

Minor Research Project
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ABSTRACT

A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF KANNADA KYFIETHS AND KADATHAS

Kannada is one of the oldest Dravidian languages and has got great literary tradition, with 2000 years of history and is designated as a classical language of India. Kannada Script originated from southern Brahmi script. The language and the script have undergone many changes over the centuries. Scholars have divided history of Kannada language into four periods; Poorvada Halagannada, (before Pampa) Halagannada (10-12century) and Nadugannada (1200–1700A.D.) and Hosagannada (1800 onwards). We can recognize unique features in each stage. Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali , Persian, Arabic, Hindi, Marathi and English are some of the languages which have influenced Kannada.

Recognition of Kannada as classical language ensures opportunities for scholars to undertake widespread research in the origin and history of the language with an effort to fill in gaps and missing links. All though there were good attempts in linguistic studies based on the available resources such as inscriptions, Kannada classics etc, between 8th century to 15th century, and much importance have not been given to the period between 15th and 19th century. However these studies have assigned ‘the language change’ traditionally to Historical Linguistics. With the turn of the 21st century the perceptions on language has changed. It is now being reviewed by contributions from anthropological, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic etc.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the trends of the Kannada language of post Vijayanagar period from 16 to 19th century, where we find unique linguistic phenomena of occurrence of loanwords and more cultural borrowings. This study is focused on the core loanwords and analyses how the cultural dominance of the donor language brings change in the recipient language’s lexicon.

More importance has been given to the stone inscriptions and copperplate inscription by the historians and other researchers as compared to the indigenous and authentic source like Kadathas. Even though some of the researchers have considered them as secondary source to reconstruct the history, very few have identified their socio cultural and linguistic importance.

Many of the Sri Matts of Karnataka are a repository of rich archival sources. There are thousands of authentic Kadathas and paper records that shed light not only on the history and culture of the Samsthanas of 4 centuries of post Vijayanagar period. They are the main source for the study of the Kannada dialectal, sociolectal and dioglossic unique features. The Kadathas which were called black books (A book made out of long sheet of folded cloth seasoned with charcoal or coal paste) by the British collectors, were used as account books in Matts, palaces and by merchants in medieval Karnataka. In post Vijayanagar period we find more of Kadathas, Kyfieths(Local History & Sthalapuranas collected by Mackenzie), Bhakhyres, paper records more than stone inscriptions and copper plate inscriptions. A thorough linguistic study based on these documents, and identification of the unique linguistic phenomena, occurrence of loanwords, cultural borrowings, code mixing and identifying unique desiwords in the documents has been done.

The study has identified a lot of difference between the language used in the creative writing and the document writing along with numerous patterns of encryption of Kannada scripts. A thorough study has been made to understand the nature and diversity of Kannada scripts and encryptions. The study has focused on the confusions and the problems encountered by the document writers in the 'Encryption process'(Lipeekarana) regarding the pronunciation of some words and phonemes.

Karnataka having a vast geographical area with people of different sociological strata, we find considerable magnitude of dialect variations in Kannada. Before integration of state on linguistic basis, the land of Kannadiga's was politically divided into four regions and were under Hyderabad Nizam, Bombay Presidency, Madras Presidency and Princely state of Mysore. This has further diversified the dialect variations along with socio-geographical factors. As spoken Kannada tends to vary from

region to region, the study examined the varieties of dialectal, sociolectal, features of Kannada in the documents of the particular period. However, this study has shed light on this phenomenon by analyzing the primary resources, Kadathas and kyfieths of different geographical area of Karnataka of the particular period. The study has traced the unique features of the vocabulary of those days and its influence in these written records, which were driven by political, socio-cultural factors. Language is one of the most powerful expressions of a human being and his social behavior. So the role of language in a given society and culture for intergroup and inter personnel relations is very important. The study has identified the occurrence of changes in languages due to both internal psycholinguistic factors and external sociolinguistic factors. The study of documents sheds light on the factors that influence code switching, its social aspects, and its implications.

Islamic administration and Colonial military invasions, living in border areas of different linguistic communities and migration are also observed as externally motivating factors of language change in this period. The study has analyzed the socio political factors that caused Kannada to come into contact with other languages and on how the prolonged and intense contact between Purso-Arabic and English languages has made significant changes in Kannada lexicon. The study has been done on loanwords, loan translation, adaptation, loan shift, loan blend and cultural borrowing. As many parts of Karnataka were under the administration of Bahmani Sultanates, Hyder and Tippu, & Sira Nawabs, Arabic and Persian influenced Kannada. This led to the incorporation of words of these languages into the Kannada vocabulary.

In this study I have discussed some of the dynamic links between language and power, language and hegemony and on how the dominance and hegemonic act of Muslim & British administrative languages and their cultural influence has brought changes in Kannada. This study is a humble attempt to understand the socio-cultural and linguistic realities of post Vijayanagar period.

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