

LANGUAGE SHIFT IN YOUNG SPEAKERS OF CROSS -CULTURE MARRIAGES IN PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Peshawar is a multilingual city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The three major languages articulate in Peshawar are Pashto, Hindko and Urdu. The present study investigates the problem of language shift in young speakers of cross-culture marriages in Peshawar. Language shift is the phenomenon of replacing one's native language with the second language for social, political and economic reasons. The study aims to figure out the adapted language of young speakers of cross-culture marriages and the reason behind the adaptation. The study is based on descriptive-qualitative methodology. The research site selected for this study is a private sector university where students come from diverse-lingual backgrounds. The data was collected from 50 male/female participants of cross -culture marriages from the age group of (20-25) through the medium of questionnaire. The result of the study shows Pashto language adaptation in much amount in young speakers of cross-culture marriages in Peshawar as compare to Urdu and Hindko. The reason behind Pashto adaptation is the larger population of Pashto speakers in Peshawar. This study will help to understand the idea of language shift in Peshawar and will also provide an insight in the reasons behind the language shift in young speakers

Keywords: cross-culture marriages, language shift, Peshawar, young speakers

INTRODUCTION

Language shift is the process of replacing L1 (first language) with L2 (second language) due to different social, economic and political reasons (Siddiqui, 2019). Language shift is the phenomena of one language contact with other widely spoken and dominant languages of society over a long time period and then completely or partially replace with the dominant language of that particular society (Stoessel, 2002). Some states are linked with language shift and the most fundamental condition is societal bilingualism (Lieberson, 1972, 1980). The language contact condition of particular community within the same geographical location is called societal bilingualism (Shirley, 2016). Physical, social and culture disturbance from the original state is the main cause of language shift (Fishman, 1972). An individual gained more languages from

interaction within society mostly at adolescence stage, so, one more reason is mobilization. Therefore, when people move from one place to another there comes higher chances of language shift (Masruddin, 2014). Once the dominance of majority language increases then mother tongue cannot sustain the prior position. The various factors of language shift are exogamous and cross-culture marriages (David, 2001). The term exogamy means outcast marriage which means marry someone outside one's own community (Kang, 1979). In cross culture marriages, language is influenced by age and domain of communication (Zaid, 2012). Some researchers called "Language Shift" as young people language because the young generations of cross culture marriages are appeared more accessible to this shift and after a long period of interaction

with society, the newly adapted language affects the proficiency of the first language (Masruddin, 2014). Young speakers play crucial role of shift agents and are stimulants of society use of language (Gal, 1979).

Regional languages are the supportive pillars in each state (David, 2001). Pakistan is a multilingual state. Hindko and Pashto are the two distinct languages spoken in the city of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The widely spoken and regional language of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is Pashto; it is not the official language of the state but the mother tongue of 70% to 80% people of the province (Rahman, 1995).

On the other hand, Hindko, the dialect of 'Indo Aryan' is the language spoken in Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and in the surrounding territories of Pashto language (C. Shackle, 1980). The relation between Hindko and Pashto is not stable bilingualism. The speakers of Hindko language are divided in to 5 districts such as Mansehra, Abbottabad, Kohat, Attock and Peshawar (Leary, 1992).

The present study focuses on the problem of language shift in young speakers of next generation of cross-culture marriages and the reasons behind given prior position to the second language in the region of Peshawar. The study provides an insight to the causes behind the language shift. It also states the reasons on the basis of which a language shifts in young speakers of cross-culture marriages.

Literature Review

Language shift is the phenomena in a particular social group. When people contact with each other inside a community then they shift from L1 to L2. This kind of shift only happens when they show the approval of other language (Grenoble & Whaley 1996). Hoffmann (1994) believes, when a group does not prolong to its first language and adapt second language is called language shift. In addition, Whaley (1998) asserts the subjective attitude of a person towards its own and other languages of particular speech community is the dominant key for predicting language shift. Fishman (1991) declared language shift takes place because of three major purposes such as physical, demographical, and social dislocation. Moreover, Baker (2000) claims the status of minority languages in society transform the

acquisition and maintenance of a language. Family is the foundation for language maintenance and language acquisition of minority languages (Pauwels, 2005 and Schwartz, 2008). In addition, Ohia (1998) observes the minimal interest of minority groups in Rivers state towards their first language and given prior position to English. Moreover, Baker (1992) asserts, language attitude is one of the central factors responsible for language maintenance and language shift. Language attitude is the perspective of speakers towards their own language or towards others people language. Similarly, Klerk (2002) reveals, language shift is closely related to the term language attitude because language attitude is the prominent condition for individual courage to adapt a second language. In addition, Bathula (2004) claims, language attitude was one of the major reasons behind the language shift in Telegu society.

Gal (1978) figures out the code choice in various settings and results showed the influential factors of language shift such as urbanization, industrialization and mixed marriages. Furthermore, Herbert and Hans (2010) conducted a study on language shift in mixed marriages. The study focuses on the adapted language of young speakers. The findings showed the language shift and the adapted language which was English because it is the language of majority people in Nigeria. In addition, Cheng (2003) believes some of the influential factors which causes language shift and language maintenance in mixed marriages are education and language attitude. This means education with peripheral factors lead towards language maintenance and language shift.

On the other hand, Masruddin (2014) conducted a study to figure the factors of language shift in Wotunese. The findings show that bilingualism, mobilization and adolescence stages are the main elements of language shift. Moreover, David (2003) concluded in his study that young speakers mostly at adolescence stage shift their language due to social, political and economic reasons. This means young speakers are more associated with society at adolescence stage. Similarly, Abbasi and Zaki (n. d.) conducted research in Karachi, city of Pakistan. The study asserts young

speakers tend to use more official and national languages as compare to their first language. The target area of the present study is the young speakers of cross-culture marriages in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The focus is on the shift of language from Hindko and Urdu to Pashto language. Though previous studies of language shift tend to focus the shift of language across generations and also in stating factors responsible for the language shift. There was a little literature available on the reasons behind these factors. Therefore, the present study particularly focuses on the reasons behind the language shift in the targeted area. It also highlights major factors behind this shift.

Methodology

The research area selected for the study is a private sector university where students come from diverse lingual backgrounds across Peshawar. In the selected domain, one can find diverse lingual speakers easily. The study is based on descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative is a specific type of data analysis technique which is used to collect informational content and analyze it in systematic order (Seixas, Smith and Mitton, 2017). The study solely focuses on the undergraduate Pashto and Hindko speakers in the private sector university as it was not difficult to find these diverse lingual speakers within the university because the researcher is also one of the members of Pukhtoon community.

Questionnaire Survey

The study conducted questionnaire to investigate the language shift and adapted language of young speakers by following Yamamoto (2002) and Brown (2008). This questionnaire was specially design to stimulate the adapted language and the reasons behind language shift. The questionnaire was divided in to three parts. Part 1 consist of some information about the conducted study to make the participants understand the criteria of the study. Part 2 consist of some personal information and part 3 consist of 15 questions on the basis of Likert Scale.

Data Collection

Data was collected from 50 male/female participants ranges from age 20-25, using the

technique of questionnaire. The participants are the young speakers of cross-culture marriages of Pashto, Urdu, and Hindko languages.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire was analyzed by using descriptive-qualitative method. The data was collected through the medium of questionnaire and analysis was done to uncover the different aspects responsible for language shift and the adapted language of Pushto, Hindko and Urdu speakers of cross-culture marriages in Peshawar.

Age

Language shift occurred mostly at adolescence stage (Masruddin, 2014). Therefore, the age of the participants of the present study varies between 20-25. It offers clear reasons behind language shift and the adaptation of new language. The reason behind the language shift mostly at the age of adolescence is the increase in ratio in outdoor exposures. Youngsters spend more time outside their homes in universities, in their friend's circle tends to adapt the language which is commonly in use.

Participants were asked about the usage of Pashto language, the widely used language of the city. At adolescence stage, young speakers were found more exposed towards society and in making relationships with new people and this may the reason of their greater contribution to language shift.

Language Restricted Domains

It has been noticed that mostly young speakers of Hindko, and Urdu speakers of cross- culture marriages use their mother tongue in family domains, solely. However, in other domains such as in neighborhood and in friend's circle, the speakers mostly use Pashto language, and their own language which they must to speak and should promote, is limited to the family domain only. It was found interesting that speakers also used Pashto language with their native speakers in friends circle, because they are used to it. The observation of data reflected, the young speakers of Hindko and Urdu language of cross-culture marriages give more preference to Pashto language in friends circle, who are the native speakers of Pushto, and in neighborhood, because all of their neighbors are the speakers of Pushto

language. At adolescence stage, young speakers are more associated in language shift because they are more involve in the activity of socializing. Therefore, the friend's circle, and the language spoken in the community influences them, and the exercise of their native language has been limited to certain domains only. That's why the young speakers adapt other languages.

Pashto as a Dominant Language

Pashto is the widely spoken language in the region of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The people here in Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, use Pashto language because it is the major language spoken in the region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is not the official language of Peshawar but the native language of 70% to 80% people of this region. While analyzing the data, the language shift is observed in the young speakers of Hindko and Urdu of cross-culture marriages. The mother tongue of these speakers was either Hindko or Urdu but still they prefer to use Pashto language in outdoors, friend's circle, neighborhood, and sometimes even in family settings, because it is the widely spoken language in their surroundings. The reason behind this language shift is the dominancy of Pashto language in the region.

Social Impact

Language is the primary tool for interaction in society. It is observed from the collected data that young speakers of the selected languages use Pashto language in their friend's circle more often. The reason is the large population of Pashto speakers in the community. Thus, these young speakers prefer Pashto language in order to negotiate with the others in their surroundings. Adolescence stage is more associated with societal interaction (David, 2003). The present study shows young speakers of Hindko and Urdu are more associated with the Pashto language. Pashto is widely spoken language of the region therefore; it is perceived from the data that the language shifts from Hindko and Urdu to Pashto which is due to the social impact.

Influence of Friends

Young speakers are very likely to be interested in making new friends. They spend more time with their friends in outdoors. Participants of the

present study are the students of a well-known university of Peshawar. Being students, they spent half of the day in university and are surrounded by people from diverse lingual backgrounds.

Questions were asked about the lingual backgrounds of the participants. Some of the participants were found having Urdu and Hindko as their first language but were fluent in Pashto. The reason was the influence of their friends which were mostly Pashto speakers. This may be the reason behind the language shift in the young speakers because they indulge most of the time with their friends. It shows influence of friends is also one of the responsible factors behind the language shift in young speakers.

Discussion

The analysis of the data reveals the language choices of the participants depends on their exposure and usage of the language. If a speaker uses the second language more often then there is a chance of him being more comfortable in using it.

The speakers of Urdu and Hindko use Pashto language mostly outside the territory of their homes specially in the friend's circle, with neighbors, and in general. Some of the Hindko speakers use Pashto language within the family like with their cousins because of their habit of using it commonly.

The status of minority languages in society affects their acquisition and maintenance (Baker, 2000). It has been observed from the data, Pashto is not the official language of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but the major and widely spoken language of Peshawar which affects the proficiency of minor languages namely Hindko and Urdu.

Hobert and Hans (2010) conducted a study on the people of mixed marriages in Nigeria. The study found that the language shifts from the language spoken by minority towards the language of the majority. Likewise, the present study also shows the language shifts towards Pashto which is language of the majority. Hence, it means the societal language motivates the language shift phenomena from minor to major language of the society.

Furthermore, the data reveals Hindko and Urdu speakers believe the reason behind their usage of

Pashto language is the exposure of this language. When different participants were asked about language change whether language change is a good sign or not, most participants answer in its favor. They are of the view that it is a good sign because it enables a person to speak two or more languages.

On the other hand, Abbasi and Zaki(n.d.) conducted a study in Karachi and asserted that young speakers associated more towards the use of national and official languages. The study focuses young speakers speak national language and the official language of their state. However, the present study shows societal language has greater impact on young speakers. Secondly, the language spoken in the company of friends also has a huge impact. In the targeted age of the present study, youngsters are more indulge towards the exposure of society and in friend's company and spend most of their time in outdoors.

Conclusion

Mentioning, this is small-scale study, it does not propose to make asserts about the implications of our findings, but at least it can be proclaimed that we have made some observations about the role of mixed marriages in the language shift. The conducted study concludes, the major language of society and the friends circle company has a significant influence on the language shift of Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa young speakers of cross-culture marriages.

Limitation of the Study

The extent of this study focuses on private sector university located in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study was conducted on small scale, it does not propose extreme proclaims about the findings. However, it can help as an opening door for future studies with larger sample of participants from other regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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