

Tribhuvan University

A Sociolinguistic Survey of the Rajbanshi Language of Jhapa and Morang

A Thesis

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By

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This thesis submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Bhuban Lal Rajbanshi entitled "**A Sociolinguistic Survey of the Rajbanshi Language of Jhapa and Morang**" has been accepted by the undersigned members of the thesis committee.

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Abstract

This thesis presents a sociolinguistic survey of the Rajbanshi language spoken in the southeastern Nepal. The Rajbanshi language is spoken in three districts, namely Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari. The purpose for this sociolinguistic survey is to assess the sociolinguistic situation. The survey instruments utilized in this work were the sociolinguistic questionnaires and the comparison of the word lists.

Rajbanshi is one of the Indo-Aryan languages with a population of about 100000. The language has rich vocabulary although the core vocabulary has also been influenced by the neighboring language in the peripheral areas. Most of the speakers are bilingual, and the monolinguals are either the elderly people who are above 60 or the children who have not started their formal education.

The research shows that the vast majority use Rajbanshi language in most of the domains, especially at home, with village friends, at local market, at religious activities and while expressing their deepest feeling. These are the language domains where Rajbanshis are capable of maintaining their language. There are some phonological variations in the lexicons. Therefore, the language variation is mutually intelligible. Since the language has its own rich native vocabulary and speakers use it in most of the domains, the Rajbanshi language is still healthy and vital. In addition to this their preference to marry within the Rajbanshi community and their reluctance to migrate will support the language for its maintenance. The average mother tongue retention is more than seventy percent in Rajbanshi community. Although some positive works have been done in this language, the formal process of standardization in Rajbanshi language has not been started yet. Despite the language attrition, the Rajbanshis are optimistic about their language.

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