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Dialect Differences and Social Stratification in a North Indian Village¹

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IT IS generally recognized that dialect differences exist in every large speech community. When these differences are minor and do not appreciably affect mutual intelligibility, they are disregarded for most purposes of linguistic description. Areas in which there are no significant linguistic barriers are thus ordinarily said to contain speakers of a single language or dialect. However, detailed studies by dialectologists of the distribution of minor speech variants have shown that these are not idiosyncratic, as had been assumed by some, but are patterned and socially determined.

Leonard Bloomfield postulates a direct relationship between linguistic diversity and the amount of verbal interaction among individual members of a community.² The model he provides is quite similar to the sociogram of the modern social psychologist. He states:

The most important differences of speech within a community are due to differences in the density of communication . . . Imagine a huge chart with a dot for every speaker in the community and imagine that every time any speaker uttered a sentence, an arrow were drawn into the chart pointing from his dot to the dot representing each one of his hearers. At the end of a given period of time, say 70 years, that chart would show us the density of communication in the community . . . We believe that the differences in communication are not only personal and individual but that the community is divided into various systems of subgroups, such that the persons within a subgroup speak much more to each other than to persons outside their subgroup . . . Subgroups are separated by lines of weakness in this net of oral communication. These lines are local, due to mere geographical distribution and non-local or as we say social.

If this model is valid, then investigations into the relations of speech differences to other types of social interaction should be of great interest to students of social structure. Work in this field, however, is still in its beginnings.³

The first systematic attempts to formulate relationships along the above lines were made by McDavid (1946, 1948, 1951). His data were drawn from the field records of the Linguistic Atlas of the United States, a geographical survey aimed primarily at collecting data for historical studies, but which used a sample drawn from the upper, middle, and lower strata of American society. The distribution of the dialect differences discovered was found to be determined by social as well as geographical factors. McDavid suggests that these social speech styles reflect what he calls "social tensions" such as those existing between Negroes and whites, Catholics and non-Catholics, and others in northern industrial communities. The field methods and sampling of the Linguistic Atlas have recently been severely criticized on grounds of reliability and

validity (Pickford 1956), but this does not destroy their usefulness in providing leads for more detailed studies.

A recent study of the relations of dialect differences to social structure in Mexico City makes an effort to avoid some of the methodological shortcomings of the Atlas (Sapon 1953). The community is divided into ten status groups, using Warner's Index of Status Characteristics, and the linguistic sample was drawn from each of the groups. The results have not yet been published.

The present study was done, in cooperation with a team of social scientists, in Khalapur, a relatively small, highly stratified North Indian village community.⁴ Linguistic differences were determined from a sample of the most important caste groups in the village and the results are compared with anthropological information collected through day-by-day observation over a period of two and a half years.

In discussing language distribution in the Hindi speaking area of Northern India, it is convenient to distinguish three forms of speech (Gumperz 1957). At the local level there are the village dialects, which vary from village to village. In the small market centers, a form of speech is current which avoids many of the divergent local features and is relatively uniform over a large area; this is the regional dialect. The third form, Standard Hindi, is used most widely in larger cities such as Delhi, Agra, and Lucknow. It is native only to certain groups which have traditionally been city residents; others speak some regional dialect. The amount of difference between the above three forms varies. There are many regions where at least two of the three are mutually unintelligible, but in others the three are relatively close.

The speech of the region around Khalapur is Khaṛī Boli, a subdialect of Western Hindi. It is a transition dialect between the Bangarū of Karnal and the Khaṛī Boli of Merut (Grierson 1916; Gumperz 1958), relatively close to Standard Hindi and mutually intelligible with it. The Khalapur village dialect is readily understood by speakers of the regional dialect. However, persons who control only Standard Hindi often have difficulty in following the local village idiom.

Most male residents, especially those who travel considerably, speak both the village and the regional dialect. The former is used in the home and with other local residents, and the latter is employed with people from the outside. Educated people and some who have spent much time in larger cities speak Standard Hindi, although they employ the local idiom at home.

The present analysis deals with the village dialect only. Differences occur on the phonological and lexical level, but only phonological variants are used in the grouping of subdialects. This has not been the practice in the past. Previous studies employ lexical as well as phonological and morphological criteria and do little in the way of structural analysis. There are a number of reasons in favor of the present approach. Phonological features lend themselves to classification according to the degree of structural relevance and thus provide a reliable tool for estimating the importance of a particular difference.⁵ They are automatic and more closely imbedded in our habit pattern than

lexical items, and are therefore less subject to change when in contact with variant dialect forms. Furthermore they present less difficulty in obtaining reliable responses, since forms can be elicited without the informant being aware of which features interest the linguist. With lexical data, on the other hand, each item is of the same importance as the other. There is a further problem in eliciting, since it is often difficult to determine which of two alternate forms is most frequently used.

Khalapur is located in Saharanpur District of Uttar Pradesh, in the Gangetic plain between the Ganges and Jumna rivers, about 80 miles north of Delhi and three miles west of the Saharanpur-Delhi road. The inhabitants are divided into 31 endogamous caste or *jati* groups,⁶ 90 percent Hindu and 10 percent Muslim, which may be ranked hierarchically along a scale according to ritual status. Each group ranks either high or low with respect to any of the others; no two have equal status. At the top of this ritual caste hierarchy are the *Brahmans*, *Rajputs* (Warrior-Rulers) and *Vaishyas* (Merchants), the twice-born castes according to the traditional *varna* system. They are followed by a large group of middle castes, mostly artisans and laborers. The three lowest ranking groups are the *Chamars*, a group of landless laborers, *Jatia Chamars*, or Leatherworkers, and *Bhangis* or Sweepers. These will be referred to as untouchables to distinguish them from the majority or touchable group. The Muslims also belong to several castes, all of which rank fairly low ritually. The most important of these are Muslim Rajputs and Oil Pressers.

The village population is about five thousand. Forty-two percent of the population is Rajput; Chamars are next with twelve percent, and after that come Brahmans with five percent. The remaining 28 caste groups make up the rest. Of the other castes mentioned in this study, Sweepers have four percent, Leatherworkers two percent, *Chamar Julahas* (one of the three weaving castes) two percent, Muslim Rajputs two percent, Oil Pressers three percent.

The Rajputs, both Muslim and Hindu, are the dominant caste.⁷ They own more than 90 percent of the land and wield most of the political power. Brahmans are accorded first rank with respect to ritual status, but are second to the Rajputs and some of the Merchants with respect to wealth and actual prestige.

The residential area of the village is divided into seven geographical subdivisions, or *paṭṭis*,⁸ related to lineage groups among Rajputs. Most Rajput residents of a *paṭṭi* hold land in the same area. Members of non-Rajput castes are said to belong to the *paṭṭi* of the families who own or used to own the land on which they live.

In selecting informants for the study, care was taken to choose only people who were willing to use the village and not the regional dialect. All informants were male. They were either illiterate or could read only with great difficulty. Students of the Inter-College, which is located in the village, and people who regularly read newspapers or books, were not interviewed. Two or more informants were used from each of the 18 castes having more than one percent of the village population.⁹ In the case of Rajputs and other large groups with

settlements in several parts of the village, informants from each of the settlements were used.

The following methodology was employed for the collection of linguistic data. As a first step, the phonemic structure of the village dialect was determined from the speech of one informant. The statements were checked for completeness with several other informants, and notes were kept on any dialect differences found. These notes were expanded by observations made in informal conversations with a wide variety of villagers on topics not connected with the linguistic study. A questionnaire was then prepared on the basis of the notes. The information obtained from this questionnaire was analyzed and a series of hypotheses was drawn up regarding dialect distribution. These hypotheses were again tested over a period of several months through informal observation of the speech of all caste groups concerned. A number of tape recordings of village speech were also made.

The linguistic data were supplemented by a series of interviews with a cross-section of informants for the purpose of determining the extent to which villagers are aware of the caste differences in speech and the function of the differences in determining caste status. Information from these interviews is presented along with the list of differences.

The dialect has the following inventory of phonemes:¹⁰

Consonants:	labial	dental	alveolar	retroflex	palatal	velar	glottal
stops	p b	t d		ʈ ɖ	c j	k g	
spirants			s				h
sonorants:							
nasals	m	n		ɳ			
laterals		l		ɭ			
		r(trill)		r(flap)			
Vowels:		front		central		back	
high		i				u	
mid			ɪ	e		o	
low				æ	ɔ		
				a			
Diphthongs:	aɪ, uɪ, oɪ, uə			Nasalization: ~			
Word juncture:	(space)			Stress: '11			

The system used for classification of dialect differences was outlined in an earlier article (Gumperz 1958). Differences in the village are of three types: (1) differences in phonemic distribution statable in terms of phonological environment; (2) etymological differences, i.e., those differences in distribution that hold true only for certain lists of cognate items; and (3) phonetic differences, i.e., those that do not affect distribution of phonemes. The term Standard is used to indicate the majority speech; other forms are referred to as variants. The following differences occur:

1. Differences in phonemic distribution

The Standard has contrasts between simple vowels /a/, /u/, /o/ and diphthongs /aɪ/, /uɪ/, /oɪ/ before consonants. Members of the Sweeper caste do not have this contrast:

Standard	Variant	
1. /baɪl/	/bal/	ear of corn
2. /lal/	—	red
3. /jhul/	/jhul/	cattle blanket
4. /phul/	—	flower
5. /khor/	/khor/	cattle trough
6. /mor/	—	peacock

In word final position, however, the above diphthongs may occur in the speech of all villagers: Standard and Sweepers /khaɪ/ eat (inflected stem).

2. Etymological differences

(a) Occurrence of /ə/ and /ʊ/ before stressed vowel in the next syllable in certain forms:

Standard	Variant	
1. /kʊrɛ́ɲa/	/kə́rɛ́ɲa/	(to) shovel
2. /dʊtɔ́i/	/dətɔ́i/	blanket
3. /mʊɳdása/	/məɳdása/	head cloth
4. /kʰurɛ́ra/	/kʰə́rɛ́ra/	cattle brush
5. /nʊlána/	/nəlána/	(to) weed
6. /pʊchána/	/pə́chána/	(to) send
7. dupɛ́ɽa/~dəpɛ́ɽa/	—	turban
8. /dʊphɛ́ra/~dəphɛ́ra/	—	noon
9. /kʊpás/~kəpás/	—	cotton
10. /lɔ́gám/	/lʊgám/	bridle
11. /dʊlán/	/dʊlán/	a type of village building
12. /bətáu/	/bʊtáu/	a condition of the soil

In examples one to six, the Standard has /ʊ/. In seven and eight, all informants show free variation between /ə/ and /ʊ/ forms; both are therefore part of the Standard. In ten to twelve, the Standard has only /ə/.

Many Chamars and most of the Shoemakers have /ə/ in all the above forms. Among the Chamars, however, the /ə/ pronunciation is considered "old fashioned" and has low prestige. Many members of the caste use /ʊ/ throughout, even in forms ten to twelve where the Standard has /ə/. Their speech therefore remains distinct in spite of their apparent efforts to adapt to the Standard.

The nonstandard use of /ʊ/ and /ə/ in these and similar examples is recognized by villagers as one of the distinguishing marks of Chamar speech. Most of the informants interviewed in regard to attitudes toward language forms, when asked who uses forms like /dətɔ́i/, blanket, laughed and said, "That is Chamar speech." Two Chamar leaders evidenced a great deal of emotion on hearing the form. They did not answer the question, but entered into long

explanations to the effect that Chamars have hitherto been denied educational opportunities by the higher castes.

(b) /ɪ/ and /ə/ in certain forms before nonfinal single consonant or consonant cluster plus stressed vowel:

Standard	Variant	
1. /ɪpət̪/	/ɾəpət̪/	(to) slip (stem)
2. /bɪchɪŋɔ̃a/	bəchɪŋa	blanket
3. /sɪlʋár/	/səlʋár/	pajama for women
4. /ɪɾjéi/	/ɾəjéi/	comforter
5. /bɪt̪ɔ̃ra/	/bət̪ɔ̃ra/	stack of dung cakes
6. /sɪkhána/	/səkhána/	(to) teach
7. /pɪchórɳa/	/pəchórɳa/	(to) sift grain
8. /bɪnɔ̃la/	/bənɔ̃la/	cotton seed

Many people have free variation between /ɪ/ and /ə/ in the above forms. The /ə/ forms have low prestige, especially in the last three examples. The frequency of these forms is highest among the untouchable castes. The use of /ə/ is generally regarded as a sign of "old fashioned" or "ignorant people's" speech, although it is not necessarily characteristic of low caste status. The particular informants who used these old fashioned pronunciations regularly were characterized as "backward" and "ignorant" also with respect to other nonlinguistic matters. Other informants used them occasionally in extremely informal situations, but when asked to repeat they gave /ɪ/ forms.

Field records from another village twenty miles to the north indicate that there /ə/ is used by most Rajputs in the above items. Thus it seems that the /ə/ pronunciations have lost prestige and are going out of use in Khalapur, while they remain as the prestige forms in other areas. There is no similar evidence for /ʊ/ and /ə/.

(c) Accented /æ/ and /ə/ in certain words of the type CVCCV and CVCV:

Standard	Variant	
1. /ǎsa/	/əsa/	like this
2. /kása/	/kəsa/	how
3. /bǎngan̄/	/bəngan̄/	brinjal
4. /bǎt̪tho/	/bət̪tho/	visit

Chamars, Shoemakers and Sweepers have /ə/ in these forms.

(d) Nasalized and oral vowels:

Standard	Variant	
1. /ik/	/ik̄/	sugar cane
2. /júa/	/jú̄a/	joke
3. /khat/	/khāt̄/	cot

Untouchables of all three castes have nasalized /ɪ/ /ā/ /ū/.

Higher castes consider features (c) and (d) as indications of untouchable speech. Some of the more educated Chamars have begun to use /æ/ in the words given in (c); however, they tend to relapse into their old habits in unguarded moments.

(e) /m/ and /ũ/ in words of the type CəũVC where V stands for /a/ or /aɪ/:

Standard	Variant	
1. /dəũám̩/	/damám̩/	head of a cot
2. /jəũám̩/	/jamám̩/	a spice

Chamars and Shoemakers have /m/ in these words, all others use the Standard forms. Field records for a village in Karnal District, Punjab, show the /m/ pronunciations in a number of forms where Khalapur village has only ~. This seems to indicate that the situation is similar to that of /ə/ in 2b; /m/ is being replaced by /ũ/.

(f) Alternation between medial nasal plus consonant clusters and single consonants, double consonants or consonant clusters:

Standard	Variant	
1. /d̪hɪdám̩/	/d̪hindám̩/	a grass
2. /k̪f̪k̪k̪ər/	/k̪f̪nk̪ər/	a tree
3. /əkkás/	/ənkás/	sky
4. /sát̪ti/	/sán̪ti/	a type of rice
5. /gán̪na/	/gán̪da/	cane
6. /lób̪ri/	/lóm̪ri/	fox

There is a great deal of free variation between the two sets in all castes. The variants are regarded as signs of uneducated speech and are more frequent among old fashioned and untouchable speakers.

(g) Relative position of consonants in certain words. The following are the alternants:

Standard	Variant	
1. /mót̪ləb/	/mót̪bəl/	meaning
2. /rəjbhāta/	/rəbjhāta/	irrigation canal
3. /bək̪hóra/	/əbkkhóra/	torch
4. /jəvám̩/	/əjvám̩/	a spice

Variants are considered uneducated speech and are used largely by the old fashioned and untouchable groups. An interesting hypercorrect form, /nisán/ for standard /ɪnsán/, man, appears in one of the Chamar field records.

3. Phonetic differences

(a) The allophone of /æ/ in word final position in utterances such as /kəræ/ he does; /ghər tæ/ from home, /hæ/ is, is [æ] in the Standard. The variant [ə^v] is used by the Shoemakers. It was also heard in free conversation from one old Chamar. The [ə^v] pronunciation is the prevalent pronunciation in several neighboring villages where the dominant castes are Jat and Tyagi.

The [ə^v] could also be analyzed as an allophone of the phoneme /ə/. This would change the difference between the Shoemaker speech and the Standard to one in phonemic distribution. In comparative studies of this kind, however, just as in comparative historical studies, it is useful to talk of phonemic differences only when there is no other possible analysis.

(b) Allophones of /ə/, /a/, /o/ and /u/. Before the consonants /h, r, l,

r, d, n, ṅ, ḍ/ followed by /i/ or /e/, allophones of /ə/ appear in three degrees of tongue height: low, medium, and high. Allophones of /a/, /o/, and /u,/ in this same environment show three degrees of phonetic diphthongization. Members of the Sweeper caste have the low allophone of /ə/ and undiphthongized [a] [o] [u] in these environments. With residents of C and G paṭṭi /ə/ has the high allophone [ɪ] and /a/ /u/ and /o/ are fronted and are followed by strong upglides [a^e], [u^ɪ], [o^e]. All other villagers have [ɜ] with medium tongue height as the allophone of /ə/ and the offglides of the /a/, /o/ and /u/ allophones are lower and less pronounced. In each case, tongue height and offglide are slightly lower before /e/ than before /i/. Some examples of items in which these allophonic variations occur are:

- | | | | |
|------------|---------------------|-------------|----------|
| 1. /d̥ri/ | rug | 5. /c̥d̥he/ | sweepers |
| 2. /gh̥ni/ | much | 6. /sun̥hi/ | broom |
| 3. /p̥ṭṭi/ | village subdivision | 7. /b̥ri/ | sack |
| 4. /mh̥re/ | my (pl.) | | |

The Sweeper pronunciation in these items is closest to Standard Hindi and is characterized as *saap*, "refined," by villagers. The pronunciation of C and G paṭṭi villagers is considered somewhat uncouth, and Rajputs from other parts of the village cite it as evidence for the fact that these people are somewhat backward. The field notes show that a few other Rajputs used pronunciations similar to those of C and G in very informal situations. However, all these informants reverted to the Standard when asked to repeat the utterance.

On the basis of the preceding list of phonological speech differences, we may distinguish six linguistic groups or subgroups in the village:

A. The majority group of speakers of the Standard, consisting of all Hindu and Muslim touchable castes, except for "old fashioned" persons and Rajput residents of paṭṭis C and G.

B. Rajput residents of C and G paṭṭis, distinguished from Group A by the phonetic features of 3b.

C. "Old fashioned" individuals of all touchable castes, characterized by the etymological differences of 2b, 2d, 2g.

D. Chamars, who share most of the characteristics of group C and in addition show the etymological differences of 2a, 2c, 2e, and 2f.

E. Shoemakers, with characteristics similar to those of the Chamars except for the features mentioned in 2a. In addition they have the phonetic features of 3a and 3b.

F. Sweepers. This group is distinguished from all the rest by the difference in phonemic distribution of 1 and the phonetic difference of 2b. It further shares differences 2b, 2c, 2d, 2f, and 2g with groups D and E.

There are also a number of lexical differences. Each of the larger castes has a special vocabulary referring to items of its subculture not shared by others. The vocabulary of Hindus and Muslims also differs, especially in regard to items of clothing, cooking utensils, and food. A detailed consideration

of these differences is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is interesting to point out that Hindu-Muslim speech differences in Khalapur are of the same order as those between individual touchable castes and certainly much less important than the variation between touchables and untouchables. In other areas of India the gap between Hindu and Muslim speech is said to be much larger.

Of the above phonological groups, F is the most divergent, since it is set apart by a phonemic difference. It is most similar to the regional dialect, which also has no contrast between simple vowels and diphthongs before consonants and shares the allophonic features of 3a. The differences between A, B, and C are relatively minor and the same is true for those between D and E.

Villagers show awareness of some but not all of the dialect differences listed. Certain forms are labelled as Chamar speech and the Sweeper idiom is said to be "refined," but the divergences between Chamar and Shoemaker speech are not usually recognized. Rajputs occasionally refer to a caste brother by the expression "he speaks like a Chamar." By this they refer to the fact that the person curses considerably and uses uncouth words, rather than to his pronunciation.

Dialect A functions as the prestige dialect. The replacement of /ə/ by /u/ in 2a, /ə/ by /ɪ/ in 2b, and /ə/ by /æ/ in 2c show the efforts of minority groups to imitate it. The field records also show one instance of a Sweeper using the Standard allophone [a^{<e}] for /a/ in the word /bari/, cotton (see 3b). The normal Sweeper pronunciation [a] was recorded for the same speaker in a conversation with a caste brother. It is interesting to note here that a form which is closer to the regional dialect is given up in favor of a divergent form. Dialect studies made in other countries usually show displacement of local forms by the regional dialect.

Speech differences like those found in Khalapur may arise in the course of normal linguistic development. Language habits are constantly in a state of flux. Just as fashions come and go, new linguistic forms are acquired and old ones are dropped. Under the conditions of communication prevalent in most Western rural communities, where, to use Bloomfield's term, the "density of communication" is relatively uniform, one would expect a form adopted in one sector either to disappear within a relatively short time or to be adopted by the entire group. If, however, there is a break in communication, the spreading of forms from one sector to the other will be delayed, thus giving rise to sub-dialects. The speech differences between groups A and D might have arisen in this way. The fact that Chamars and Shoemakers share all the features of old fashioned speech and show traces of forms still prevalent in other parts of the area, seem to indicate that they are more conservative than the other sub-dialects. Dialect A would then be the innovating dialect.

The Sweeper speech does not seem to fit into this pattern, as there is no indication that the village dialect ever had the features of 1 and 3b. Since the majority of Sweeper men have spent much of their life in the cities and army camps, one possible explanation is that they brought in the new forms after

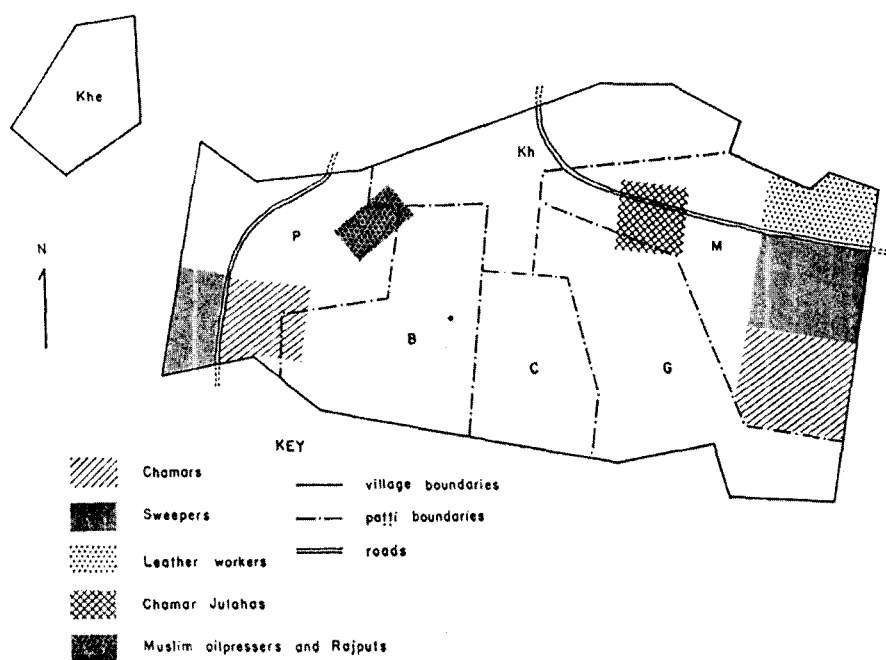
their absence from the village. If this were so, it would be difficult to explain the retention of other divergent low-caste forms such as those of 2b, 2c, 2d, 2f, and 2g which are not found in the regional dialect. Replacement of the diphthongs in the items of 1 would involve the loss of a phonemic contrast. Historical linguistic studies indicate that this is much more difficult to achieve than the process of replacing a phoneme in certain words by another already in the system, which is all that would be required for the elimination of variants in category two. The Sweepers, furthermore, are not the only group that finds employment outside. Many of the Shoemakers spend several years of apprenticeship in neighboring bazaar towns. Children of higher castes are often educated outside. Merchants make weekly trips to the bazaar and sometimes spend weeks and months outside the village. The common practice is for villagers returning from outside to revert to village speech, no matter what their level of education. There are interview data to show that people are ridiculed and accused of "taking on airs" if they use the regional dialect at home. A more likely explanation for the Sweeper dialect is that it was brought in when the group settled in the village. Evidence from genealogies indicates that the present Sweeper group immigrated from elsewhere a little more than a hundred years ago.

An accurate determination of the origin of the various variants requires a great deal more comparative data about dialects in the entire area than are available now. From a sociological point of view, however, the origin of the dialect differences is less important than the fact that they have maintained themselves in this relatively small community for such a long time. Genealogical evidence indicates that the village population has been fairly stable for more than a hundred years. Aside from a slow turnover among the lower castes, there has been no large scale immigration. The common marriage pattern is village exogamy, but this applies equally to all castes. It might therefore be useful to look for other factors in the social system which might tend to create or preserve speech differences. The following are considered: residential patterns, ritual purity, work or economic contact, informal adult friendship, and children's play-groups.

The map gives a schematic representation of the residential patterns. Touchable castes occupy the main part of the village. Members of a particular caste tend to be grouped together in housing clusters. Most of the larger castes occupy a number of such clusters in different sections, but their quarters are not really segregated. In the last fifty years the village has expanded greatly beyond its former boundaries; new Rajput residences have sprung up in what formerly were cattle compounds or grazing grounds, and habitations of other service castes have grown up around them. The untouchable quarters formerly were some distance away, but because of the recent expansion they have begun to merge with the village itself. However, untouchable housing is still largely confined to separate sections. The Sweepers and Chamars each have two quarters at opposite ends of the village. The Shoemaker settlement is in M paṭṭi near the Sweeper quarter.

Differences in ritual purity are evidenced by prohibitions concerning the following practices: touching the other person or his children, touching or approaching his cooking hearth, his cooking utensils or charpoy, and accepting either fried, boiled, or uncooked food from him. Each caste has a slightly different set of prohibitions, which is more or less extreme depending on the level of the other caste in the hierarchy. The lower the position of a particular caste, the greater is the number of castes from whom boiled food is accepted.

A tentative ranking, based on social-distance interviews with members of 22 castes concerning prohibitions of the above type, shows the following



OUTLINE MAP OF KHALAPUR

rough groupings: High castes are those from whom all others take boiled food and allow touching of clay utensils. Middle castes may touch brass utensils and offer fried food and water. Lower middle castes are those from whom one does not take food but whose touch is not polluting. In the case of the untouchables, the entire set of prohibitions holds. The Chamars, Shoemakers, and Sweepers, i.e., those castes referred to as untouchables in this paper, are clearly at the bottom of the hierarchy. The status of Muslims, including Muslim Rajputs and of Chamar Julahas (one of the three weaving castes) is somewhat intermediate between untouchable and lower middle. Many villagers state that they do mind their touch and would not let them use the village wells. In practice, however, they are known to use these wells. They live among other castes (see map) and are integrated into the regular neighborhood

patterns of borrowing of implements and social intercourse. The distinction between high and middle castes is also somewhat vague. Brahmans and Rajputs are clearly at the top, but the status of Merchants, Goldsmiths, and Bhaats, a lower group of Brahmans, is intermediate between that of high and middle castes.

The ritual prohibitions also operate among the untouchable castes. Chamars do not accept food from Sweepers and Shoemakers. Some Sweepers are less strict and accept food from Chamars, especially those who perform services for them, but this practice is looked down upon by other members of the Sweeper group.

There are some interview data to suggest that in the past the separateness of the untouchables has been forcefully maintained by the higher castes. Shoemaker women, for example, report having been prevented by Rajputs from wearing ornaments and clothes similar to those of the Rajput women. Attempts to imitate Rajput speech might also have been discouraged for fear of incurring the displeasure of the higher castes. This explanation, however, would not account for the linguistic diversity among the three untouchable groups.

Work or economic contacts may be of the employer-employee or of the vendor-customer type. The former involve close day-to-day contacts and require a great deal of verbal communication, while in the latter contact is limited to occasional short periods. The majority of employers are Rajputs, Brahmans, and Merchants. Among the artisan castes, including Shoemakers, some members work at their profession in their own homes or rent land and thus have little contact with outsiders; others serve as farm laborers. The great majority of the Chamars either work as farm hands or as day laborers in construction work, where they are constantly together with members of other castes. Among Sweepers, women devote most of the day to cleaning the houses and cattle compounds of the village, and much of that time is consumed in gossiping with and listening to the conversations of their employers. Men used to work in the cities. At present, most of them earn their living as occasional agricultural laborers, and few also do cleaning work similar to that of the women. Chamars and Sweepers thus seem to have the greatest amount of work contacts with other castes.

Informal contacts occur in children's play groups and in adult intercaste friendships. Among the touchable children, play groups are formed on a neighborhood rather than a caste basis. If the neighborhood is exclusively Rajput, play groups will be limited to Rajputs; in intercaste neighborhoods, however, children from all resident castes may play together. Some groups observed playing in the streets or on certain ceremonial occasions were found to include Rajputs, Brahmans, Carpenters, Muslim Oil Pressers, Watercarriers, Potters, and others, but untouchable children were not observed in any of the groups.

Studies of informal friendships among adults show that while friendships tend to be primarily within the caste, intercaste friendships are by no means rare. There are a number of instances of close personal relationships between

Rajputs and Brahmins, Rajputs and Merchants, Goldsmiths and Rajputs, Muslim and Hindu Rajputs. Among the middle castes, where each group has relatively few members, this type of intercaste contact is even more frequent. Since only caste fellows can share the same *hukka* (waterpipe), many people keep special hukas for their friends from other castes. A number of stores, artisan's shops, and cattle compounds serve as regular centers for informal intercaste neighborhood gatherings. In these gatherings it is common to smoke the *chilam*, a clay pipe which can be shared with other castes. Women of different castes also visit each other frequently. There is one active religious sect in the village, the Kabir Panti sect, which has members belonging to Muslim, Rajput, Weaver, Carpenter, Potter, and Merchant castes; the leader of this group is a Potter.

Among the three untouchable castes, each group forms a more or less self-contained unit with its own well or water pumps. Each of the residential quarters is shut off not only from the touchable castes but also from the adjoining quarters of other untouchable groups. In M paṭṭi, for example, the Chamar and Sweeper quarters adjoin, but they are separated by walls. To go from one to another it is necessary to make a detour through the main village lane. While among the touchables, mens' quarters are open to view from the lane and hukka groups often congregate on the road or in the square, similar groups among untouchables meet inside the quarter, where they are not exposed to view from other sections of the population. Contacts with members of other untouchable castes tend to be formal rather than informal. There are no informal neighborhood gatherings. Intercaste friendships exist but are much rarer than among touchables. Children keep to themselves and do not form intercaste playgroups; they either stay within their quarter or accompany their parents to work. Sweeper boys and girls guard the pigs which scavenge in the village lanes and around refuse piles, but wherever they are, they keep to themselves.

The anthropological data provide some interesting information on relations with Rajputs from other paṭṭis of Rajput residents of Kh paṭṭi, who enjoy great prestige and have more contact with the outside officials. A questionnaire which was administered to half the family heads in Kh paṭṭi included the following questions: (a) what persons do you sit with most often? (b) of these, which is your best friend? (c) with whom do you exchange labor or bullocks or agricultural implements? A sociogram constructed from the answers to this questionnaire shows a smaller number of friendship choices in C and G than in any of the other paṭṭis, including Kh which is farthest away. C and G Rajputs are also set off from the others by the dialect difference of 3b.

The above data should be sufficient for some preliminary conclusions. It is clear that the linguistic differences represent social and not geographical groupings, since members of the same caste living in different sections of the village speak the same dialect. There is some correlation between the linguistic groupings and ritual status. Both agree in setting off the untouchables from the majority group and from each other. The distinction between high and

middle castes, however, is not reflected in village speech, and on the other hand the differences between C and G paṭṭi, old fashioned speech and the Standard, have no relation to ritual status.

In examining intercaste communication, we find that linguistic differences have no correlation with work contacts. Bloomfield's concept of "density of communication" therefore needs some refinement. It becomes necessary to distinguish between several forms of communication. Not all of them have the same effect on linguistic diversity. In the present study, the determining factor seems to be informal friendship contacts. We may assume that the population is divided into a number of small friendship groups of the type described by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955). Each of these creates its own norms and exerts pressures for uniformity. A linguistic form adopted in one group may spread to the other, through individuals having membership in both groups, and is then adopted. Since there are a number of intergroup and intercaste friendships among touchables, there is no barrier to the spread of innovations from one sector to the other. However, these friendships do not extend across the touchable-untouchable line or from one untouchable group to another, and thus account for the linguistic isolation of the untouchables. The linguistic peculiarities of the C and G Rajputs can be explained in a similar way.

The exact relationship between linguistic and social groupings needs a great deal of further clarification. We need to know more about what types of contact favor the spread of linguistic innovations and what processes are involved. For example, it is not clear from the present study whether children's play groups or adult friendships are more important in language habit formation. Hockett has suggested that age-grading plays a decisive role, but this has never been tested (Hockett 1950). If it is true, then the present linguistic diversity reflects the situation of some years ago, rather than the present one. Another problem of interest is the relationship between the amount of linguistic difference and the social distance between two groups. Lexical variants in Khalapur occur between individual castes, phonological differences correlate with larger groupings. The distinction between Chamar and Sweeper speech is phonemic, while that between Chamar and Shoemaker is relatively minor. Does this also indicate that in the case of the former the social distance is greater? It would be of interest to learn more about correlations of differences at each of the various levels of language structure with other aspects of the culture. Detailed interdisciplinary study is required, based on research designs suitable for isolating all social factors that have a bearing on the formation of speech habits.

NOTES

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² Leonard Bloomfield 1933:46.

³ For a more detailed listing of the literature on the subject see Putnam and O'Hern 1955.

⁴ Other literature dealing with the village is found in Gumperz 1955, 1957, and Hitchcock 1956.

⁵ For a discussion of the difference between data on language structure and other social science data, see Levi-Strauss 1951:156.

⁶ In the transcription of caste and other names, traditional transliteration is used.

⁷ For a discussion of the difference between ritual and other caste rankings, see Srinivas 1957. The concept of the dominant caste is discussed in Srinivas 1955:17. The distinction between the ritually highest caste and dominant caste is important for dialect studies in India, since the dialect of the "highest caste" cannot always be presumed to be the prestige dialect.

⁸ Pattis will be referred to by initials as in the outline map.

⁹ There are insufficient data for the Watercarriers (3 percent of the population).

¹⁰ For a detailed description of the phonology of the dialect, see Gumperz 1955.

¹¹ Stress is marked only in words of more than one syllable.

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