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## **Linguistic traces of colonial structure<sup>1</sup>**

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### **1. Introduction**

This article aims at exploring to what extent the distribution of allegiance to a former colonial language in a post-colonial setting mirrors the social structures set up by the former rulers. The present case study refers to the usage of Indo-Portuguese (henceforth IP) on the island of Diu, India, which was a Portuguese possession from 1535 until as late as 1961. It will become apparent that IP is not the same as standard (European) Portuguese (henceforth SP), the code employed and promoted by the former political administration. We are in fact dealing with a linguistic setting where a creole language (IP), its main lexifier (SP) and the area's autochthonous language (Gujarati) have for a long time co-existed. While in truth Diu IP (henceforth referred to as DIP) retains for many Diuese the same attitudinal attraction or repulsion as that of SP, awareness of its divergence on the part of those skilled in IP adds a new layer of language interaction where the notion of prestige operates.

Section 2 is a survey of former attempts at categorising and formalising the interplay between language use and the definition of social groups/ethnicities. Given the topic at hand, I pay particular attention to discussions of multilingual societies and the role of language in defining social categories.

A brief description of IP and its varieties is presented in section 3, as well as the history of Diu (with a particular focus on the period of Portuguese occupation) and

its present-day social make-up. This section also addresses the relationship between DIP and SP, as well as that between DIP and other varieties of IP.

Section 4 describes the distribution of IP across the Diuese population and analyses the factors that are likely to play a role in explaining allegiance to the linguistic manifestation of a colonial culture. The notion of prestige is invoked, not so much as a driving force for linguistic change but as a factor in understanding certain aspects of the community's linguistic behaviour and make-up.

IP's lack of institutional support and the significance of this factor with respect to language maintenance (v. Giles, Bourhis & Taylor 1977: 309) are taken up in section 5, together with a discussion of the social implications of colonial language demotion. Finally, the conclusion will bring together the different points made concerning the interplay between present-day DIP distribution and the past colonial structure of Diuese society.

## 2. The meaning of language allegiance

The realisation that linguistic behaviour is instrumental in defining, blurring or manipulating social structures, in a variety of domains, is not a recent one. Labov (1972: 111) points out the usefulness of language production as a "sensitive index of many [...] social processes" and emphasises its malleability as an instrument of social structuring:

"Variation in linguistic behavior does not in itself exert a powerful influence on social development, nor does it affect drastically the life chances of the individual; on the contrary, the shape of linguistic behavior changes rapidly as the speaker's social position changes." (*idem*)

Although lacking considerations on malleability constraints, this claim makes it clear that, according to Labov, specific linguistic standards are required to define and uphold the different divisions of society.

It has been observed, for example, that a will to enforce a particular group's separate identity may result in (semi-)conscious protection of its peculiar language against influence from its neighbours (Bourhis & Giles 1977) or exaggeration of its peculiarities. Language use, misuse (e.g. satirical use of a group's linguistic behaviour) or abandonment are therefore powerful political acts, and tend to accompany social/ethnic awareness and change.

In connection with studies linking language and social constructs or ethnicity, the terms "ingroup" and "outgroup" are normally used to refer to, respectively, the speech community under study and the neighbouring speech communities with which it interacts. Both the definition of *speech community* and *ethnicity* are somewhat problematic; in the latter case, previous racial connotations are

pervasive, although modern studies of ethnicity have broadened the term to encompass several cultural manifestations thought to belong to a particular populational group by means of paternity or patrimonial inheritance (e.g. Fishman 1977). The issue of paternity replaces but also supersedes the former focus on race as a defining element of ethnicity.

For the purpose of this article, the notion of *speech community* is defined as a group of people able to interact in a given linguistic code or, considering the peculiar relationship between a Creole and its lexifier language(s), a *cluster* of related codes whose similarity is easily identifiable. This is therefore a non-exclusive concept where speakers with native competence, non-native competence, monolingual or multilingual knowledge and a variety of commands of the language can participate. This broad group is likely to be very heterogeneous and can be subdivided and subcategorised in a number of ways (including subgroups claiming a more paternal versus a more patrimonial line of cultural transmission); the aim of this study, however, requires an inclusive notion of *speech community*, as we are interested in understanding the distribution of *knowledge* of a former colonial language and, more importantly, the factors governing the *will* to be part of a linguistic group.

LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985) draw attention on the variety of domains in which language and social structure can interact, when they point out that

“[n]ational, ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, age, sex, social class, educational economic, geographical, occupational and other groupings are all liable to have linguistic connotations. The degree of co-occurrence of boundaries will vary from one society to another, the perception of the degree of co-occurrence will vary from one individual to another.” (p. 248)

An additional proposal of these authors, as evident from the previous quote, is that not only do different societies express different combinations of these domains through language use, but the same holds true for interpretation of these social manifestations on an individual level. In the case of Diu, one expects use of SP or IP to reflect a variety of social categorisations: although a description of the particular significance of these languages must ultimately be carried out on a speaker by speaker basis, this article is concerned with language use on a *macro-level*: the objective is to produce an inventory of social domains for which allegiance to (Indo-)Portuguese is relevant and attempt to explain it with reference to past colonial structures and policies.

Bourdieu's (1990) analysis of linguistic practice in society stresses out that the definition of a language's or language variety's relative "value" (in terms of putative correctness or prestige) is a political or social exercise charged with notions of power asymmetry. These considerations are particularly significant

when dealing with post-colonial societies, as the moment of decolonisation (by whatever means) normally involves, if not a reversal, at least a redefinition of power. Where this brings about lack of institutional support or conscious downplay of the colonial language, its long-term maintenance (as that of any unrecognised minority language) can only come about through strong attachment of the speakers to the language and what it represents.

All factors contribute to make up a particular social setting able to determine the status, survival or dismissal of a language - in Mufwene (2001)'s terms, the language's *ecology*. With reference to the New World, this author points out that, in different regions, the same colonial language has met with different destinies (e.g. French in Québec *versus* French in Maine), which is to be explained away with reference to different social structures (Mufwene 2001: 154-155).

Speakers and policy-makers are allowed some degree of manipulation over a language's ecology; whether decolonisation is peaceful or not makes no definitive predictions as to the degree of support the new institutions give to the former colonial language. The case of Portuguese decolonisation in Africa is an example of a traumatic armed struggle for independence; however, this did not prevent the newly independent nations of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique or S. Tomé e Príncipe from recognising Portuguese as official language, nor indeed did it prevent Portuguese from thriving in these independent societies (cf. e.g. Inverno 2005:95 for a discussion concerning Angola). The Indian case was and still is different with regard to Portuguese. This issue will be taken up in section 5, but it is convenient for the moment to state that, in Diu, the institutional relevance of IP and SP has been minimal since decolonisation, with the crucial exception of the Catholic Church.

### **3. Indo-Portuguese in Diu**

Indo-Portuguese is a cover term for a variety of Portuguese-based Creoles once widely spoken along the coasts of India and Sri Lanka. Portuguese presence on the subcontinent (between the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and 1961) was not characterised by the possession of large territories (with the notable exceptions of Goa and the Northern Province, i.e., the stretch of land centred around Bassein, Bombay, Chaul and Daman) but rather the domination of strategic strongholds scattered along the coast. IP, spoken in these possessions, therefore encompassed several geographically discrete varieties but with a history of population movement and a centralised government that disallow their characterisation as "isolated". Creole languages came to develop in these territories which remain locally distinct despite sharing a number of linguistic features. Several of these varieties have now become extinct, but IP survives in Diu, Daman, Korlai, Sri Lanka, Cannanore and possibly

in Cochin and other unsurveyed areas. The only linguistic work done on the Diuese variety prior to the present research project was carried out by Hugo Schuchardt in 1883, deserving a comment from a local resident produced about two decades later (Quadros 1899; 1907).

Diu, a prosperous trading post in the Sultanate of Gujarat, was annexed by Portugal in 1535. Despite initial challenges to this state of affairs on the part of the Sultanate of Gujarat and its Turkish and Egyptian allies, the Portuguese were able to retain their domain over the island for more than four centuries. On December 18<sup>th</sup> 1961, Indian armed forces occupied Diu (together with the remaining Portuguese enclaves of Goa and Daman) and effectively incorporated the territory into India.

The vast majority of the Diuese population throughout the colonial period consisted of Gujarati-speaking Hindus, with a significant Muslim community. Parsis were present on the island until 1950, and there is evidence of an early Jewish community (v. Shokohy 2003). Christianity was introduced and promoted by the Portuguese rulers; the emergence of local Christian communities in the Portuguese-controlled territories of India is very much a product of colonialism, which involved not just the conversion of locals but also intermarriage between Asians and Europeans. Clements (1996: 11) suggests a scenario for the formation of IP consisting of (1) a process of pidginisation as a result of contact between the Portuguese and Indians (mediated by an early Eurasian population) followed by (2) creolisation by the offspring of the new Indian Christians.

It seems clear, then, that IP had from its onset a particular association with the Christian sections of the population: the Portuguese emigrants (known in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as *reinóis* or, in case they settled in India, as *casados*), the new converts and the community of mixed European and Asian descent (*mestiços* and *castiços*). The colonial society, although segregationist to varying degrees, was not entirely prohibitive of social ascension of Hindus or Muslims (Pissurlencar 1952). In fact, the colonial rule of Diu seems to have been particularly inclusive, at least when compared to other areas of the Portuguese Empire in Asia (Boxer 1963: 81). It is still uncertain how early or through which social mechanisms knowledge of (Indo-)Portuguese extended to non-Christian tracts of the population. Whether or not use of the colonial language correlated with integration into the colonial administrative or commercial structures is for the moment a matter of conjecture, but this is a highly likely path for the dissemination of a colonial language (viz. SP) or a language strongly associated with it (viz. IP).

For the purpose of this paper, the period immediately preceding decolonisation and up to the present is crucial. It is clear from the following quote from Quadros (1899: 97) that, in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Portuguese was not exclusive to the Christians:

“O idioma de que usam os não christãos são o guzerathe e o mussulmano, havendo alguns que fallam, lêem e escrevem o portuguez.”

[“The language used by the non-Christians are Gujarati and Muslim, some of them being able to speak, read and write Portuguese.” - Trad. H.C.]

The present-day distribution of IP in Diu still echoes this observation. The social structure of Diu is rather complex, with a interweaving of groupings according to language, religion, social status, education, geographical provenance and so on. Despite this complexity, however, religion stands out as a central criterion of social categorisation. Singh et al (1994), in their description of Diuese and Damanese society for the *Anthropological Survey of India*, do so based on both religion and caste. Caste is allegedly of a weaker importance than in neighbouring Gujarat, as a result of previous Portuguese legislation, although its retention in the *Anthropological Survey of India* indicates some ongoing significance. In everyday life on the island, the most relevant categories governing dress codes, cultural manifestations or even language seem to be religious. Despite the presence of a small Jain community in Diu, the most visible religious groups are the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians, with the former representing the vast majority. According to the census of 1991/2001, as well as reports from the parish priests, Diu counts about 37,000 Hindus, 3,400 Muslims and 250 Christians, out of a population of nearly 40,000. The Christians have since 1961 converged exclusively into Diu Town, whereas before they had pockets in other villages of the territory (notably Fudam and Vanakbara). The last members of an old Parsi community have left Diu in 1950 and the Jews who may have been present on the territory at some point (as suggested by toponyms in an early map, v. Shokohy 2003) earlier than that.

Decolonisation did not entirely break off the cultural ties between Diu and Portugal or between DIP and SP. Anyone whose ascendancy goes back to Portuguese-controlled Diu is entitled to a Portuguese passport, although the process is notoriously costly and difficult. There is a considerable community of Diuese immigrants in Portugal (mostly in the Greater Lisbon area), who regularly return to Diu for ceremonies or holiday. Apart from this route of migration, others made possible by the island's colonial past are still active, namely towards Goa, Daman (across the Gulf of Cambay, nowadays governed jointly with Diu, and where a related variety of IP is still spoken). and Mozambique. The latter is in fact a trend older than emigration to Portugal, whereas Goa and Daman's proximity to Diu closely reflects their shared history of both colonisation and decolonisation. Goa, Daman and Diu form one single archdiocese, whose officers (most of whom with knowledge of SP) are nominated by the Goan authorities.

There is no active education in Portuguese on the island but migration, church tradition and satellite television function as potential channels for SP. The result is the maintenance of SP on the island alongside IP.

#### **4. Linguistic traces of colonial structure**

##### **4.1. Connotations of DIP / SP usage**

The population of native speakers at present has been calculated at around 170, all members of the Christian community (v. Cardoso 2006)<sup>2</sup>. The exact figures concerning knowledge and/or proficiency across the Hindu and Muslims sections of the population is unclear, but many have been encountered who traced back their knowledge of Portuguese to different causes. This is to say, there is a number of social characteristics which can, to different degrees within different communities, be used to account for or even predict knowledge of the colonial language. Such indicators can only be understood with reference to several levels of social meaning attached to DIP/SP knowledge which, in turn, must be traced back to what is known of the socio-dynamics of Diuese society under colonial rule:

a) Religion: this is by all accounts the most obvious connotation of knowledge of the language (v. the common local claim that Portuguese is “the language of the Christians”); Christianity was introduced in Diu by the Portuguese rulers and has thereafter been intensely equated with the culture of the colonialists. To the extent that the Christian community has since 1961 inherited the role of upholders of this culture, so have they also inherited the association with native use of the colonial language. This is in fact true as, to the best of my knowledge, the Christians are the only native Diuese who can claim IP or SP as their first language, and certainly the only ones who have passed this knowledge on to the younger generations.

Christian allegiance to the language comes as no surprise; this is also the community claiming direct descent from the European settlers, i.e., the Eurasian of mixed-blood<sup>3</sup>. At present, the equation that whoever is a *native* speaker of IP or SP in Diu is a Christian seems largely (if not entirely) supported. Language is therefore instrumental in setting the boundaries of the Christian community and enforcing the notion of its separate identity with regard to the rest of the population. It must be mentioned that, alongside religion and language, other cultural manifestations ultimately traceable to Portuguese presence are characteristic of the Diuese Christians, such as clothing, certain food items, songs and dance, etc. A clarification must be made at this point to the effect that a number of Christians have entered Diu since 1961 from areas of India with a

weaker or no connection with Portuguese colonial rule; these number some 50 at present, according to local ecclesiastic statistics.

b) Social status: the territory's colonial history has enforced an association between Portuguese and administrative positions, and more generally between Portuguese and belonging to/interaction with a ruling elite. Administration was not exclusively carried out by Christians, at least in the period immediately preceding decolonisation, nor is it at present. However, Singh *et al.* (1994:51) mention the partial social demotion of the Christian community after 1961 with reference to their access to administration:

“They [the Christians] enjoyed high social position during the Portuguese regime being placed high in administration. Presently, they perceive their position as inferior to the Brahman, Vania, Koli Patel, Kamli, Bhandari, Sagar and Bari, and superior to the Machhi, Mangela, Mitna, Dhodia, Dubla, Momin and Mahyavanshi.”

It is perhaps not surprising that the centres of the territory's administration (Collector's office and dependencies, court) are nowadays places where it is easy to find fluency in Portuguese, among Christians as well as non-Christians. It is also conspicuous that a knowledge of SP seems to be preferred by those higher up in the administrative ranking (cf. considerations on Education below).

This correlation of SP with social rank applies to the native-speaker community as well, where IP is to be found. Although fluency in SP *per se* does not determine someone's status, it is true that the most influential among the Christian community are those with better knowledge of the colonial norm. Overall, SP remains the norm of prestige, and an outsider is likely to be directed to those with a stronger command of it.

c) Ideology: nostalgia for the colonial era is not devoid of significance when addressing the distribution of knowledge of Portuguese. The Christians feel culturally attached to Portugal, but significant nostalgia for the colonial era is also to be found among members of the Hindu and Muslim communities. This attitude towards the past must by no means be generalised; instead, it must be posited that those able to manifest themselves in the colonial language are generally those who feel particularly close to the colonial era, reflecting a particularly privileged relationship with the Portuguese social structure (among those who experienced it), either by means of employment, education or simple proximity to the foreign elite or the local Christian community. Considering the aforementioned claim that the Christians were generally privileged during colonial rule, together with the assertion of their social decay after integration into India, it comes as no surprise that one finds such nostalgic attitudes among them at present. The younger DIP

speakers, as expected, feel much more distant from the past than the elders. This issue must not be downplayed when considering the language's vitality.

d) Age: reflecting the chronology of the island's decolonisation, it can safely be asserted that knowledge of DIP and SP is much more widespread among the older generation, followed by the middle generation and very little among the younger generation. Integration with India in 1961, whether voluntarily or not, sparked a process of cultural decolonisation of Diu, with linguistic implications. Portuguese courses continued on offer in the English-medium Catholic school until 1982 (p.c. Fr. Ronald d'Souza, the principal in 2005), apparently with little impact. Gujarati, already widely used and accepted under Portuguese rule, gained in recognition after 1961, and English ostensibly replaced Portuguese as the single non-endemic language being promoted in the territory (see section 5 for further discussion). All in all, the only youngsters with proficiency in IP are the Christians, as this is their community's first language. Among the Muslim and Hindu children and teenagers, no knowledge of either DIP or SP is to be found, except for the odd formula or whether they have recently experienced a period of emigration to a Portuguese-speaking region.

e) Economic affluence: the considerations made above concerning the correlation between knowledge of Portuguese and social status are intimately connected to the issue of economic affluence. Ever since Diu was controlled by the Portuguese, economic affluence depended on the relationship with the colonial structure. In the 17th century, trade in the territory was largely done by locals. However, in 1686, a group of Banians (Hindu traders) complained to the Viceroy D. Francisco de Távora that the tyranny of the local Portuguese rulers was ruining their business. Eventually, the viceroy passed a law partially transferring control of trade from the colonial representatives to the local population<sup>4</sup>. This episode suggests that the colonial power had the ability to control its territories' economy and, as such, had a grip on the distribution of wealth. It is therefore conceivable that, in order to be financially affluent, good relations ought to be maintained with the ruling elite.

Ever since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, emigration has been common practice in Diu. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a community of Diuese traders was already settled in Mozambique, but at present the most immediate link is with Portugal. Some of these emigrants return to the island, albeit occasionally, and continue to invest in it. An important linguistic aspect of this profitable migratory route is that these families usually become proficient in SP (in some cases the children are raised in SP).

The correlation between economic affluence and a higher degree of education is self-evident. In the case of 20<sup>th</sup> century Diu, education higher than basic had (and still has) to be attained outside the territory, and before 1961 that usually meant

Goa or Portugal. This sort of endeavour would necessarily not be accessible to all, therefore enforcing the association between SP and economic affluence.

Crucially, all the factors pointed out as enforcers of the link between wealth and the colonial language clearly privilege SP instead of IP. This fact combines with (or in fact feeds into) the notions of prestige attached to SP to dictate very conspicuous linguistic dynamics operating among those with knowledge of the colonial language (see section 4.2.).

f) Education: as mentioned earlier, there is a perceived interaction between knowledge of SP/DIP and education, not so much concerning the level of education but rather the “medium” of education. According to documents of the colonial administration preserved at the Historical Archives in Goa, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were several Gujarati-medium schools in the territory and one Portuguese school. This school, located in Diu Town, was not meant exclusively for the Christian population<sup>5</sup>. It is unclear what the policy of admission to this school was, and therefore it is not possible to explore the interactions between Portuguese-medium education and other variables, such as economic affluence or social status<sup>6</sup>.

Level of education, as mentioned in e), is relevant in providing a break-up between proficiency in SP or DIP, bearing in mind that SP was at some point perceived as an indicator of higher education attained elsewhere in the Portuguese empire.

## 4.2. Prestige asymmetry

Historically, the prestige awarded in the territory to DIP and that of SP have been fundamentally different, with SP clearly taking the upper hand during Portuguese rule, as it was a) the language of education, and in particular of higher education in Goa or Portugal, b) the language of the emigrants, c) the language spoken by the Church authorities and, crucially, d) the language of the ruling elite and those with close work or personal contact therewith. The cultured people of Diu seem to have had some contempt for DIP, as evidenced in this excerpt from Jerónimo Quadros (1998: 98), a local learned man and otherwise relatively supportive of Schuchardt’s attempt at documenting the language:

“Os usos e costumes dos christãos de Diu são os mesmos ou quasi mesmos, que os dos christãos de Goa e Damão. Fallam o portuguez, mais ou menos correctamente, não sendo todavia raros certos idiotismos, solecismos e barbarismos intoleraveis”

[“The habits and traditions of the christians of Diu are the same or nearly the same as those of the christians in Goa or Daman. They speak Portuguese, more or less

correctly, though certain intolerable idiocies, solecisms and barbarisms are common” - Trad. H.C.]

The prestige that SP enjoyed in light of the circumstances of colonialism has not been dispelled since 1961. The present vitality of this concept allows the notion of SP as an indicator of education and wealth to go on structuring the very community of native speakers. In other words, among the Christians, proficiency in SP is still an index (if not a pre-requisite) of high social status.

In linguistic terms, this state of affairs motivates a high degree of variation and establishes an asymmetric dialogue between SP and DIP that potentially facilitates borrowing of SP features/material into the vernacular. Variation is made possible by the fact that SP congregates the characteristics of *linguistic norm*, which in turn means there is no local norm governing the speech of those who, by whatever reason, can not or will not use SP. However, part of the variation observed among the native speakers in particular is a product of the coexistence of the vernacular and the standardised code. Whether SP usage is circumstantial (e.g. when faced with an interlocutor perceived as a speaker of SP and/or with the relevant social profile) or more structured (as in the case of those whose social status within the community is partially demonstrated by their linguistic skills), speakers juggle proficiency of DIP and SP with variable degrees of success.

Apart from variation and phenomena of (hyper)correction, understanding the issue of SP prestige and its position as the desirable code in a number of socially-defined situations is useful to explain certain patters of linguistic behaviour among the speech community. Feelings of inferiority on the part of DIP speakers may cause them to speak extremely cautiously or ashamedly towards an interlocutor associated with SP, or not at all. Some may feel more comfortable in another language (e.g. English), so as to attenuate the social asymmetries implied by the DIP-SP contrast (with recourse to code-switching, v. Cardoso 2006). Notice, incidentally, that the notion of a continuum ultimately leading to the European norm is implied in the common claim, pronounced with pride by the Diuese, that DIP is closer to SP than the variety of IP spoken in Daman.

## **5. Official recognition of colonial languages**

The decolonisation of India in the 20<sup>th</sup> century happened by stages, with the British domains attaining independence before the French and Portuguese-controlled territories. The discrepancy in size and population between the different colonial shares of the subcontinent was also notorious, with British India extending over a much larger area than the French or Portuguese enclaves. Grasping the differences in scale is important to understand the different official destinies of the colonial languages in India<sup>7</sup>. In fact, with no objective reason except for the

quantitative issue and the fact that independent India had its roots in the areas previously under the British sphere of influence, English and Portuguese have been treated in an almost diametrically opposite way by the Indian authorities.

The 1949 Constitution of India elected Hindi as the official language of the Union, while granting English a transitional period of official use:

“1. The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script. The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union shall be the international form of Indian numerals.

2. Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement: Provided that the President may, during the said period, by order authorise the use of the Hindi language in addition to the English language (...)” (The Constitution of India, 1949, Part XVII, 343, articles 1 and 2)

The same document also provided that, after the transitional period of 15 years, Parliament could determine to sanction the maintenance of English as an official language for all matters of the State. Hindi having proven a controversial choice as the official language, particularly resisted in the South of the country (Hohenthal 1998: 21) and rejected by some regions as a state language, the 1963 Official Languages Act proclaimed the continuation of English as an official language for communication with states that had not adopted Hindi and all matters related to the State, for an additional period of 10 years, after which a committee should evaluate the progress of Hindi as the official language of India.

At present, English is all-pervasive in most aspects of Indian society, and seen as a valuable skill for the country’s economic success. In the 1991 census, a total of 178.598 Indians indicated English as their L1, but active knowledge of this language extends over a much larger fraction of the population.

English education and use has been actively promoted in the former Portuguese territories, to the effect of demoting the Portuguese language. In Diu, several English-medium schools exist, alongside Gujarati-medium institutions, and have proven immensely popular. Among the younger generations in Diu, English rather than Hindi has gathered great allegiance. It seems that English is naturally gaining ground over the other colonial languages extant in India, and even over some local languages. There is, however, a serious case of official unrecognition towards the use of IP that accelerates the process of decay. The Constitution of India states that

“Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.” (The Constitution of India, 1949, Part III, 29, article 1)

In order to guarantee linguistic and cultural rights to minorities, certain provisions are made in the Constitution granting any community the freedom to run their own educational institutions, sanctioning the possibility of extending the panel of a State's official languages and nominating a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities. In the case of Portuguese, however (and in stark contrast with English), the status of the language was never seriously addressed on a national level since decolonisation. In the census of 1991, as indeed in any Census carried out in India since its independence, "Portuguese" was never a given option, let alone IP. As such, there seems to be no awareness of the vitality of IP across the country or the dangers it may face.

The fact that the definition of India's language inventory is still incomplete has in the past led to some apparent discrepancies in the statistics. Romaine (1995: 27) discusses the issue as follows:

"In the 1981 census in India 107 mother tongues were reported. Only 20 years later, however, 1,652 mother tongues were reported. The discrepancies here are due to a number of factors. One is that a given mother tongue may be called by as many as 47 different names depending on the ethnic, religious and other affiliation of the person who claims it. Out of all these varieties, however, only 15 mother tongues are recognized as 'major languages' by the Indian government."

The complexity of the linguistic picture in India is both a challenge and an opportunity, in the sense that there should be room among the ever-finer linguistic inventory for the recognition of IP. The problem of IP's lack of recognition on the part of the Indian authorities is fundamentally the same as that of any minority language in the same circumstances; however, in the case of a language with strong colonial echoes, such as Portuguese or French, it is felt that there may be an additional drive behind its demotion, namely the will to counter the remains of a colonial past that may have been brutal and traumatic.

Official recognition of an endangered language is not a minor player in its maintenance. Giles, Bourhis & Taylor (1977: 309) include this in the inventory of factors contributing to language vitality, alongside demographic and other sociolinguistic considerations:

"Institutional Support variables refer to the extent to which a language group receives formal and informal representation in the various institutions of a nation, region or community. The vitality of a linguistic minority seems to be related to the degree its language is used in various institutions of the government, church, business and so forth."

With no official role within the Diocese administration, Portuguese is upheld in the territory by one institution only, viz. the Catholic Church. Most services and special celebrations were traditionally conducted in Portuguese (SP for the most

part); recently, however, the parish has seen a period of services exclusively in English. Portuguese liturgy has been resumed on a rather small scale, alongside more regular services in English – admittedly, a language other than Portuguese is required due to the number of Christians entering the territory at present.

Resistance to the reminders of previous colonial rule is politically and emotionally understandable. On purely linguistic terms, though, any language spoken natively by a community (with all the social implications of the fact) is extremely valuable and deserves to be not only safeguarded but promoted as a basic right. Given that language is often instrumental in defining the structures of a community in a variety of domains (cf. section 2), failing to uphold the legitimacy of its use can be seen as an act of socio-cultural violence.

The case of Diu alone reveals that IP is indeed a native language of India, fulfilling essential social needs not only among its native speakers but also among the Hindu and Muslim communities, and also that it faces serious threats to its maintenance. Notice however that IP transcends Diu, as it fulfils similar roles in other areas of the country, such as Korlai, Daman or Kerala. One should stress out the uniqueness of the Indo-Portuguese language (as indeed of the Indo-Portuguese culture) as the product of linguistic and cultural contact; regardless of any colonial undertones they may be associated to, these are cultural goods absolutely worth preserving.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study has attempted to reconstruct the colonial structures relevant to understand the distribution of IP in Diu. It is argued that, despite the changes introduced by decolonisation, DIP and SP use still reveals colonial-induced notions, such as its religious and ideological connotations, and its role as an indicator of social, economic or educational status. The distribution of the languages across age groups, on the other hand, reflects the recent history of the territory with reference to the moment of decolonisation, while interacting with some of the domains mentioned above.

A typical post-colonial resistance to the symbols of a past of foreign domination clashes, in the case of minority languages with colonial connotations, with a recognition of their social functions among the communities where these languages are spoken. The opposite fate of Portuguese and English in independent India is given as indication that decolonisation does not necessarily imply the demotion of colonial languages; it simultaneously stresses out the extent to which language promotion and maintenance is a matter of official decision. An appeal is made for the recognition of the status of IP in India, not only on account of its

anthropological value as a cluster of contact varieties, but primarily in view of its social roles within several communities in the country.

## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> A caveat is in order to indicate that the segmentation of the population according to knowledge of DIP, SP or both is elusive, as the exact definition of the terms in some cases proves to be problematic on account.

<sup>3</sup> The fact that they retain Portuguese family names is normally seen as indication of mixed descent; however, there is the danger of some circularity here, as it is known that new converts, whether or not of mixed descent, would usually adopt a Portuguese surname.

<sup>4</sup> Information retrieved from documents kept at the Goa Historical Archives, *Livro da Província do Norte*, with the reference 1376.

<sup>5</sup> I have encountered a number of Muslims and Hindus who also completed their primary education in Portuguese, and this seems to have been a successful means of linguistic propagation. In fact, among the older Muslims and Hindus who experienced the colonial rule, education is the most frequently invoked explanation for their command of Portuguese (which, in most cases, refers to DIP).

<sup>6</sup> While it is impossible to analyse this issue with any degree of objectivity, it seems that Portuguese-medium education was not reserved for the wealthiest or most influential alone, as some of those who attended the school were reportedly from poor families, often from outside Diu Town.

<sup>7</sup> French will not be dealt with here, although, given the similarities in scale, it offers a potentially interesting counterpoint to the official (un)recognition of Portuguese.

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