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## Migration's Impacts on Diminishing Lingual Heritage

### Abstract:

*Socialization in the post-migration phase has a key role in shaping the behavior of the people towards a new place, culture and phenomenon. The socialization of children after the migration has potential impacts on the diminishing lingual heritage. Migration has radically exposed the younger generation to this challenge threatening the lingual heritage. They, most probably, lose their mother tongue and get socialized in other languages. This study explores the latent hazards faced by migrants from a rural setting and their impacts on the diminishing languages. The methodology of the study was descriptive. In-depth questionnaires were conducted along with a focused group discussion of sample 95 out-migrant families, living in Rawalpindi and Islamabad through a convenient sampling technique. The results from the cross-comparison of three generations show that the majority of the grandparents and parents proudly speak their native languages whereas their children are rapidly getting alienated from the language of their forefathers.*

### Key Words:

Communication, Language, Lingual Heritage, Migration, Momentum, Mother Tongue, Multi-lingual.

### Introduction

Language tends to be one of the most cherished intangible heritage of a culture. It is thereby a crucial component of any culture. The bases of ethnicity, identity and nationalism are set by the languages and they also help to preserve and represent one's national heritage. It is the very driving force that serves to unite the people of all the races, castes and creeds under one nation and helps them to distinguish from other nations. Language is barely imposed rather adopted by individuals living in a geographical region, but and once adopted, it is extremely difficult to eliminate it from society until the very society itself decides to replace it with a new language. The issue of the State language of our country, Pakistan was elevated soon after the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. A disaster emerged as Urdu was imposed as the national language of Pakistan in the post-partition era. East Pakistan strongly resented and stood in opposition to this decision. The issue aggravated to a great extent. The masses and central government of Pakistan started the unilateral use of Urdu in money order forms, postal stamps, currencies, coins, railway tickets and official letterheads even without formally adopting Urdu as the state language of Pakistan (Zaheer, 1994).

The interaction in natural language takes place both written and spoken and language content of these interactions has been along acknowledged missing ingredients (Bramsen et al., 2011). Insight into the social structure of the groups is provided by the signals embedded in the languages (Rahman, 2002). Language has a certain form of power. Power is that quality which enables the users of a language to obtain more means of gratification than the speakers of other languages. The intangible sources of gratification are pleasure, ego-boosting, and self-esteem (Rofes,

2002). In this way, the language one can fluently speak and comprehend has an edge that not only empowers its speaker but also serves for his gratification.

In the kulturkreise, a cultural circle (Britannica, 2019), it is fair to say that the impact of globalization is viewed in a negative rather pessimistic fashion. It is believed that the wave of globalization is destructive since it mingles cultural identities, it westernizes people rather than modernizing them, the heterogeneity is taken over by the homogenizing forces, accelerates the enrichment of capitalism and consumerism. This view, the constituency for which extends from (some) academics to anti-globalization activists, tends to interpret globalization as a seamless extension of – indeed, as a euphemism for – western cultural imperialism (Goffman, 1978). Language is one such entity that is threatened by the extensive pace of globalization whereby the English language is taking the lead and sweeping all the national and ethnic languages of the world.

Each language positions individuals having its own defenses and certain so there will be a tendency for those who have traveled close to one of these poles to complete the voyage (Kundara, Heim & Roth, 1996). Some people remain in the same cultural circle unless they die; others are destroyed after a long fall. Rare are the languages that retain a muted nostalgia for the culture circle dance.

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However, we all are the inhabitants of a universe where everything turns in circles (Weinreich, 2010). Language shift is defined as “the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another (Marsden, Mitchell & Myres, 2013). Language is often regarded as a prerequisite for the integration of immigrants and as an indicator of cultural assimilation, multi-culturalism and adaptation. Studies focused on the time period of adolescence as this period is not only formative for adult years but also seems a very sensitive time for a change in second language use (Tseng & Fulgini, 2000).

Human beings are born with the ability to learn languages but the manner in which a language is acquired and used is culturally mediated. For studying the significance of language on its natives and survival of the language it is pertinent to see the multifarious aspects associated with it. The present paper aims to explore the implications of migration on the native languages of AJ&K along with other factors i.e. globalization and urbanization. Magnifying the root causes of demolishing languages of AJ&K one comes to understand how migration plays an overwhelming role in its devouring. The institution of the family plays also plays a vital role in it. It was observed that for the majority of the migrant from AJ&K the transfer of culture through socialization and language has critical trajectories due to the utilitarian approach associated with it. A cross-comparison of three generations showed that the majority of the grandparents and parents proudly speak their native languages whereas their children are rapidly getting alienated from the language of their forefathers.

The majority of the parents do not speak their native language with their children rather they prefer to communicate with them in the Urdu language. Among the permanently settled migrant families trend of communication between the children and their parents is Urdu. Respondents were of the view that they prefer to speak Urdu with their children so that their children have a command over the Urdu language even before going to school. One of the respondents in an interview highlighted that only she and her husband speak Pahari (Dialect of Hindko) at home whereas their children never speak it. They prefer to speak Urdu because they do not like it and feel humiliated while speaking it. While in another interview respondent was of the view that there is no utility of teaching the native language to the children because it is worthless except communicating with its own speakers. Here in this new setting what the point in reinforcing it as it is not part of any curriculum, job requirements or not even substantial and routine interaction with non-speakers. Children need to strengthen their faculties in Urdu and English that can positively influence their future.

## Methodology

The present research was focused to find out the lingual crisis among the out-migrants of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and to explore the problems faced in new settings regarding language, identity crisis and culture. A qualitative and quantitative study was conducted with a sample size of 95 households from Rawalpindi and Islamabad by using non-probability, convenient sampling technique. An in-depth questionnaire was designed to collect data from the respondents. SPSS version 16.00 was used for the analysis of data and the Chi-Square test was applied to check the association among the variables.

## Results

**Table 1.** Distribution of Preference for Language and Other Variables

| Language preferred at Home | Speaking Mother Tongue |            |            | Total       |
|----------------------------|------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
|                            | Never                  | Off and on | Frequently |             |
| Urdu                       | 15 (14.25%)            | 9 (8.55%)  | 22 (20.9%) | 46 (43.7%)  |
| Hindko                     | 2 (1.9%)               | 7 (6.65%)  | 26 (24.7%) | 35 (33.25%) |
| Punjabi                    | 2 (1.9%)               | 1(0.95%)   | 2 (1.9%)   | 5 (4.75%)   |
| Kashmiri                   | 0                      | 1(0.95%)   | 8 (7.5%)   | 9 (8.55%)   |
| Total                      | 19 (18.05%)            | 18 (17.1%) | 58 (55.1%) | 95 (100%)   |

Chi-Square = 14.179 df = 6 p-Value = 0.028

|          | Language preferred at Public Places |             |          |          | Total       |
|----------|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------|----------|-------------|
|          | Urdu                                | Hindko      | Punjabi  | Kashmiri |             |
| Urdu     | 45 (42.75%)                         | 0           | 1(0.95%) | 0        | 46 (43.7%)  |
| Hindko   | 25 (23.75%)                         | 10 (9.5%)   | 0        | 0        | 35 (33.25%) |
| Punjabi  | 4 (3.8%)                            | 0           | 0        | 1(0.95%) | 5 (4.75%)   |
| Kashmiri | 7 (6.65%)                           | 1(0.95%)    | 0        | 1(0.95%) | 9 (8.55%)   |
| Total    | 81 (76.95%)                         | 11 (10.45%) | 1(0.95%) | 2 (1.9%) | 95 (100%)   |

Chi-Square = 30.190 df = 9 p-Value = 0.000

| The reaction of Children to Learn Mother Tongue |             |             |              |             | Total       |
|---|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
|   | Encouraging | Supportive  | Discouraging | Humiliating |             |
| Urdu  | 9 (8.55%)   | 13 (12.35%) | 21 (19.95%)  | 3 (2.85%)   | 46 (43.7%)  |
| Hindko  | 8 (7.5%)    | 21 (19.95%) | 4 (3.8%)     | 2 (1.9%)    | 35 (33.25%) |
| Punjabi   | 3 (2.85%)   | 1(0.95%)    | 1(0.95%)     | 0           | 5 (4.75%)   |
| Kashmiri  | 2 (1.9%)    | 5 (4.75%)   | 1(0.95%)     | 1(0.95%)    | 9 (8.55%)   |
| Total   | 22 (20.9%)  | 40 (38%)    | 27 (25.65%)  | 6 (5.7%)    | 95 (100%)   |
| Chi-Square = 19.016 df = 9 p-Value = 0.025      |             |             |              |             |             |

  

| Speak Mother Tongue with Native People     |           |            |            |             | Total       |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
|  | Never     | Off and On | Frequently | Often       |             |
| Urdu                                       | 5 (4.75%) | 1(0.95%)   | 0          | 40 (38%)    | 46 (43.7%)  |
| Hindko                                     | 1(0.95%)  | 0          | 0          | 34 (32.3%)  | 35 (33.25%) |
| Punjabi                                    | 0         | 0          | 3 (2.85%)  | 2 (1.9%)    | 5 (4.75%)   |
| Kashmiri                                   | 0         | 0          | 0          | 9 (8.55%)   | 9 (8.55%)   |
| Total                                      | 6 (5.7%)  | 1(0.95%)   | 3 (2.85%)  | 85 (80.75%) | 95 (100%)   |
| Chi-Square = 59.865 df = 9 p-Value = 0.000 |           |            |            |             |             |

Table 1 shows that among the 95 households, 18.5% never preferred to speak their mother tongue in which 14.2% speak Urdu, 4% speak Punjabi and Hindko whereas the Kashmiri language has not been spoken even by a single respondent. 17.1% of respondents said that they speak mother tongue off when they encounter friends and close people whereas 55% of respondents said that they speak their mother tongue frequently in which 24% speak Hindko their native language and only 7% speak the Kashmiri language. The Kashmiri language is diminishing with the passage of time and people prefer other languages to speak as of their native language Hindko which is now spoken as potpourri here in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The chi-square analysis shows significant values that sanction the results and approves the association.

The respondents prefer to speak Urdu at public places a larger ration of respondents answered that they usually interact in Urdu language and it is almost spoken and understood everywhere. They said their children are also speaking their Urdu at school and elsewhere while interacting and even at home they prefer to speak Urdu. 42.75% of respondents speak Urdu, 23.75% prefer to speak Hindko at public places with a low proportion of Punjabi as well but the Kashmiri language is spoken only by 6.65% people at public places. They said that Urdu is spoken at large that's why they have had to speak it and Kashmiri has a little utilization and only spoken at homes and with the native people and relatives. The chi-square value endorses the results and demonstrates high significance.

Respondents were asked about the reaction of their children towards the mother tongue and it was interesting that 38% respondents showed a supportive attitude towards their mother tongue in which 19.95% respondents were reluctant about their children that they have had positive attitude to their mother tongue and speak it but the real problem lies with Potohari which is the typical form of Hindko, again the low ration among respondents and their children prefer to speak Kashmiri language. The encouraging ration is also low as 8.55% of children of respondents prefer to speak Urdu, 7.5% prefer to speak Hindko and the Kashmiri language is again discouraged by the children of respondents as well. The discouraging attitude towards Urdu, as per respondents, was evaluated with a small proportion to the native languages and especially to Kashmiri. The chi-square value sanctions the results as significantly associated.

Among the 95 households, 5.7% of respondents said that they never speak their mother tongue at the native place because they have less opportunity to visit their native place but when they meet their native people or relatives they often speak Urdu instead of mother tongue. 2.85% respondents speak their mother tongue with their native people frequently and get involve in speaking it more satisfactorily whereas a larger proportion of respondents 80.75% respondents speak their mother with the native people in which 38% respondents who prefer speaking Urdu in normal routine speak their mother tongue with natives, relatives and friends while 34% also prefer to speak mother tongue with natives but the proportion of people who prefer to speak Kashmiri is very low as only 8.55% respondents speak Kashmiri language with their native people. The discouraging attitude towards the Kashmiri has different reasons as their migration is concerned. The people migrated earlier when their parents were speaking Kashmiri language but either their parents did not intend that their children speak their mother tongue or the utilitarian constraints have had been a hindrance in seeking and speaking their mother tongue. Respondents said that they understand the language but cannot reply in Kashmiri language but fault lie either on the parent's side or acculturation responsible for the diminishing of Kashmiri language.

## Findings

The institution of the family plays a vital role in the transfer of lingual heritage. As it is very common in Anthropological discussion that culture is always learned by the new generation and transmitted via senior generation. Most of the cultural values and norms get constructed, molded and sometimes impressed by others with the passage of time. Language is always an identical valued factor for any specific area residents. To learn any cultural values new generation is totally dependent upon their elders, but one we talk about to learn the language than their the family institution always have a vital role not only to transfer the language but also to build the confidence among their youngsters to speak and promote their mother language. It was observed that for the majority of the migrants from AJ&K, the transfer of culture through socialization and language has critical trajectories due to the utilitarian approach associated with it.

A cross-comparison of three generations showed that the majority of the grandparents and parents proudly speak their native languages whereas their children are rapidly getting alienated from the language of their forefathers. One major significant reason behind this dilemma is first two generations are more closely associated with their motherland, and they used to speak in their local language rather practice any other language, but in case of third-generation seen is quite different, firstly third generation of AJK national normally settled abroad and secondly they are used to live in Pakistani communities for education or earning purposes and they have to speak English or Urdu to get fitted in the area of residence, ultimately the practice of their mother language is getting shorter day by day. Maybe after some generations, the local language will be seen only in memories.

The majority of the parents do not speak their native language with their children rather they prefer to communicate with them in the Urdu language. This is due to inferiority thinking about their local language. If someone used to speak in his mother language, this means he is illiterate and having a rural background. One of the respondents in the interview highlighted that only she and her husband speak *Pahari* (Dialect of *Hindko*) at home whereas their children never speak it. They prefer to speak Urdu because they do not like it and feel humiliated while speaking it.

Among the permanently settled migrant families trend of communication between the children and their parents is Urdu. As mentioned earlier that people think if someone communicates with them in the local language this meant to be that he is not a well-educated person. Families of AJK national settled in Pakistan whatever the objective on background, they should like to speak in Urdu with their kids and also promote to speak in Urdu with others to their children. There is less association found in permanent migrant residents and in their language.

Respondents were of the view that they prefer to speak Urdu with their children so that their children have a command over the Urdu language even before going to school. Another reason mentioned by the study respondents living in Pakistan is the schooling of their children. Normally in Government schools, Urdu is a common mode of communication between teachers and students. So AJK migrants tried to develop good bases in their children and make this sure that they get command in Urdu speaking, understanding and writing.

Children of the Migrants understand the language but cannot reply in their mother tongue. It was observed that children's parents communicate with each other in their local language, but when they speak with their children they avoid communicating their messages in their mother tongue. So, as a result, their children at least understand the meaning associated with the particular local word but not able to speak in response. The reason as observed was children were discouraged to speak their forefather's language in their childhood so as to result in their latter part of life they completely forget to speak their own language. It is difficult to decide whether this breaking linkage between mother and newly learned language is created by the parents only or the need for time to adjust in completely new different cultural setup.

## Discussion

Socialization and enculturation is a cultural process that is largely responsible for acquiring the traits to become a 'cultural being'. These processes are not only there for lingual traits but also for adopting the established world views, values, norms, and customs. It is known for making a person carry the cultural heritage according to age, gender, ethnic classes, etc. According to the empiricist understandings of John Locke, the human mind is like a blank tablet upon which the enculturation process imprints its learning and also helps to bestow upon its practitioners the 'cultural mind'. These migrant families though attempting to preserve their native cultural belongings but their off-springs are exposed to a social milieu where they learn their 'host-language' more than their 'native language' in spite of the parental expectations, directions and aspirations.

The peer group influence was found to be one of the forceful factors for adopting the 'host-language' as their first language as compared to their mother-tongue or *Mah-boli*. The children on entering their formal schooling years are supposed to communicate among their peers in a language already spoken by the majority group due to which the kids prefer to speak the language that is understood and uttered by their class and age fellows and friends both in and outside the school. This is also done to ensure the social approval on behalf of the age and class fellows to win the membership and association for the age and class fellows for

socialization. Being deficient in the lingual abilities makes the kid unappealing for the rest of the class fellows and may be dropped from all education and entertainment opportunities.

The intention of seeking approval in the social environment or *Mahaul* of the host society, this is imperative that these migrant families adopt the means of communication that is already under use by the host community to ensure the continuity in the social relations in the neighborhoods and among the colleagues. This is so particular among the migrant families that migrated for good from their native places and towns due to their jobs or some business. In order to become a permanent part of the host community, the migrants prefer to adopt the host dialects and language.

The Rawalpindi city is a cosmopolitan community due to its neighboring Capital city of Islamabad where people from all over the country visit for their multi-purposes. This is especially true of the flocks of immigrants from various districts of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, South and Central Punjab and all parts of Pakistani Kashmir. In fact, the situation on the ground is that these migrants also bringing their cultural norms and custom with them due to which there is a variety of languages and cultural traits added into the local cultural norms. People with various dialects of *Pashto*, *Hindko*, *Pahari*, *Gojri*, *Kashmiri*, *Pothohari*, *Punjabi*, *Jangli* and *Saraiki* are very common in Rawalpindi city. This feature makes the city's cultural landscape a multi-ethnic community. Even the Afghani migrants speaking *Dari* (a dialect of Afghan Persian) are also found here. The multi-ethnicity of the city makes Urdu (to a greater extent) and Pothohari (a local language) commonly spoken languages used among its inhabitants for inter-communication purposes. Not only the Kashmiri community (the target community of the research) but also the rest of the communities from the rest of the part of the country adopt the Urdu and Pothohari to be their first languages.

The Utilitarian approach is also crucial for the dominance of Urdu and Pothohari among the inhabitants of Rawalpindi city. Urdu is the official language in the government offices as well as the medium of education in the public school system of the city. Similarly, Urdu is the major medium of business and commercial chores due to which it is in a way preceding the very native language of Pothohari. Whereas, Pothohari is the mean of communication in social circles, markets, streets, and transport. Due to these reasons, both Urdu and Pothohari have become the main languages understood and spoken among the residents of Rawalpindi to undertake their multi-facet socio-cultural chores.

## Conclusion

The relationship between migration and practice of native language is inverse proportional resultantly it might lead to language death under the influence of powerful languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, and English due to the utilitarian approach. Because migrants belong to any language they are always in minority and minorities always should have to follow the majority so they are somehow bound to adopt Urdu as their first language.

The family institution has been adversely involved in disseminating the situation which is quite alarming and needs immediate concerns to preserve the local languages. If the family institution promotes its local language at least within the boundary wall of their home, it will be benefitted not only for next-generation but also for the survival of the language.

Respect and love for the language and its multiplicity among the successors could possibly save it. If parents of the young generation successfully own their language and show respect & love to their language in front of their children this means to develop/create/passing worth of their local language in the next generation.

Off-springs use local languages to become a part of the culture and society where they are being brought up in order to avoid the alien feelings. Children are more easily adopted new living patterns and try to adjust to the new environment after getting the requirement of new culture and society.

The parents feel this language abandonment as a threat to identity crisis. The Grandparents feel concerned about the grandchildren that they are getting away from their indigenous cultural roots because of their less affection toward their local language, toward their cultural values and norms. If they do not know their local language how they could be able to practice the practices of their forefathers especially when they do not understand the meanings of their language.

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