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THE STATUS OF HAROTI: AN ENQUIRY INTO RAJASTANI LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The present paper enquires the status of Haroti language. It also takes into consideration the problem of absence and paucity of data, grammatical categories that are closely related to its neighboring Rajasthani languages, and not commonly examined due to lack of data, and particularly language-specific data that are not closely related to other languages; and it is also an effort to build an academic consensus on its more distant relations that are not yet established.

One of the obvious markers of a regional language today is accent. Non-linguists and traditional grammarians generally consider the varieties of Rajasthani languages as mutually intelligible but with varying under the accent of an umbrella term 'Rajasthani' for the various eight macro and micro languages spoken in this region.

Keywords

Haroti language, Rajasthani languages, regional language, macro and micro languages

EL ESTATUS DEL HAROTI: UNA INVESTIGACIÓN EN LA LENGUA RAJASTANI

Resumen

En este artículo se investiga sobre el estado de la lengua Haroti. Toma también en consideración el problema de la ausencia y la escasez de datos, las categorías gramaticales que se relacionan estrechamente con las lenguas rajastanis vecinas, y que no han sido habitualmente examinadas por falta de datos, y particularmente los datos lingüísticos que no están estrechamente relacionados con otras lenguas; y muestra igualmente el esfuerzo por construir un consenso académico en relaciones más distantes que aún no se han establecido.

Actualmente, uno de los marcadores más evidentes de una lengua regional es el acento. Los no lingüistas y los gramáticos tradicionales consideran generalmente las variedades de la lengua rajastani como mutuamente inteligibles pero con diferentes acentos, y las agrupan bajo el término genérico 'rajastani' que agrupa las macrolenguas y las microlenguas que se hablan en esta región.

Palabras clave

lengua Haroti, lenguas rajastanis, lengua regional, macro y micro lenguas

1. Haroti: speakers and geography

The Haroti language¹ (Indo-Aryan language family) is spoken in Rajasthan. Rajasthani is a language cluster of the Indo-Aryan languages family. The current name Rajasthan² was introduced by Colonel Tod in 1829 and it gradually replaced the old name 'Rajputana' given by George Thomas in 1800. Through the course of the time the name Rajasthan got established mainly after the 'State Reorganization' on 1st November 1956 and consequently, the form of the language spoken in this state were called as the 'varieties' of Rajasthani. Haroti is spoken by 8 million people in Rajasthan in India (Census of India, 2011). All the eight languages of Rajasthani region have been derived from Surseni Apbhransha. Its word order is of SOV type.³ They are Haroti (spoken in Kota, Bundi, Jhalawar, and Baran), Bagari (spoken in Ganganagar and Hanumangarh), Shekawati (spoken in Jhunjunu and Sikar), Wagari (spoken in Banaswara, Dungarpur, and Chittorgarh), Dhundhari (spoken in Jaipur, Tonk, and Sawai Madhavpur), Mewati (spoken in Alwar, Bharatpur, Dholpur), Marwari (spoken in Jodhpur, Bikaner, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Churu, Pali, Ajmer, Nagaur), and Mewari (spoken in Udaipur and Rajsamand).

¹ This is the view put forward in Chomsky (1980), who explains that for him the expression 'language X' (for example, 'Haroti/German', etc.) is of no help and of no interest because a linguist's main concern is with the nature of language itself. What we are concerned with are the structural properties and relationships internal to the system.

² Rajasthan was essentially the country of the Gurjars Historian R. C. Majumdar explained that the region was long known as Gurjaratra (Country protected by the Gurjars or Gurjar nation), early form of Gujarat, before it came to be called Rajputana, around the 12th century. The historian John Keay in his book, India: A History stated that, Rajputana name was given by Britishers and the word even achieved a retrospective authenticity, in 1829 translation of Ferishta's history of early Islamic India.

³ The SOV language is a subject-object-verb type language.

According to 2001 census	Jhalawar	Bundi	Kota	Baran
Population	1180323	962620	1568525	1021653
Literacy Rate	57.32	55.57	73.53	59.5
Gender Ratio	926	907	896	919
Workers participation Ratio	47	47.47	34.51	42.41
Rank in Rajasthan	16	13	2	12

Table 1. Major HDI Index of Haroti region (Courtesy: Government of Rajasthan Statistics)

2. Unclassified languages

Out of these 8 languages Wagari, Bagri, and Haroti come under living- unclassified languages.⁴ Unclassified languages are languages whose genetic affiliation has not been established, mostly due to lack of reliable data. The present paper enquires the status of Haroti language. It takes into consideration the problem of absence and paucity of data, grammatical categories that are closely related to its neighboring languages, and not commonly examined due to lack of data, and particularly language-specific data that are not closely related to other languages; and it is also an effort to build an academic consensus on its more distant relations that are not yet established.

The paper highlights the fact that Rajasthani is not a language⁵ but it is a cluster of certain major/minor languages which are mutually intelligible to one another but are linguistically different. Haroti is the name of the southern region of Rajasthan in India. This region has four districts namely Kota, Jhalawar, Bundi, and Baran. The native speakers of this area use Haroti as their mother tongue or Hindi as their lingua franca.

⁴ Rajasthani language has 18 varieties. They are broadly divided into 2 categories-Marwari (10) and Unclassified languages (8). Under Marwari there are 10 languages, they are Dhatki (Pakistan), Dhundari (India), Goaria (Pakistan), Godwari (India), Loarki (Pakistan), Marwari (Pakistan), Marwari (India), Mewari (India), and Shekawati (India). The unclassified languages are Bagri (India), Gujari (India), Gurgula (India), Harauti (India), Lambadi (India), Gade Lohar (India), Malvi (India) and Nimadi (India).

⁵ A doctoral thesis submitted by Lakhan Gusain at Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi, India, now Professor at Johns Hopkins University described Ba:grī a dialect of Rajasthani, on the contrary Rajasthani is a term for people who stay in Rajasthan but speak different dialects or languages. As a matter of fact, it is not politically determined by the constitution of India whether Rajasthani is a language or a cluster of languages, or simply a dialect of Hindi but the fact remains that different languages that are spoken in different part of Rajasthan are phonologically, syntactically, and semantically different.

Most of the Hindi native speakers consider Haroti as the dialect⁶ of Hindi but Haroti has its distinct phonology, morphology, and syntax which is totally different from Hindi.

3. Grammatical features of Haroti

Haroti is spoken in historical Haroti region: Kota, Baran, and Bundi and Jhalawar districts of Rajasthan in Republic of India. Its word order is typical Subject Object Verb (SOV), e.g.

(1)

ram	ri	tʃʰori	nɛ	kʰi
ram.SG.M.	POSS.F.	girl.SG.F.	NOM	say.PST.

'Ram's daughter said.'

Haroti characteristic feature, unlike Hindi, is presence or absence of agentive marker in perfect tense depending on the nature of accusative marker, e.g.

/nɛ/ case marker is employed in accusative case in Haroti sentences, e.g.

(2)

nokər	baba	nɛ	pəkəɖba	bagja
servent	sage	ACC	catch hold	run

'The servent ran to catch hold of the sage.'

The agentive case marker is absent because *nɛ* is employed in accusative case marker. This sentence can be written in the following manner employing agentive case marker *nɛ*.

⁶ The purpose of this study is not to solve the debate between dialect-language controversy but to simply put a linguistic description of a mode of communication named 'Haroti' which is used by at least eight million people.

(3)

nokər	nε	baba	ĩ	pəkəɖa
servent	AG	sage	ACC	catch.PST.M.

‘The servent caught the sage.’

Where nε agentive marker is employed accusative case marker employs ι. It can never take nε is both agentive and accusative case marker.

Haroti as a language has been mentioned first by Kellogg (1875). Nagarchol and Syopuri languages are spoken in North and North-east part, and Malawi language is spoken in the Southern part of Haroti region respectively.

3. Status of Haroti

SIL International in 2005 documentation for Rajasthan for ISO 639-3 identified Rajasthan as raj, and the other individual languages within this macro language are following:

<p>Identifier: raj Name: Rajasthani Status: Active Code sets: 639-2 and 639-3 Scope: Macro-language Type: Living</p>	<p>The individual languages within this macro language are:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Bagri [bgq]</td> <td>Gade Lohar [gda]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gujari [gju]</td> <td>Hadothi [hoj]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Malvi [mup]</td> <td>Wagdi [wbr]</td> </tr> </table>	Bagri [bgq]	Gade Lohar [gda]	Gujari [gju]	Hadothi [hoj]	Malvi [mup]	Wagdi [wbr]
Bagri [bgq]	Gade Lohar [gda]						
Gujari [gju]	Hadothi [hoj]						
Malvi [mup]	Wagdi [wbr]						

Table 2. SIL International 2005 documents Rajasthani-Macro languages

Standard Haroti is described by G. A. Grierson⁷ (Grierson 1908) as the variety of Jaipuri language but as a matter of fact Jaipuri language is now known as Dhundhari language. Standard Haroti is still used as an oral form that is typically used in Haroti-speaking region. Although non-standard varieties of Haroti will also be used as Haroti

⁷ See *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. IX, part II, pages 203-220, published by New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas in 1908 for more detail.

dialects like Haroti-Malwi, Haroti-Sondhwari, etc., standard Haroti is the variety that is the focus of this study.

Lexical similarity of Haroti with other Rajasthani regional languages								
Marwari	Merwari	Shekhwari	Godwari	Mewari	Dhundari	Mewati	Bagari	Sipari
45%	57-67%	58-66%	44-47%	61-71%	64-73%	52-70%	55-62%	45%

Table 3. Lexical similarity in Haroti languages (Courtesy: SIL)⁸

4. Supporting facts for Haroti language

Haroti is as rich and diverse as any other language in its phonology, morphology, and syntax; and hence it can be used as an effective medium of expression and communication to transfer complex human thoughts, a feature characteristic of any language. Various syntactical features of Haroti are as potent as English or Hindi in terms of effectiveness. Not compromising on the thought of considering it as one of the dialects of Hindi language as a matter of fact there is a misconception in the mind of layman/non-linguist that languages which have a very high degree of mutual intelligibility can be named either after the geographical area of a place or the number of speakers of a particular area who are politically more aware for pleading for the constitutional status of that language. Linguistically speaking both these thought processes are wrong in order to determine the status of a language under which these Haroti speaking subjects' fall, which we believe that they have not done well enough to give this rich language the

⁸ Regarding updating the data on www.ethnologue.com, an e-mail has been sent to the editor (Ethnologue) on 25 June 2011.

Following are my suggestions to update the data for Haroti.

- (1) There is no alternate name like 'piploda' for Haroti.
- (2) This language is spoken only in Kota, Baran, Jhalawar, and Bundi, and not in Madhya Pradesh.
- (3) Sipari is not Haroti as it is also mentioned as an alternate name for it.
- (4) The website also shows lexical similarity with other Rajasthani languages where Merwari is mentioned but to my best knowledge there is no language as Merwari in Rajasthan instead Marwari and Mewari are there.
- (5) You have also missed to mention an important language Wagri spoken in Banaswara and Dungarpur regions of Rajasthan.

status that it deserves. Historians have raised much dust of controversy⁹ whether Haroti is a dialect of Hindi or a dialect¹⁰ of Rajasthani language. The following facts would help to clear certain basic doubts regarding Haroti. They are:

(1) Rajasthani is not a language but a geographical area, and Rajasthani is not defined as language in the constitution of India.

(2) Historians like S. N. Sadasivan in his book *A social history of India* has clearly mentioned that modern Hindi is a combination of north Indian dialects. He says:

Modern Hindi is a blend of such north Indian dialects as Maithili, Awadhi, Khadiboli, Vrijahasa, Magadhi, and Ardhamagadhi, Haroti (spoken in Kota)... (2000: 593)

This observation clears one doubt that the existence of Haroti was much earlier than Hindi.

(3) Following SIL, the term major and minor languages has been used instead of traditional term dialect. This usage would help to identify the minor-macro languages of India, and help young linguist to remove the paucity of data which becomes a hurdle to establish the independent status of a language.

(4) The problem with Haroti as a language lies not in the language or its syntax itself, rather it is due to the negligence and ill informed ways on part of both the Haroti speaking people and the political determination of the Haroti speakers to demand a status of a language for Haroti.

⁹ Linguists are in the better position to tell whether a form of language is a dialect or a language. Historians and psychologist can write best-sellers on the field and sub-fields of linguistics. Or they can express they own views and the popular opinion of the speakers.

¹⁰ The Mead Project states that to the linguist there is no real difference between a dialect and a language which can be shown to be related, however remotely, to another language. By preference the term is restricted to a form of speech which does not differ sufficiently from another form of speech to be unintelligible to the speakers of the latter.

5. Towards revitalization of Haroti language

The oral tradition proves that Haroti is as far from Hindi as Gujarati or Marathi is from Hindi. In *People of India: Rajasthan* (part II, vol. XXXVIII), edited by K. S. Singh it is clearly mentioned that:

Laskari tribe migrated Laskar (Gwalior) during the region of Maharaja Ram Singh (1827-1865) and got settled near Kota. They initially settled in eight villages near Kota. They are a community of farmers who used to supply fodder. Their language is Haroti. They know Hindi and use the Devnagari script (2003: 576).

This description might seem self contradictory as a matter of fact modern Hindi or Hindustani came into existence much later, and S. N. Sadasivan asserts that modern Hindi is a blend of a number of dialects which also includes Haroti as one of the languages. Thus, a dialect can become a language on political grounds, and not affected by the number of people speaking it or the geographical area it has covered.

Gabrielle Hogan-Brun and Stefan Wolff states in *Minority Languages in Europe: An Introduction to the Current Debate*

Language rights and language policy [...] are two important aspects [...] of minority protection [...] language minorities can preserve their language [...] their language is for their identity (2010: 6).

Another major problem is the way people start adopting a language considering it more important and prestigious because it is the part of the curriculum or it is used in government offices. This diverse and scattered thinking of Haroti speakers seems to be a major hurdle in getting a unified voice to do any effort to establish it in the constitution of India as a language as such.

In the recent past Indian government seems to be going in the right direction to organize a New Linguistic Survey of India in 2007 at Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore which was based on the footsteps of Grierson to do a systematic survey of Indian languages so that an estimate of Indian major/minor languages can be made.

Such small steps can become a seed which if nourished with care can flower into a wonderful platform from which the flowers of this language can spread in all directions. The need of the hour is for the Indian government to come forward and make serious efforts in the promotion of this language by encouraging it through various schemes, awards and scholarships. On part of the people, it is imperative for all scholars and native speakers to publish as much literature as possible in this language and also not to shy away from using this language in daily conversations, which is becoming a threatening trend for many native language speakers who are not using their native languages. Grenoble and Whaley focus on the term revitalization as a crucial factor to estimate the status of a language in *Saving languages: An introduction to language revitalization*. They say:

Revitalization aims at increasing the relative number of speakers of a language and extending the domains. [...] Revitalization almost always requires changing community attitudes about a language, while maintenance seeks to protect against the imposition of outside attitudes (2006: 23).

/boli/ literally means 'dialect' and /bhaja/ literally means 'language' are two common words with two different connotations in Haroti language. The former is used for the spoken form, and the later for the written form. The people conceptualize these terms in the form of written and oral literature. If a language employs a script that is popularly used by a more prestigious language then the languages like Haroti which has no independent script or writing symbols to express its words, phrases, clauses, and sentences is not recognized as /bhaja/ by its speakers despite the fact that this language shows a marked distinction in phonology, morphology, and syntax. The popular thinking is quite different from the pristine linguistic thought. As a matter of fact, the paucity of authentic data becomes the prime hurdle to overcome the popular thinking of /boli/ and /bhaja/. Linguistic grammar of Haroti also provides facts to clear the misconception that Haroti is a dialect of Hindi or Rajasthani.

Mutual intelligible languages generally cannot claim their independent status easily. There are several reasons for this; first, the people find it convenient to use both the

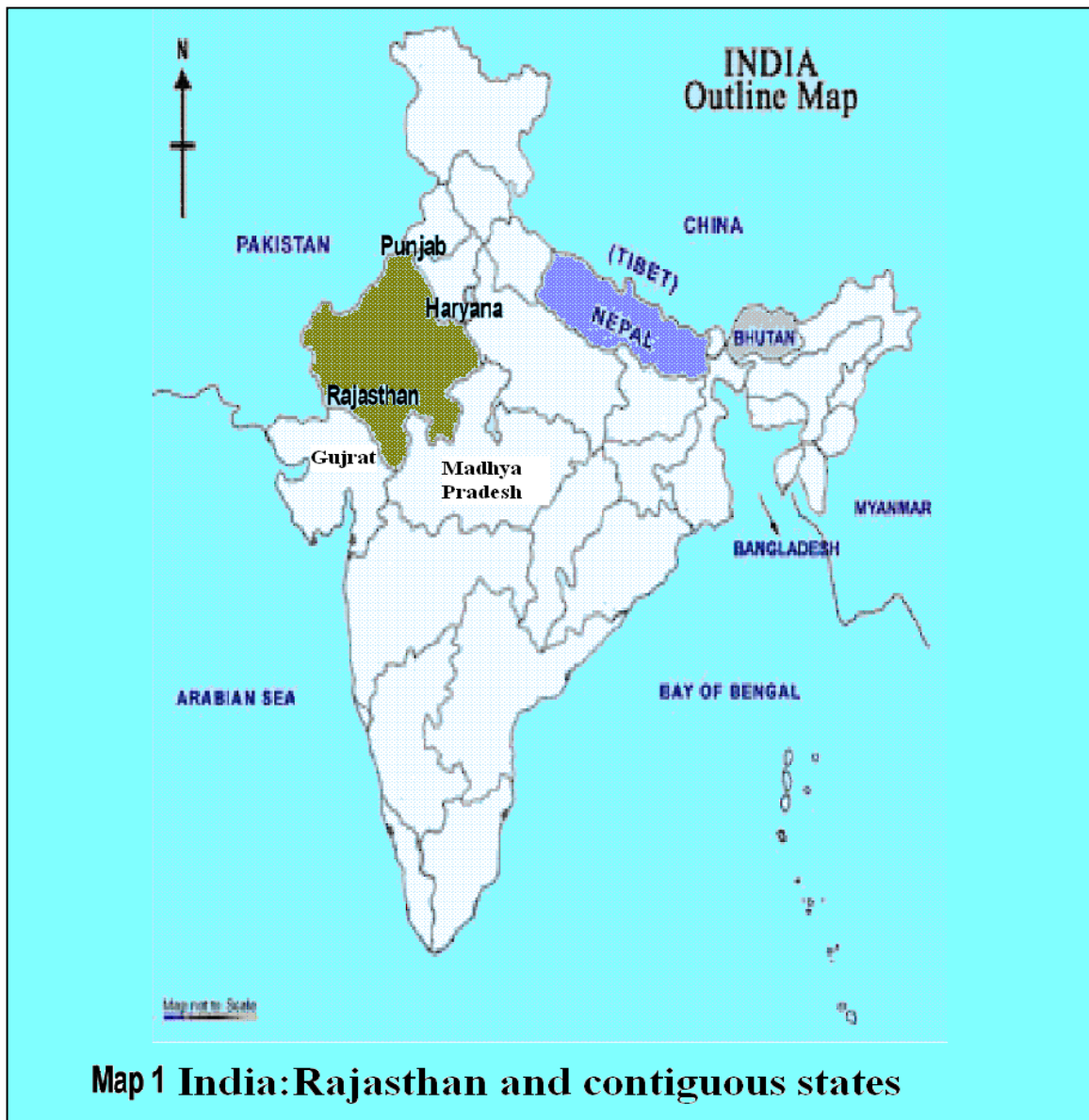
languages interchangeably, second, their purpose is to convey their message than to claim for an independent status, third, their strong feeling is attached to neither of the languages, and they find code-mixing is comparatively a easy mode of communication than to communicate in the single code.

Migration of people during their jobs from one language region to another is quite common. A lot of Indians migrate from other states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, etc. to Rajasthan and as a consequence they start using their mother tongue and the a major/minor Rajasthani language. Similarly, when a Rajasthani migrate to another states he/she adopts the same behavior. In due course, social and personal intimacy to a language disappears and multilingualism comes in vogue. But this practice is extremely harmful for the growth of independent minor-macro languages.

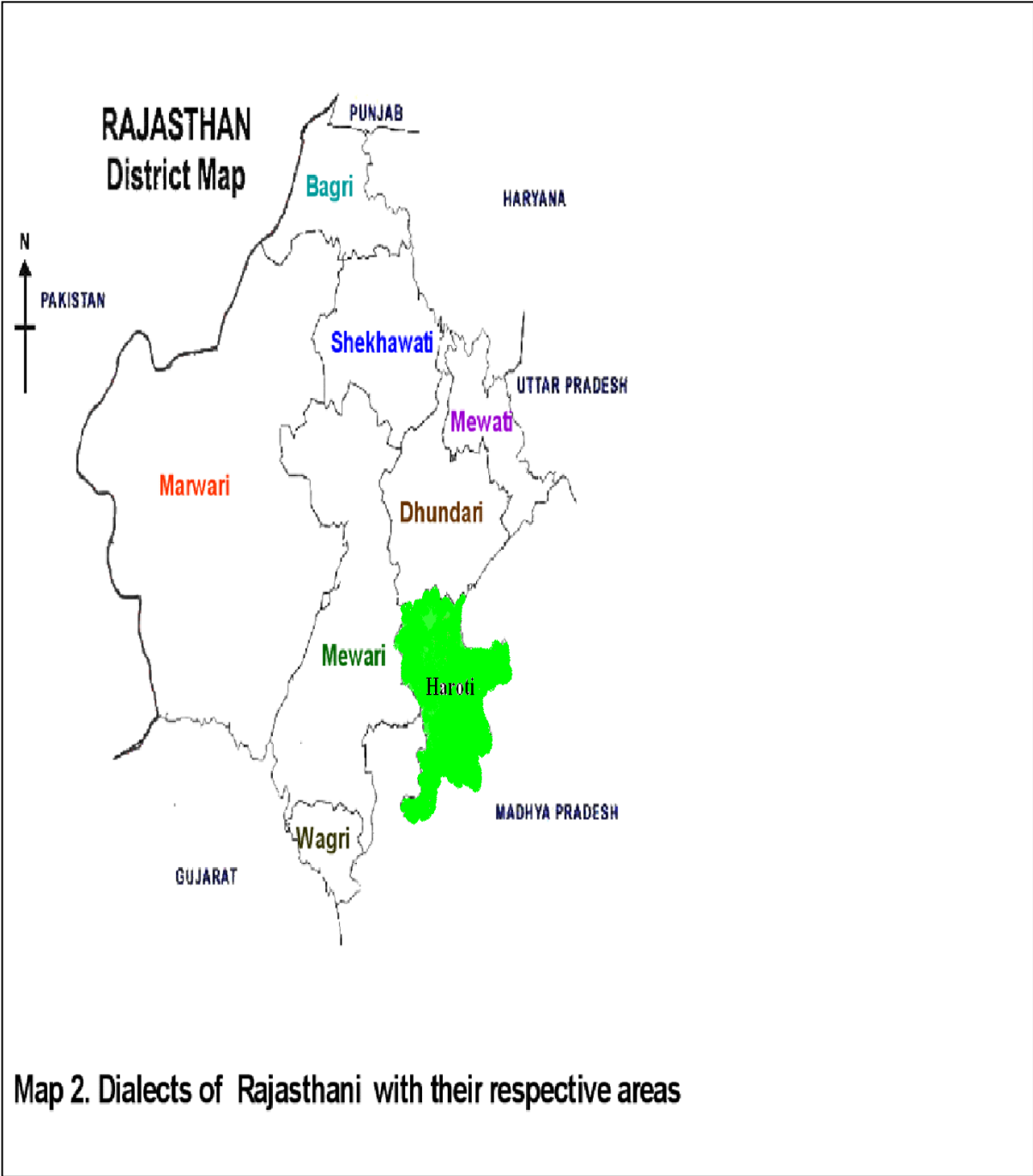
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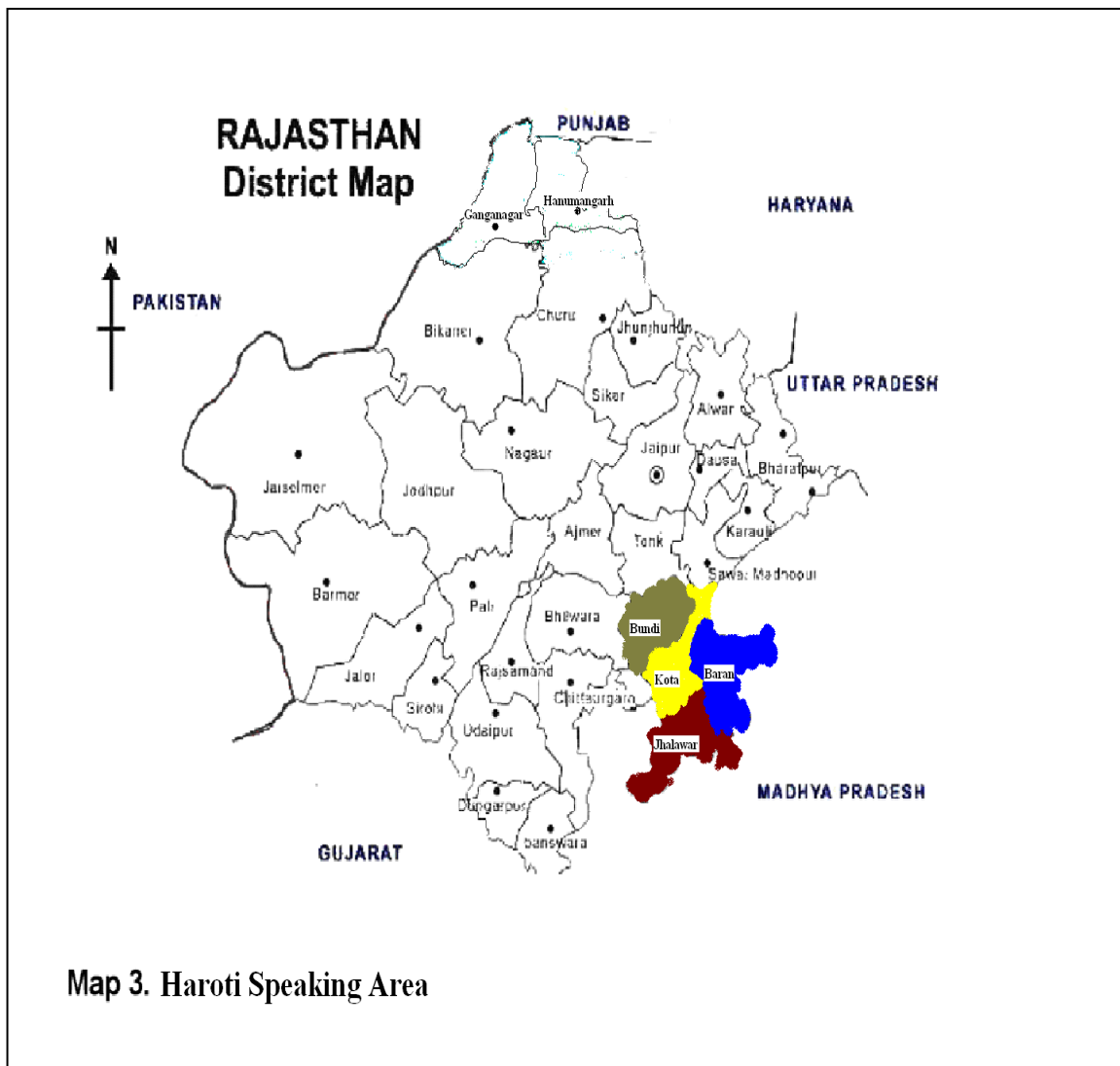
APPENDIX
MAPS



Map 1. Rajasthan and contiguous states in Republic of India



Map 2. Language regions of Rajasthan



Map 3. Haroti speaking districts: Kota, Jhalawar, Bundi and Baran