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The Effects of Parents' Socialization Using Languages Other Than Their Indigenous Language: A Case Study of the Saraiki Language Shift

Abstract

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Keywords: Multilingual, Indigenous Languages, Saraiki Language, Contact Languages, Language Shift, Ethnolinguistic Identity, Language Preferences, Motivational Factors

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Title

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Abstract

In Pakistan, most of the population is multilingual owing to their ethnolinguistic identities. However, Urdu and English are used as contact languages and considered more prestigious than indigenous languages. The present study focuses on the Saraiki language shift due to the parents' inclination to use Urdu and English while socializing with their children. The present study used a purposive sampling technique to select ten parents with Saraiki ethnolinguistic identity from Multan city. Following the mixed-method approach, the data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The thematic analysis was attempted in the light of the 'taxonomic model' by Karan (2008), to identify the motivational factors involved in the Saraiki language shift. The findings exhibit that the parents do not use Saraiki language while communicating with their children. The study recommends sensitizing the parents by organizing various linguistic literacy programmes to reverse the process of the Saraiki language shift.

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Keywords:

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Introduction

In the present modern world, it is easier to find a bilingual than a monolingual, particularly in non-English speaking regions or countries like Pakistan. Apart from English as the international and official language and Urdu as the national language, Pakistan exhibits its cultural and linguistic

diversities in minority and regional languages. Owing to the political, economic, educational and social dominance of English and Urdu languages over the minority languages and their excessive use as contact languages between different ethnolinguistic communities, these minority and regional languages are in continuous struggle to maintain their ethnic vitality and cultural



relevance, as the culture and identity are inseparable (Abbasi, David & Ali, 2023). Moreover, communities living in rural terrains are the main users of these regional languages and have a critical role in maintaining the relevance or revival of these languages. Contrarily, the linguistic situation in the urban areas is drastically complex due to the competitive environment of English and Urdu languages, replacing the use of minority or regional languages (Abbasi & Zaki, 2019). Such a situation for language choice is alarming for minority or regional languages, which are either facing the threat of becoming extinct or will become extinct in the near future. Hence, it is important to understand that languages remain alive through their use by their users.

Saraiki, as one of the regional languages of Pakistan, is mainly associated with the region of Southern and South-Western Punjab. However, it is fairly spoken and understood by the speakers of the four provinces of Pakistan (Atta, Weijer, & Zhu, 2020). Shackle (1977) put in a significant effort to categorize Saraiki language accordingly to the geographical boundaries of Pakistan: Southern Saraiki spoken in D.G. Khan, Bahawalpur, and Muzaffargarh, Northern Saraiki spoken in Mianwali and District of Dera Ismail Khan, Sindhi Saraiki spoken in Sindh province, along with Sindhi language, Jhangi Saraiki spoken in Jhang, Shahpur Saraiki spoken in Sargodha, and Central Saraiki spoken in Multan, Bahawalpur, Muzaffargarh, and D.G. Khan (as cited in Atta, Weijer & Zhu, 2020). Although Saini (2018) found similarities between Saraiki, Punjabi, and Sindhi languages, he has identified regional variants of Saraiki that are spoken in many regions, i.e., Multani, Hindko, Riasati, Thali, and Jafri.

The origin of the Saraiki community can be traced back to the history of the Indus civilization. Most of the literature states its evolution with the establishment of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian communities in the subcontinent (Asif, 2005; Yasir & Ghani, 2020; Atta, Weijer & Zhu, 2020; Saini, 2018). During the colonial rule in the Sub-continent, Saraiki was considered a dialect of the Punjabi language. Even after many years of independence, Saraiki could not be recognized as a language until 1981. The 1981 Census data revealed that Saraiki speakers in Pakistan were 9.8% of the population, whereas Punjabi speakers were 14.9% (Asif, 2005). There was also a conflict between

Saraiki identity and Punjabi language, which is highlighted by evidence of social, political, and economic deprivations in the regions central to Saraiki speakers, i.e., Southern Punjab with Multan as its centre. As highlighted by Shackle (1977), Multan, being the sixth largest city in Pakistan, the earliest Islamic establishment in the sub-continent, and the centre of cultural heritage and Sufism, has remained deprived of social cohesion, cultural facilities, economic resources, and infrastructure as compared to Lahore (pp. 392-393). These factors contributed to the motivation of the Saraiki movement for the rights of ethnonationalists in Pakistan, following the Bahawalpur provincial movement (Rahman, 1995). Although linguistically the intelligibility between Punjabi and Saraiki is analogous to intelligibility between Urdu and Hindi, both are separate languages (Rahman, 1995). Initiating in a sharp cognizance of the region's peripheral standing in comparison to the dominant position of eastern Punjab, the modern Saraiki Movement gained impetus in the 1960s (Fatima & Mirza, 2023). Its early achievement in establishing Saraiki as the predominant term for regional dialects, not only swapped local terms like Multani, but also raised a vigorous sense of ethnolinguistic identity. Nevertheless, the movement's goals range beyond linguistic terminology, encapsulated in the enthusiastic demand for a separate Saraiki province (Fatima & Mirza, 2023).

Apart from the ethnonationalist conflict between Saraiki and Punjabi languages, the Saraiki language has been facing ethno-linguistic threats from Urdu and English as Contact Languages. Abbasi and Zaki (2019) believed that the language shift of Gujrati and Sindhi towards Urdu in Karachi has been due to the political and economic supremacy of the Urdu language. Urdu, being the national language of Pakistan, is considered a major language. However, it also serves as a *Lingua Franca* for different ethnic communities and regional languages or varieties (Shah & Anwar, 2015). The phenomenon leads to one of the major concerns of the present study, which is that Saraiki native speakers have been observed to be inclined towards the Urdu language, affecting the use of their native language. This might result in a language shift or language loss. Asif (2005) has appropriately defined that the occurrence of language shift is the selection of one language to be used instead of another; whereas, language loss

occurs when proficiency in any one of the languages is lowered or lost completely. In the context of language shift, David (1998, 1999, 2000, & 2001) observed the practice of shifting from native language to mainstream language in Malaysia, Singapore, and London, owing to the social, geographical, marital, and psychological factors (as cited in Abbasi & Zaki, 2019). However, the constant practice of using one language by replacing the native language would consequently end up in language loss or language death (Yasir & Ghani, 2020).

There are mainly two ways involved in the occurrence of language death: first, if the speech community associated with that language dies, and second, when language stops being transmitted to the next generation (Ahearn, 2017). However, in the context of a multilingual state like Pakistan, the second process of language death has more relevance unless necessary measures are not implemented for language maintenance. As defined by Asif (2005), language maintenance is the development of language proficiency by using it at both the societal and individual levels. Nevertheless, language shift begins at the level of individual practice of language choice, which leads to the societal shift of language. Consequently, the regional or minority language becomes endangered, leading to the threat of extinction. In this regard, Karan (2008) proposed the Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift, believing that the motivations can serve as language revitalization. The process of language revitalization through language maintenance has been labelled as reversing language shift by Fishman (1990). He argued that reversing language shift is a social movement, in which each individual puts in their effort by using the endangered language (p. 7).

It has been proven theoretically and empirically that motivational variables impact multilinguals' attitudes to get inclined towards the native language or the second language. Gardner & Lalonde (1985) highlighted the importance of motivational and attitudinal variables by placing them in their socio-educational model. Motivational and attitudinal factors to learn a language are the concern of social psychology, in which the speakers of one ethnolinguistic group become interested in learning and using another language (Gardner & Clement, 1990). Thus,

individual attitude and motivations can influence learning a second language.

However, the present study is concerned with the language shift of the Saraiki language as an indigenous language to the mainstream contact languages, i.e., Urdu and English. According to the facts presented in Ethnologue (2024), the Saraiki language is widely spoken in Pakistan and classified as a firm category on EGIDS (Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale); yet, the Saraiki language is being deteriorated by its users, due to its lessening use during socialization in everyday life. In this regard, studying parental attitudes and motivations towards their native language is more important. Socialization, as defined by socio-cultural theory, is the process of language acquisition that is developed unconsciously through the provision of enough language exposure by parents and caregivers (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1982, as cited in Salzmann, Stanlaw & Adachi, 2012). Parental attitude towards the native language is crucial to transmitting the native language to the next generation. Therefore, the present study intends to focus on parental attitudes and motivations towards language choice to communicate with their children, either in Saraiki, as their native language, or in Urdu, due to educational, social, and economic requirements.

Rationale of the Study

Pakistan, as a multilingual and multicultural country, displays its diversity at the ethnic and linguistic levels. The review of the history of languages in the Subcontinent and later in Pakistan indicated that the Saraiki language gained its ethnic identity through a great struggle. However, this ethnic identity is in danger due to the developing motivations and attitudes to learn and use the Urdu and English languages more, which is resulting in a language shift. Hence, in order to revitalize the Saraiki language, it is important to know about parents' responses towards their native language. During the child's earlier language acquisition process of L₁, parents' socialization provides ample exposure to develop L₁ proficiency. However, L₁ is endangered if parents stop using their native language because of negative biases toward native culture or language, and socialize with their children by using another language, which is socially, economically, and politically

considered more prestigious. Asif (2005) found that this phenomenon is more common in urban areas and amongst working-class parents. Hence, the present study focuses on urban working-class parents who have Saraiki as their native language.

Aim of the Study

The study mainly aims to explore the factors involved in socialization and development of Saraiki as an indigenous language by Saraiki parents and the reasons for their language preferences and motivations to choose languages other than Saraiki while communicating with their children.

Research Questions

1. Which language do the Saraiki parents choose to communicate with their children and to communicate with their parents?
2. What are the factors involved in language choice by parents to communicate with their children?
3. What is the status of the Saraiki language shift or maintenance influenced by parental language preference?

Literature Review

The present study deals with the phenomenon of language shift from the perspective of Anthropological Linguistics and through the broader domain of Sociolinguistics. Anthropological Linguistics views language as part of a broader social and cultural context where language is used to sustain sociocultural norms through practicing them (Foley, 2016). Whereas sociolinguistics perceives language to form social organization through linguistic patterns in collaboration with social behaviour, and it also deals with linguistic and social diversity and their factors, i.e., ethnicity, social status, gender, etc. (Foley, 2016). Although the study focuses on language shift in the Saraiki language, the previous studies exhibit dedicated efforts to explore the phenomenon in other languages, within Pakistan and outside of Pakistan.

Wilson (2021) investigated the French-English bilingual parents' beliefs towards language choice and management by using an online survey and case studies. The results demonstrated the positive parental beliefs towards code-mixing, though it was

not evident from the language used at home. However, Haman et al (2017) studied the impact of exposure of Polish-English Bilinguals on both languages. The researchers focused on the development of linguistic structures as well as on parental provision of language exposure. The results indicated that monolingual children demonstrate more language proficiency than bilinguals in the domains of vocabulary, phonological, grammatical, and other cognitive abilities. In general, the bilingual exposure to both languages exhibited a positive impact at the discourse level. The study also concluded that shortcomings in the performance can be overcome through the provision of maximum L₁ exposure to the children. Similarly, Tanaka & Park (2012) found the impact of parents' perceptions on Japanese-English bilingual children through studying their code-switching practices. Children's and parents' language beliefs were observed through interviews. The results exhibited that parental inclination towards English education is accepted and impacted as a kind of approval to children's code-switching.

At the global level, it has been observed that most languages are shifting towards English. The English language has spread over many countries during British Colonialism; however, it continued to flourish even after that era. Khan (2023) articulates that the English language has held a position as the world's dominant language for over a century. Like Latin's historical inspiration, English has cemented its way across Europe, prevailing over numerous languages (p. 25). In Pakistan, English is considered the most prestigious language, accompanied by social, economic, educational, and political advantages. Ahmed and Hafeez (2007) highlighted the issue in language planning of Pakistan's educational policy, in which the English language is considered the medium of instruction. Nonetheless, the multilinguals in Pakistan first translate their ideas into the Urdu language and then into the English language, resulting in reduced comprehension of meaning, owing to twice or multiple translations. However, the study also found that most students are inclined towards using their regional language as a medium of instruction to teach or learn English as a second language. Contrary to this, Mansoor (2004) analysed the role of the English language in impacting the status of the regional language in the

educational domain. The findings demonstrated the development of negative beliefs of speakers regarding their regional language. Therefore, Mansoor (2004) recommended reviewing the Language Policy to consider minority and regional languages for the promotion of cultural pluralism in Pakistan. As affirmed by Ashraf (2023), the current educational policy in Pakistan is subjugated by English and Urdu, putting aside the indigenous regional languages.

Apart from studying educational causes for language shift in Pakistan, it has been observed that the Punjabi language shift towards the English language is because of a social trend, influenced by historical, socio-cultural, economic, and psychological variables (Nawaz, Umer, Anjum, & Ramzan, 2012). In this context, Sarwat, Kabir, Qayyum & Akram (2021) investigated the status of the Punjabi language shifting towards English in the United States of America. The study focused on the language shift trend among three generations. The results revealed that the first generation (grandparents) exhibited L₁ maintenance practice, while the second generation (parents) was observed as more inclined toward using L₂, and using the Punjabi language only when required. The second generation was also found to prefer the second language for the younger generation, in order to secure their and their children's socio-economic future, instead of the ethnic identity associated with their L₁, i.e., Punjabi language. Similarly, Shah & Anwar (2015) observed multilinguals residing in Faisalabad who preferred using Urdu or English instead of their L₁, which is the Punjabi language. The researchers found that attitudinal factors play a major role in determining the language choice of parents as well as children. However, Abbas and Iqbal (2018) conducted a comparative analysis between English, Urdu, and Punjabi languages to know the language choice preference of the Pakistani young community. Through a mentalist conceptual framework and questionnaires, the study revealed that the choice between Urdu and Punjabi languages is due to integrative motivation, while the use of the English language is derived through instrumental and supremacy motivation.

In Pakistan, the general pattern of language shift due to language choice, i.e., preferring a prestigious language over native language, is also exhibited in the regional languages other than

Punjabi. In the region of Sindh, Abbasi & Zaki (2019) analysed the language preference of Sindhi and Gujarati speakers through comparative analysis. The data obtained through interviews and analysed by thematic procedure demonstrated that the third generation speaking Sindhi and Gujarati languages is being shifted to English and Urdu languages; hence, Sindhi and Gujarati languages are in danger of becoming extinct. In the context of studying the impact of language shift within the regions, Rabbani & Lohat (2020) focused on Punjabi language shift in the region of Sahiwal, while Nazir, Aftab & Saeed (2013) examined the status of Punjabi language shift in the Sargodha region. Interestingly, both studies arrived at similar findings, that the Punjabi language is confronting a threat of becoming extinct, as the Punjabi language is losing its value, innovation, and societal mobility for its native speakers. However, Shafi (2013) studied the Punjabi parents' preference in language choice and its influence on their children. Shafi (2013) found that Punjabi parents believe that the Punjabi language is an economically and educationally insecure language, which is why they are moving away from their native language.

With regards to the Saraiki language, it has been found from the thorough review of extensive literature regarding language shift that only a few studies address the phenomenon in the Saraiki language. Most of the studies have focused on either historical and evolutionary developmental documentation of the Saraiki language (Saini, 2018; Garcia, 2016) or phonological description of the Saraiki sound system and lexical differences in comparison with other dialects (Atta, Weijer & Zhu, 2020; Khalid, Noor, Imran & Muhammad, 2020).

The phenomenon of language shift of the Saraiki language is not novel. The influences of neighbouring regional languages have been affecting the Saraiki language linguistically, socially, politically, and ethnically. Asif (2005) presented a remarkable study by highlighting the issue of Saraiki language shift in Urban and rural areas of Multan city. She collected the data through triangulation of the matched-guise test, speech recordings, and interviews. The study interpreted the results that Saraiki language is maintained as ethnic identity in rural areas of Multan, while Saraiki language shift is evident in urban areas of

Multan. The study has concluded that the attitudinal factor plays an important role in language shift. However, Yasir & Ghani (2020) studied socio-economic variables influencing Saraiki language shift towards Urdu language, in the region of Dera Ghazi Khan. The data was obtained through a multiple-choice questionnaire employed to get responses of 300 children with Saraiki ethnic identity using the Urdu language. The findings confirmed that socio-economic variables motivate speakers of native languages to use another socially, economically, and politically stronger language, such as English and Urdu.

Statement of the problem

Saraiki language is one of the largely spoken regional languages in Pakistan, which gained its political recognition through a great struggle, though the struggle is still persistent in the form of socio-linguistic and political movement. However, the occurrence of language shift is emerging, which has been explored by a few scholars and researchers. Though many factors involved in language shift have been highlighted by researchers, no study has examined or settled the factor of knowing parental language preference as a variable to induce children's motivation towards using L2, i.e., Urdu or English, instead of using their native language, i.e., Saraiki. Consequently, Saraiki is becoming one of the endangered languages. The present study aims to explore the parental role contributing to the Saraiki language shift.

Theoretical Framework

Language change begins to occur at the individual level but leaves its adverse effects at the society level in a broader context. Hence, the process of language revitalization should be started at the individual level (Karan, 2008). With regards to achieving a full understanding of parents' inclination towards their L1, i.e., Saraiki language, the present study has selected a model with a sociolinguistics scheme, i.e., The Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift, proposed by Karan (2008). The model has been developed with the perspective of language shift, a process of language choice decisions by the individual speakers, influenced by certain motivational factors (p. 2). The model has classified six main motivations

involved in developing certain behaviour toward learning and using a language. The taxonomy includes; Communicative motivations: Economic motivations, i.e. job related, trade related or network related: Social Identity motivations, i.e. related to prestige group, solidarity, hero/villain and social distance: Language Power and Prestige motivations, i.e. high language or low language forms: Nationalist and Political motivations and Religious motivations i.e. pleasing or appeasing, sacred language, access writing and religious communication (Karan, 2008, pp. 3-6). The present study intends to adopt the model in order to determine the motivational variables responsible for affecting Saraiki parents' language choice in preferring Urdu and English languages over the Saraiki language, which is ultimately causing the language shift.

Methodology

The portent of language shift, occurring in the Saraiki Language, has been explored by a few researchers, including Asif (2005) & Yasir & Ghani (2020). These researchers have highlighted various causal factors in the process of the Saraiki language shift, which are: attitudinal factors of speakers, socio-economic factors, etc. However, the present study claims that parents' language preference for their children makes a major contribution to the child's cognitive and language development. Thus, the corresponding aim provides a domain, i.e., to study the impact of Saraiki parents' language preference while interacting or communicating with their children on the Saraiki language shift. To explore the research problem and elucidate the research question, the present study has opted for the descriptive design with a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) approach. The methodological approach divided the paper into two dimensions. The first dimension is the quantitative analysis of parental attitude in selecting language. It has been assumed that parental language preference would be reflected through their own use of the native language before affecting the language development of their children. To know about the efficiency, domain, and frequency of using the Saraiki language, a questionnaire has been employed to be filled out by the parents, including their demographic information.

The second dimension of methodology is based upon the qualitative approach, which has focused on the phenomenon of language shift. It comprises multiple dimensions of human life, such as socio-cultural aspects, historical effects, motivational variables, cognitive and language development, etc. To collect data about such a broad spectrum, flexibility towards the method of data collection is required to be exercised, so that an in-depth comprehension of system dynamics can be attained from collected data. For the holistic understanding of the phenomenon of language shift, the present study has found a mixed-method approach to be more appropriate. In same context, there has been variation of methods and approaches employed by the scholars and researchers; few have adopted quantitative approach to obtain basic demographic information and speakers' disposition towards language preference through questionnaire, e.g., Nawaz et al (2012), Shafi (2013), Yasir & Ghani (2020), Abbas & Iqbal (2018) and Imtiaz, Jadoon & Naqi (2020). Whereas, many researchers and scholars have employed a mixed-method approach by using questionnaires and interviews, e.g., Wilson (2021), Khalid (2016), Abbasi & Zaki (2019), Shah & Anwar (2015), Nazir, Aftab & Saeed (2013), and Asif (2005).

The setting to carry out research has been selected on the basis of the large population of Saraiki speakers in Multan city. Ten parents from five families have been selected through a purposive sampling technique. The selected families are settled in urban areas of Multan city and belong to the working middle class social status. Before conducting interviews, a short questionnaire was employed, which was to be filled out by parents. The questionnaire has been formulated to gain data to address research question 1 and is adopted from Abbasi & Zaki (2019) and employed online.

Telephonic semi-structured interviews have been conducted through video calls using WhatsApp. As the participants have not permitted

the recording of the interviews, notes have been taken

during the interviews. Each parent has been interviewed separately. The interview questions have been framed on the basis of Karan's taxonomy of language choice motivation (2008), and selected in light of the theoretical framework of the present study. The purpose of constructing interviews within the framework suggested by the theory has provided a context for the interviews, and it has enabled the establishment of alignment between the data and the research questions. The semi-structured pattern has also allowed the occurrence of free expression, which is important to observe the possible emerging themes or features relevant to the study.

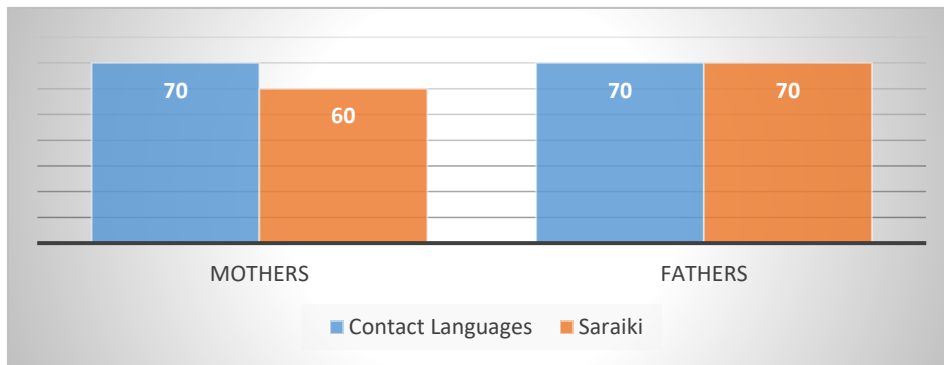
To analyse the questionnaire, the descriptive statistics method has been applied, while the interviews have been analysed through thematic analysis, as explained step by step by Mortensen (2018). As the data of semi-structured interviews could not be transcribed, the notes taken during the interviews have been relied upon for identification of the assumed as well as emerging themes. Initial coding has been developed manually, and under the theoretical categories, the researcher focused on emerging themes and sub-themes that are relevant to the framework of the research subject. Themes have been labelled and categorised by recognizing the conceptual relation between the themes. At the end, the themes have been reviewed holistically to determine the most dominant factors affecting language shift.

Results

In this section, the results of the questionnaire have been shown, followed by their brief explanation and findings. The results of the questionnaire have been categorised into three categories: proficiency, domain of use, and frequency of use of language with a selected person or group.

Figure 1

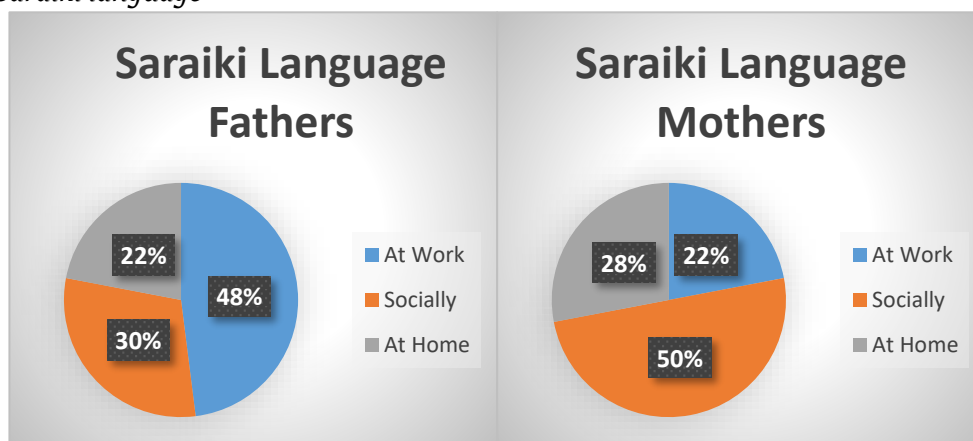
Proficiency in the Saraiki language Vs Contact Languages



Note: The data obtained from the participants exhibit a proficiency level of Saraiki language at 70% for fathers and 60% for mothers; while for contact languages, it is 70% for both.

Figure 2

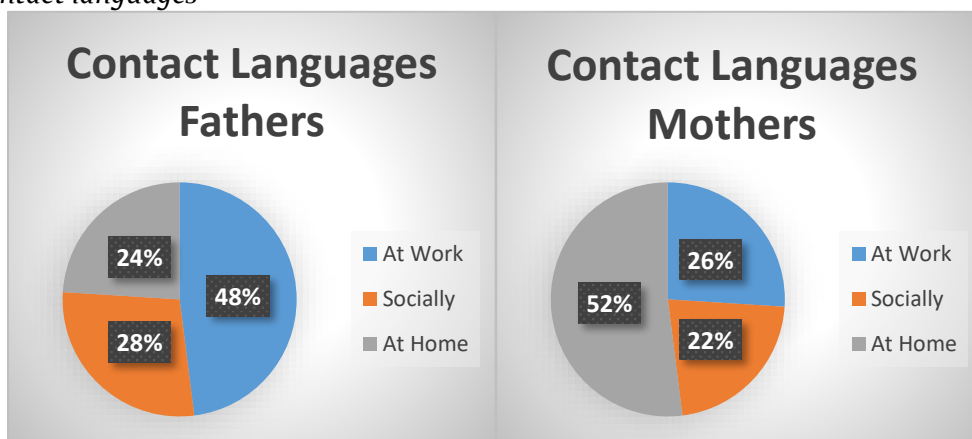
Usage of the Saraiki language



Note: This figure illustrates the comparative percentage of Mothers and Fathers using the Saraiki language in social interactions. Fathers have predominant usage at work, while mothers' usage is significant in the social domain.

Figure 3

Usage of Contact languages



Note: This figure illustrates the comparative percentage of Mothers and Fathers using contact languages in social interactions. This depicts that fathers' 24% of contact language usage is at home, while it is 52% for mothers.

Table 1

Frequency and the language choice of the persons

| Language | Parents | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Persons' Category | Fathers | Mothers |
| Saraiki | With Parents | Most Frequently | Mostly |
| | With Colleague | Often | Mostly |
| | With Spouse | Regularly | Regularly |
| | With Children | Very rare | Never |
| | With Parents | Rarely | Often |
| Contact Languages | With Colleague | Often | - |
| | With Spouse | Always in the presence of Kids | Always in the presence of Kids |
| | With Children | Always | Always |

Note: This table illustrates the frequency and the language choice of Mothers and Fathers while interacting or communicating with other persons.

The analysis of questionnaires signifies that in the category of proficiency in the Saraiki language, fathers possess a higher proficiency level than mothers; while in contact languages, fathers and mothers have equal levels of proficiency (Figure 1). The results for the second category of usage of Saraiki and contact languages disclose that fathers use the Saraiki language more at the workplace; whereas, mothers use the Saraiki language more in social activities, i.e., with neighbours or other family members (Fig. 2). In the same context, the results for contact languages use show that the mothers use contact languages more at home, while Fathers mostly use contact languages at work (Figure 3). The third category of frequency and preference of language while interacting with different categories of persons showed that fathers and mothers frequently use Saraiki language to interact with parents; conversely, both frequently use contact languages to communicate with their children and spouse in the presence of children.

The findings reveal that fathers and mothers use Saraiki language while interacting with their elders (first generation) and age-fellows (parents, uncles, cousins); but they use contact languages at home, specifically while communicating with their children and with each other in the presence of children.

Discussion

In this section, the findings of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews have been discussed in the light of research questions. The first research

question can be explained through the findings of the questionnaire.

Research Question 1

Which language do the Saraiki parents choose to communicate with their children and to communicate with their parents?

The findings obtained from descriptive analysis of the questionnaire show that the parental language choice varies while interacting with their parents and with their children. These parents use their native language, i.e., Saraiki, to interact with their parents, whereas they use contact languages (Urdu and English) during interaction with their children. Since the findings do not express complete abandonment of the Saraiki language, it cannot be interpreted that the parents possess negative views towards their language. Nevertheless, the findings of the questionnaire have shown that the second generation (parents) is not transferring the native language to the third generation (children). As parents do not communicate with their children in their native language, it can be deduced that parents appear to be more motivated in promoting contact languages for their children. In the context of attitudinal factors, the findings from the questionnaire indicate that the parents think negatively of their native language. The depiction would be clearer with the findings of semi-structured interviews, which have been discussed in the light of research question two.

Research Question 2

What are the factors involved in the language choice by parents to communicate with their children?

The findings from the questionnaire exhibit that the parents (second generation) select Saraiki language to communicate with their parents (first generation) and are using contact languages while interacting with their children (third generation). To explore the reason why parents do not use Saraiki language while communicating with their children, thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews on the basis of the categories suggested by the theoretical framework (Karan, 2008) has been carried out. The findings exhibit that social and economic factors dominate and affect the communicative factors of parents' language preference with their children. Concomitantly, these parents also reflect their cultural association with the Saraiki language as a matter of social identity. In contrast, they favour Urdu and English languages as contact languages to be prestigious on the basis of a nationalistic and political perspective. Religiously, these parents support the Urdu language more than Saraiki, due to the availability of translated versions of the Holy Quran and religious books.

With regard to parents' communication with their children in contact languages, most of the parents express that they intentionally use Urdu and English with their children, so that their children can learn and communicate better in these contact languages in the social settings, other than home, i.e., at school, with friends, etc. This highlights the decreased domains for the expressions in the native language. Parents also prefer Urdu and English languages for being a contact language, to enable their children to socialize with other children, who are from different socio-linguistical identities. Economic factor is another important influence considered while interviewing parents. Parents have careful thoughts regarding their children's future, and they want to develop such linguistic and social habits in their children that can help them to become socially and economically well-established citizens. This finding resonates with the previous studies, specifically with Asif (2005) and Yasir & Ghani (2020), who have found the socio-economic factor to be more dominant in the shift of the Saraiki language. Similarly, Abbasi & Zaki (2019), Nawaz,

Umar, Anjum & Ramzan (2012), and Sarwat, Kabir, Qayyum & Akram (2021) observed the social and economic factor as the strongest factor to cause language shift in other regional languages of Pakistan. Within the social context, educational motivation is an emerging theme that has frequently been expressed by parents. Another emerging theme is the code-switching between English and Urdu. It has been observed that parents have a propensity for code-switching of English-Urdu words during communication with their children. Parents consider both Urdu and English to be fundamental for their children's successful educational pursuits. In this context, Abbasi & Zaki (2019) and Shafi (2013) have also observed the children's inclination towards learning and using a second language, due to the exposure and linguistic habits developed at school. However, most of the parents consider this linguistic behaviour as an influence of media, i.e., social media, dramas, movies, etc. At the same time, these parents have concerns about the emerging behaviour of code-switching in their children's language with regard to vocabulary, meaning, and lexical choices, for which these parents blame social media.

With respect to ethno-linguistic identity and cultural association, most of the parents seemed content and confident about being known as the Saraiki Community. Most of the parents have expressed their positive beliefs that the Saraiki language is valuable for them to remain integral to their cultural association. Almost all parents called it meethi zaban. Yet, it has been observed that parents take Saraiki language with the perspective of ethno-linguistic identity, rather than to use it and to pass it on to the next generation. In contrast to it, Sarwat, Kabir, Qayyum & Akram (2021) have found that Pakistani families living in the USA have agreed on giving up their ethno-linguistic identity for socio-economic benefits. However, the finding of a positive attitude has been confirmed by the findings obtained from questionnaires, which show that Saraiki parents possess positive beliefs regarding their language and culture.

It has also been observed that on one hand, parents want to retain their ethno-linguistic identity, while on the other hand, they seem to remain functionally associated with the Urdu language. It is because most parents revere the Urdu language as their national language, a

politically strong language, and as a medium of instruction and learning in institutions of Pakistan. The finding suggests that the Urdu language has become a prestigious language for national and political associations. Similarly, language shift has also been observed in previous studies, due to the linguistic prestige possessed by the Urdu or English languages. Shah & Anwar (2015) have found that language status can develop parents' and children's positive attitude towards those languages. Nazir, Aftab & Saeed (2013) have shown similar findings amongst the Punjabi people, who have developed an interest in Urdu and English languages owing to the prestige attached to them. However, the participants of the present study responded negatively when they were asked to replace their Saraiki linguistic ethnicity with Urdu ethnicity. The finding can be interpreted that the Saraiki parents accept the Urdu language for its being prestigious and instrumental, but not as a replacement for their native language.

The respondents have also been asked about their language choice towards religious practices and understanding. Most of the parents have revealed their approval for the Urdu language because a better understanding of religious content could be achieved through the Urdu language, owing to the availability of the Urdu translation of the Holy Quran and other religious content. This factor can be interpreted as an instrumental and educational factor of language shift. However, this factor is not a motivational factor as compared to the socio-economic and language prestige factors, which have a causative influence to bring about language shift.

Research Question 3

What is the status of Saraiki Language Shift or maintenance influenced by parental language preference?

On the basis of the results of the questionnaire, the results of the interviews, and supportive evidence from relevant literature, the findings of the present study can be interpreted as denoting the occurrence of Saraiki Language shift towards Contact languages (Urdu and English). The data has shown that the majority of parents representing the second generation have positive beliefs regarding the Saraiki language and culture, and the parents are using the Saraiki language during

interaction with their parents & elders (first generation), relatives, and friends. However, it has been observed and stated by the parents that they do not interact with their children in the Saraiki language. Main reasons for Urdu and English language preference, as deduced from the data, identify social, economic, and educational factors rather than parents' attitudinal factors. Nevertheless, parents' linguistic practice of using Urdu and English in communication with children ultimately develops a positive learning attitude of children towards the Urdu and English languages. As a result, the children are developing communicative competence in Urdu and English rather than the Saraiki language. This phenomenon is decreasing the Saraiki language repertoire in the third generation.

Conclusion

Pakistan, being a multilingual nation-state, faces the daunting challenge of preserving the minority and regional languages, which are also native languages, specifically when the contact languages are considered more prestigious than the regional languages. The language prestige of contact languages not only depicts the political power associated with these contact languages but also their economic, social, and educational importance. In Pakistan, Urdu and English are the contact languages; hence, they carry the status of language prestige. With regards to the historical traces of Urdu and English languages, both came into use as Lingua Franca in the sub-continent; Urdu by the Mughal Empire and English during the British colonial rule. In the contemporary period, the domains of these two languages are expanding at the cost of regional languages. Many researchers have tried to find the factors causing this language shift while focusing on the third generation, who are developing their linguistic competence in Urdu and English languages, limiting or foregoing the acquisition of their native language, i.e., Saraiki, Punjabi, Brahui, etc. Within this broad scope, the present study has focused on the parents' language preference affecting the process of language shift. The root cause has been identified as the process of communication by parents with their children, preferring another language rather than their native language. The phenomenon is pronounced

during the critical period of children's development of language competence.

The present study has focused on the Saraiki language shift by studying urban working-class parents' language preference decisions and the factors affecting these decisions for communication, interaction, or socialization with their children. The study has found that despite possessing positive beliefs regarding the Saraiki language, the parents communicate with their children in Urdu and English, mainly to prepare them for future challenges associated with educational, occupational, and social domains. The parents have considered the judgment that the Urdu and English languages will better equip their children to overcome these challenges than the Saraiki language. However, parents are not aware of the consequences of such practices, which are contributing to the Saraiki language shift. One key aspect in language survival is that users use the language in their social sphere. It is likely that, if necessary measures are not taken, i.e., parents' sensitization to provide more exposure of native language to their children and increasing communication activities in Saraiki language, the Saraiki language, one of the regional languages in Pakistan, would be extinct in coming years; and if not reversed, will result in language death of Saraiki language.

Due to limited time and resources, an ethnographic research design could not be carried

out. Moreover, the data could not be recorded electronically as it was not permitted by the participants. Due to these limiting factors, many of the non-linguistic and para-linguistic features could not be observed and taken into consideration while carrying out data analysis. Despite the limitations encountered during the research study, the present study offers generalizable facts. The findings of the present study are significant to take cautionary measures against the alarming situation of the Saraiki language shift. Parents' role in the provision of maximum exposure to the native language is crucial in this regard.

The present study identifies the requirement of sensitizing parents through conducting literacy programmes regarding the socio-ethnic struggle and historical evolution of the Saraiki language in order to build awareness among the second generation, which could lead the Saraiki language towards endangerment. Hence, it will contribute to preserving the Saraiki language heritage and usage. The Pakistani government and media should also take measures to promote regional languages in educational, occupational, and social domains. As language concerns every human being, language revitalization should also carry importance for human social well-being. Therefore, language awareness should be obligatory for respective language users to save regional languages as well as the rich heritage and culture associated with these regional languages.

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