Challenges to Indo-Portuguese across India

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Abstract

This study contrasts the longevity of some Indo-Portuguese varieties with the consummated disappearance of others, to explore the challenges behind its present endangerment. Multilingualism alone is said not to pose a threat to the maintenance of minority languages unless the languages compete for the same domain(s) of usage or social function(s). Despite the territorial dispersion of Indo-Portuguese, data is primarily drawn from Diu, where it is shown that allegiance to (Indo-)Portuguese operates on different levels: a) Religion; b) Social status; c) Ideology; d) Age; e) Economic affluence; f) Education. Religion emerges as a central element, and is therefore an essential domain of intervention for preservation-oriented policies. A distinction is made between the challenges faced by Indo-Portuguese in areas of short-lived Portuguese rule (Cannanore or Korlai) and territories with a longer-standing colonial presence (Diu and Daman), in which Standard Portuguese enters the competitor pool alongside national and state languages (Hindi and Gujarati) or English. Given the status of Indo-Portuguese as a contact language, continuing co-existence with its lexifier and a conspicuous prestige differential between the two conspire to shape Diu Indo-Portuguese’s synchronic pattern of variation and to append an additional factor of endangerment to be separately addressed by policy-makers.

Introduction

The purpose of the present study is to define, with resort to present-day demographic and social information, the domains of use and primary connotations of Indo-Portuguese, so as to single out the areas to be targeted by policy-makers and conservationists in order to overcome the challenges faced by the language. Data is available, to differing degrees, for the Indo-Portuguese speaking communities in Daman, Diu, Korlai and Kannur; a particularly extensive discussion will be woven around the situation of Diu, which is presented as a case study.

The label ‘Indo-Portuguese’ (henceforth IP) calls for closer definition. It does not stand for one language but rather a number of Portuguese-lexified creoles scattered across South Asia, which can in turn be subdivided into clusters according to the endemic language of its physical environment and ultimately - because the different varieties are geographically discrete - classified as individual languages.

Portuguese creoles were once spoken on several coastal areas of India and Ceylon, as indeed across Asia; a hypothesis for the genesis and spread of restructured Portuguese in Asia (and within the Indian subcontinent) relates to an alleged Portuguese-based pidgin which served as a trade language and even intercultural medium of communication from East Africa to Japan\(^1\). In South Asia, relatively stable varieties of IP were at some point to be found in Sri Lanka, in several ports of present-day Gujarat (e.g. Diu, Daman, Bassein, Surat) and Maharashtra (e.g. Bombay, Chaul/Korlai, Thane), Goa\(^2\), as well as Karnataka and Kerala (e.g. Mangalore, Cannanore, Tellicherry, Mahé, Calicut, Cochin, Quilon) but also on India’s Eastern coast (e.g. Meliapor, Nagappattinam, Tranquebar, Pondicherry, Pipli, Calcutta) and Bangladesh (e.g. Dacca, Chittagong)\(^3\).

Towards the end of the 19\(^{th}\) century and beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century, two authors dedicated a number of publications to the linguistic description of some varieties extant at the time: Schuchardt worked with...

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\(^1\) See Clements, 2000. For a collection of 16\(^{th}\)- through 19\(^{th}\)-century documents indicative of the role of Portuguese in Asia, see Lopes, 1936 and Matos, 1968.

\(^2\) The historical existence of IP in Goa is the matter of some debate. Analogy with the other strongholds may suggest so (cf. Clements, 2000), but there is no clear attestation of the fact; Goa’s position as a capital, however, may have meant a stronger pressure of standard Portuguese, to the effect of blocking the formation of a greatly restructured variety.

\(^3\) For an exhaustive list, see Smith, 1995.
data from Cochin (1882), Diu (1883a), Mangalore (1883b), Mahé and Cannanore (1889b); Dalgado’s writings focused on Goa (1900), Daman (1902-3), Bassein/Bombay (1906) and Nagappattinam (1917).

More recently, Clements has produced work on Korlai (1996) and Daman (Clements and Koontz-Garboden, 2002), while work on Diu IP is being carried out by Cardoso (e.g. Cardoso, 2006). Nowadays, IP is known to survive in Daman, Diu, Korlai, Cannanore and Sri Lanka, and allegedly also in the vicinity of Cochin. Other varieties are said to be extinct (cf. Smith, 1995).

History

The history of contact between Portuguese and South Asian languages began early in the 16th century, either through trade or by means of Portuguese settlement along the coasts of India and Sri Lanka. The formative period of the Indo-Portuguese creoles (as well as the restructured Portuguese that was to serve as a lingua franca for intercultural communication in Asia) is to be found within this century. Records of offspring of mixed Asian and European descent are available as early as 1516 for the first Portuguese settlements in Southern India (v. Clements, 1996). An overt policy of racial mixing was ordained by the Portuguese king D. Manuel I, and carried out with particular zeal by D. Afonso de Albuquerque, the second emissary ruler of Portuguese India (between 1509 and 1515). These early Eurasian households are prominent in the creation of the various varieties of IP, but traders and new Christian converts who came into contact with the language of the colonists must also have played a role in the process.

Considering that some varieties have survived to the present day, IP has a history of nearly five centuries. In that period, however, it has met different destinies in different locations. Most of the varieties have since died out, whereas in those places where IP still survives its degree of stability or endangerment varies quite considerably (see section ‘Challenges’).

The question arises why some of these varieties have had such extraordinary longevity while others have been lost. In fairness, the linguistic environment, political history and social setting of each of the territories where IP formed varied radically since the first surge of colonization. Notice, for instance, how variable the chronology of Portuguese presence was in these territories: whereas Daman was uninterruptedly controlled by Portugal for 403 years (1558-1612) and Goa for 451 (1510-1661), the Portuguese held a grip on Cochin for 160 years only (1503-1663), on Cannanore for 161 years (1502-1663), Bassein for 204 years (1535-1739), Nagappattinam for 150 years (1507-1657) and Sri Lanka for 153 years (1505-1658). On the other hand, e.g. Tranquebar and Pondicherry were never under the political control of Portugal, while the presence in Meliapor was not so much military/political as it was religious. These temporal considerations are not devoid of significance in understanding the fate of IP; it comes as no surprise, in fact, that two of the most vibrant IP-speaking communities nowadays are to be found in Daman and Diu (both integrated into India as late as 1961). However, this cannot be the full picture; in the light of these considerations, Korlai IP’s vitality would come as a surprise, as its predecessor (Chaul) was lost to the Marathas in 1740.

Two sociolinguistic constants appear to hold for all former Portuguese strongholds, viz. that IP speakers always represented a linguistic minority and that IP was mostly (if not entirely) spoken by multilingual speakers. Despite being the native language of sections of the population, IP has never been the only language of any of the territories. The type of colonization favoured by the Portuguese in India did not target the control and settlement of large tracts of land (with the notable exceptions of Goa and the area known as Província do Norte, centred around Bassein) but rather the establishment of commercial infrastructures in prosperous or strategic ports. Therefore, the Eurasian as well as Christian communities (which partly overlapped), always co-existed with much more numerous original inhabitants. The same held true for the presence of European incomers. It is known that, between 1497 and 1612, a total of 806 Orient-bound ships left the port of Lisbon, which could have transported around 100,000 one-way passengers (Matos, 1968). However, in the early 17th century, descriptions of the Portuguese-controlled territories such as the one by Bocarro (1635) suggest the presence of a rather reduced European and Eurasian population. In Daman, for instance, they numbered 400, there were only 200 moradores (i.e. resident Portuguese) in Chaul, and more numerous in Goa, Cochin and Meliapor (with between 1000 and 1500 moradores, cf. Matos, 1968).

The observation that multilingualism was the rule among IP speakers both in the areas where the language still survives and those where it does not, coupled with the numerical inferiority of IP speakers in all these territories, suggests that multilingualism per se is not sufficient to wipe out a minority language, unless there is competition between the two (or more) languages regarding social functions and domains of use. If one is to understand the fate of IP, then, it is essential to superimpose explanatory layers; some of these may indeed refer to the chronology of colonial occupation,

4 see Boxer, 1963.

5 see Leão, 1996.

6 More fantasist versions suggest double this amount or an even larger number.
IP’s minority status and its speakers’ multilingualism, but new ones must be sought. A close look at the case of present-day Diu will help us identify the domains of use, connotations and distribution of IP.

**Case study: Diu**

Schuchardt (1889a) proposed a classification of the Asian Portuguese-based creoles according to the typology of their substrate; IP was therefore divided into Gauro-Portuguese varieties (i.e., those with Indo-Aryan substrate, namely Gujarati and Marathi) and the Dravido-Portuguese creoles (i.e., those with Dravidic influence). Falling squarely into the proposed Gauro-Portuguese category, the cluster of varieties usually known as *Norteiro* (see Dalgado, 1906) referred to IP as it was spoken in the former *Provincia do Norte*, the stretch of land between Daman and Chaul/Korlai - including the Bassein/Bombay area – and the island of Diu. Of these, the varieties of Diu, Daman and Korlai survived to this day.

In the 15th century, Diu had extraordinary strategic value, at the entrance of the Gulf of Cambay and capable of controlling the trading route connecting India with the Arabian Peninsula. The Portuguese elected it as a primary objective and achieved control over the island in 1535. Diu was integrated in India, along with Daman and Goa, in 1661.

**Present-day linguistic scenario**

As in all of the longest-standing Portuguese colonies in India, standard Portuguese (henceforth SP) plays an important role in Diu. It is often in competition with IP in that some speakers are fluent in both codes and most have at least some knowledge of SP. SP, as would be expected, enjoyed a higher position than IP in the eyes of the colonial rulers, and this has brought about a prestige differential that still nowadays favours SP over the creole. The present population of both IP and/or SP native speakers has been calculated at around 170 (see Cardoso, 2006). The exact figures concerning knowledge and/or proficiency across the Hindu and Muslim sections of the population are unclear, but many command either IP or SP, with different degrees of proficiency. It must be pointed out that, for most non-speakers or non-native speakers of IP and SP, the two are likely to be seen as one and the same, in disregard for their differences.

The distribution of IP and SP knowledge throughout the modern population of Diu reflects a number of personal histories and provides important hints as to the social meaning of the former colonial language. In order to account for knowledge of IP and SP in Diu, several factors need to be analysed; here we give a list of interactions between IP/SP knowledge and social characteristics of its speakers that are simultaneously connotations of language knowledge/use and variables relevant to predict/explain allegiance to the language(s) in a given member of the speech community. The rationale behind these connotations of IP and SP is found in the colonial era and what is known about the socio-dynamics of Diu at the time:

a) **Religion**; this is the most obvious connotation of knowledge of SP/IP, as made evident by the local epithet of Portuguese as ‘the language of the Christians’; Christianity (of the Catholic rite) was introduced in Diu by the Portuguese rulers and has thereafter become the most visible manifestation of the colonists’ culture. The Christian community has tacitly inherited the role of upholders of this culture since integration into India, a fact to which their native command of IP/SP must not be alien. It is a fact that the Christians are the only native Diuese who can claim IP or SP as their first language, and certainly the only ones who have passed this knowledge on to the younger generations.

Christian allegiance to the language is no surprise; this community also claims direct descent from Portuguese settlers, which is given some support by onomastics. At present, the equation that whoever is a native speaker of IP in Diu is a Christian seems largely (if not entirely) supported. Language is therefore instrumental in setting the boundaries of the Christian community and enforcing its separate identity with regard to the rest of the population. Alongside religion and language, other cultural manifestations ultimately traceable to Portuguese presence are characteristic of the Diuese Christians, such as clothing, certain food items, songs and dance, etc. A clarification must be made at this point to the effect that a number of Christians have entered Diu since 1961 from areas of India with a weaker or no connection with Portuguese colonial rule; they number some 50 at present, according to local ecclesiastic statistics.

b) Social status: the territory’s colonial history has enforced an association between the Portuguese language and local administration, and more generally between command of Portuguese and belonging to/interaction with a ruling elite. Christians were not the only administrative employees under the Portuguese, at least in the period immediately preceding decolonisation, nor is this the case nowadays. However, Singh *et al.* (1994) mention the partial social demotion of the Christian community after 1961 with reference to their access to administration:

They [the Christians] enjoyed high social position during the Portuguese regime being placed high in

7 The same cannot safely be stated for knowledge of SP, given that the recent trend of emigration to Portugal has resulted in a number of children of Diuese origin growing up in Europe; however, these SP speakers tend to pay only short visits to Diu, as opposed to setting up their main residence on the island.
administration. Presently, they perceive their position as inferior to the Brahman, Vania, Koli Patel, Kamli, Bhandari, Sagar and Bari, and superior to the Machhi, Mangela, Mitna, Dhodia, Dubla, Momin and Mahyavanshi (Singh et al 1994: 51)

It is perhaps not surprising that the centres of the territory’s administration (Collector’s office and dependencies, Municipality, court) are nowadays places where fluency in Portuguese is likely to be found, among Christians as well as non-Christians. It is also conspicuous that knowledge of SP seems to be preferred by those higher up in the administrative ranking (cf. considerations on Education below).

This correlation of SP with social rank applies to the native-speaker community also, where it encounters native use of IP. Although fluency in SP per se does not determine someone’s status, the most influential among the Christian community are those with better knowledge of the colonial norm. Overall, SP remains the norm of prestige.

c) Ideology: nostalgia for the colonial era is not devoid of significance when addressing language maintenance. The Christians feel culturally attached to Portugal, but significant nostalgia for the colonial era is also to be found among members of the Hindu and Muslim communities. Let us, however, not generalise this attitude towards the past; instead, it is possible that those who are capable of expressing themselves in SP/IP are precisely the ones with strongest affinities with the former colonial structure, reflecting their interaction with it. Therefore, language proficiency may not be so much a consequence of ideological attachment to that era as indeed a co-product of a favourable colonial experience.

The assertion of the relative social decay experienced by the Christians helps to explain their attachment to the colonial period; the younger speakers of IP, as expected, feel much more distant from the past than the elders. This issue must not be downplayed when considering the language’s vitality.

In addition, the issue of SP’s higher prestige enters the realm of ideology to the extent that it reflects (and perpetuates) a colonial-induced social structure.

d) Age: in accordance with the timing of Diu’s decolonisation, knowledge of IP and SP is much more widespread among the older generation, followed by the middle generation and very little among the younger generation. Integration with India in 1961 has inevitably led to a process of cultural decolonisation that poses a threat to the survival of IP. Gujarati, already widely used and accepted under Portuguese rule, gained in recognition after 1961, and English ostensibly replaced Portuguese as the single non-endemic language being promoted in the territory, namely through education. Apart from public Gujarati-medium schools, present-day Diu counts a number of private English-medium institutions, which have proven extremely popular. One such school is run by the Catholic Church and is attended by all Christian children.

All in all, the only youngsters with proficiency in IP are the Christians, as this is their community’s first language. Among the Muslim and Hindu children and teenagers, no knowledge of either IP or SP is to be found, except for the odd formula or whether they have recently experienced a period of emigration to a Portuguese-speaking region (see note 7).

e) Economic affluence: the connotation of IP and particularly SP with economic affluence is not distant from the considerations above concerning social status or the ones below on education. Throughout Diu’s colonial era, economic affluence depended on the relationship with the colonial structure. In the 17th century, trade in the territory was largely controlled by locals. In 1686, a group of Banians complained to the Viceroy D. Francisco de Távora that the tyranny of the local Portuguese rulers was hampering their activity, and at the same time contributing to Diu’s commercial decline. Eventually, the viceroy determined that the local traders should be granted more control over commerce. This episode suggests that the colonial power had the ability to control its territories’ economy and, as such, had a grip on the distribution of wealth. It is therefore conceivable that, in order to be financially affluent, good relations ought to be maintained with the ruling elite.

Emigration was already common practice in Diu in the 16th century. In the 17th century, a community of Diuese traders was reported in Mozambique, but at present the most immediate link is with Portugal, as all those who can prove descent from a family already established in Diu before 1961 are in theory entitled to a Portuguese passport. Some emigrants occasionally return to the island and continue to invest in it. An important linguistic consequence of this profitable migratory route is that these families usually become proficient in SP.

The correlation between economic affluence and a higher degree of education is self-evident. In the case of 20th century Diu, education higher than basic had (and still has) to be attained outside the territory; until 1961 the preferred destinations for that were Goa or Portugal. Financially speaking, this is the type of endeavour that would be reserved for the mostly affluent, therefore enforcing the association between SP and economic affluence.

f) Education: as mentioned earlier, there is a perceived interaction between knowledge of SP/IP and education, not so much concerning the level of studies but rather the medium of education. According to documents of the colonial administration preserved at the Historical Archives in Goa, in the 20th century there were several Gujarati-medium schools in the territory and one Portuguese school. This school, located in Diu Town, was not meant exclusively for the Christian population.
It is unclear what the policy of admission to this school was, and therefore it is not possible to explore the interactions between Portuguese-medium education and other variables, such as economic affluence or social status, in the colonial period. However, considering the range of people who trace their knowledge of IP or SP (in the case of the non-native speakers) back to pre-1961 schooling, the Portuguese-medium school must have been rather inclusive.

**Interactions and the IP-SP divide**

Having segmented the social role of IP/SP into constituents a) through f) above, it is necessary to point out that none of these in isolation is sufficient to predict the occurrence of IP or SP knowledge in any given individual, with the possible exception of a) (and even then making no predictions as to the IP-SP divide). Instead, these social characteristics must be allowed to interact with each other in virtually unlimited combinations. Nor must one particular layering be expected to apply to all members of the speech community. As LePage and Tabouret-Keller propose,

> [n]ational, ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, age, sex, social class, educational economic, geographical, occupational and other groupings are all liable to have linguistic connotations. The degree of co-occurrence of boundaries will vary from one society to another, the perception of the degree of co-occurrence will vary from one individual to another. (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985: 248)

It is clear, for example, how the perceived connotation of SP with high education may not apply to a young member of the community, given that since 1961 education in Portuguese is less available - therefore, a particular setting for the age factor will annul the assumptions of the education layer. On the other hand, the correlation between (old) age and IP/SP is rather fallible unless coupled with other factors (e.g., ideology).

Elements a) to f) can be expected to operate on three distinct levels. Their explanatory power may be relevant to:

1) Define the community of those with indiscriminate knowledge of IP and/or SP - all factors mentioned above are of relevance, with the necessary highlight of the religion variable: with the exception of recent immigrant families (see above), most Christians can be expected to belong to the IP/SP speech community;

2) Predict the native vs. non-native status of a speaker’s command - religion stands out very strongly with respect to this issue: native-speaker command of IP and/or SP is not to be found outside the Christian community (with the possible exception of emigrant youngsters, but see note 7);

3) Provide a break-up between use of IP and use of SP among the speech community - within the IP/SP speech community, a number of factors may favour the knowledge of SP, such as social status, ideology, age (contact with SP has reduced since 1961) and education. Religion is not essential for this matter, as both IP and SP are to be found among Christians and non-Christians alike.

Proficiency in IP and SP are not mutually exclusive, but SP remains the norm of prestige. This situation is not new in the history of IP nor is it exclusive to Diu. Notice for instance the following observation by Dalgado concerning early 20th-century Nagappattinam (my translation from Portuguese):

> The individuals who speak the creole are conscious of the fact that their language is corrupt, and they do not wish to expose it to strangers. Hence the difficulty in collecting specimens of the creoles that are exclusively colloquial. (Dalgado 1917)

Allegations of linguistic corruption when referring to IP (as seems to be the case for contact languages the world over) are as old as the language itself (cf. e.g., documentation contained in Lopes, 1936), and go on shaping the patterns of language use nowadays. Among those with a strong command of SP, IP will tendentially not be used towards an outsider or a speaker perceived to have high social status, but it may be used in a familiar context. In addition, many linguistic inconsistencies attested in the speech of IP speakers must be attributed to an attempt at reverting to SP. As such, even after decolonisation, SP knowledge remains a powerful factor of social stratification. The difficulty Dalgado reported in obtaining unconstrained IP data is still felt in Diu, with the exception of the younger generation, for which prestige notions are more and more tenuous.

**Portuguese and Catholicism**

It has been variously pointed out that the single most powerful social correlate of IP is Catholicism in the areas where it is spoken. Analysis of this link is warranted for two reasons: 1) to explain IP’s loss pattern; 2) to explain language maintenance in areas outside Portugal’s recent political jurisdiction.

The ongoing reduction of IP to the Christian section of the population in Diu and Daman is a strong indicator of the fact that religion is IP’s main social referent, as is the unfailing maxim that only the Catholic community upholds the language natively in these territories. It is likely that the loss of IP in other regions (e.g., Bassein/Bombay or Meliapour) followed a similar pattern. The cases of Cannanore and Korlai would then represent more advanced stages of this process of reduction, as IP is the exclusive prerogative of Catholics there.
In addition, it is convenient to refer once more to the longevity of Korlai IP. As happened elsewhere in India, Portuguese in Chaul (Korlai’s predecessor) was intense but relatively short lived, between around 1514 and 1740. Several other settlements present a similar chronology of settlement, however in Korlai IP has survived to this day. A rare feature of Korlai is that the entire village is Catholic; as a result, an unusually tight-knit community survives where the creole is allowed to remain active despite widespread knowledge of Marathi.

The second essential element to understand Korlai IP’s longevity relates to the fact that, according to Clements (1996), the parish was looked after by Portuguese-speaking priests. The use of Portuguese in religion therefore largely outlived Portuguese political presence in Korlai, as indeed in other Indian parishes.

The association of the Portuguese language with Christianity in Asia is in fact rather old and well attested. At the onset of their colonising efforts, the Dutch and the English had to resort to Portuguese in order to carry out missionary work, as shown in Lopes (1936). The same author quotes an 1814 source (Quarterly Review) as claiming that ‘(i)f Christianity eventually triumphs in India and a roman church is formed, portuguese will be the language of that church wherever it expands’ (Lopes, 1936: 62). As far as Catholicism was concerned, the Portuguese had from very early on been given the mission and control of evangelisation in the whole of Asia by papal mandate. This took the form of a Patronage (Padroado Português), first delineated in 1442, which made Portugal responsible for all religious activities in the territories it reached, including the nomination of church officials and administration of its patrimony (see Sá, 2004: 15). Later on, since the foundation in Rome of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide) in 1662, conflicts ensued between the Holy See and Portugal concerning the exact jurisdiction of the Padroado. Despite successive limitations and negotiations, Portugal retained the right to exercise religious power in some of the areas over which it had lost political and economic control - such was the case of modern-day Maharasthra, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, whose dioceses remained under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Goa until 1886 (Mangalore, Bombay, Quilon and Madurai) and even after that (Cochin and Meliapari). The Padroado and ensuing presence of Portuguese missionaries was instrumental in maintaining IP’s long-term vitality in these regions, with repercussions reaching to this day (e.g. Cannanore and Cochin).

The conditions in which the different IP varieties have survived vary greatly. The present-day situation of Diu, complex though it may be, is in fact representative only of the territories that remained under Portuguese control until the 20th-century, and mirrored in Daman alone8 (and to some extent by the distribution of SP in Goa, where no creole is spoken at present and where considerations on the IP-SP divide are therefore suspended). Reflecting the fact that Daman’s population is much larger than that of Diu, Damian IP speakers number around 4000 at present (Clements, 1991), in much the same conditions as in Diu. This is the largest of all IP-speaking communities to survive at present. Similarly to Diu, Catholic children are still raised in IP. Challenges to the maintenance of IP in both Diu and Daman include the tendency to abandon religious services in Portuguese in favour of English, the attraction of English and Hindi as languages of employment and wealth, the continuous reduction of the IP speaking community, the lack of official recognition within the Union Territory and the nation, continuing SP pressure and emigration.

The second largest community to uphold IP is found in Korlai (Maharashtra), where the creole earlier formed in Chaul is spoken by circa 760 people, including children (see Clements, 1996). The survival of IP in Korlai may seem surprising if one takes into consideration that the Marathas drove the Portuguese out of Chaul in 1740; but the village is also unique in that it is entirely Catholic (see section ‘Portuguese and Catholicism’).

Having lost its community-defining properties and virtually all its domains of use, IP is spoken in Cannanore by 6 people only, and almost entirely in multilingual households. In consequence, Malayalam and English have replaced IP as day-to-day languages and knowledge of IP is becoming obsolescent. A fraction of the speakers do not use IP on a regular basis and must struggle to recall certain aspects of the language.

Access to speakers of Sri Lanka IP in Batticaloa and Trincomalee has been severely limited in the recent past, and as a result its linguistic vitality is unknown; the last accounts of its linguistic distribution and vitality date from the 1980’s (Smith, 1984 and Theban, 1985). To the best of our knowledge, all other varieties of IP, with the possible exception of Cochin, have become extinct.

**Policies**

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8 As of yet, the nearby territories of Dadra and Nagar-Haveli have not been linguistically prospected, although there is information of Portuguese still surviving among the Catholic population; whether this refers to IP or SP still needs to be established.
The challenges faced by IP in each of the territories mentioned warrant serious doubt as to its long-term maintenance. The process of loss is a long-standing one (notice the consummated extinction of most IP varieties); despite the longevity of the varieties still extant, they are at present rather endangered, and in some areas (e.g. Cannanore) virtually extinct. It is imperative that attempts are made to document and, if possible, support IP in those areas in which it still fulfills important social roles. Based on our observations of the domains of use and social status of IP, a number of suggestions follow that may contribute to a reversal of the process of loss.

The particularly strong historical link between IP and Catholicism has been discussed before (see section ‘Portuguese and Catholicism’). A result of this is that the Catholic Church in India can give a major contribution for the maintenance of IP. Church authorities should be encouraged to uphold services in Portuguese (ideally IP).

The political authorities of India also hold responsibility on the matter. The benefits of granting a minority language official recognition and support have often been pointed out. Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) integrate the variable of Institutional support in the list of factors for determining a language’s vitality:

Institutional Support variables refer to the extent to which a language group receives formal and informal representation in the various institutions of a nation, region or community. The vitality of a linguistic minority seems to be related to the degree its language is used in various institutions of the government, church, business and so forth. (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor 1977: 309)

In practical terms, opportunity for maintenance efforts lies mostly with the administration of the Union Territory of Daman, Diu, Dadra and Nagar-Haveli. Public recognition should be given to the fact that this territory holds some of the most dynamic speech communities of a unique creole language, and their linguistic riches should be celebrated.

On a national level, the very existence of IP still needs to be acknowledged. The necessity to promote the nation-wide visibility of IP is as pressing as for any other minority language in the country. Official accounts of India’s linguistic diversity never contemplate IP or SP. The truth is the definition of India’s enormous language inventory is still ongoing, giving rise to some apparent inconsistencies, as reported by Romaine:

In the 1981 census in India 107 mother tongues were reported. Only 20 years later, however, 1,652 mother tongues were reported. The discrepancies here are due to a number of factors. One is that a given mother tongue may be called by as many as 47 different names depending on the ethnic, religious and other affiliation of the person who claims it. Out of all these varieties, however, only 15 mother tongues are recognized as ‘major languages’ by the Indian government. (Romaine 1995: 27)

A first step should contemplate the inclusion of IP in the language listings for the national census, as IP is indeed the native language of a fair number of citizens throughout the country.

Another measure with potentially positive results would be to network IP speakers in different areas of the country, so as to unveil the true dimension of IP. In the case of Diu and Daman, it is felt that the close ties between the two territories (e.g. by means of intermarriage and a common administration) has been positive for the maintenance of IP. Public events should be also be aimed at, so as to promote awareness of the language and its challenges, while simultaneously stimulating a sense of worth among IP speakers. Long-standing notions of the creole’s inadequacy or linguistic inferiority are not only scientifically and morally unwarranted but also an obstacle to its survival. It is felt that any activity aiming at empowering the IP in detriment of SP is not only fair and liberating but also in keeping with the sensitivities of those who oppose the promotion of a former colonial language.

As a final note, let us point out that, given the prestige asymmetry between SP and IP, setting up SP courses in these areas is likely to constitute a threat rather than a boost to the creole. Instead, further research on IP should be promoted, possibly aiming at the development of teaching materials and ideally involving native speakers.

**Conclusion**

The present study has drawn a picture of IP’s modern vitality that reveals the language’s frailty in all of its surviving varieties. The process of loss is an old one, and as a result IP is now circumscribed to a fraction of the territory over which it once spread. A product of India’s historical contact with Portugal, IP is in fact not a colonial language but rather a cluster of unique varieties whose structure bears testimony to their history of linguistic and social contact.

The analysis of distribution and use of IP in Diu made it clear that Catholicism is its primary connotation, and that the universe of IP speakers is becoming more and more circumscribed to the Catholic communities. Such has also been the case in territories that fell out of the Portuguese sphere of political influence earlier, such as

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9 These considerations do not apply to the cases of Korlai, Cannanore and possibly Cochin, where SP pressure is either entirely absent or rather weak.
Korlai and Cannanore; therefore, it is suggested that promoting the employment of IP in Catholic activities can be a reinforcing measure, as indeed will be the official recognition of the language, its worth and its challenges.

IP has a long-standing history of multilingualism and minority, which comes to show that, given the correct sociolinguistic factors, multilingualism per se does not constitute a threat to a minor language’s survival unless two languages compete for the same functions and social domains. SP, on the other hand, retains a prestige in Diu and Daman that threatens the speakers’ attachment to IP. In order for IP to strive, therefore, measures should be taken to boost its image in the eyes of its own speakers, instead of perpetuating erroneous notions of IP’s inferiority. It is felt that IP’s survival in the future depends on measures to be taken at present, and also that IP’s uniqueness, history and ongoing social functions justify that action be taken.

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