

AIPS Short-Term Research Grant Final Report

Project Title: Nasalization in Mankiyali and Panjabi

Author's Name: Jonathan Charles Paramore

Dates for Project: 08/02/2023 – 09/08/2023

Location: Islamabad, Pakistan

1. Significance to Pakistan Studies:

One of the primary outcomes of the project this summer was the promotion of the indigenous languages of Pakistan, both in the academy in the US and Pakistan, as well as within the indigenous communities that speak them. Focusing research on understudied languages like Mankiyali and Panjabi has the effect of increasing the awareness of the rich linguistic (and thereby cultural) diversity in Pakistan within the linguistic community. The hope is that such studies will lead interested linguists to pursue further research on these and other languages of Pakistan. Likewise, research on understudied languages like Mankiyali and Panjabi often leads to a greater valuing of the languages within the communities in which they are spoken. It was clear to me that the native speakers who participated in the linguistic experiments showed great pride for their language.

A corresponding outcome of the project is that it takes steps toward the preservation of these languages and demonstrates that these languages have inherent value, both as linguistic objects of study by researchers and as cultural objects with untold value for their speakers. Linguistic diversity, when fostered and celebrated, certainly leads to greater prosperity. My desire is that research like this will lead to further preservation of these languages by their communities.

Finally, interesting insights into the phonetics and phonology of vowels in Mankiyali and Panjabi will certainly come from the project. I collected data from 40 speakers of Mankiyali and 36 speakers of Panjabi, and each language has unique patterns for how different vowels are produced. While further analysis is required, the results will likely shed light on interesting facets of human language that have hitherto gone unnoticed. My plan is to present these findings at the bi-annual meeting of Laboratory Phonology (LabPhon 19) in Seoul, Korea, in the summer of 2024.

2. Key Outcomes and Deliverables

The main deliverable from my experiments is recordings of three types of vowels from 40 speakers of Mankiyali and 36 speakers of Panjabi. Each participant recorded about 60 words with 6 repetitions each, resulting in 27,360 word tokens for analysis. Each token will need to be annotated for its segment boundaries, and its acoustic properties will need to be analyzed to determine the differences between the three vowel types: oral, nasal, and neutralized. The physical production of the three vowel types is very interesting from a theoretical perspective since the two languages seem to exhibit different patterns. A future deliverable will be a published paper discussing the results of the two experiments and their bearing on the nature of human language.