

INTRODUCTION

Lahndi is a modern Indo-Aryan language belonging to the Indo-European family. The word "Lahndi"¹ means "the language of the West". It is spoken in Pakistan over a vast area lying approximately between 70° and 74° east longitude and 28° and 34° north latitude.

Commencing somewhat south of the point where the Sutlej River merges into the Indus River the western boundary of the Lahndi tract runs northwards along the right bank mountainous regions of the Indus to reach its destination somewhat north of Peshawar. The eastern boundary begins south of the town of Bahawalpur, passes northwards through the towns of Sahiwal, Gujranwala and Jehlum and terminates somewhat north of the city of Muzaffarabad. The area mainly covers the bigger, western part of the Pakistani Punjab (roughly two-thirds of the total) and the former District of Bahawalpur situated to the south of the above district. It stands to reason that these boundaries are rather conventional, since, for instance, the change from Lahndi to its eastern "neighbour" Punjabi is gradual and in the western subdialects of the latter, e.g. in Lahauri we can detect peculiarities typical of Lahndi. West of the conventional eastern boundary there occur forms of speech with some peculiarities of Punjabi. The further west we go, the less traces we find of Punjabi and, according to George Grierson we may consider, Lahndi to be finally established on the Districts of Multan and Jhang.

¹ We have found out the exact pronunciation of the name of the language by asking persons whose mother tongue it is, particularly philologists. The point is that the sign *h*, used in the English transliteration *Lahndi* (Landa) instead of a certain sign employed in Lahndi, is not pronounced, but only indicates the rising tone of the given word which is pronounced as *l^hndi* or *l^hndā*.

The linguistic environment of Lahndi is roughly the following. To the west of its zone Pushto and Balochi are spoken, with Sindhi in the southwest, Rajasthani in the south, Punjabi in the east, Kashmiri in the northeast, Shina in the north, and Kohistani in the northwest. Pushto and Balochi are Iranian languages; Sindhi, Rajasthani and Punjabi are Modern Indo-Aryan; Kashmiri, Shina and Kohistani are Dardic languages.

Since the bulk of Lahndi speaking people live in the pre-partition western Punjab, British linguists termed the language Western Punjabi, pointing, however, to the features that distinguish it considerably from Punjabi. Since most of the Jats speak Lahndi, the language is sometimes called Jatki. And in view of the fact that Multan is the central area in which the language is a vernacular, it is also referred to as Multani. Actually, however, the names Jatki and Multani have a narrower meaning and in correct usage denote only two corresponding dialects of Lahndi. In recent years the language under consideration comes to be mostly termed in Pakistan *Seraiki* or *Saraiiki*.

According to the returns of the 1931 Census /Candar, 38/, 8,566,000 people spoke Lahndi. Prior to the partition of India in the rural areas, where the overwhelming majority of Lahndi speaking people reside, there was a 9:1 ratio between the Muslims, on the one hand, and the Hindus and Sikhs, on the other. In the towns it was 1:1 (Jukes, V). After the partition nearly all the Hindus (except a small number of representatives of the lowest castes) and all the Sikhs moved to India. Therefore, nearly all the Lahndi speaking people in Pakistan are Muslims. There is no exact data now on the number of people speaking the tongue, since the Census of 1961 in Pakistan deliberately did not single them out, regarding such people as among the 26,196,000 who spoke Punjabi. The figure is obviously exaggerated, since many Muslim refugees from India in their attempt to settle in Punjab, an economically more developed area, declared themselves Punjabis, though in effect they were not.

Estimates put the number of Lahndi speaking people in 1960 at 10 million /Chatterji, 145/. If we take into account the growth of the population, 1973 saw over 13 million people in the country, whose native tongue was Lahndi. In addition, in India Lahndi is known by at least several tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of people. Unfortunately, no special efforts were made in that country to detect Lahndi speaking population on a nationwide scale. And in

the areas where it was done, not all the population was covered. For instance, the figures given in the Handbook by Amal Sarker /Sarker, 48, 58 and others/ are obviously understated (for instance, 1971 for Hyderabad and Uttar Pradesh State). The author does not take into account precisely the territories (such as Punjab, Delhi and others) where most of the Lahndi speaking people reside.

Peculiarities of Lahndi are examined in works by such eminent scholars as George Grierson /Grierson¹, Grierson²/, G. Bailey, A. Jukes and others. It is noteworthy that, G. Bailey, comparing Lahndi with Punjabi, points to a very great difference existing even between the subdialects of Punjabi merging into Lahndi (the District of Wazirabad) and Lahndi proper (he terms the latter Western Punjabi) /Bailey, 1/.

Great attention is paid to Lahndi by India's most prominent linguist, S.K. Chatterji. Placing Lahndi in the same row as other modern Indian languages, he at the same time points to the peculiarities of the language, and on this ground contrasts it and Sindhi to the other languages of the group /Chatterji, 66, 83, 116, 117, 129/. Peculiarities and issues concerning Lahndi as an independent language are stressed in the works of the Punjabi linguists V.B. Arun /Arun¹, X, Arun², 38-65/. Duni Chandar /Chandar, 39/, B.S. Sandhu /Sandhu, 26/.

Indian and Pakistani scholars point out in their works Lahndi's considerable influence on a number of modern Indian languages, including Punjabi and Urdu. Thus, the linguist Prem Prakas Singh of Punjab writes that "Punjabi's specific features stem, first and foremost, from Lahndi" /Prakas, 320/. He also speaks about Lahndi's influence on Urdu, and in particular about the penetration into the latter of Lahndi postpositions beginning with the sound /k/.

The Pakistani linguist Sheikh Ikram-Ul-Haq writes of the influence of Multani, the central dialect of Lahndi, on Urdu, Punjabi and some other modern Indian languages /Haq, 47/.

It should be noted that some writers tend at times to confound Lahndi with Punjabi. The explanation lies either in the fact that they are not adequately informed, or in their desire to exaggerate the importance of Punjabi. This view reminds one of the erroneous position taken by the scholars who in their turn regard Punjabi and some other Indian languages merely as dialects of Hindi.

Lahndi despite its peculiarities, is kindred to Punjabi and Sindhi. This kinship was emphasised by Prof. Kohli who wrote: "Lahndi and Sindhi are the sister languages which have a near relation... with Punjabi" /Kohli, 62/.

According to Grierson the substratum of Punjabi is a language which had features common with peculiarities of modern Lahndi and was spoken on the territory now covered by Indian and Pakistani Punjab. However, in the process of its development this language in the eastern areas came under such an extensive influence of one of the dialects of Western Hindi, that the latter overlying the former obliterated or hid many of its important peculiarities. All this is reflected in modern Punjabi. In the western areas (mainly the greater part of Pakistani Punjab) the language under investigation was not subjected to the influence of Western Hindi or had little of that influence and therefore preserved its peculiarities, as seen in modern Lahndi /Grierson², 615/.

Despite the Hindi influence on Punjabi, the latter nevertheless preserved a number of grammatical and lexical peculiarities. As the more archaic Lahndi, it has, for instance, many words with double consonants.

Though Lahndi is kindred to Punjabi, it has the following basic distinctions:

- 1) whereas Punjabi is mainly an analytic language, Lahndi, as we shall attempt to show further on, reveals a considerable amount of synthetic forms;
- 2) Lahndi possesses many specific phonetic features which make it differ from Punjabi, such as the presence of special sounds, peculiarities of tones (see the "Phonetics" section and other sections);
- 3) as distinct from Punjabi, it is typical of both Lahndi and Sindhi to frequently use pronominal suffixes attached to a word agglutinatively. In Punjabi these suffixes are found only in transitional forms of speech coming from Lahndi and in the written literary language of authors who know Lahndi, but write in Punjabi;
- 4) it is typical of Lahndi to build the future tense forms by suffixing -s-, whereas Punjabi builds the same by using the suffix -g-, not to mention a number of other distinctions;
- 5) Lahndi is void of durative forms of the predicate, typical of Punjabi and Hindi, but possesses its own pattern expressing the equivalent aspect of the verb;
- 6) in Lahndi there is a peculiar system of personal negative verbs of being, which is not characteristic of Punjabi;
- 7) in both languages there is a considerable difference between the systems of the verb "to be", with Lahndi having two verbs of being possessing multivarious and ramified systems;

8) there are peculiar forms of the verb, for instance, verbal-adverbial and participial;

9) widely used in Lahndi are synthetic forms of the passive, which is not typical of Punjabi. In the latter we rarely find synthetic forms of the passive (formed by suffexing *-î-*) which are borrowed from Lahndi. Typical of both Panjabi and Hindi is an analytic passive;

10) it is typical of the ergative voice of the main dialects of Lahndi to use the word denoting the agent (doer) of an action without a special postposition. Moreover, instead of the ergative construction there frequently occurs a mononuclear sentence with a predicate containing a pronominal suffix expressing the doer of an action. Punjabi is characterised by using a special ergative postposition;

11) Lahndi possesses a specific declension system distinct from that of Punjabi;

12) the presence of an internal inflexion that serves to build forms of certain grammatical categories;

13) peculiarities of other parts of speech, for instance, of pronouns, adverbs, postpositions, etc.);

14) a number of syntactic peculiarities, such as, for instance, the semi-ergative construction. specific features of the ergative construction, the presence of special word-sentences, sentences without a link-verb etc;

15) the specific character of much of the Lahndi vocabulary. A. Jukes, the compiler of the biggest Lahndi dictionary, writes: "The Western Punjabi, or Jatki language is quite a different language from that spoken in the Eastern Punjab." Jukes observes that the linguist H. Martin Clark, when comparing the dictionary with that of Bhai Mai Singh, found on every page of the Lahndi dictionary, containing an average of 36 words, only about two that coincided with Punjabi ones /Jukes, V/.

Naturally, a specific vocabulary is characteristic primarily of the language of rural localities, where Lahndi is less under the influence of Punjabi and Urdu, all the more that the bulk of the population is illiterate there or semi-literate and does not read the publications in Urdu and Punjabi that come out in Lahore in the Arabic script. As to the urban population, part of it speaks Lahndi influenced to a certain degree by Urdu and sometimes by Punjabi;

16) all the above-mentioned peculiarities of Lahndi make the language difficult to understand for speakers of Punjabi, as we have ascertained in practice.

In addition to the kindred ties with Punjabi and Sindhi Lahndi also experiences the influence of Dardic languages in the field of grammar and vocabulary.

Lahndi is a language deep-rooted in history and closely linked with ancient culture. This applies particularly to the language's most significant dialect, Multani, which according to the contemporary Pakistani linguist Sheikh Irkam-Ul-Haq is the most widely spoken form of speech in Pakistan. Five million speakers of Multani reside on a vast area amounting to 75,000 square miles /Haq. 44/. Multan is the ancient cultural and economic centre of the rich Indus valley. Four thousand years ago the Aryans coming down from the North found this flourishing town which they called Mool-Asthan, or Mool-Taran, which means "basic city". The richness of Indus Valley had over the centuries attracted conquerors. These included Egyptians, Babylonians, Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Arabs, Turks, Mongols, Afghans and English /Haq. 44/.

Lahndi has certain literary traditions. The famous *Adi Granth* (the Scripture of the Sikhs) includes not only the compositions of Sikh Gurus, but also the hymns and verses of various Hindu and Muslim saints and poets. The *Adi Granth* contains sections in Persian, Hindi, Punjabi and Lahndi. The ancient base of Lahndi is revealed in the verses of the poet Sheikh Farid Shakarganj who was born in a village near Multan in 1173 A.D. and died in 1266 A.D. His verses also contain borrowed Persian and Arabic words.

Prior to the dissemination of Islam (714 A.D.) the language-predecessor of Lahndi was subjected to considerable sanskritisation. This is borne out by the family-hymns of Dutts, one of the most ancient branches of Brahmins. These hymns retain ancient Lahndi verbs, but contain many Sanskrit nouns.

With the dissemination of Islam there came a period when many borrowings from Persian and Arabic found their way into Lahndi.

In the Middle Ages and even earlier inhabitants of the Lahndi tract (mainly those of Multan) several times migrated in large numbers to Delhi. These included the armies they made up, which were entering the city (e.g. 9th and 14th centuries). According to some scholars, from that time on Lahndi began to exercise its influence upon Urdu.

Of the early works in Lahndi one should note a versified book on the Muslim rules of bathing, shrouding and burying the dead, entitled

Masail-i-Ghusal-o-Kafan-o-Dafan written in 1137 A.D. by Nur Muhammad of Shergarh, and a more famous book by Hazrat Mian Abdul Hakim "Yusuf and Zuleikha", produced in 1218 A.D. /Haq. 51/.

In 1819 the Bible was translated into Multani, and later the Koran. The following books have been also written in the language: *Pakki Roti*, a book on religious observances, *Bagh o Bahar* - translation of Story of four Derveshes, *Shahnamah-i-Hind*, a history of events from the Arab conquest of Multan to the time of Emperor Aurangzeb, and *Lok Geet*, a collection of Multani popular songs compiled by Dr. Mehar Abdul Haq.

Other collections of songs, stories and tales have also been published in Lahndi. For instance, 1954 saw the publication of tales in Pothohari, a dialect of Lahndi. These tales were collected by Prof. Vanjara Bedi. The Lahndi folklore is very rich and varied.

Also noteworthy are the following poetical books written in Lahndi: *Khyaban-i-Khurram* (of Bahawalpur), *Dewan-i-Farid*, the work by philologist Sheikh Ikram-Ul-Haq (Farid the Lyricist) who examines the original divan by Farid; *Nijat ul-Momineen* by Abdul Karim, *Noor Namah* by Noor Mohd, *Karbala Namah* by Akbar Shah, *Bazar Be Khiza* by Jala, *Saiful Maluk* by Lutf Ali Sayad, and versified stories of *Sassi Punnu Mirza Sahban*, *Shah Bahram*. In 1967 an anthology of Multani poets by Kaifi, was under print.

The well-known book "Janam Sakhi" on the life of the Sikh Guru (Jan) is written in Lahndi mixed with many elements of Punjabi.

Lahndi is a research subject of a number of monographs, articles, and dictionaries (for details see Bibliography). Particularly noteworthy are the Persian-Multani dictionary *Nisab Zaroori*, George Wilson's grammar and dictionary, a rather comprehensive work by George Grierson /Grierson¹/, the monographs by H. Bahri on Lahndi phonetics and phonology /Bahri¹, Bahri²/, the dictionary by A. Jukes and the dictionary of the Pothohari dialect (Poth) compiled in Indian Punjab.

Nowadays some Lahndi speaking scholars in Pakistan are trying to create research works on their native tongue. Akhtar Waheed, who died young, wrote and published a short Multani grammar /Haq. 53/. Unfortunately, the manuscript on Multani grammar by Sadullah Khan Mallezai /Haq. 53/, has been lost. Dictionary of Seraiki has been compiled by Bashir Ahmad Zami from Bahawalpur.

Different problems of Multani and Multani literature are being tackled by philologist Shoikh Ikram Ul-Haq, who has been mentioned repeatedly.

There are a number of periodicals in Lahndi. For instance "Akhtar", a weekly published in Multan and the monthly Journal *Seraiki Adab* published in Bahawalpur. Newspapers *Al-Aziz* and *Punjad* were also published, but are now defunct.

In the districts inhabited by Lahndi speaking people there are several cultural and research centres (for instance, the Multan Academy and the Bahawalpur Academy), which also carry out research into literature in Lahndi, its grammar, and where research works are published.

In view of a number of unfavourable historic conditions Lahndi speaking people have not as yet developed an extensive literature of their own. A considerable role is also played by the fact that Urdu is the only national language in Pakistan, and that it is actively used in the schools.

As Pakistani scholars point out representatives of Lahndi speaking intellectuals call for a more intensive development of the written form of their mother tongue and the creation of broad foundations for native literature. Speaking in 1962 at the first linguistic conference in Pakistan Sheikh Ikram Ul-Haq said:

"It is an irony of fate that political re-groupings have brought into prominence regional languages like Panjabi, Sindhi and Balochi, and the parent language has been relegated to a comparatively secondary position. The importance of Multani could be judged from the fact that it is the most widely spoken language in West Pakistan... The problems of this language arise out of neglect. There has been no attempt to collect, print and publish the various works that lie scattered about. There has been no attempt to compile its authoritative dictionary." /Haq. 44, 52/.

During the last decade or so a certain degree of progress has been observed in the field. This is testified by compiling a new dictionary of Multani by B.A. Zami, the publication of an anthology of Multani poets by Kaifi and opening in December 1966 a special section of literature in Multani (Seraiki) in the Central library of Bahawalpur, since, as the press pointed out, there existed in the dialect valuable literature and historical works /*Pakistan Times*, 11.XII, 1966/.

According to the Pakistani press, some time back representatives of the Lahndi (Seraiki) speaking people demanded official status for their mother tongue and even pointed out that it was necessary to establish a new province out of the areas inhabited by the Lahndi (Seraiki) speaking people. Thus, the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*,

September 2, 1969 (p. 10), carried an article under the heading "Official Status for Saraiki Demanded". The newspaper says that early in September 1969 a Saraiki Adabi (literary) Conference was held in Multan "attended by representatives of various Saraiki literary organisations of Multan, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan, Mianwali, Dera Ismail Khan, Bahawalpur, Rahimyarkhan and Bahawalnagar... A resolution adopted at the Conference said Saraiki was an independent language having a very rich literary heritage which needs to be given proper recognition. It also demanded that... a new province for Saraiki speaking people comprising Multan and Bahawalpur Division and Districts of Mian Wala and Dera Ismail Khan be established... The participants of the Conference demanded that Saraiki should be given its due status at the University level along with Punjabi, Pushto, Sindhi and Baluchi... Mr. Nahar Abdul Haque, a prominent philologist has demanded the introduction of Saraiki language as medium of instruction at primary level".

The central dialect of Lahndi is Multani. It is spoken over a greater area than that of each other dialect, the number of its speakers being also bigger, and it serves as a vernacular in the region which is culturally and economically most developed throughout the Lahndi tract. Multani has influence on all other dialects, gradually turning into the prop dialect. There can be no doubt that with the creation of broad foundations for literature the centralising role of Multani will become still greater.

Lahndi is represented by two groups of dialects: 1) an extensive southern group (that of the Plains) and 2) a relatively less important northern group (that of mountains). The conventional boundary line between them runs along the southern foothills of the Salt Range, though on the territory of Gujranwala and Gujrat part of the Plateau is included in the zone of the southern dialects.

The main dialects of the southern group are as follows:

a) Multani. As has been already pointed out, this is the central, most important and most influential dialect of Lahndi having 5 million speakers. It is the vernacular of Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh and Bahawalpur. Its sphere also includes part of the territory of Jhang, Sahiwal, Khairpur and Baluchistan;

b) Jatki is spoken in Shahpur (between the Jehlum and Chenab rivers), Jhang, Lyallpur, Sahiwal, Gujranwala and Gujrat. Grierson for some reason regards the dialect as the "standard proper" /Grierson, 239/, although it plays a role of lesser importance than Multani.

Apparently the fact that the dialect had been relatively well described by Wilson in that period of time influenced Grierson who therefore let other factors determining the importance of the dialect escape his attention;

c) Thali, whose speakers inhabit the Thal desert and parts of the territory of Mianwala, Jehlum, Shahpur, Jhang, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bannu.

The mountainous northern dialects are spoken in the Salt Range area and north of it. These are Pothohari, Chibhali, Poonchi, Awankari, the Shahpur dialect of the Salt Range, Ghebi, Dhanni, Peshawar Hindko, Tinauli and Dhundi-Kairali. George Grierson divides the northern dialects into two groups; 1) the north-western and 2) the north-eastern. But such a classification seems inexpedient, since it is difficult to draw a dividing line between these groups of dialects.

The main differences between the northern dialects and the southern are as follows;

1. In the northern dialects many nouns take the termination *-e* or *-ī* in analytic cases.
2. More typical of the north is the usage of the coordinating-relational postposition (our term) *nā̃* or *nā* instead of *dā* (though the dialects Dhanni, Tinauli and the Hindko of Peshawar use *dā*).
3. More typical of the north is the participle I attaching *-nā̃* (*-nā*), instead of *-dā* (the same three dialects providing the exception).
4. In some northern dialects there is a tendency to use *r* instead of the cerebral *ṛ*, e.g. *kōr* instead of *koṛ* 'who?' and *intrā* instead of *iṭṇā* 'so numerous'.
5. Tones in the northern dialects have their peculiarities. Whereas it is typical of the southern dialects to use a rising tone of one variety (which starts in a rather low register, rises considerably and falls a little at the end), contrasted by a level (even) tone, the northern dialect Awankari, for instance, in addition to such a rising tone has a second variant. Its peculiarity is to start in the middle register, to relatively slightly rise and then to fall beneath the middle register. Both variants phonologically combine with the level tone. A small group of words in Awankari also has a falling tone.
6. There are differences between the northern and southern dialects in vocabulary as well. Whereas it is more typical of the southern dialects to use the verbs *vañjuṇ* 'to go' and *āvūṇ* 'to come', in the north *gachṇā* (*juḷaṇ*) and *achṇā* respectively are rather widely employed (although in Awankari and Ghebi *vañjuṇ* and *āvūṇ* are used

more frequently; in the north one may more often come across *hagan* 'to be able', whereas in the south they use *sakkun*. The southern dialects also see more frequent employment of the possessive pronouns *merā* 'my' and *terā* 'thy' borrowed from Punjabi, but this is parallel with the Lahndi vernaculars *māṇḍā* and *tāṇḍā*.

However, it should be taken into account that it is impossible to sharply delimit the dialects of both groups, since they are variants of one and the same language. Frequently forms, on the whole more typical of one group of dialects, are used in the other. Thus, in the northern dialects Dhanni, Tinauli and the Hindko of Peshawar there occur the postposition *dā* and participle I in *-dā*, which is more characteristic of the southern group. However, in one of the plays by Sant Singh Sekhon written in the southern dialect Jatki (the Lyallpur area) we have come across participles both in *-dā* (*karendā*, *dasendī*) and in *-nā* (*puchnī*, *ahnī*). As illustrative material for this treatise we have used the play by Sant Singh Sekhon "*Siālā dī naḥī*" written in Jatki (spoken in Lyallpur), the modern newspaper "Akhtar" in Multani, texts in Lahndi collected by Grierson /Grierson¹/, Wilson /Wilson/, Dames /Dames/, Rose /Rose/, Bomford /Bomford/, Bahri /Bahri¹/, small texts from different sources, etc., and also dictionaries of Lahndi by Jukes /Jukes/, Wilson /Wilson/, O'Brien /O'Brien/, as well as the dictionary of the Pothohari dialect issued in 1960 in the town of Patiala Punjab /Poth/.

Since it is very difficult to illustrate all the propositions of the work solely with material of the Multani dialect, the author resorts at times to examples from other dialects. This material enriches our notion of the language, since apart from Multani other dialects of Lahndi are rather widely spoken as well. In a number of places forms of several dialects are compared. This is not only of practical importance, but also provides useful material for further research. When presenting the theoretical points which do not necessarily require comparison and in which the general tangibly prevails over the particular, especially in the section dealing with syntax, the author provides illustrations from various dialects without distinctive marks.

Dissatisfied with a number of traditional unhappy methods of describing linguistic material, and also confronted with specific cases which have not been described, the author offers his own solution of several issues, some additions and changes and new terms involved by all this. This applies, first and foremost, to a new tense-aspect system, the mutually subordinating type of connection bet-

ween parts of the sentence, called "interaction", the notions and terms "the qualitative-predicative part", "the semi-ergative construction", "the semi-correlative construction", a new system of voices (including the ergative, causative, ergative-causative, passive-causative), a new notion of voice connected with the development of a more suitable concept regarding the category as syntactic-morphological (see Panfilov), a number of observations concerning the system of cases. New terms have been introduced where we deal with phenomena earlier not described, or where described phenomena are either denoted by obviously unhappy terms, or are not denoted at all. In the "Gender" section the material is analysed by a statistics method.

The author expresses his gratitude to Prof. Hardev Bahri of Allahabad University for a number of valuable consultations and some materials granted, to the philologist Sheikh Ikram Ul-Haq of Multan for kindly having sent valuable data on Lahndi and other materials, to engineer Avtar Singh Nagi of the "Bhakra" hydroproject and to his esteemed father for the assistance given in studying Lahndi (all the persons mentioned are speakers of Lahndi). The author is also extremely grateful to his colleagues U.N. Zavadovsky, M.S. Andronov and others for their valuable remarks and advice.

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THE LAHNDI LANGUAGE



«NAUKA» PUBLISHING HOUSE
Central Department of Oriental Literature
Moscow 1975

4И

C 50

Translated from the Russian

by E.H. Tsipan
(an authorized translation)

Editorial Board:

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The book describes the language of 13,5 million Lahndi (Saraiki) speaking people who inhabit a rather vast territory in Pakistan. "The Lahndi Language" considers in detail phonetics, morphology, syntax and other aspects of the given form of speech. The author propounds a number of his own theoretical propositions dealing with linguistics.

C 70104-12 265-75
013(02)-75

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издательства "Наука", 1975