A Sketch of Supra-segmental Features of Modern Angika and Magahi - A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

This paper deals with the description of supra-segmental features especially *'juncture'* of Magahi and Angika languages. Both Angika and Magahi are spoken in central Bihar and in the adjoining areas. Angika and Magahi are not included in the VIII Schedule of languages in the Constitution of India and they belong to Eastern New Indo-Aryan (NIA) language (S. Jha, 1958 and S. Prasad, 2002 & 2008).

Key words: Angika, Magahi, supra-segmental features, New Indo-Aryan lanugages

1. Background of the Study

Angika and Magahi are among the languages which are not currently included in the eighth schedule of languages of India and they belong to *Eastern New Indo-Aryan (NIA) language* (S. Jha, 1958 and S. Prasad, 2002 & 2008). **Angika** is spoken mostly in the eastern and north-eastern parts of Bihar State in India and is also spoken in the Tarai districts of Nepal according to Indian Census report (2001). It is spoken by around 740,000 speakers in India (*Ethnologue*, 1997- 2001) while **Magahi** is spoken in the areas which formed the ancient kingdom of Magadha – the modern districts of Patna, Nalanda, Gaya, Jehanabad, Arwal and Aurangabad (S. Prasad, 2002). **Magahi** is bounded on the north by various forms of **Maithili** spoken in Tirhut across Ganga. On the west it is bounded by Bhojpuri, on the north-east, it is bounded by **Maithili** and **Angika**. Besides the ancient kingdom of **Magadha** the blend of **Magahi** and **Bengali** known as **Kharostha (Khortha)** is spoken by non-tribal populations in North Chotanagpur division of Jharkhand. The total number of speakers of Magahi is around 14 million (according to Census of India 2001).

2. Literature Survey

The literature survey in this present work identifies four possible juncture clusters in

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Angika and Magahi languages, which are as follows:

- **v+v   (vowel + vowel)**
- **v + c (vowel + consonants)**
- **vv + c (vowel, vowel + consonant)**
- **c + c   (consonant + consonant)**
- **c + v (not possible)**

After the examination of juncture in possible syllable clusters, only c+v is found not possible, while the other four aforementioned clusters are present in both the languages. The major work on supra-segmental features, especially on juncture, was done by Prasad, Saryoo, *Magahi Phonology*: *A descriptive study*. But in Angika no such existing concrete work is available. In this paper, the *juncture* of both the languages is examined descriptively.

3. Objective

Some studies have been conducted on Magahi *but on Angika,* no detailed study is available. The studies done Angika mentioned pitch, stress, intonation, but juncture is ignored. The target of this study is to provide the phonological description of supra-segmental features especially *juncture* to provide the exact prosodic system of Angika and Magahi.

4. Supra-segmental Features

Supra-segmental is also known as a proso
dic feature. Some contrastive item of speech cannot be analysed as a separate item because it is an integral part of the syllable or word. These non-separable elements are called a supra-segmental feature which includes **pitch, intonation and stress, etc**. Some Phonologists consider that nasality and vowel harmony are also supra-segmental or prosodic features. But, in the present study, we limit ourselves to juncture only.

5. Juncture

Juncture is a transition period or transition from one sound to another in speech. Juncture enables a speaker to identify boundary at the level of word or phrase. The transition is meant the way of moving from one sound to another in speaking. Juncture is a purely time-dependent phenomenon, wherever a speaker puts a pause in between two successive syllables, is called juncture. In Angika and Magahi the transition found between two syllables

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are as follows:

a) between two vowels **v+v,**

b) between a vowel and a consonant **v+c,**

c) between a diphthong and a consonant **vv+c,**

d) between two consonants **c+c.**

Types of Juncture: While discussing juncture it is important to discuss the types of juncture. It can be classified into two categories, which are as follows:

- **Close juncture:** Also known as a normal transition, this is a transition between segments (sounds), within the word.

- **Open juncture:** It is also known as plus juncture, this is further subdivided into two parts internal open juncture and external open juncture. It always comes medially as an internal phenomenon. Open juncture occurs at the word boundary level. In phonetic transcription, it is transcribed as /+/.

/pia/	[pi‿a.]	'lover or husband'
/pi+a/	['pi.+'a.]	'please drink'
/jia/	[ji‿a.]	'mind's state'
/ji+a/	['ji+'a.]	'live+come'
/khala/	[kha‿la.]	'mother's sister'
/kha+la/	['kha.‿'la.]	'eat' + 'bring'
/jala/	[ja‿la.]	'cob-web'
/ja+la/	['ja.+'la.]	'go'+'bring'
/mala/	[ma‿la.]	'traditional or religious necklace'
/ma+la/	['ma.+'la.]	'mother+bring'
/nala/	[na‿la.]	'sever lane'
/na+la/	['na.+'la.]	'no+bring'

6. Methodology

For this paper, we have followed the method which includes fieldwork, analysis, observation and evaluation through phonemic and phonetic transcriptions. As this study is an attempt to cover the prosodic or supra-segmental feature of Angika and Magahi language, data collection was required. Both the sources have been used (Primary & Secondary). The

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data was collected from the native speakers of both the languages.

7. Data Collection

Data comes from two following sources.

A: Primary Source: In this, we have collected the desired data by visiting the target informants and under which we have followed the following steps:

 a) **Silent Observation:** At this step, we have just simply observed the informants silently while recording the useful information.

 b) **Participation and observation:** Data were not just collected by listening and recording from informants, rather observers participated actively so that some more natural data can be obtained.

  c) **Questionnaire Method:** Basic word list were prepared randomly and some words taken from the different books and papers. To prepare the word list we have followed the methods suggested in Anvita Abbi, (Abbi, A. 2001) 'A Manual of Linguistic Fieldwork and Structure of Indian Languages; Lincom Europia}.

B: Secondary Source: Apart from a primary source, secondary sources has also been used to take help especially books in the analysis which were similar to this work like, Prasad, S. 2008. *Magahi Phonology: A Descriptive Study*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

8. Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, we have attempted to analyse and interpret the collected data. The process of data collection has been mentioned in the next section.

a) **c+c structure juncture examples**

/khala/	[kha‿la.]	'mother's sister'	(c+c)
/kha+la/	['kha+'la.]	'eat' + 'bring'	(c+c)
/jala/	[ja‿la.]	'cob-web'	(c+c)
/ja+la/	['ja+'la]	'go'+'bring'	(c+c)
/mala/	[ma‿la.]	'traditional or religious necklace'	(c+c)
/ma+la/	['ma.+'la.]	'mother+bring'	(c+c)

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| /nala/ | [na‿la.] | 'sever lane' | (c+c) |
| /na+la/ | ['na.+'la.] | 'no+bring' | (c+c) |

b) v+c structure juncture examples

| /ala/ | [a‿la.] | 'doctor's stethoscope' | (v+c) |
| /a+la/ | ['a.+'la.] | 'come+bring' | (v+c) |

c) vv+c structure juncture examples

/kailas/	[kai‿las.]	'a name'	(vv+c)
/kai+las/	['kai+las.]	'how many dead bodies?'	(vv+c)
/koila/	[koi‿la]	'coal'	(vv+c)
/koi+la/	[koi+la]	'bring any one or anyone bring	(vv+c)

d) v+v structure juncture examples

/pia/	[pi‿a.]	'lover or husband'	(v+v)
/pi+a/	['pi.+'a.]	'please drink'	(v+v)
/jia/	[ji‿a.]	'mind's state'	(v+v)
/ji+a/	['ji+'a.]	'live+come'	(v+v)
/si+a/	[si‿a.]	'to stitch'	(v+v)
/si+a/	['si+'a.]	'to stitch+ come'	(v+v)

9. Conclusion

Above data shows that the *juncture* is always accompanied by stress, but stress cannot play a significant role always in dialectal variation. One word is being broken into its syllables by putting the pause where we derive two different meanings from it by shifting the stress sometimes, as it is shown in the data.

While describing the data we could not find the combination of **c+v** type juncture in Magahi and Angika.

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References

Where is Dr. Abby's book?
Please rearrange the books in appropriate alphabetical author using the last names of the authors.

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