, Jamuna and Kapili.”30

29 R. M. Nath, The Background of Assamese culture Cited in G.C. Sharma Thakur’s The Lalungs, 1985, P.1
30 G.C. Sharma Thakur. The Lalungs. P.1
Tiwa people are also known as Lalung. The concentration of Lalung is spread over in the districts of Nagaon, Morigaon, Karbi Anglong and some pockets of Jaintia hills of Meghalaya. They are found in Kapili, Mayang, Bhurbandha, Kathiatali, and Kampur Development Block areas of Nagaon district and Nartiang area of Jowai Sub-division of Jaintia district. Besides, there are a few Lalung villages in Dhemaji areas of Dhemaji Sub-division, Titabar areas of Jorhat district and Sonapur area of Kamrup district (Sharma Thakur, G.C, 1985). Moreover, in the areas (villages) like Makrangkusi, Sarangkusi, Natun Gaon, Bhomoraguri, Pashim Nagaon, Bangphou, Deosal, Naxola, Sindhisar, Gobha, dabarghat, Phakalihabi, Garamkusi, Nellie, Palashguri, Kumarbari, Makaria, Dohali, Darapani, Silsang, Bengenabari, Bonpora, Amsoi, Sohori, Beltola and Gagara are some habitat in Morigaon district. In Karbi Anglong district also villages like Balekunchi, Bhaksong, Kamarpha, Hatipara, Haoraghat, Marjong, Bormarjong, Uthakhunchi, Silakunchi, Barangkhoi, Khaplangkusi, Hadau, Umsuai, Langkradang, Dapsal, Tharakhunchi, Ulukunchi, Umpanai, Morten are habitation of Tiwa people. But, except the Tiwa people residing at Nagaon, Morigaon and Karbi Anglong districts, people from above mentioned areas hardly speak Tiwa language even if they claim to belong to Tiwa tribe.

2.2.1. The origin of the word ‘Tiwa’

The Lalungs prefer themselves to be called as Tiwa. They view that the name Lalung is given by other people. In the name Tiwa, ‘ti’ denotes water and ‘wa’ denotes superior. A common account says that they were sailing through Brahmaputra in search of proper residence. Once they landed in their present places, they introduced themselves as Tiwa.

G.C. Sharma Thakur has given different account of the origin of the word Tiwa. He states “Probably ‘Tiwa’ derives its origin to the term ‘Tibbatia’ meaning people hailing from Tibbet. In course of time this ‘Tibbatia’ might have changed into Tiwa.”

2.2.2 The origin of the word ‘Lalung’

The name Lalung was first given by the Karbi people of Karbi Anglong district. The people who used to live on the south bank of river Brahmaputra was called Lalung because, ‘la’ means water and ‘lung’ means rescued. These people were rescued by Brahmaputra river by offering shelter, hence the name Lalung. It was also said that during the reign of Kamata King the Lalungs had to leave their original principalities and established a village on the bank of a tributary of river ‘Daiyang’ which was known as ‘Nilalung’. In course of time, the people living on the bank of ‘Nilalung’ were attributed as Lalungs.

The mythological account states that once Lord Mahadeo was heavily intoxicated with rice beer and while he was lying unconscious on a road, a stream of saliva (lal in broken Assamese) came out from the mouth of Lord Mahadeo. The Lord created two human beings out of his saliva and later on they came to be known as Lalung (human being created out of Lord’s ‘lal’).

But the most plausible account could be traced from the folk songs which are being sung during the harvesting and purification ceremonies after a child birth. They reveal that these people once belong to the Kingdom of ‘Hillali’. They were residing on the north bank of Brahmaputra. And they preferred to call themselves as subjects ‘lali’ the clipping of ‘Hillali’. Later on, due to different pronunciation this ‘lali’ came to be known as ‘Lalung’.

2.3.0. Deori Speech community

Gumperz (1962/71:101): defines 'linguistic community' is "a social group which may be either mono-lingual or multilingual, held together by frequency of social interaction patterns and set off from the surrounding areas by weaknesses in the lines of communication." So a linguistic community "may consist of small groups bound together by face-to-face contact or may cover large regions, depending on the level of abstraction"
we wish to achieve." This was purely a social concept. Deori speech community is a small community with a set of social norms shared by all members of the community. It is a language bounded by a set of grammatical rules and with common verbal repertoire. Gumperz (1968/71:114): further describes a 'speech community as "any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage". A more restrictive concept, assuming a shared set of grammatical rules; emphasizes linguistic contrast with outsiders. Gumperz also argues for regular relationships between language use and social structure. "The speech varieties employed within a speech community form a system because they are related to a shared set of social norms" (Gumperz 1968/71:116), but may overlap language boundaries: e.g. Czech, Austrian German, and Hungarian speakers may share norms for speech acts, topics, conversational participation, etc. But in context to Deori it is confined to the territory of Assam state only unlike Tiwa speech community.

According to the Census Report of 1951, the total population of Deori people was 12,503. But it is quite strange that only 6715 of them could speak their own language. The 1991 census has reported 15,955 speakers. The 2001 census report shows that Deori has 27,960 population altogether. But there is a difference between the number of population and the number of speakers. As many people introduce themselves as the member of the Deori community but unable to speak their mother tongue. At the same year the SIL Ethnologue has reported that Deori has only 26,900 speakers (2001). Here there has been a decrease of the number of speakers.

2.4.0. Tiwa Speech community

The Tiwa community also fulfills the criteria of being a speech community of its own. They also share a set of social norms through which one can identify a member of Tiwa community. Hudson (1996) starting with the special premise that to be a speech community a group of people must possess a common language. The members of Tiwa

33 http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=der
community also interact with each other through the means of Tiwa language. Wardhaugh (1998) develops the idea from idealized homogeneity to fragmented individualism, with community dependent upon the impulse to identify oneself with others. Instead of rejection he prefers a vague, one-size-fits-all approach: "some kind of social group whose speech characteristics are of interest and can be described in a coherent manner" (1998, p.116). Some members may not be very fluent speakers of their language or may not stay within the boundary of their common habitat but that can not hinder them in becoming the member of Tiwa speech community. As Holmes & Meyerhoff (1999:178-9) were in the opinion that: "Membership in a speech community depends on social or behavioural properties that one possesses... [The speech community concept has] nothing to say about maintenance or (de)construction of boundaries between categories" (of membership, presumably). Those people who have been living in the plains and in the semi urban areas, they still try to maintain the tradition and culture of their tribe, but have some problems in conversation. The same outlook was viewed by Hymes (1967/72:54-5) when he said, "A community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety... A necessary primary term... it postulates the basis of description as a social, rather than a linguistic, entity." For Hymes one can participate in a speech community without being a member of it, but the lines of demarcation are not fixed or universal: e.g. accent, ways of speaking, grammar, etc. in different communities or at different times in one community. But Labov (1972:120-1) asserts: "The speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms. These norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative behaviour, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are invariant in respect to particular levels of usage."

It is difficult to find universal and unique behaviour which is shared by all Tiwa people. From place to place there are differences in terms of their approach, attitude and behaviour. Although certain norms vary from another, it would be unjust to say that they

---

34 Peter. L. Patrick, The speech community.
belong to different speech community. Their aspirations are same, they practice the same religious beliefs and there is unity in the process of prayer. That is why Gumperz (1982:24) asserts "A system of organized diversity held together by common norms and aspirations. Members of such a community typically vary with respect to certain beliefs and other aspects of behaviour. Such variation, which seems irregular when observed at the level of the individual, nonetheless shows systematic regularities at the statistical level of social facts."

Dr Grierson, in his epoch making work, Linguistic Survey of India, mentioned that there were 40,000 Tiwa speakers across Assam (including all the seven sister states of North East India). But the 1961 census had reported 61315 Tiwa people. 1981 census36 revealed that there are just 16,091 speakers who could speak Tiwa fluently. Again the total population rose up to 95609 in 1971 census. In 1971, their percentage of total tribal population in Assam was 7.11%. But the number of speakers was mere 10,650. In 1991 it rose up to 32,633. According to the 2001 census report Tiwa (Lalung) language shows 27,072 speakers,37 showing the decadal decrease percentage of this language by 19.78% which led it to a position of endangered level.

2. 5.0. Diglossia / Diglossic situation

Fishman (1967) introduced the notion that diglossia could be extended to situations found in many societies where forms of two genetically unrelated (or at least historically distant) languages occupy the H and L niches, such that one of the languages (e.g. Latin in medieval Europe), is used for religious, educational, literacy and other such prestigious domains, while another language (in the case of medieval Europe, the vernacular languages of that era) is rarely used for such purposes, being only employed for more informal, primarily spoken domains. The concept of Fishman's extended diglossia is also applicable to the Deori and Tiwa societies of Assam. Here the Assamese language plays the role of H variety. The defining criteria for diglossia such as prestige, literary heritage, function also prove Assamese being the H variety in Tiwa and Deori

36 People of India, National Series, 1997, OUP, P.284.
societies. In these two societies every person is either bilingual with excellent fluency in Assamese language or multilingual. Those who have economic and political power always prefer to use the H variety. On the contrary, L variety which is their mother tongue is being used at their home and village domains. It is like the language situation of the USA where some Spanish speakers keep their language for different function and use at home but English in the public. Fishman calls it the classic example of extended diglossia. This way, children start learning the H variety by gradually discarding the L variety. This scenario is very much prevalent in the urban pockets of Tiwa and Deori habitation especially in Jagiroad area of Morigaon district, Nagaon town of Nagaon district and in Dhemaji town of Dhemaji district. The prestige issue is also associated with the H variety, as some speakers even feel proud by using the H variety. Again these two languages almost lack their written literature. In fact, none of the languages have their own scripts. Tiwa has adopted Roman script, whereas Deori has adopted Assamese script to give the written form of their languages. Most of the speakers of these two languages use the literature of H variety to satisfy their literary thirst. All educated and employed people from these languages prefer to use the H variety in public places and to address the public gatherings of their community. For example, Mr. Dandi Deori, an inhabitant of Dibrugarh town of Dibrugarh district was serving as the D.I. of schools in different parts of upper Assam. He was popularly known as the ‘di ai gira’ among the Deori people. In fact, he was the first graduate among the Dibongia clan of Deori and second among the entire Deori-Chutia tribe. In 1971, 16th March he addressed the opening session of Assam Deori Sammilan held at Sripani Deori Gaon of Lakhimpur district of Assam. The targeted audiences were all Deori people, in spite of that he addressed them in the H variety:

‘apunalo ke cikunkoi akiboloi sikiboloi lage, gahori puhiboloi eri gai goro puhiboloi lage, lora suwalik modor xoloni gakhir aboloi xikabo lage. badobatulok hisabe amar lora suwalik skulboli potni xikkha diyaboloi sesta koribo lage, chang hor eri mati ghor lobo lage.’
“Gentlemen, you have to learn how to live cleanly: try to domesticate cows in place of pigs, teach your children to consume milk instead of rice beer. We should send our children compulsorily to the school; you should abandon pile dwellings and live in Assam type house… etc.” (Saikia, P.C, 1976)

Except a few grammatical mistakes like misuse of case markers, and future aspectual markers, the person had used good H variety to convey his ideas. There are instances of H varieties being used in religious domains also. For example in Tiwa language a person prays in the following way:

‘ōh ram iswɔr prɔb’u, kak tuti kɔr, dæŋɔr dæŋɔr debɔta, lɔk’h i kowɔr pak’h i kowɔr, bɔrde o mohadeo th’an, bɔli mɔha bɔli, devi kamak’h abɔli, aru etiao apunak ki di xɔntusto kɔrim, kerkuta k’hɔa’ gua, mɔkorai sata pan, take di b’hɔgba na di parisu, kon rak’h ise dæŋɔr dæŋɔr devɔtai rak’h ise buli, apunar nam rɔba jɔx rɔba. ip’hale kak tuti kɔr, bɔr ai xɔru ai, akɔri, ɔbari, tutiridɔ, b’hɔktiridɔ, suli sɔgi katar kɔrɔ, ɔgɔst’h i pɔrial hate abɔrɔn kɔr ɾak’h ise, kon rak’h ise ai mɔtri rak’h ise buli nam rɔba jɔx rɔba.’

“Oh Lord Ram, whom do I pray, so many powerful gods, Lakhi Kownar, Pakhi Kownar (names of Tiwa gods), the altar of Mahabali, Devi Kamakhyabali, with what should I satisfy, want to offer the nuts which is half eaten by squirrel and betel leaf torn by spider. If you behave as a saviour, your name will remain forever as an almighty god and you will be a renowned god. Again, whom do I pray, big mother, small mother? I pray you earnestly to keep me and my family safely and let your name be remembered by all.” (Sharma Thakur, 1985)

From this specimen also we got to know that even if the Tiwa people use Tiwa language in their ritual and religious activities, many a time, they use the H variety in prayer and in some other activities. Here, except a few names of god and goddess, everything is in
Assamese language. The female deities like Bor ai, Saru ai etc. are offered prayer to mitigate their sufferings. This particular mantra is practised by the Sukai clan of Tiwa.

2.6.0. Language Shift and Maintenance

Language maintenance denotes the preservation and use of a language in the face of competition from a regionally and socially more powerful and numerically stronger language. According to Hoffman (1991:186), “when a community does not maintain its language, but gradually adopts another one, we talk about language shift [while] ‘language maintenance refers to a situation where members of a community try to keep the language(s) they have always used’. Hoffman also observed that under certain cultural, social and political conditions, a community might opt to change one set of linguistic tools for another. Language shift and maintenance occur in a situation where more than two languages are in contact situation. There are lots of factors to occur this phenomenon. They could be attitude towards the language, language ability, language and identity, social-economic and political factors, relationship with particular people etc. Certain other conditions can also be attributed for this phenomenon like societal bilingualism, migration, government’s language planning, school’s use of another language than the mother tongue, urbanization, prestige issue related to the dominant language etc. Although it is very difficult to single out just one cause for language shift and maintenance, it has been proved that all the causes are interrelated and in some instances one cause affects the entire speech community profusely. The factors which are responsible for individual shift can be discussed as economic changes, social status, demographic changes and institutional pressure. Factors like urbanization, modernization, industrialization are directed by the economic motives which eventually lead to shift of language. To explain the demographic factor R. Mesthrie has rightly remarked “it might seem obvious that, the smaller the size of community, the stronger the threat of language shift and death” (R. Mesthrie, 2001).

A language can not be used in isolation. The speakers of a given speech community are bound to use the contact languages of a given region. Then the phenomenon of societal
bilingual arises. To occur a language shift this situation must be present at some point in
time. Bilingualism can ultimately lead to language shift in a society and is often marked
by intergenerational switching of the languages (Fasold, 1984; Dressler, 1984, Aitchison,

2.6.1. The plight of Tiwa

Along with societal bilingualism, the number of speakers of the Assamese language,
which is the dominant language of this region, is a major cause of shifting of Tiwa
speakers to the Assamese language. Speakers of Tiwa language simply can’t help but to
use Assamese in their daily walks of life. With the development of modern
transportation, communication and technology, most of the speakers of Tiwa language
have started to feel that the social mobility and status could be availed only through
either English or Assamese, which in the long run lead a huge chunk of speakers to use
only the latter languages. This phenomenon affects acutely to the new generation. It is
because, neither their parents encourage/talk to Tiwa nor they get a chance to use their
own language with their peers. But a group of concerned people have realized the
scenario of decreasing usage of their language and the laid back attitude of the speakers
of this language and started a movement to preserve and promote their language. Now
they have been little bit successful in addressing the need of preserving their own
language and injecting them to revitalize their culture and history as well.

Of late, the number of Tiwa speakers is decreasing alarmingly. Especially, the new
generation has stopped using Tiwa language. Instead, Assamese is occupying the place
of their mother tongue. Again the survey shows that majority of the parents who are well
educated want to send their children to the English medium schools. Because of rapid
urbanization, improvement of communication and technology people of this community
are now better equipped with all information and have the access to outer world. As a
result the need for higher and technical education has arrived and a huge chunk of people
are coming out from their places and due to the demand of the new medium of
communication they have started using Assamese or English language. Gradually these
groups and their second generation family members are also adopting their surrounding language other than Tiwa.

Once the concerned lots of Tiwa speakers have realized the need for preserving their language, they have initiated certain measures to save the language from extinction. When they started a mass movement for economic and political autonomy within the territory of Assam, during that time only they had realized that because of the non development of their mother tongue they were lagging behind in many aspects. The student leaders and the autonomous demand leaders had injected the Tiwa people that if they were not going to study and preserve their language, one day they along with losing their own language they would also end up by losing their own culture.

In this endeavour the most remarkable effort had been accomplished by ‘xʌdou xʌm tiwa xʌnmilɔn’ (All Assam Tiwa Organization’). They were the first organization to take initiative to publish a Tiwa magazine called ‘riŋsaŋ’. They had published four consecutive issues of this magazine. They published this magazine in Assamese language. Another book ‘tiwa xʌm prodayɔr pɔrisɔi’ (Introduction to Tiwa community) was edited by this same organization and published by the literary body of Assam “Assam Sahitya Sabha”. Some individuals have also come forward with their personal works like Rameswar Kownar’s ‘tiwa xɔbdɔ xɔmɔnɔr’ (Tiwa word collection) and Maneswar Deori’s ‘tiwa xɔmaj aru xɔmalo:sɔna’ (Tiwa society and Criticism) etc.

To introduce Tiwa language as a medium of education at least in the Tiwa dominated areas ‘xʌdou xʌm tiwa xʌnmilɔn’ has published two text books as well. This step could be regarded as a great measure for a community to restore their about to loss language. Individuals like Mahiram Bardoloi had also published a grammar on Tiwa language. Reverend M Balowan composed a multilingual dictionary of Tiwa along with some other books in English language.
After that, *tiwa matɔ nlai tokra* the literary organization of Tiwa language took over the responsibility of spreading and maintaining Tiwa language. They have published a souvenir called ‘turay’ where they try to discuss the socio economic issues of Tiwa community and their language related issues. Apart from this, other small scale organizations had also brought out some magazines to study their language such as *talax, borota saydo, pahari, sɔane arsi* etc. People became so enthused in this movement that some educated people have even started writing literary genres in Tiwa language. Among those Mr Maneswar Deori, Mihiram Bordoloi, Ganesh Senapati, Uphing Maslai, Maheswar Pator, Bidyaram Pator, V Len Kholar were prominent. But they could not keep the momentum of this enthusiastic movement; later on, this effort had gradually lost its sheen.

2.6.2. The plight of Deori

The situation of Deori language is also not very encouraging. Since Deori language does not have its own script, it has adopted Assamese script. All educated people from this community get educated either through Assamese or English language. The imposition of Assamese language as a medium of instruction in the Deori dominated areas was the part of state government’s language plan to homogenize one education system in the state of Assam. Since Deori language doesn’t have sufficient written literature, and because of the holistic approach of using Assamese language within the territory of Assam, the state government did not have any other option but to implement Assamese as the medium of instruction. It is because of this reason, once a Deori child comes out from their home s/he gets to meet her/his peers who speak Assamese language. Although after a prolonged debate and demands, the state government of Assam has given Deori the status of a ‘language’ through the office order number A (1) E, 338/99/572\(^\text{18}\) in 2005 and included this language in the Primary School for 3\(^{rd}\) and 4\(^{th}\) standard students as a subject, due to the lack of adequate study materials it was not fully operationalised. In high schools also the Deori students have to interact, learn the text, express their ideas

---

\(^{18}\) Deori, Xaranan. *Deori Bhasa Sahityar dhara: Ek Alochana (Phases of Deori language and literature: a discussion).* Ajir Dainik Batori.P 4
and write in Assamese language. The same story is applicable to the English medium schools, where they do not get a chance to use their own language. It is because most of their peers, friends, and classmates belong to the Assamese middle class families. This way, they develop a kind of detachment from their mother tongue which finally leads to outright non-usage of their language. This scenario is very much prevalent in the urban and semi-urban places in upper Assam area.

Moreover, Deori tribe was enlisted in the Constitution of India as one of the plain tribes in India. Being the inhabitants of the plain area, the impact of rapid urbanization, technological changes, communication development etc. on the Deori communities is more comparing to the hill area tribes. These factors play pivotal role in shifting a language to a dominant language. In the market place also, Deori people have to use only Assamese language as the vendors, shopkeepers understand very little about Deori language. The language attitude and prestige issue are also highly associated with language shift. One of the observations made during my field survey was that some informants were simply felt neutral to speak their mother tongue. They would rather prefer to send their children to English medium school rather than teaching Deori to their children. The educated and employed people of this community use Assamese language not only in their professional domain but also in their home domain.

Although the process of language shifting is very much prevalent in Deori language, some vigilant and foresighted people realized that if they were not going to preserve their language, somewhere down the line, the brunt of English hegemony would completely be felt on their language and culture. Pertaining to this attitude, they have initiated certain programs such as arranging some get togethers, publishing some books, magazines etc.

Mr. Nripen Deori is one of the precursors of the individual efforts to preserve Deori language. In 1981, he published the first Deori Grammar ‘jimcʰaya cʰo icʰareya’. Although it was completely a prescriptive grammar of Deori language written in Assamese language, a linguist can have lot of insights from this book. Bhimbar Deuri,
(1903-1948) the social reformer of Deori community also emphasized in preserving their culture by preserving and developing Deori language. Upendra Nath Goswami’s ‘An Introduction to the Deori language’ (1994) is another book about the Deori language. He wrote the book out of his sheer interest for language study. Mr. P.C. Sarma of Dibrugarh University, Mr Leela Kanta Deori, Prabin Kumar Deori are some of the individuals who had taken up some individual research to study Deori language and culture.

Usually, the members of a speech community cannot stay neutral for their language. They may consider it essential for their existence; or they may find it embarrassing for the community. In both the cases, they will either promote it or cease to pass it on to their younger generation. With regard to Tiwa and Deori communities, the urban population seems to show negative attitude towards their language while the rural and hill area population do not seem to bother about it.

2.7.0. Borrowing / Loan words, Code mixing and switching in the backdrop of contact situation

In the days of modernization, no language can occur in isolation except a very few languages. Virtually, every language whether it is a minority language or a tribal language, comes into contact with other languages. The study of language in contact situation is not new. Muller (1875), Paul (1886), Johannes Schmidt (1872), Schuchardt (1884) were some of the linguists who had undertaken extensive research on languages in contact situation. It remained the focal point in the beginning of twentieth century in the works of Sapir (1921), Bloomfield (1933), Weinreich (1953) and other structuralists. As a result of contact, a language might undergo a lot of morphological and syntactic changes. In reply to a Muller’s essay, Whitney (1881), argued that grammatical and lexical both the changes occur in contact. The study of contact induced changes took place in the 19th and mid 20th century to figure out the historical relationships among languages or some other linguistic assumptions.
Tiwa and Deori languages can also be referred under the purview of language contact. If we examine the responses of the Tiwa and Deori informants, it will become evident that almost every speaker of these two languages is multilingual. The Tiwa language is in persistent contact with Assamese, Karbi, Jaintia, Bengali, Nepali, Hindi and English languages. People even use Sanskrit language for religious purposes. Similarly, Deori speakers also have to stay in touch with Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Bhojpuri, some Arunachali languages and English language. The moment they come out from their home, they get to talk to someone who is actually from these above mentioned languages.

One of the consequences of contact situation is the lexical borrowing to a language from the surrounding languages. The borrowing words may have several possible ways of incorporating the foreign or alien form in its own phonological, morphological or semantic system. But it never discards stem form of the word in the newly added words. Weinreich has introduced the term *interference* as a neutral term to refer to the lexical borrowing, those borrowings occur as a result of the familiarity of the neighboring language which is quite prevalent both in Tiwa and in a large number in Deori language. For example in Tiwa the words such as *ketli (Tea-pot), randh:misal (kitchen), dali (lentil), lau (gourd), sini (sugar), jibha (tongue), bason (year), haldi (turmeric) etc. are borrowed from Assamese language. Apart from this, although once they used to have the complete numerical nomenclatures in Tiwa, now no one could either remember the numerical system or use it in their day to day activities and the entire numerical system has been replaced by the Assamese numerical system. Following are some of examples in sentences where words are borrowed from other languages.

In Tiwa:

(1) ram re sita sanēõbo cinema li-gom.
    Ram and Sita both cinema go- PST

---

Ram and Sita both went to watch the movie.

*Observation:* The word ‘cinema’ is borrowed from English

(2) **na batarikakat** nui-tom-na

You **newspaper** read PST - Interrogative particle

Did you see the papers?

*Observation:* The word ‘batarikakat’ is borrowed from Assamese.

J Heath\(^{40}\) defines “A borrowing is a form that has spread from one linguistic variety (the source) into another variety (the ‘target’ or ‘replies’). In this sense it is nearly synonymous with ‘loanword’, but a borrowing is often really a stem and may be a phrase. Borrowing is also the term for the act of incorporation itself, so there is a certain semantic ambiguity between process and result in the usage of the term.” A loan word implies a word taken from another language which is used without translation. Werner Betz, (1949, 1959), Einar Haugen (1950, 1956) and Uriel Weinreich (1953) have done substantial research on loan words in different languages. Sometimes, the calque words which are morpheme to morpheme translated words are also found in some languages. In Tiwa and Deori there is no instances of calque words, instead there found lot of evidences of loan words from English and Assamese words.

The Deori language has shown lots of occurrences of borrowing and loan words, mostly from Assamese language as well as other languages such as English, Hindi, and Bengali etc. For example, words such as: areke (and), jontu (animal), k'arone (because), har (bone), uxlabela (breathing), g'ha (grass), jxdi (if), and xagor (sea) etc. are classic examples of borrowings from Assamese in Deori language. Words like Xerox, pundit, pyjama, camera, building etc are examples of loan words in Deori language.

2.7.1. Code mixing and switching

Code mixing and code switching are possible in the de facto bilingual and multilingual society. Bokamba\(^{41}\) (1989) defines both the concepts this way: “Code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event... code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from a co-operative activity where the participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand.” Tiwa and Deori languages exist in the places where speakers of these two languages can’t avoid the contact of other languages such as Assamese, English, Hindi, Karbi, Bengali etc. Code mixing is a linguistic phenomenon where speakers of a language mix words from other language to complete their utterances or sentences. In context to Tiwa and Deori, speakers do mix lexical items from Assamese, English and sometimes from Hindi. Judy Woon\(^{42}\) defines “code mixing refers to any admixture of linguistic elements of two or more language systems in the same utterance at various levels: phonological, lexical, grammatical and orthographical.” The presence of Assamese codes in Deori language is prominent.

In Deori:

(3) \textit{atori na kirā.}  
\hspace{1cm} Go away you aux  
\hspace{1cm} You go away.  
\hspace{1cm} \textit{Observation: Code mixing from Assamese}

(4) \textit{ba jōdi sinto à gutei g'otōna- na isarehen.}

\(^{42}\) Judy Woon, Yee Ho, *Code mixing: Linguistic form and socio-cultural meaning.*
He if ask I whole story CM tell.
If he asks me I will certainly tell the whole story.
Observation: Code mixing from Assamese.

(5) ā skul- mai kʰia
I school CM NEG-go.
I don’t go to school.
Observation: Code mixing from English.

If we examine the above examples we will find that the words such as ‘atori, jodi, gutei, qʰotana, skul’ have been mixed in the sentences from Assamese and English languages in spite of having their own lexical items. The same phenomenon is also present in Tiwa language. For example:

In Tiwa:

(6) pe aklɔ pʰiju-kaitɔ citʰi-kɔ nugɔm
He earlier came cond letter-CL see-PST
If he had come earlier he would have seen the letter.
Observation: Code mixing from Assamese.

(7) sakɔre kaohala man- kɔ papa mankrã
Servant thrown away papers- CL father got
Father got all the papers thrown away by the servant.
Observation: Code mixing from Assamese and English.

(8) rænjar pʰantana mistiri rau- kɔ pʰandana ɔstɔm
Forest officer wood-cutter carpenter CL- CM cut aux-PST
The forest officer is making the wood-cutters cut the trees.
Observation: Code mixing from English and Assamese.
In the above Tiwa sentences words such as ‘cithi, sakor, papa, rænjar, mistiri’ are taken from Assamese and English languages. This shows that both Tiwa and Deori speakers have the tendency to mix code from various surrounding languages in their day to day conversation. There could be various reasons for code mixing. People do forget some words of their L1 because of less frequency or long detachment from L1 or may be the excessive contacts with the dominant language or nearby languages. Prestige associated with the language which is being mixed is another cause of code mixing. Sometimes, by mixing some codes from the dominant language they want to prove that their linguistic skill is better than their fellow compatriot. Moreover, to prove their competency in a language which has been their medium of learning, the speakers mix codes from that language.

Code switching is the instant change of a language or a variety from one to another language/variety. The phenomenon of code switching is mostly prevalent in the languages of educated people. Although code switching has been around unnoticed for quite sometime among the speakers of various languages, the foundation works on code switching can be traced in the writings of Gumperz (1972), Myers-Scotton (1993), Rampton (1995) Benson (2001) etc. After this, many a linguist has accomplished experimental works on code switching. Hymes (1974) defines code-switching as “a common term for alternative use of two or more languages, varieties of a language or even speech styles”. Crystal (1987) opines that code, or language, switching occurs when an individual who is a bilingual, alternates between two languages during his/her speech with another bilingual person.

Code switching can be studied from various perspectives. As MaClure (1981) has rightly pointed out that the researchers are not in consensus of the constitution of the code switching. Syntactic and morpho-syntactic, second language acquisition constraints, prestige issue, exclusion policy, language inefficiency, social solidarity towards the speakers of a particular language, to emphasize something etc. are main factors of switching codes.

---

One of the observations made during the time of my field survey was that some of the urban Tiwa and Deori people switch to Assamese language because of their lack of proficiency in their mother tongue. The new generation people also find it prestigious to switch to either Assamese or English language in their conversation. People also like to switch to Hindi language to show the same attitude. This could be attributed as the direct influence of national media and the popularity of Hindi movies. People, who feel that they have been being exploited economically or politically and dominated by the so called Assamese middle class of plain areas for a long time, develop a feeling of animosity for Assamese language, they instead prefer to Hindi language. But the number of people of this group is very less as they can’t do away with using Assamese language and don’t always get people who can speak Hindi fluently.

Situational switching is a common phenomenon occurred in the domains of market place, public place etc. both for Tiwa and Deori context. Especially in the market places when 2/3 Tiwa or Deori people get assembled, they converse in their respective languages. But the presence of an Assamese speaker, if the person happens to be their friend, they will immediately switch over to Assamese language.

The evidence of conversational switching can be traced among the educated speakers of these two languages. Especially, the college going students and employed people from both the languages, to ascertain style and pragmatics requirements, switch mostly over to Assamese. During the field trip in the urban areas in Nagaon and Morigaon districts, it has been observed that even among themselves the Tiwa speakers tend to switch to Assamese or sometimes Hindi language.

2.8.0. Bilingualism, Societal bilingualism, Multilingualism

My questionnaire, given in the appendix-2 represents that all the speakers of Tiwa and Deori are bilingual. Scholars are in the view that a person who has native like control over another language, the ability to produce meaningful utterances in more than one
language can be called a bilingual person. This could be regarded as an individual bilingual. Similarly we can also have societal bilingualism. Societal bilingualism is a phenomenon where two languages are used but not necessarily all the speakers ought to be the speakers of both the languages. Even if a huge chunk of people use the L2 variety, the community would be termed as societal bilingual society. In case of Tiwa and Deori speech community, the conspicuous feature is that every member can speak Assamese language. Hence the phenomenon of societal bilingualism is present. This could also be said that the stable bilingual situation has been prevailing in these two societies for a long time.

After examining the questionnaires, we found that the speakers (who were being interviewed) of Tiwa language can speak minimum of three languages to maximum nine languages. Every speaker in this speech community can speak and understand Assamese language apart from their mother tongue. The other languages they use are English, Hindi, Bengali, Sanskrit, Nepali, Karbi, Khasi, Jaintia and Pnar.

The Deori scenario is also similar to the Tiwa situation. The speakers of this language can speak at least two languages whereas some speakers can speak and understand maximum of five languages. During the fieldwork, every informant reveals that everyone can speak and use Assamese language apart from their mother tongue. Moreover, they also sometimes communicate through Hindi and English. These two languages are being used by the educated and employed people to perform official and academic activities. Hindi is also being used to interact with the people who are associated with business, especially with the Marwari businessmen and the truck drivers who transport various goods through their localities to the eastern point of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Other surrounding languages like Nepali, Mishing, Bodo and Bengali are also sometimes used and understood by the Deori people. So, ‘passive’ or ‘receptive’ bilingualism can also be traced in both the languages.

The following table will give us a good idea of the multilingual situation prevailed in Deori and Tiwa society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assamese</th>
<th>Hindi</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Bengali</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Nepali</th>
<th>Karbi</th>
<th>Khasi</th>
<th>Jaintia</th>
<th>Pnar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIWA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker D</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEORI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker D</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tiwa Speakers:**
- Speaker A: Badal Muni/38/M/businessman
- Speaker B: Maneswar Deori/66/M/Retired govt serviceman
- Speaker C: Robert Lumphui/45/M/Social-Political activist
- Speaker D: Singmon Mithi/101/M/Village headman

**Deori Speakers:**
- Speaker A: Prabin Kumar Deori/46/M/College Lecturer
- Speaker B: Ms Minki Deori/18/F/Student
- Speaker C: Minut Deori/32/M/Farmer
- Speaker D: Basanta Deori/30/M/Educated Youth

The above table would aptly substantiate the level of multilingualism prevalent among the speakers of Tiwa and Deori languages. The informants are representative speakers of these two languages. Languages such as Nepali, Karbi, Khasi, Jaintia, and Pnar are neighbour languages of Tiwa and Deori and the level of proficiency of these speakers are not equal in all languages except Assamese language.
Mackey (1967: 555)\textsuperscript{45} has pointed out that to address the bilingual issue in a proper way one has to deal with at least four questions: degree, function, alternation and interference. The degree denotes proficiency; function implies the usage and the different roles a bilingual person performs in their daily repertoire. Alternation says in what way a person alternates two languages in their regular usages. Interference suggests the nature in which way a bilingual speaker fuses the languages or keep them separate in the conversation. If we consider the Tiwa and Deori speakers and bring them under the scanner of these filters, the observations made in the field trip have to be concerned. The proficiency in Assamese language is satisfactorily high for both the speakers of these two languages. The proficiency condition is also bounded by the knowledge of the other languages. If we consider Assamese, English and Hindi languages to fulfill this condition, it is obvious that by virtue of being the instructions of learning or the mandatory curriculum of government's language planning, they have to study these three languages and become the speakers of these three languages. The function is dependent on the domains wherein they confront different situations and they have to perform different roles in a speech act. Students/speakers of Deori and Tiwa have to go to schools, offices, public places, market places and other domains, where they have to interact with speakers of other languages and perform as bilinguals and enrich their verbal repertoire and use them in different domains. The question of alternation is again based on the domains and the targeted audience. If the speaker is in the domain of home, the frequency of alternation is less. On the contrary, in the public places or among the educated speakers the frequency is always high. The interference condition can lead to language mixing and code switching. The speakers of educated families mix a lot of Assamese or English words in their day to day conversation. The college going students are also very much prone to mix English words and switch to Assamese language.

Societal bilingualism or multilingualism refers to that condition where there is coexistence of two or more languages used by individuals and groups in a society. Societal bilingualism doesn't necessarily imply that all members of the society are bilinguals. From the above discussion also, one can easily opine that because of being the societal

\textsuperscript{45} W. Mackey, \textit{Bilingualism as a World Problem}. 

48
bilingual societies both Tiwa and Deori societies also have many multilingual people. Half of the people of these two societies can speak more than two languages. A good number of people can speak their surrounding languages such as Karbi, Jaintia, Khasi, Bodo, Nepali, Bengali etc. Because of the multilingual situation, the interference of other languages in Tiwa and Deori actually causes semantic shift of many lexical items, mixing of lot of other words and lexical loss of many words. For example, in both language communities they have lost their number system and it has been totally replaced and substituted by Assamese and sometimes English system.

2.9.0. Kinship terminologies in Tiwa and Deori

Every society has its own kinship terminologies. People use different words for different human relationships. Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia, defines Kinship terminology as “The words used in a specific culture to describe a specific system of familial relationships. Kinship terminologies include the terms of address used in different languages or communities for different relatives and the terms of reference used to identify the relationship of these relatives to ego or to each other.”

Malinowski (1930) remarks “words grow out of life, and kinship words are nothing else but counters or labels for social relations.” Although there is a spat of controversy about the subject whether it should be a part of Linguistics or Anthropology, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown rightly described it ‘an intrinsic part of language’. Anthropologists study it from the cultural point of view and regard as a part of society. For them each and every terminology incurs cultural meaning and binds the people of a society. Leslie White (1939: 567) has put forward the simplest definition of Kinship terminology as “A kinship term is a mechanism whose function is the classification of relatives”. It is because of kinship terminologies one can classify, categorize and distinguish their relatives. Kroeber has listed eight principles of Kinship terminologies: “Most systems distinguish people in the same and different generation, they indicate differences between lineal and collateral

46 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinship_terminology
47 Cited in William Jervis Jones' German Kinship Terms 750-1500.
48 Ibid. P.2.
relations; they mark differences of age within the same generation (lacking in English); they indicate sex of the relatives; they denote the sex of the person through whom a relation exists (lacking in English); they discriminate consanguine from affinal; they denote whether the relative is dead or alive (lacking in English). In some, the word 'niece' denotes a relative a generation below the speaker, a female and a collateral." 49

In Deori society, the ‘jupa’ is regarded as primary and core social unit which means 'family' living in a common residence. The ‘jupa’ is usually headed by a male person who happens to be the father in case of a nuclear family or the eldest male person if it is a joint family. Many a time, the final decision is made by this headman in the family. Of course, other adult members are also heard in decision making. Every member has different relational terminology which is strictly maintained. Following are different kinship terminologies used by the Deori people not only in their 'home' domain, in other domains as well.

2.9.1. Deori English

1. yoyoe mother
2. baba / banj father
3. kokai/kai elder brother

Observation: Borrowed from Assamese

4. pijinya younger brother
5. gopi brother
6. bebe elder sister
7. pei father’s elder sister, father’s younger sister
8. momai father’s sister’s husband
9. gumi elder sister’s husband
10. dodai uncle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>dai</td>
<td>father’s younger brother, father’s elder brother’s son, wife’s father’s younger sister’s husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>maku</td>
<td>aunty (uncle’s wife)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>didi</td>
<td>grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>jiji</td>
<td>grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>momai</td>
<td>maternal uncle, father’s elder sister’s husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>pei</td>
<td>maternal uncle’s wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>sigirai</td>
<td>Father-in-law, wife’s father’s elder brother, and all men whom father-in-law calls his brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>sigirasi</td>
<td>mother-in-law, wife’s father’s elder brother’s wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>aya</td>
<td>daughter-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>sinu</td>
<td>brother/sister-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>salpoti</td>
<td>wife’s sister’s husband</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation: Borrowed from Assamese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>pisa</td>
<td>son, elder brother’s son, elder and younger brother’s daughter’s husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>pisasi</td>
<td>daughter, younger or elder brother’s daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>aji</td>
<td>son-in-law, elder or younger brother’s daughter’s husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>pisusi</td>
<td>grand daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>pisu</td>
<td>Grand son, daughter’s son, elder and younger brother’s son, grand daughter’s husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>buji</td>
<td>elder brother’s wife, father’s father’s father’s mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>kai</td>
<td>father’s father’s father’s father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>chiya</td>
<td>brother’s wife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
30. muka  Husband
31. mifi    wife
32. cʰinu  Wife’s younger brother and younger sister, husband’s younger brother and sister.
33. amara  Younger sister’s husband
34. iyamu  Son’s wife’s father and daughter’s husband’s father.
35. iyami  Son’s wife’s mother and daughter’s husband’s mother.
36. boinai Younger sister’s husband.
37. goi    Younger brother’s wife
38. cʰiupi Husband’s elder brother
39. maku   father’s younger brother’s wife
40. picʰiamcʰi Younger sister
41. judai  wife’s father’s elder sister’s husband
42. mai    wife’s father’s younger sister
43. ponyu  Father’s elder brother
44. manyu  Father’s elder brother’s wife
45. bagin  Elder or younger brother’s son (from women’s side, elder or younger sister’s daughter, elder or younger brother’s daughter.
46. ainyo  Son’s wife
47. diŋ / didi Grandfather, Father’s brother and whom he later calls elder or younger brother, wife’s father’s father and his brothers.
48. jing   wife’s father’s mother
49. pɨʃɨnɨo pisu Son’s son’s son
50. pĩjinyọ pisusi Son’s son’s daughter

Following are the kinship terminologies used by the people of Tiwa community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIWA</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ai / ma / ayan</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. papa / fa / paŋ</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. kʰai / kaka</td>
<td>elder brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. kojjal</td>
<td>brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. bai</td>
<td>elder sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. asi</td>
<td>father’s sister, younger brother’s wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. asa</td>
<td>father’s sister’s husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. punchi</td>
<td>elder sister’s husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. tatai</td>
<td>uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. asi</td>
<td>aunty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. aju /aja</td>
<td>grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. api /buri/ abi</td>
<td>grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. mamai</td>
<td>maternal uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. ani</td>
<td>maternal uncle’s wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. xu</td>
<td>father-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. niu</td>
<td>mother-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. gobʰia</td>
<td>son-in-law (who stays in father-in-law’s home permanently)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. pohari</td>
<td>daughter-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. sali</td>
<td>sister-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>salisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>saru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>saja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>sarau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>jawai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>ch'u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>ch'u jawai /ch'u sarau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>ch'u t'apla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>bauji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>koijal pohari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>dadai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>magara ayuj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>bouji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>mamai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>bunc'h'i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>bagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>pagrai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>soi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>jawai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>sali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>jat'ali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>ma-a-su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>magarasu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Tiwa society, it has been observed that they use reference kinship terminology than the terms of address. They tend to extend their terminologies to the outsiders as well who may not be part of their society. Many a time, they use Assamese equivalent terms also. Tiwa kinship system offers exclusive respect and recognition to the aged and elders. People from the older generations are always regarded and given their due respect by using distinct kinship terms. Like many other terminologies of other languages, Tiwa terminologies also show the sex differentiation.

But Deori kinship terminologies are more extensive and inclusive. There are many Deori terms which are used to denote more than one relationship. dai, sigira, aji, pisu etc. are some examples of Deori kinship terminologies which are used as ‘overextension’ terminologies. But Tiwa terms are more specific and usually they lack ‘overextension’ meaning. Apart from this Deori society has more number of kinship terminologies in comparison to Tiwa community. Unlike Deori, Tiwa language doesn’t shown specific kinship terminologies such as younger brother, wife’s sister’s husband, wife’s father’s younger sister’s husband, wife’s father’s elder sister’s husband etc.

But one noteworthy custom which is prevalent in Tiwa society is that in many instances after getting married the groom comes to stay with his wife’s family permanently. In that case, the boy would be called ‘gobhia’. But gradually this custom is getting diminished from the Tiwa society.

2.10.0. Color terminologies

Each and every language has its basic color terms. A basic color term has to be a single word, not the mixture of two words such as light blue, navy blue etc. Berlin and Kay (1969) were in the view that there exists a universal set for all colors in all the languages. From this basic set one can have various subsets. A speech community may have all kinds of colors, but may lack the terminologies which are evident in various African
languages. In On translation Reuben A. Brower (ed.)\(^5\) opined that: "The segmentation of experience by speech symbols is essentially arbitrary. The different sets of words for color in various languages are perhaps the best ready evidence for such essential arbitrariness. For example, in a high percentage of African languages, there are only three "color words," corresponding to our white, black and red, which nevertheless divide up the entire spectrum. In the Tarahumara language of Mexico, there are five basic color words, and here "blue" and "green" are subsumed under a single term (p. 13)."

The modernization and technological development also help in adding color terminology in a language. Berlin and Kay (1969) also suggested that "Number of color terms seems to correlate with technological development, degree of isolation, 'cultural complexity.' " Some of the results of Berlin and Kay's (1969) experimentation of the color terminologies on different languages from different parts of the world were that:

- All languages contain terms for white and black
- If a language contains 3 terms, then it contains a term for red.
- If a language contains 4 terms, then it contains either green or yellow (not both).
- If a language contains 5 terms, then it contains terms for both green and yellow.
- If a language contains 6 terms, then it contains a term for blue.
- If a language contains 7 terms, then it contains a term for brown.
- If a language contains 8 or more terms, then it contains terms chosen from (Purple, pink, orange, grey)

Both Deori and Tiwa languages also have some color terminologies. In Deori, the speakers have revealed that they have only four color terms. They are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deori</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>phurço</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sangira</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we go by Berlin and Kay’s assumption, in Deori language, four color terminologies such as pʰʰurɔ for white, saŋɡira for red, kəlia for black and halɔdia for yellow have been found. But Deori has already lost its two basic terminologies for black and yellow and they have been replaced by respective Assamese terminologies. Even if they use the colors such as pink, violet, chocolate, reddish, deep blue etc. in their daily life, they lack these terminologies. To refer those terminologies they simply use the equivalent Assamese or English terminologies.

Tiwa language can be said very rich in terms of color terminologies. Even if we notice the dresses they wear, it would be clear that they have varieties of traditional colourful dresses. From the towel to the home made shirt, all dresses are designed by adding lot of colors. From this very fact we explicate that since they use different colors in weaving clothes, their language must be enriched with various color terms. They have the following color terms. Out of these eight colors are found to be the basic colors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tiwa</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. pʰɔlo</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. kʰauratʰasi</td>
<td>blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. koraŋeʰor/ kʰɔdaemonʰor</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. kɔija</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. kʰɔijɔm</td>
<td>black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. bronda</td>
<td>brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. pʰuldi</td>
<td>pink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. haldia</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. kɔijatʰia</td>
<td>deep red.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In both the languages the equivalent color terms for yellow are borrowed from Assamese language. In Assamese the word for ‘yellow’ is referred as ‘halødia’.

2.11.0. Urban and Rural forms of language

The classification of urban and rural forms of language was basically made by the dialect geographers. The assumption was that the rural people of a particular linguistic community, by virtue of being insular and isolated from the hectic life style of urban areas and the influx of the people from other communities, tend to keep and maintain the archaic form of a language. That is why, many a time, a line of demarcation can be drawn between the speakers of urban and rural people of the same language in morphophonemic level as well as in other linguistic levels. The phenomenon of language change is also less likely or less affected in the rural areas. The major differences between urban and rural varieties can be marked in lexical, phonological and syntactic levels. In lexical level the significant difference could be traced in those lexical items which denote the cultural and occupational terms. At phonological level also the difference is remarkable. But the difference in syntactic level is less substantial.

Tiwa language can also be classified into two varieties. The urban, in fact, it would better be preferred as semi-urban form which is known as ‘datiòlia’ and the variation found among the hill Tiwas is known as ‘hajowali’. By the term ‘datiòlia’ they also mean the people who live by the side of the hill or on the foothill areas. There are distinct differences in the phonological level of these two forms. To explicate this statement some examples are given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hajowali</th>
<th>Datiòlia</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. sing</td>
<td>jìng</td>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ọlọm</td>
<td>jọlọm</td>
<td>birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ọkʰa</td>
<td>jọkʰa</td>
<td>middle/mediocre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. su</td>
<td>ju</td>
<td>rice beer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In all the examples it has been clearly evident that the voiceless sounds are becoming voiced sounds in the ‘datiola’ form of Tiwa language.

The same distinction of rural and urban forms of language is virtually not present in Deori. There can be of two reasons for the lack of this division. First, the Deori tribe in upper Assam is a plain tribe. They are scattered in nearly 3/4 districts of upper Assam and are in constant touch with each other. And secondly, even in the urban areas, substantial concentration is not found. They are scattered in different places of the town and city areas. Although, there are many people who live in the semi-urban places of upper Assam, they are pocketed in various areas in a small size groups and their rural ancestors are not in the remotest areas.
2.12.0. Power and Identity through Language

The concepts of power and identity are both relative. When a group of people gets power, they tend to show their identity as well. On the other hand an identity-less community usually runs after power to establish their identity. The social identity is governed by the personal attitude and behavior of a person. To feel the common or social identity a person has to be loyal towards her/his social community, language and all social norms exercised by her/his society. Turner and Brown (1978) first coined the term “social identity theory”. Turner has opined that: “Social identity is seen as a person’s definition of self in terms of some social group membership with the associated value connotations and emotional significance” (Turner 1999:8).

The social identity theory is always interwoven with the Ethnic identity of ethnic tribes. Almost every ethnic group uses their cultural symbols and language to become a self conscious community. The status of social recognition either with the superior groups or at least with the equal to other groups is demanded along with their subjective consciousness. Distinctive norms and customs, religion and most prominently through language the cultural markers come to the forefront to differentiate ethnic identity from the other groups. Ethnicity is to ethnic category, while class consciousness is to class.\(^1\) Paul Brass further defines an ethnic group as-'any group of people dissimilar from other peoples in terms of objective cultural criteria and containing within its membership, either in principle or in practice, the element of complete division of labour and for reproduction, forms an ethnic category. The objective cultural markers may be a language or dialect, distinctive dress or diet or customs, religion or race.'\(^2\)

The sense of ethnicity is awakened mostly by the language issue. Both Tiwa and Deori communities had also undergone the same phenomenon during their movement for political and economic autonomy. This period has witnessed the revived consciousness of Tiwa and Deori people to preserve their language only to show their political identity.

---


\(^2\) Ibid. P.19
The special mention can be made about the various language programs (see: language shift and maintenance part) run by the Tiwa autonomous council and some other initiatives taken by Deori Autonomous council.

Even if we consider the Assamese nationalism, it achieved its culmination with the demand of continuation of Assamese language in the state of Assam. Once it came into being, the speakers of this language have been playing the role of dominant linguistic community. Assamese language is also used as the language of administration and politics. Other tribal groups were made to remain under the umbrella of Assamese Nationalism in the regional level.