

CHAPTER 28

LINGUISTICS

Doctoral Theses

01. KHANDEKAR (Prachi)
Middle Marathi: Reconstruction of a Missing Stage in the History of the Marathi Language.
Supervisor: Prof. Tanmoy Bhattacharya
Th 26753

Abstract

Middle Marathi is a period of approximately 500 years in the New Indo-Aryan stage that lies between 1300AD-1800 AD, it is preceded by Old Marathi (1000 AD-1300AD) and followed by Modern Marathi (1800 AD- present). Middle Marathi is a comparatively lesser studied stage in the formation of Marathi language due to various reasons such as lack of accessible data, a variety of coded scripts, socio-political instability during the Middle Ages, etc. This study uses Mahanubhav Marathi prose texts to investigate the language changes that occurred during the Middle Marathi period. A historical corpus of the Mahanubhav prose texts from 1300AD-1600AD was created using the annotation tool SIL Toolbox. A step-by-step process for creating historical corpora for Indian languages has been provided in this work. The Middle Marathi corpus was used for extracting the phonemic inventory and the sound changes. Similarly, sentence structures were analysed to track the changing case marking conventions within the 300-year period. The variations in case markers were plotted in graphs for a visual representation of the language change. The emergence of the -la dative in Marathi can be seen clearly during the Middle Marathi period around 1400 AD that shows a growing trend till 1600 AD. In Modern Marathi, the -la dative becomes the primary marker for both dative and accusative cases. Thus, proving that this important language change can be attributed to the Middle Marathi stage. Ergative structures in Middle Marathi are observed by marking features of markedness, agreement, verb transitivity and aspect-split as suggested in Modern Marathi. The development of the -ne ergative is observed within the Middle Marathi data. A comparison of the ergative behaviours between the Middle and Modern Marathi further elaborates the language change. Diachronic stages of OIA, MIA, Apabhramsa and Old Marathi are briefly discussed in the background; in this way, the Middle Marathi stage has been reconstructed to fit the larger picture of Indo-Aryan development.

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