

CHAPTER 26

LINGUISTICS

Doctoral Theses

01. SUOKHRIE (Kelhouvinuo)
Language Variation and Change: A Case Study of Kohima Village.
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Abstract

The present study is a sociolinguistic study of language variation and change in (tsh) and (dz), in Angami language spoken in Kohima Village. Palatalization has remained a puzzle in the history of Tibeto-Burman. Unlike their widely reported canonical distributions, palatals are attested across the vowel space in Naga languages which challenges their traditionally believed conditioning. The challenge of the present study lies in providing a quantitative account of the variable distribution of palatals and alveolars before /a/ and /o/ vowels. The study contributes to the resolution of the puzzle by bringing in additional dimensions of change in progress, role of social factors such as clan membership, birth year, gender, schooling, and linguistic factors including the role of lexical conditioning. Using apparent time, the study provides evidence of linguistic change in progress in Kohima Village. The findings suggest that the clan profile of both the parents is significant and not just father's clan alone. This is suggestive of the contact among clans-lects and the role of both the parents and care providers in influencing the outcomes. This finding is significant considering that there exists variation along clan lines in Kohima Village. Further, there is evidence of the role of lexical conditioning in propagating palatalization of (tsh) and (dz). The lexical progression is not independent of social clans and other factors, even though the lexical constraint turned out to have the strongest effect. The findings suggest that the change is progressing lexically across the speech community and is progressing differently across clan backgrounds. The constraint hierarchies vary across clan backgrounds of families. The findings further suggest that though the linguistic change is outwardly oriented as evident from the shifts across generations and across clans, the linguistic input the child receives at the earlier stages of learning continues to influence the learning outcomes.

Contents

1. Introduction to the speech community: ethnographic background 2. Variation and Change in (tsh) and (dz) palatalization 3. (tsh) and (dz) palatalization among younger speakers 4. Summary and Conclusion. Appendices and bibliography.