

Linguistic Diversity as a National Resource: The Role of Linguistics in Contemporary India

DR. Deepesh Kumar Thakur

PhD, MA, MBA, DCA, Associate Professor, Mangalmai Institute of Management & Technology,
Greater Noida (UP)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1308000310>

Received: 07 September 2026; Accepted: 12 September 2026; Published: 24 September 2026

ABSTRACT

India has world's richest Linguistic and cultural diversity which is its real strength. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 rightly lays emphasis on mother tongue education (regional, local and home language) so that students can gain knowledge and understand the subject matter in a more effective way. The policy also serves the purpose of saving many endangered or lesser known languages of India from extinction.

The study of Linguistics is the scientific and systematic interpretation of the structure and evolution of human language, and its use in every aspect of human endeavour. Linguistics as a discipline focuses on theories of language structure, their variation and usage, the description and documentation of contemporary languages, and the implications of theories of language for an understanding of the mind, human culture, social behaviour, and language learning and teaching.

It encompasses not only the study of sound, grammar and meaning, but also the history of language families, how languages are acquired by children and adults, and how language use is processed in the mind and how it is connected to race and gender. The discipline more recently has embraced advances in computational Linguistics and is active in understanding the relationship between humans and computational devices.

Key Words: Linguistics, NEP, Language, Education, Research

Language

"Language is a system of conventional spoken or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture communicate", thus defines, Encyclopedia Britannica.

In other words we can say that Language is a system of conventional spoken or written symbols used by people in a shared culture to communicate with each other. Human language is being examined as a universal component of thought and behaviour through the lens of scientific methodology. All languages begin as speech, and many go on to develop writing systems.

Originating over 5,000 years ago, records of the Linguistic history of India began with early pictures that transformed into pictorial scripts and engravings and eventually in to modern orthographies. The Indian subcontinent comprises seven sovereign nations: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives. Linguistically speaking, these political divisions cloud the extensive underlying chronicles of literary and socio-Linguistic histories of the present states of the subcontinent. The major language families of South Asia are Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, and Munda. The region's diversity also manifests itself in religious pluralism, representing Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. It is the languages of wider functions that link regional, ethnic, and Linguistic population of the pluralistic subcontinent. These languages are used in varying degrees of functional effectiveness in communication - in administrative, commercial, and religious contexts, and in cross-Linguistic situations, and often as languages of status, power, and identity construction. Throughout history evolution of Indian languages is a constant of influences and reconstruction from early proto-languages to the modern Indian languages.

Profile of a Linguist

Linguists may specialize on a specific language and conduct extensive study on it, or they may specialize in a Linguistic concept, such as history or grammar. Linguists investigate how people acquire their knowledge about language, how this knowledge interacts with other cognitive processes, how it varies across speakers and geographic regions, and how to model this knowledge computationally. They study how to represent the structure of the various aspects of language (such as sounds or meaning), how to account for different Linguistic patterns theoretically, and how different components of language interact with each other. Many Linguists collect empirical evidence to help the students gain insight into a specific language or languages in general. Linguists basically analyse very specific aspects of language to determine how languages are structured phonetically, syntactically and culturally.

It is important to note that the term Linguist is used differently in non-academic domains. Sometimes language experts are referred to as Linguists, but those individuals do not necessarily conduct the same kind of scientific research as carried out by those with advanced degrees in Linguistics. So, we can say that Linguists are not necessarily individuals who can speak multiple languages but rather, individuals who have acquired specialized training in the art and science of Analysing patterns of language structure and language use. A Polyglot is used for a person who has knowledge of multiple languages. A person can be both a Linguist and a Polyglot.

The Scope of Linguistics

With close connections to the humanities, social sciences and the natural sciences, Linguistics complement a diverse range of other disciplines such as anthropology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, biology, computer science, health sciences, education and literature. Following are the main reasons on why one should study Linguistics:

- To comprehend a language's evolution and nature.
- To know language theory and to comprehend different languages in a particular context.
- To recognise the progressive importance of languages in human evolution and society.
- To investigate how languages and dialects change and flourish through time.
- To learn about several facets of a language, such as speech therapy, socio-Linguistics, anthropological applications, psychological factors, and so on.

Field of Linguistics

Linguistics is comprised of several principal areas such as Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics, Historical Linguistics, Socio-Linguistics, Psycho-Linguistics and Computational Linguistics.

Phonetics

The study of how speech sounds are produced and perceived is known as Phonetics. Speech sounds are examined in terms of production mechanisms (articulatory phonetics), propagation or transmission mechanisms (acoustic phonetics), and perception mechanisms (auditory phonetics).

Phonology

Phonology is the study of the laws that regulate the structure, distribution, and sequencing of sounds, as well as the form of syllables in a particular language. It approaches a language's sound system by using phonemes as a starting point. A phoneme is the smallest Linguistic unit of sound that can indicate a difference in meaning.

Morphology

Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words. It investigates the smallest units of meaning,

morphemes, as well as the mechanisms of word production to see how morphemes come together with prefixes and suffixes to make whole words.

Syntax

Syntax is the study of the formation of sentences and the relationship of their component parts. Syntax refers to word order and depends on lexical categories such as parts of speech. Study of syntax helps us understand how sentences work, the meanings behind word order, structure, and punctuation. In other words we can say that syntax is the study of sentence structure.

Semantics

Semantics helps us understand the meaning behind words and combinations of words. In semantics we also study how each language provides words and idioms for fundamental concepts and ideas (lexical semantics), how the parts of a sentence are integrated into the basis for understanding its meaning (compositional semantics). Some other sub field of Linguistics include Pragmatics - the study of language is used in a context, Historical Linguistics - the study of language change, Socio-Linguistics - the study of the relation between language and society

Psycho-Linguistics- the study of how humans acquire and use language, it is the study of the mental aspects of language and speech, Stylistics - Study and interpretation of style and tones in Language, Neuro-Linguistics - the study of how language is represented in the brain, Comparative Linguistics - the study of identifying similar and dissimilar properties between different languages of a common origin, Philosophical Linguistics - the study that bridges the gap between language and logic and Anthropological Linguistics - the study of language in a cross-cultural context.

Career Opportunities

A degree in Linguistics provides a wide range of career choices. Students with Linguistics degree have found employment not only in traditionally defined academic positions (i.e. university-level teaching and research) but also in publishing and translation, international development, literacy consultation, language planning, language technology (Microsoft, Amazon), ELT and ESL teaching, both in India and abroad and a host of other interesting career fields. Some of the career opportunities with Linguistics degree are as follows:

Lexicography

Linguistic consultants work on the advisory panels of dictionary publishers. Good lexicographers must possess knowledge of phonology, morphology, historical Linguistics, dialectology, and Socio-Linguistics.

Computational Linguist

A computational Linguist researches, creates, and maintains models that help technology better process human language. He/She is responsible for developing applications that communicate with technology to help computers follow human commands to a greater degree. Computational Linguists also work on speech recognition, text-to-speech synthesis, artificial intelligence, natural language processing, user research, and computer-mediated language learning, among many other areas.

Publishing

Publishers and the media industry prefer trained Linguists as technical writer. The verbal and written skills that Linguists develop are ideal for positions in writing, editing, and publishing.

Information Technology

Graduates with formal training in Linguistics are considered as an expert in speech recognition, text-to-speech synthesis, artificial intelligence, natural language processing, and computer-mediated language learning.

Translator

A translator is a Linguist who converts texts and communications from one language to another. A translator may work for a government agency, a public facility, or in any role that facilitates communication and provides translations for written documents, oral dialogues and more.

Test Design

Linguists can work for testing agencies, where they prepare and evaluate standardized exams and conduct research on assessment issues.

Language Expert

Language specialists may interpret and translate verbal messages from one language to another. A language specialist may also transcribe vocal exchanges into written material, either in the same or a different language.

Language Documentation

Some agencies and institutes seek Linguists to work with language consultants in order to document, analyse, and preserve languages (many of which are endangered). Some organizations engage Linguists in fieldwork like conducting language surveys, establishing literacy programs, and translating documents of cultural heritage.

Advertising and Marketing

Most of the advertising agencies and marketing arms of corporations' commission extensive, sophisticated Linguistic research on the audiences that people make with particular sounds and classes of sounds, and the kind of wording that would appeal to potential consumers.

Linguistic Consulting

Students with degree in Linguistics become language consultant and offer expertise for professionals in law or medicine. The subfield of forensic Linguistics involves studying the language of legal texts, Linguistic aspects of evidence, issues of voice identification, and other areas of specialization. Law enforcement agencies and the courts and other related agencies hire Linguists for these purposes.

Speech-Language Pathologist

A speech-language pathologist is a specialist who works with people who have communication difficulties or who have difficulty speaking. Speech-language pathologists can diagnose language issues, develop treatment plans, and provide therapy to help people improve their speech.

Education and Teaching

People with a background in Linguistics and Education can develop materials for different populations, train teachers, design assessments, find effective ways to teach language-related topics in specific communities, or use the language of a community effectively in instruction. Many applied Linguists are involved in teacher education and educational research. If you get a PhD degree in Linguistics then you will be hired to teach in departments such as Linguistics, Philosophy, Psychology, Speech and Communication Sciences, Anthropology, English, and departments focused on specific foreign languages.

Film Industry

Linguists are hired to provide training to artist in their speech and dialogue delivery. Actors need training in pronunciation, intonation, and different elements of grammar in order to sound like real speakers of a language or dialect. They may even need to know how to make them sound like an authentic non-native speaker.

CONCLUSION

Linguistic diversity is one of India's most distinctive cultural and intellectual resources. The coexistence of numerous languages, dialects, speech communities and linguistic traditions reflects the historical depth, cultural complexity and social plurality of the Indian subcontinent. Rather than viewing this diversity as an obstacle to national integration or educational development, contemporary India needs to recognise language as a resource that contributes to cultural continuity, social identity, knowledge production and inclusive development. In this context, linguistics has an important role to play in understanding, documenting, preserving and developing India's multilingual heritage.

The role of linguistics in contemporary India extends far beyond the scientific description of sounds, words, grammar and meaning. Linguistic research provides valuable insights into the relationship between language and society, language and identity, language and education, and language and culture. Sociolinguistics helps explain patterns of multilingualism, bilingualism, language choice and language variation, while applied linguistics contributes to language teaching, curriculum development, translation, communication and language policy. Historical and comparative linguistics further enables scholars to trace linguistic relationships and understand the evolution of India's diverse language traditions.

REFERENCES

1. Sharma, R. S. (2007). The linguistic background. In *India's Ancient Past*. Oxford University Press.
2. Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2001). The Globalisation of (educational) language rights. *International Review of Education*, 47(3–4), 201–219.
3. Annamalai, E. (2001). *Managing multilingualism in India: Political and linguistic manifestations*. Sage Publications.
4. Central Institute of Indian Languages. (n.d.). *Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages (SPPEL)*. Ministry of Education, Government of India.
5. Government of India, Ministry of Education. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020: Language and multilingualism provisions*.



Dr. Deepesh Kumar Thakur, working as a Faculty of Management- Humanities, teaching in PhD, Post-Graduate & Graduate students. He belongs to village-Kansi, District-Darbhanga-Mithila region of Bihar state (India). He has more than eighteen years of experience in teaching in Management, Engineering, Law, Medical Science, Architecture, Pharmaceutical, Dental Science, Fashion Designing as well as corporate sectors like NSN Ltd. & TCS Ltd. India, an author of a research book, *Importance of English Language for Professional & Technical Education*, "Lambert Academic Publishing (LAP), Germany (Europe)". He has presented **50** papers in International & National level Conference & Symposium. He has published several research papers in reputed National and International journals in diversified areas such as **25** no. of articles published in International & National Journals with SCI & Scopus, **4** no. of Books, **17** no. of Articles in books, editors of International Journals, *MIRRORVIEW* & *IIP*, a magazine and **3** nos. of education books. Edited **5** Books. Online Conference, Seminar, Symposium, Panel Discussion: the total no. of more than **250**. He has research interests in diversified areas such as English Language & Literature, Linguistics, Communicative English, Indian English Literature, Translation Studies, Management, Maithili, Sanskrit, Hindi, Nepali & Bengali.