The Development of Indo-European Languages in Cultural and Historical Processes: A Case Study of Indo-Iranian Languages

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Abstract. The linguistic and civilizational processes in Asia were driven more by war, colonization and religion. This paper explains the development process of Indo-Iranian language family from the perspective of cultural and historical development, focuses on the analysis of the role of the progress of ideology and religious belief in language and society, and tries to influence language and language trend from the perspective of spiritual civilization and social culture. It is necessary for linguistics to form a closer integration with neighboring disciplines, to confirm and support each other, and to play its due role in the study of Asian civilizations.

Keywords: Asian civilization · Indo-Iranian Language · linguistics · culture

1 Introduction

The origin of Indo-European languages is widely debated. As Indo-European languages with a large number of speakers covering a large area, their origin and development have attracted many scholars from anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and other fields. Since the beginning of the 20th century, countries around the world began to show acceptance towards various cultures and customs, and the research on Indo-European languages also showed a trend of diversification. Research into the Indo-European language family has intensified with the discovery of new Indo-European languages, including Hittite in Anatolia and Tocharian in western China. Throughout the history of European history, ideas and culture have played an important role in promoting language development and ideological progress. In contrast to European ideas that promoted language and social and cultural development, Asian language and civilization processes were more driven by war, colonization and religion. Indo-Iranian language family was spread and developed by the migration of primitive Indo-European nomads in the middle and late Bronze Age, which is closely related to Indo-European language family.

For historians or archaeologists, they will deduce the life of Indo-European peoples who lived thousands of years ago through clues such as the remains of tombs and agricultural remains. And linguists, faced with ancient peoples that have left few written records and words, constantly look for evidence in living languages. From this linguistic

evidence we can deduce where and how they lived, tell us how some words have survived thousands of years, and even help us construct Indo-European understandings of themselves, concepts of the world and the universe, and so on. This paper explains the development of Indo-Iranian languages from the perspective of cultural and historical development, and focuses on analyzing the role of the progress of ideas and religious beliefs in language and society, in order to clarify the important role of linguistics in the study of Asian civilization.

2 The Development of Indian Language and Hindi in the Process of Asian Civilization

The Indian language covers about thirty languages, which are widely spread in northern and central India and parts of modern Pakistan and Bangladesh. The development of India was accompanied by all kinds of contradictions and struggles, especially the invasion of British colonists, which had a huge impact on India's politics, economy, culture, language and other aspects. The Aryan tribes brought Sanskrit with them when they arrived in India around 2000 BC (Khan 2006; Kulke & Dietmar 2004) [4, 6]. In the 12th century, the Central Asian Turks and Mongols invaded India, followed by the Persian invasion. Thus, Hindi began to grow in India, its grammar, vocabulary, writing gradually spread, and this is the initial stage of the development of Hindi in India.

The Mongols, who arrived in India in 1526, established the Mughal Dynasty (1526–1858), an Islamic feudal dynasty that ruled most of the subcontinent, and formally introduced the Persian language and Islam into India. During this period, Persian was the official language of the Mughal Dynasty. Persian words and rhetoric could be seen in the fields of government, law, business, religion, etc., but it did not shake the status of Hindi, Urdu and other existing Indian languages in these fields. Around 1800, the northern part of India, under the influence of many languages, gradually developed Urdu, which became one of the most widely spoken languages in the subcontinent at the time (Khan 2006; Ge 2008) [3, 4].

Europe, with its growing economic power, had turned its attention to India. In the 17th century, with the beginning of the British invasion war and the establishment of the colonial regime, the status of English in India was constantly promoted, which had an important impact on the development of the local language. During this period, the status of English increased greatly as the number of people in India who used English for trade and communication increased. This period is the second stage of the development of Hindi. Indian nationalism makes some Sanskrit words try to be active again, and foreign languages and characters are also constantly influencing Hindi language, leading to the continuous absorption and integration of foreign and local languages, and the vocabulary system is increasingly rich.

The Battle of Pulsey in 1757 was the prelude to the formal British domination of India. Language was the key to colonization. The process of Indian language development in this period can be divided into the reign of the East India Company and the reign of the Queen of England (Schiffman 2000) [9]. During the rule of the East India Company, on the one hand, the native Indian people began to accept the learning of English, on the other hand, the officials of the East India Company also carried out the activities

of native Indian language learning, teaching native languages such as Indian classical language (Mir 2006) [8]. English finally became the official language of the Indian colonial government in 1837 (Mir 2006) [8]. The use of English even became a symbol of power and high social status, which provided the basis for English to replace Persian as the language of instruction and social interaction, and solidified the status of English in the Indian region.

India's independence in 1947 and the Constitution of the Union of India in 1949 clearly defined the official language status of Hindi, and even stipulated that Sanskrit was the preferred source language to be selected for vocabulary when necessary or appropriate, before other languages. This was also the third stage in the development of Hindi, where the words of Turkic, Persian, Arabic and other languages that had previously existed in Hindi were gradually diluted and replaced, but English still had a profound influence on the Indian language.

"Loanwords" are also called "loan words". Loanwords are an effective factor to show the influence of foreign culture on local culture. The ethnic contact and cultural influence caused by war invasion, religion spread and other factors can be well shown by loanwords. Therefore, we discuss some loanwords in Hindi from the perspective of three profound invasions of religious culture and war. First of all, in the 12th century, the Turks and Mongols from Central Asia invaded India, bringing Persians, Turkish and other languages. The words of these languages and the Islamic religion behind them also greatly penetrated the language system of India. For example, some Persian and Turkish words are used in an early epic of Hindi literature, Ode to the King of the Earth, written in the 13th century. Second, in the around 13th century AD to around the 18th century, India under the rule of the Muslims, Persian as the primary use of language, the official language and social life in various aspects have made an impact on the vocabulary of Hindi, and Islamic religious culture further penetration in the society and culture. Hindi is in constant contact, collision and fusion with Arabic and Persian. The best example of a language being influenced by a foreign language is the formation of Urdu, which has Hindi, Arabic and Persian echoes in its vocabulary, the form of writing is similar to Arabic, but it also has Hindi grammar. Finally, after Britain and other European countries invaded and colonized India, European words such as English infiltrated into Hindi, and Western religious culture continued to influence Indian religious culture, gradually appearing many foreign words from European countries.

Language invasions and policies, including those of British colonists, had a profound impact on the language situation of India and changed the pattern of Indian language at that time. However, multilingualism has not disappeared in India. The official adopts a single language policy, trying to change the local language from native to English, but at the local level, they insist on multilingualism, which does not abolish the use and learning of native language while promoting English. The invasion of English has enriched the variety of Hindi dialects. After the independence of India, the government still adopted monolingualism at the beginning, but due to the serious invasion of foreign languages and the significant multilingualism, English played the role of reconciliation, which not only made English not disappear, but also secured its foothold in India (Liu 2021) [7]. With the continuous adjustment of the language policy by the Indian government, the

language of India gradually presents a trilingual pattern combining Hindi, English and regional languages, forming the multilingual pattern of today's India.

3 The Evolution and Linguistic Features of Iranian Language

There are about 20 languages in the Iranian language branch, mainly including Persian, Pashto and so on. Throughout the development process of Iranian language, the external features of Iranian language have experienced three periods: ancient Iranian, Middle Iranian and modern Iranian. The language types of Iranian language are different, and the linguistic features are also diverse.

From a phonetic point of view, both Avituan and Ancient Persian of ancient Iranian languages retain a phonetic length opposition in terms of vowel system, but this opposition has been gradually lost in subsequent development, preserved only in some of the dual phonemes, or gradually stable or completely disappeared (дельман & Wang 2016) [1]. From the perspective of morphology system, the morphology system of ancient Iranian language is mainly characterized by inflectional word formation and the alternation of vowels in the root and affix. The changes of the position are varied and rich; Numbers include singular, even and plural. After a long period of time, the later Iranian language began to gradually simplify, but there are some increasingly refined and complex trends (дельман & Wang 2016) [1]. Thus it can be seen that the process of language evolution of Iranian branch is also long and complex.

Iran is located in West Asia, with the title of "the crossroads of Eurasia", which shows its superior geographical location and convenient transportation. Therefore, Iran has a large population of ethnic groups, and the cultural customs of each ethnic group are also very different. Throughout the development of Iran, every regime has placed great hope on the language policy, which shows the importance of language in the national process.

Persian is the official language of Iran, which is widely used and has the highest status in the country's government, judiciary, teaching and other fields. It also means that Persian is a language that must be learned in order to live a normal life in Iran, to participate in social and even political activities. But the fact that Persian is the mother tongue of 53% of the Iranian population also means that some other language is the mother tongue of the remaining 47%. Therefore, the evolution of Iranian language and policy changes in Iran are also worth studying.

Before the Islamization of Iran, Persian was the official language of Iran. The Persian government adopted the measures of Persian as the main language and other languages as the supplement, which made the Persian culture shine. From the 7th century to the 11th century, Iran gradually began and completed the Islamization. The spread of religion not only influenced the culture, but also laid the foundation for the introduction of Arabic. Due to the influence of religion, Persian began to come into contact with Arabic, the original words of Persian and some words of Arabic began to collide and fuse, and the combination of the two also created the new Persian.

When the Pahlavi Dynasty was established in 1925, in order to preserve the purity and supremacy of the Persian language, the government began a policy of "pan-Persian" integration and centralization, eliminating foreign words adopted by the Persian language

and ordering Persian-speaking officials to take important posts in regions where other languages were spoken. Life and culture in some areas have been severely affected (Katouzian 2009:213–214) [5]. After the next ruler came to power, the state policy of Persianization and secularization was continued because of the need to modernize the country. Persian was the only official language in Iran until the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

After the Islamic Revolution, when Iran became a theocratic Islamic state, Arabic, a language borrowed from the religion, gradually rose in prominence until it overtook Persian as the first language in Iran, but the importance of Persian was not ignored. In 1979, Iran promulgated the Constitution of the Islamic Republic to guarantee the human rights and freedoms of minority groups. At the same time, during the Islamic Republic of Iran, a religious language policy was introduced, and the government became increasingly tolerant of languages other than Persian and accepted the teaching of English.

4   Conclusion

A survey of language development in India and Iran provides a glimpse into the development of Indo-Iranian languages after they were introduced into Asia by the Proto-Indo-Europeans. The close relationship between the Indian and Iranian branches is evidenced by lexical homology and the rhetoric of religious and cultural works. In contrast to the changing language situation in India due to the invasion, the language change in Iran is mainly a change driven by the times and its own needs. From the laissez-faire language policy in ancient Persia to the assimilation in dynastic times, and then to the pluralism of languages at present, it can be seen that the ruling class of Iran put language in a very important position in the strategic pattern of its ruling country. Persian and Arabic, which eventually become the mainstream languages, have experienced a long political process and continue to develop along with social progress, gradually making the language situation in Iran show the characteristics of the combination of tradition and modernity, the combination of religion and secularity, and the combination of unity and pluralism.

It can also be seen that the language family is not immutable, but constantly changing with the influence of foreign invasion, national customs, religious culture and other aspects, and gradually changing in the constant tolerance and exclusion. The study of culture and civilization can help to understand the development trend of language families. In turn, the study of language and language families can also provide powerful evidence to explore the evolution of civilizations and migration of peoples. The study of vocabulary, such as loanwords, can reflect the communication and interaction between countries in a certain period, and can also infer the time when a certain object appeared or was brought to a certain region.

In short, the multidisciplinary approach to the study of Asian civilization has become a strong voice in the academic community, and has generated a lot of results, forming a great impact (Renfrew 2010:162–165) [9]. It is necessary for linguistics to further broaden its thinking, strive for closer integration with neighboring disciplines, mutual verification and mutual support, and play its due role in the study of Asian civilizations (Cheng & Liu 2022) [2].

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