Parental Language Preference for Children and Saraiki Language Shift

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Abstract

In Pakistan, most of the population is multilinguals. The ethnic identities of these multilingual Pakistani citizens have an additional layer of linguistic identity associated with their regional languages, i.e., Saraiki, Balochi, Punjabi, Sindhi, etc. However, it has been observed as the research problem that the mainstream communication languages in Pakistan, i.e., Urdu and English, are more prestigious than regional languages. The present study has focused on one of regional language which represents one of the largest ethnic communities, i.e., "Saraiki Language". Owing to the importance of parents' role of 'socialization' in developing native language skills among their children, the present study has selected ten "Saraiki" speaking parents from urban working-class parents, who are settled in "Multan" city. The data was collected through a Likert scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews conducted through video and audio calls, by applying mix-method approach. The thematic analysis attempted in the light of "theoretical framework taxonomic model" by Karan (2008), to identify the motivational factors involved in the Saraiki language shift. Though findings from questionnaire have shown the positive views of parents towards Saraiki language, yet, it has been evident from the results that the parents do not use native language while communicating with their children. The findings obtained through thematic analysis of interviews' data have confirmed the results of questionnaire. Moreover, the respondents have appeared to retain their linguistic ethnic identity as their cultural values. But these parents think that the accomplishment of their children's future progression are related with "Urdu" followed by "English". Hence, these parents have expressed

that in order to prepare their children for educational, occupational and social pursuits, they need to develop their communicative competence in Urdu language rather than in "Saraiki". The study has recommended to organize "linguistic literacy programmes" for parents' awareness with regards to the importance of Saraiki language to encourage them to provide maximum exposure of "Saraiki" language to their children in order to slow down and then to reverse the process of "Saraiki" language shift.

Key Words: Multilingual, Saraiki Regional Language, Language Shift, Ethnolinguistic Identity, Language Preferences, Motivational Factors

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 international and official language and "Urdu" as national language, Pakistan exhibits its cultural and linguistic diversities in minority and regional languages. Owing to the political, economic, educational and social dominancy of "English" and "Urdu" languages over the minority languages, these minority and regional languages are in continuous struggle to maintain their ethnic vitality and cultural relevance. Moreover, communities living in rural terrains are the main users of these regional languages and have 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 threat of becoming extinct or will become extinct in near future. Hence, it is important to understand that languages remain alive through its use by its 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 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, yet, he has identified regional variants of Saraiki which are spoken in many regions, i.e., "Multani", "Hindko", "Riasati", "Thali" and "Jafri".

The origin of Saraiki community can be traced back in the history of Indus civilization. Most of the literature states its evolution with the establishment of "Indo-Aryan" and "Dravidian" communities in subcontinent (Asif, 2005, Yasir & Ghani, 2020, Atta, Weijer & Zhu, 2020 and Saini, 2018). During the colonial rule in Sub-continent, "Saraiki" was considered as a dialect of "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 population, whereas, Punjabi speakers were 14.9% (Asif, 2005). There was also a conflict between "Saraiki" identity and Punjabi language, which is highlighted from 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) that "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", "economical resources" and "infrastructure" as compared to "Lahore" (pp. 392-393). These factors contributed in the motivation of "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, yet, both are separate languages (Rahman, 1995).

Apart from the ethnonationalist conflict between "Saraiki" and "Punjabi" languages, "Saraiki" language has been facing "ethno-linguistic" threats from "Urdu" and "English" languages. Abbasi and Zaki (2019) believed that language shift of "Gujrati" and "Sindhi" towards "Urdu" in "Karachi", has been due to the political and economic supremacy of "Urdu" language. "Urdu" being "the national language of Pakistan" is considered as 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 "Urdu" language, affecting the use of their native language. This might result in "language shift" or "language loss". Asif (2005) has appropriately defined that the occurrence of "language shift" is selection of one language to be used instead of another; whereas, "language loss" is occurred when proficiency in any one of the languages gets lowered or lost completely. In 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 at "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, die, and the second is when language stops

being transmitted to next generation (Ahearn, 2017). However, in the context of multilingual state like Pakistan, the second process of "language death" has more relevancies unless necessary measures would not be implemented for "language maintenance". As defined by Asif (2005), "language maintenance" is developing language proficiency by using it at both levels, i.e., 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 becoming extinct. 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 his effort by using the endangered language (p. 7).

It has been proven theoretically and empirically that motivational variables impact "multi-linguals" attitudes to get inclined towards native language or 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 language is 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 second language. However, the present study is concerned with the "language shift" of "Saraiki" language as "native language" to "Urdu" language as mainstream language. 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 which is developed unconsciously through

provision of enough language exposures by parents and caregivers (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1982, as cited in Salzmann, Stanlaw & Adachi 2012). Parental attitude towards native language is crucial to transmit their 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" as educational, social and economic requirement.

Rationale of the Study

Pakistan, as multilingual and multicultural country, displays its diversity at ethnic, as well as at linguistic level. The review of history of languages in Subcontinent and later in Pakistan, indicated that "Saraiki language" gained its ethnic identity through a great struggle. However, this ethnic identity is in danger with the developing motivations and attitudes to learn "Urdu" language, which is resulting in "language shift". Hence, in order to "revitalize" Saraiki language, it is important to know about parents' response towards 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 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 as more prestigious. Asif (2005) found that this phenomenon is more common in urban areas and amongst the working-class parents. Hence, the present study focuses on urban working-class parents, having "Saraiki" as their native language.

Aim of the Study

The study mainly aims to explore the factors involved in developing "Saraiki" language speaking parental preferences and motivations to choose "Urdu" language while communicating with their children.

Research Questions

1.   Which language 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 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 Linguistic" and through the broader domain of "Sociolinguistics". "Anthropological Linguistics" views language as part of 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 "Saraiki" language, yet, 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' believes towards "language choice and management", by using online survey and case studies. The results

demonstrated the positive parental believes 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 the languages. The researchers focused on 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 positive impact at discourse level. The study also concluded that shortcomings in the performance can be overcome through 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 and parents' language believes 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-switch".

At global level, it has been observed that most of the languages are getting shifted towards "English". "English" language has spread over many countries during British Colonialism; however, it continued to flourish even after that era. In Pakistan, "English" is considered as most prestigious language, accompanied with social, economic, educational and political advantages. Ahmed and Hafeez (2007) highlighted the issue in "language planning" of Pakistan's educational policy, in which "English" language is considered as medium of instruction. Nonetheless, the multi-linguals in Pakistan first translate their ideas into "Urdu" language and them in "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

second language. Contrary to this, Mansoor (2004) analysed the role of "English" language in impacting the status of regional language in educational domain. The findings demonstrated the development of negative beliefs of speakers regarding their regional language. Therefore, Mansoor (2004) recommended reviewing "Language Policy" to consider minority and regional languages for the promotion of "cultural pluralism" in Pakistan. Apart from studying educational causes for "language shift" in Pakistan, it has been observed that "Punjabi" language shift towards "English" language, is because of social trend, influenced by historical, socio-cultural, economical and psychological variables (Nawaz, Umer, Anjum & Ramzan, 2012). In this context, Sarwat, Kabir, Qayyum & Akram (2021) investigated the status of "Punjabi" language shifting towards "English" in 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 second generation (parents) was observed as more inclined toward using L2, and using "Punjabi" language only when required. The second-generation also found to prefer the second language for "younger generation", in order to secure their and their children's socio-economic future, instead of ethnic identity associated with their L1, i.e., "Punjabi" language. Similarly, Shah & Anwar (2015) observed multi-linguals residing in Faisalabad who preferred using "Urdu" or "English", instead of their L1, which is "Punjabi" language. The researchers found that attitudinal factors play major role in determining the "language choice" of parents as well as children. However, Abbas and Iqbal (2018) implied the comparative analysis between "English", "Urdu" and "Punjabi" languages, to know the language choice preference of Pakistani young community. Through "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 "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 Gujrati" speakers through comparative analysis. The data obtained through interviews and analysed by thematic procedure, demonstrated that the third generation speaking "Sindhi and Gujrati" languages is being shifted to "English and Urdu languages", hence, "Sindhi and Gujrati" languages are in danger of becoming extinct. In 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 "Sargodha" region. Interestingly, both studied arrived at similar findings, that "Punjabi" language is confronting a threat of becoming extinct, as "Punjabi" language is losing its value, innovation and societal mobility for their 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 "Punjabi" language is economically and educationally insecure language, which is why they are moving away from their native language.

With regards to "Saraiki" language, it has been found from the thorough review of extensive literature regarding "language shift", that only few studies address the phenomenon in "Saraiki" language. Most of the studies have focused on either historical and evolutionary developmental documentation of "Saraiki" language (Saini, 2018, Garcia, 2016) or phonological

description of "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 "Saraiki" language has not been novel. The influences of neighbouring regional languages have been affecting "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 "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 "multiple choice questionnaire" employed to get responses of 300 children with "Saraiki" ethnic identity using "Urdu" language. The findings confirmed that "socio-economic" variables motivate speakers of native language 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, yet, 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 in this "language shift".

Theoretical Framework

"Language change" begins to occur at individual level but leaves its adverse effects at society level in broader context. Hence, the process of "language revitalization" should be started at individual level (Karan, 2008). With regards to achieving full understanding of parents' inclination towards their L1, i.e., "Saraiki" language, the present study has selected a model with 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 to affect "Saraiki" parents' language choice in preferring "Urdu" over "Saraiki" language, which is ultimately causing "language shift".

Methodology

The portent of "language shift", occurring in "Saraiki" Language, has been explored by few researchers including Asif (2005) & Yasir & Ghani (2020). These researchers have highlighted various causal factors in the process of "Saraiki" language shift towards "Urdu" language which are: "attitudinal factors" of speakers, "socio-economic" factors, etc. However, the present study claims that parents' language preference for their children has major contribution in child's cognitive and language development. Thus, the corresponding aim provides 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 the "descriptive design" with mix method (quantitative and qualitative) approach. The methodological approach divided the paper into two dimensions. 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 native language, before affecting language development of their children. To know about the efficiency, domain and frequency of using "Saraiki" language, a questionnaire has been employed to be filled 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 of 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 method of data collection is required to be exercised, so that in-depth comprehension of system dynamics could be attained from collected data. For the holistic understanding of the phenomenon of "language shift", the present study has found mix 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 mix method approach by using questionnaire 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 large population of "Saraiki" speakers in "Multan" city. The parents from five families have been selected through purposive sampling technique. The selected families are settled in urban areas of "Multan" city and belong to working middle class social status. Before conducting interviews, a short questionnaire has been employed which is to be filled by parents. The questionnaire has been formulated to gain data to address "research question 1" and is adopted from Abbasi & Zaki (2019). Owing to the circumstances developed due to Covid-19, the questionnaire has been employed online.

Telephonic semi-structured interviews have been conducted through video calls by using 'WhatsApp'. As the participants have not permitted recording of the interviews, notes have been taken during the interviews. Each family 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 to the interviews and it enabled the establishment of alignment between the data and the research

questions. The semi-structure pattern has also allowed the occurrence of free expression which are important to observe the possible emerging themes or features, relevant to the study.

To analyse the questionnaire, "descriptive statistics" method has been applied, while the interviews have been analysed through "thematic analysis", 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, researcher focused on emerging themes and sub themes which are relevant to the framework of "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 dominating factors affecting "language shift".

Results

In this section, results of questionnaire have been shown, followed by their brief explanation and findings.

The results of questionnaire have been categorised in three categories: proficiency, domain of use and frequency of use of language with selected person or group of persons.

Figure 1: *Proficiency in Saraiki language Vs Urdu Language*
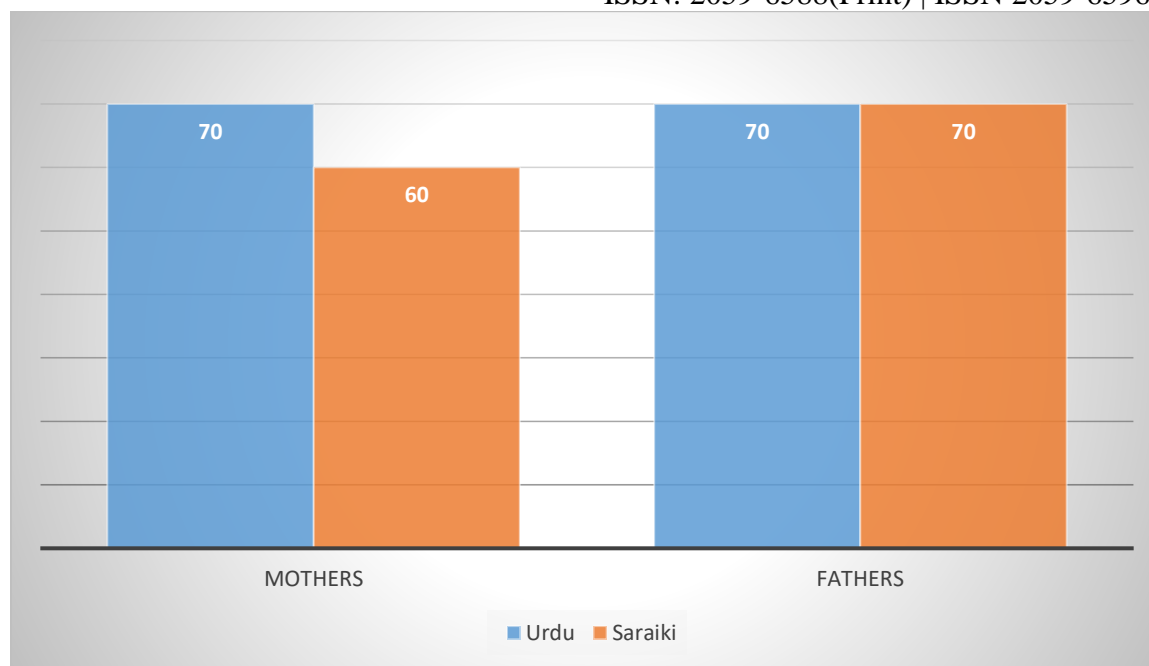
Note: The data obtained from the participants exhibit proficiency level of "Saraiki" language at 70% for

fathers and 60% for mothers; while for "Urdu" language, it is 70% for both.

Figure 2: Usage *of "Saraiki" language*
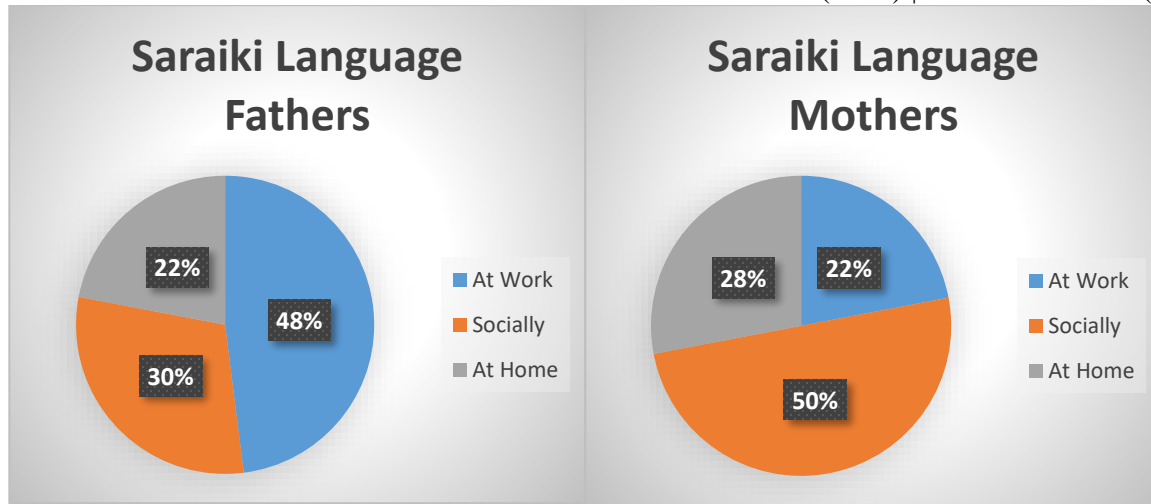
Note: This figure illustrates the comparative percentage of Mothers and Fathers using "Saraiki" language in social interactions. Fathers have predominant usage at work while mothers' usage is significant in social domain.

Figure 3: Usage *of "Urdu" language*
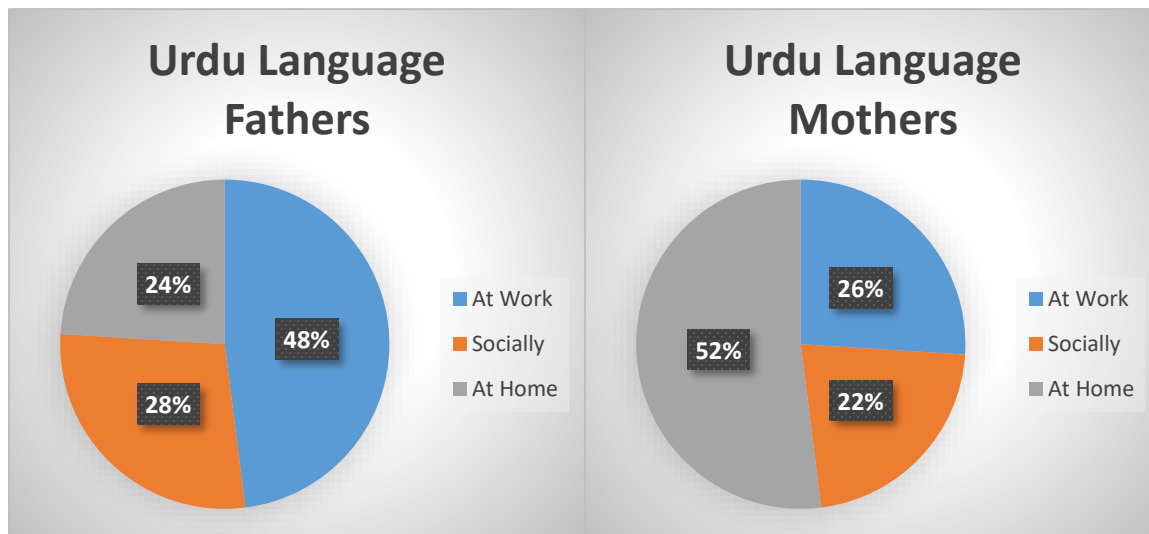
Note: This figure illustrates the comparative percentage of Mothers and Fathers using "Urdu" language in social interactions. This depicts that fathers' 24% of "Urdu" language usage is at home while it is 52% for mothers.

Table 1: *Frequency and the language choice with 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
Urdu	With Parents	Rarely	Often
	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 "Saraiki" language, fathers possess higher proficiency level than mothers; while in "Urdu" language, fathers and mothers have equal level of proficiency (Figure 1). The results for second category of usage of "Saraiki" and "Urdu" languages disclose that fathers use "Saraiki" language more at work place; whereas, mothers use "Saraiki" language more in social activities, i.e., with neighbours or other family members (Fig 2). In same context, the results for "Urdu" language show that Mothers use "Urdu" language more at home; while, Fathers mostly use "Urdu" language 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 "Urdu" language to communicate with their children and spouses 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 "Urdu" language 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 questionnaire.

Research Question 1

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

The findings obtained from "descriptive analysis" of questionnaire exposes that the parental language choice varies while interacting with their parents and with their children. These parents use native language, i.e., "Saraiki" to interact with their parents, whereas, they use "Urdu" language during interaction with their children. Since, the findings do not express complete abandonment of "Saraiki" language, therefore, it cannot be interpreted that the parents possess negative views towards their language. Nevertheless, the findings of questionnaire have shown that the second generation (parents) is not transferring the native language to the third (younger) 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 "Urdu" language for their children. In context of attitudinal factor, the findings from questionnaire

negates that the parents think negatively towards their native language. The depiction would be clearer with the findings of semi-structure interviews, which has 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 questionnaire exhibits that the parents (second generation) select "Saraiki" language to communicate with their parents (elder/ first generation) and are using "Urdu" language while interacting with their children (younger/ third generation). To explore the reason as to 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 "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" language to be prestigious on the basis of "nationalistic and political" perspective. "Religiously", these parents support "Urdu" language more than "Saraiki", for the availability of translated versions of "Holy Quran" and religious books.

With regard to parents' communication with their children in "Urdu" language, most of the parents express that they "intentionally" use "Urdu" language with their children, so that their children can learn and communicate better in "Urdu" language in the social settings, other than home, i.e., at school, with friends, etc. This highlights the decreased domains for the expressions in native language. Parents also prefer "Urdu" language 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 construed 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 which 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 dominating in the shift of "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, which has frequently been expressed by the parents. Another emerging theme is the code-switching between "English-Urdu" languages. It has been observed that parents have propensity of code-switching of "Urdu-English" words during communication with their children. Parents consider both "Urdu" and "English" languages to be fundamental for their children's successful educational pursuits. In this context, Abbasi & Zaki (2019) and Shafi (2013) have also observed the children inclination towards learning and using 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 towards the emerging behaviour of code-switching in their children language with regards to vocabulary, meaning and lexical choices, for which these parents blame the social media.

With respect to "ethno-linguistic identity" and "cultural association", most of the parents seemed contented and confident on being known as "Saraiki Community". Most of the parents

have expressed their positive beliefs that "Saraiki language" is valuable for them to remain integral to their "cultural association". Almost all parents called it as "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 family living in USA have agreed on giving up their "ethno-linguistic identity" for "socio-economic" benefits. However, the finding of positive attitude has been confirmed by the findings obtained from questionnaires, 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 another hand, they seem to remain functionally associated with "Urdu" language. It is because that most of the parents' revere "Urdu" language as their "national language", "politically strong language" and as a medium of instruction and learning in institutions of Pakistan. The finding suggests that "Urdu" language has become a prestigious language for national and political association. Similarly, language shift has also been observed in previous studies, due to linguistic prestige possessed by "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 the similar findings amongst the "Punjabi" people, who have developed interest in "Urdu" and "English" languages owing to the prestige attached to them. However, the participants of the present study have 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 "Urdu" language for its being prestigious and instrumental but not as replacement to their native language.

The respondents have also been asked for their language choice towards "religious practices and understanding". Most of the parents have revealed their approval for "Urdu" language because better understanding of religious content could be achieved through "Urdu" language owing to availability of "Urdu" translation of the Holy Quran and other religious content. This factor can be interpreted as "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 causative influence to bring "language shift".

Research Question 3

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

On the basis of results of the questionnaire, results of the interviews and supportive evidences from relevant literature, the findings of the present study can be interpreted as "denoting the occurrence of Saraiki Language shift towards Urdu language". The data has shown that majority amid parents representing second generation, have positive beliefs regarding "Saraiki" language and culture and the parents are using "Saraiki" language during interaction with their parents & elders (elder/ first generation), relatives, friends. However, it has been observed and stated by the parents that they do not interact with their children in "Saraiki" language. Main reasons for "Urdu" 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" language in communication with children, is ultimately developing positive learning attitude of children towards "Urdu" language. As a result, the children are developing communicative competence in "Urdu" language rather

"Saraiki" language. This phenomenon is decreasing "Saraiki" language repertoire in the younger/ third generation.

Conclusion

Pakistan being multilingual nation-state, faces daunting challenge of preserving the minority and regional which are also native languages, specifically when the contact languages are considered more prestigious than the regional languages. The "language prestige" of contact language, not only depicts the political power associated with these contact languages, but also their economic, social and educational importance. In Pakistan, "Urdu" and "English" languages are the contact languages, hence, carry the status of "language prestige". With regards to the historical traces of "Urdu" and "English" language, both came into use as Lingua Franca in sub-continent; "Urdu" by the Mughal Empire and "English" during the British colonial rule. In 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 other 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 "Saraiki language shift" to "Urdu" language 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 "Saraiki" language, the parents communicate with their children in "Urdu" language, mainly to prepare them for future challenges associated with educational, occupational and social domains. The parents have considered judgement that "Urdu" language will better equip their children to overcome these challenges than "Saraiki" language. However, parents are not aware of the consequences of such practices which are contributing in "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, ethnographic research design could not be carried out. Moreover, owing to the circumstances and lockdown, due to Covid-19, the researcher could not get face to face access with the participants, during data collection process. The data could not be recorded electronically as it has not been permitted by the participants. Due to these limiting factors, much of non-linguistic and para-linguistic features could not be observed and taken into consideration while carrying out data analysis. Despite of the limitations encountered during research study; the present study has offered generalizable facts. The findings of the present study are significant to take cautionary measures against the alarming situation of "Saraiki language shift". Parents' role in provision of maximum exposure of 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 "Saraiki"

language in order to build awareness among the second generation which could lead "Saraiki"

language towards endangerment. Hence, it will contribute in preserving the "Saraiki" language

heritage and usage. Our 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 wellbeing.

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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