www.grrjournal.com

GRR
Global Regional Review
exploring humanity

GRR
GLOBAL REGIONAL REVIEW

VOL. IX, ISSUE I, WINTER (MARCH-2024)

Humanity Publications
sharing research
www.humapub.com
US | UK | Pakistan

Article title

A Tendency to Lingual Shift in Pothohari Urban-Living Community

Abstract

In this globalized era, many languages of the world are in the process of language shift. In the Pakistani multilingual context, a rapid language shift to dominant languages is taking place among the indigenous communities. This research paper in particular investigates the lingual shift among the Pothohari community living in urban areas of Rawalpindi and Islamabad by analyzing the everyday speech practices of the native Pothohari speakers. Live dinner-time conversations and semi-structured interviews of the participant families are the main data sources for the study. Karan and Stadler's (2000) Perceived benefit model of language choice and stability provides theoretical underpinnings to study the language situation and unveil the complex social, political, and economic factors regarding language change and shift. The findings revealed that language shift is swift and there is a lack of conformity among the native community towards the heritage language.

Key Words: Indigenous Languages, Pothohari, Language shift, language maintenance, language attitude

Authors:

Samina Tabassum: Assistant Professor, Government Associate College for Women, Kallar Syedan, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.

Samina Amin Qadir: (Corresponding Author)
Professor, Emeritus at Fatima Jinnah Women's University Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.
(Email: samina.taba2012@gmail.com)

Citing Article

07		A Tendency to Lingual Shift in Pothohari Urban-Living Community					
		Author	Samina Tabassum Samina Amin Qadir	**DOI**	10.31703/grr.2024(IX-I).07		
Pages		79-91	**Year**	2024	**Volume**	IX	**Issue**	I

Referencing & Citing Styles	**APA**	Tabassum, S., & Qadir, S. A. (2024). A Tendency to Lingual Shift in Pothohari Urban-Living Community. *Global Regional Review*, *IX*(I), 79-91. https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-I).07
	CHICAGO	Tabassum, Samina, and Samina Amin Qadir. 2024. "A Tendency to Lingual Shift in Pothohari Urban-Living Community." *Global Regional Review* IX (I):79-91. doi: 10.31703/grr.2024(IX-I).07.
	HARVARD	TABASSUM, S. & QADIR, S. A. 2024. A Tendency to Lingual Shift in Pothohari Urban-Living Community. *Global Regional Review,* IX**,** 79-91.
	MHRA	Tabassum, Samina, and Samina Amin Qadir. 2024. 'A Tendency to Lingual Shift in Pothohari Urban-Living Community', *Global Regional Review*, IX: 79-91.
	MLA	Tabassum, Samina, and Samina Amin Qadir. "A Tendency to Lingual Shift in Pothohari Urban-Living Community." *Global Regional Review* IX.I (2024): 79-91. Print.
	OXFORD	Tabassum, Samina and Qadir, Samina Amin (2024), 'A Tendency to Lingual Shift in Pothohari Urban-Living Community', *Global Regional Review,* IX (I), 79-91.
	TURABIAN	Tabassum, Samina and Samina Amin Qadir. "A Tendency to Lingual Shift in Pothohari Urban-Living Community." *Global Regional Review* IX, no. I (2024): 79-91. https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-I).07.

Title

A Tendency to Lingual Shift in Pothohari Urban-Living Community

Authors:

Samina Tabassum: Assistant Professor, Government Associate College for Women, Kallar Syedan, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.

Samina Amin Qadir: (Corresponding Author) Professor, Emeritus at Fatima Jinnah Women's University Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan. (Email: samina.taba2012@gmail.com)

Contents

Abstract

In this globalized era, many languages of the world are in the process of language shift. In the Pakistani multilingual context, a rapid language shift to dominant languages is taking place among the indigenous communities. This research paper in particular investigates the lingual shift among the Pothohari community living in urban areas of Rawalpindi and Islamabad by analyzing the everyday speech practices of the native Pothohari speakers. Live dinner-time conversations and semi-structured interviews of the participant families are the main data sources for the study. Karan and Stadler's (2000) Perceived benefit model of language choice and stability provides theoretical underpinnings to study the language situation and unveil the complex social, political, and economic factors regarding language change and shift. The findings revealed that language shift is swift and there is a lack of conformity among the native community towards the heritage language.

Keywords: Indigenous Languages, Pothohari, Language shift, language maintenance, language attitude

Introduction

Linguistic diversity is notable in the Pakistani context where according to records of Ethnologue (2022) 77 languages are spoken. These indigenous languages are a rich expression of our social and cultural heritage (Inam-Ullah, 2012) but unfortunately, all of them are not vigorous and lack recognition or due status even in their own speech communities because of the overwhelming influence of English and Urdu. Now a day English and Urdu are considered essential for societal cohesion and advancement (Nazir, 2019). Both English and Urdu enjoy prestigious places as being official and national languages respectively and are being recognized as symbols of power, prestige, and success. It has badly eclipsed the utility and progress of the indigenous languages by assuming them as of

lower status, incompetent, and culturally undignified (Zaidi, 2016). It has posed a serious threat to the vitality and maintenance of indigenous languages. Particularly in urban areas where a high standard of life and to secure bright future are the prime focus of the public, the indigenous language situation is more precarious. People keep the least interest in maintaining heritage languages and transmitting them to future generations. In this context, the present study attempts to investigate the endangering status of Pothohari in urban living Pothohari communities.

Pothohari is a regional language native to the Pothohar plateau. Geographically it is spoken in district Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and some parts of Azad and Jammu Kashmir territory. As per estimates and Lothers (2010), it is the mother tongue of several million speakers in Pakistan as well as abroad. It is mainly with oral tradition. At least written records are available in the language. It has no recognition in professional, educational, and public domains (Anjum, 2007). Its survival is only through intergenerational transmission. These facts not only consolidate its under-resourced position but also forecast its endangered future due to the lingual shift of native communities to mainstream languages. This critical state of Pothohari provides impetus to investigate the endangering vitality of this under-resourced language in the present study

Problem Statement

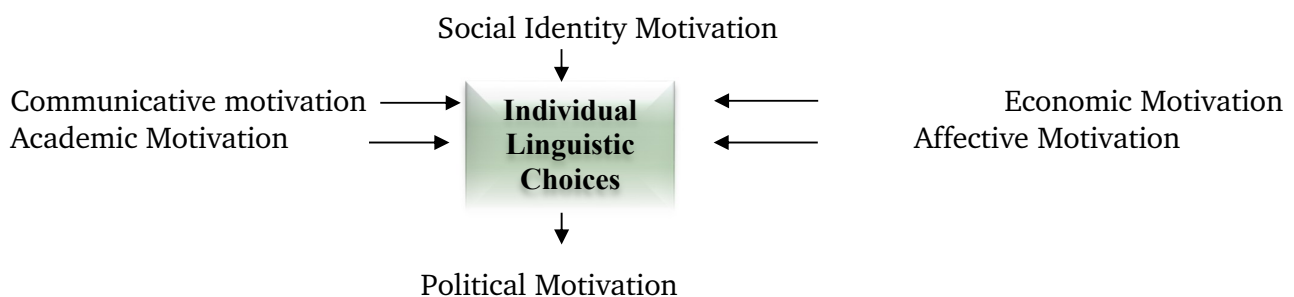The power and dominance of main languages are adversely affecting the indigenous languages by declining their utility across various domains of life. Resultantly small indigenous languages are losing their speakers and facing the threat of extinction. Pothohari one of our regional languages is facing the same dilemma that the present study aims to explore by investigating the speech practices and choices of the urban-living Pothohari community.

Research Questions

1. What are the language preferences of urban-living native Pothohari speakers in the family domain?
2. What is the influence of English and Urdu on their linguistic practices?
3. What is the impact of age, education, and occupation on their language choices?
4. What attitude does the community hold towards the mother tongue?

Theoretical Framework

Karan and Stadler's (2000) Perceived Benefit Model for language choice proposes that certain motivations determine individual linguistic choices. These motivations or benefits can be social, financial, political, or personal which attract individuals to make the preferred choices. These motivational factors are the true markers of estimating the language stability or shift in a particular speech community. This model views individuals as the major actors in the selection of linguistic choices who adopt from a vast linguistic repertoire that best serves their key interests. For the present study, the model is adopted with additions because the collected data created the need to add affective and academic motivational factors to investigate the findings.

Social Identity Motivation

Communicative motivation ⟶ **Individual Linguistic Choices** ⟵ Economic Motivation
Academic Motivation ⟶ ⟵ Affective Motivation

Political Motivation

Literature Review

The phenomenon of language shift is accelerating in this globalized era. Speakers are steadily giving up the use of their mother tongue in favor of dominant languages. Thousands of native languages across the globe are losing their speakers and are being replaced by a few socially and politically powerful languages (Hale, 1998). Resultantly many minority languages are becoming endangered species and some are near the verge of extinction (Krauss, 2000). UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003) reported that 50% of the living languages of the world are losing their speakers and 90% of these will be replaced by powerful languages by the end of this century. Ethnologue reports 5000-6000 living languages in the world and Linguists warn that if the language shift continues at the existing pace, 50-90% of world languages will be lost in the coming century. According to Brook (2017) majority of these languages would be in the developing regions of the world and with the extinction of these languages intellectual wealth and cultural heritage associated with these languages would also be lost (Ravindranath, 2009).

Researchers have highlighted multiple factors operating behind this complex phenomenon including economic, social, political, cultural, and communication factors. These factors offer motivation and incentives to users regarding language choices and pose a serious challenge to the maintenance of linguistic diversity (Wrum, 1991). Weinreich (2010) emphasizing the internal factors states that the unfavorable attitudes of the speech community towards the dominant languages cause suppression of the native vernacular first and then permanent shift makes the individuals realize not to maintain a language low in prestige and devoid of economic benefits. These internal and external factors are operating coherently to promote language shift and are destroying the lingual diversity of the globe.

In recent years quite a huge amount of research has been carried out about community languages to explore the phenomenon of language shift and the factors responsible for it. Canagarajah (2008) investigated language shifts among the Tamil immigrant community settled in the United States, Canada, and England using Fishman's (GIDS) model. The findings revealed that the Tamil community is facing challenges in maintaining their heritage language due to social, institutional, and economic pressures. Karidakis and Arunachalam (2015) have studied the case of Australian migrants. The study highlighted dynamic patterns of lingual shift from community language to English. Various factors like age, gender, educational level, community distribution, and duration of stay were attributed to the pace of the language shift.

Ali, Ibrar, and Khan (2021) investigated the changing trends of language use in Hindko speaking community in Peshawar. Their findings exposed that Hindko is losing its young speakers rapidly. In another study language shift among college students is explored by Akhtar and Talib (2020) in Pakistani context. The findings of the study identified excessive usage of English vocabulary and a strong tendency for language shift to English. Birhamani and Loahr (2019) investigated the case of Brohi language maintenance versus shift in Dadu, a city in the province of Sindh. They focused on the informal use of Brohi in the home domain. Their findings stated that the Brohi community exhibited a negative attitude toward Brohi calling it a worthless language and demonstrated a positive attitude toward Sindhi by adopting it for family conversations. The research records indicate overall extensive research activity to evaluate the phenomenon of language shift in general but as far as individual languages or speech communities are

concerned it is not sufficient. More rigorous research is needed to investigate particularly those languages that are under-resourced and are becoming the target of the community's negative attitude. In this background, the present study aims to investigate the current state of Pothohari in its home region.

Research Methodology

Dinner-time conversations of six families, residing in Rawalpindi city have supplied the primary data for analysis. Families are targeted on the basis of their economic status which is determined by the average monthly income and expenditure measurements (2018-19) published by the National Bureau of Statistics Government of Pakistan Semi-structured interviews are collected from twelve participants one male and one female from each family to get close insights to their language preferences and attitudes towards their mother tongue. Audio recorders and observation sheets are the tools used to collect the desired data. A triangulation strategy is used to collect and evaluate the data. Data collection is made between August 2021 and December 2021. The total duration of conversational recordings of the participant families was approximately four hours while the total interview duration of the participants extended over five hours.

Demographic profiles of the families are prepared for data presentation and interpretation.

Findings and Analysis
Findings of Conversational Recordings

The conversational data reveals a tendency of language shift from Pothohari to Urdu among urban families. Urdu is found as the dominant home language among the participating families. Though a significant number of participants acquired Pothohari as their mother tongue yet are not maintaining its use in everyday conversation. Furthermore, the data demonstrates that Pothoahari is rapidly losing its young speakers in urban areas as families are not transmitting it as a family language to their children. The detailed distribution of language usage on the basis of demographic variables is summarized below.

Language Distribution by Income Group

The following table demonstrates the mother tongue use among the participant families based on their income status. Income has a strong correlation with language preferences. More income means better educational and living opportunities which provide great exposure to dominant languages.

Table 1

Distribution of Pothohari by income group

Family	No. of speakers	Income Group	No. of speakers having Pothohari as their Mother Tongue	No. of speakers maintaining Pothohari as the dominant language in the home domain	Transmission to children
1	7	Low	4	2	No
2	5	Low	5	None	No
3	5	Middle	5	None	No
4	6	Middle	6	6	Transmitted
5	6	Upper	2	None	No
6	5	Upper	2	None	No
Total	34	3	24	8	5
Percentage values			70.5%	33%	27.7%

Overall the facts reflect Urdu is replacing Pothoahri in the home domain across all income groups.

Family no. 4 belonging to middle income group is maintaining the use of Pothohari along with its transmission to children. The family seems to be least affected by the urban language environment. They are new settlers so possibly it's the reason for their constancy to their mother tongue. In family no.1 which represents the poor income group Pothohari exists but without a future as only old members of the family are keeping it in use.

Language Choices of Participants by Age Group

Language choices of participants by age group are presented in the given table.

Table 2

Language choices of participants by age group

Age	No. of speakers	Pothohari as mother tongue	Pothohari is the dominant language	Urdu as the dominant language	Influence on family speech					
					Code-mixing			Code-switching		
					U	P	E	U	P	E
<19 years	12	06	2	10	-	1	13	-	-	-
20-59 years	13	09	2	11	2	1	106	-	5	03
60 years & above	09	09	4	05	-	-	31	4	4	03
Total	34	24	08	26	2	2	150	4	9	03

The findings indicate dominancy of Urdu use in all age groups however; the occurrence of language shift is high among young age groups. The frequency of English code-switching and code-mixing is also high in this age group in comparison to the other two age groups.

Distribution of Language Choices by Educational Level

The findings about language choices by educational level are presented in the table below.

Table 3

Language use by educational level

Education	No. of speakers	Pothohari as mother tongue	Pothohari is the dominant language	Urdu as the dominant language	Influence on family speech					
					code-mixing			code-switching		
					U	P	E	U	P	E
Graduation & above	11	7	01	10	2	1	72	-	5	3
Inter	09	7	01	08		1	12	-	-	-
Matric & less	14	10	06	08			22	4	4	-

Education	No. of speakers	Pothohari as mother tongue	Pothohari is the dominant language	Urdu as the dominant language	Influence on family speech					
					code-mixing			code-switching		
					U	P	E	U	P	E
Total	34	08	26			106	4	9	3	

Education is an important factor in determining the language choices of the speakers. The participants are divided into three categories on the basis of their qualifications. It is observed through this variable that the use of Urdu is dominant in young speakers who have acquired a better education. The frequency of English code-mixing and code-switching is also strong among educated participants. On the other hand, the participants who are not well-educated are somehow maintaining the use of Pothohari. The overall shift to the Urdu language is quite evident in this category.

Use of Pothohari by Occupation

The findings regarding this category are summarized in the table below.

Table 4

Language use by occupation

Occupation	No. of speakers	Pothohari as mother tongue	Pothohari is the dominant language	Urdu as the dominant language	Influence on family speech					
					code-mixing			code-switching		
					U	P	E	U	P	E
Teacher	04	02	02	02	2		40	-	3	3
Businessman	04	03	02	02	-	-	12	-	-	-
Accountant	02	01	01	01	-	-	39	-	-	-
Driver	03	03	-	03	-	-	08	-	4	-
Pensioner	2	02	01	01	-	-	09	-	-	-
Student	09	04	02	07	-	1	19	-	-	-
Housewife	08	07	04	04	-	1	27	-	2	-
Shopkeeper	01	01	01	00	-	-	01	4	-	-
Associate Engineer	01	01	-	01	-	-	01	-	-	-
Total	34	24	13	21	2	2	114	4	9	03

The speech practices of thirty-four participants from different occupational groups indicate a tendency of language shift from mother tongue to Urdu. It is common among all occupational groups identified in the data but Student class is observed strongly influenced by it. Students are the growing generation and highly influential individuals in society. They adopt influence from dominant languages easily and pass it to others strongly due to their diversified social and communicative network that extends to family, friends academic associates, etc. Even housewives who do not have any formal career their speech practices are also deeply influenced by the dominant languages. In the present study, seven out of eight housewives have acquired Pothoahri as their mother tongue and only four of them are maintaining its use. These facts give sound evidence that Pothohari is losing its status as a community and family

language in urban areas and forecast a grim future of the vernacular.

Interview findings

The respondents' views about their language choices and prevailing linguistic situation are studied thoroughly and dominant themes are summarized in the tabular form.

Table 5

Major themes identified in interview-based data

Major themes	The socio-linguistic situation of urban families
Status of Pothohari As family language	Pothohari is replaced with Urdu in urban families.
Language preference	Urdu with English code-mixing
Language maintenance/shift	• Language maintenance is endangered • Language shift is in rapid progress.
Intergenerational communication	Intergenerational communication is taking place in Urdu across all age groups
The scheme of bilingualism & Trilingualism	• Urdu in combination with English is the dominant speech style among urban participants. • Subtractive bilingualism- speakers are giving more importance to Urdu deserting Pothohari
Intergenerational language transmission.	Intergenerational transmission of Pothohari is not taking place in urban families.
Factors influencing the use of mother tongue	• Educational • Economic • Lack of official patronage • Lack of literacy skills • Influence of dominant languages. • Stereotypes and language attitudes • Socio-linguistic environment
Attitudes of native speakers to Pothohari	Negative
Present of Pothohari language	Native communities have abandoned its use in family communication.
Future of the Pothohari language	Endangered and insecure
Restoration efforts	• Lack of awareness • No participation

Home language: A shift from Pothohari to Urdu

A home language is a particular language used by members of a family for everyday communication in a domestic or home setting. It is the identity of a community whose members take pride in maintaining its use. Unfortunately in this modern era, these community languages are becoming weak and endangered due to the vast popularity of a few dominant languages which are offering better incentives and opportunities to their users. Particularly in urban areas, this phenomenon is getting worse where heritage languages are contesting their existence Pothohari is also facing the same fate in our urban localities. The research findings authenticate that Pothohari has almost lost its status as a home language in

city areas. People are not using it for everyday communication. The research participants also admit that they do not prefer its use. The investigations show that Urdu has occupied its position in the family domain. The following statements by the interviewees support these findings.

1. Informant 2, family no.3: "*Urdu hi mary rouz mara ki zuban ha*" (Urdu is the language used in everyday speech)
2. Respondent I from family no. 6: "*though ke hamari mother language Pothohari ha lakin arsa daraz se ham ne iska istamal khatam ker chuley han. Ab tou hamari bache Urdu se English speaking ki taraf ja rahe han*" (though Pothohari is our mother tongue but it's not in our use since a long time. Now our children are switching from Urdu to English"
3. Respondent I from family no. : " *ab shehron me tou Pothohari ka wajood hi taqreeban khatam ha aur new generation tou isko bilkul prefer nahi krti*" (in cities Pothohari is almost near to its end and the new generation does not prefer it at all)

The preceding observations about lingual shift further motivate us to explore the factors responsible for it which is discussed below.

Factors Causing Lingual Shift

Language shift is a highly complex phenomenon that is stimulated by a range of factors including social, educational, economic, religious, political, and affective factors. Similarly, the implication of these factors goes from individual preference of the speakers to the forceful imposition by the institutions and authorities. My research findings pointed out the following factors that are at work for language shift in urban society.

Educational and Economic Factors

In our educational, social, and economic context, English and Urdu are essential languages. Pothohari is an incompetent language in this context. It does not offer

educational success and financial security for a bright future. People think it is a barrier on their way to success. So they are least interested in promoting it by maintaining its use. The research participants have defended their language preferences genuinely and logically as is expressed in the given extracts.

1. Participant 1, family no. 4 "*Mere mutabik Pothohari ka hamre education sector aur job markey me koi role aur scope nahi merey kheyal isko preference na den eke yahi bari waja ha*" (In my opinion, Pothohari has no role and scope in our educational set up and job market so it's the main reason due to which people do not prefer it).
2. Participant 1, family no. 5: "*Simply we need to accept the reality that English is the need of time*".
3. Interviewee 2, family no. 5 "*Apka medium of instruction schools, colleges aur universities mein English ha, competitive exams ko hi ley len good command of English is necessary tou ap kese English ko ignore kren ge*" (medium of instruction at school, college, and university is English, take the competitive exam for which good command of English is necessary so how could you ignore English).

These impressions about the linguistic situation prove that the dominancy of English and Urdu in educational and economic fields has affected the position of local language adversely and the users are left with no choice but to accept this linguistic situation.

Power and Prestige

In Pakistani society, English and Urdu are the languages of power and prestige. According to Rahman (2008), the patronage of English and Urdu by the government and elites is due to the fact that people from these strata want to maintain their superiority and authority by differentiating themselves from other people. It has made our languages an identity marker of class and status. Those persons with good

English and Urdu competency are considered educated, civilized, and enjoy a privileged status while those confined to the use of ethnic languages are taken as uneducated and backward people.

1. Interviewee 2, family no. 4: *English aur urdu status symbol ban chuke han, mere bahi aur behan ki families England aur Dubai se aien tou un ke bache apas me English boltey the uno ne meri bachyoun ko lift nahi krai. Muje bora feel hoa mene behan se discuss kya to usne muje kaha pendo na bano, tum be apni bachyoun ko ache English medium sckoolon me krwao*"(English and Urdu have become status symbol, my brother and sister's families came from Dubai and the UK and their children were conversing in English, they did not let my daughter mix with them. I felt bad and discussed it with my sister who replied that do not become backward send your daughters to good English medium schools).

2. Interviewee 2, family no. 5: This interviewee expressed that our people suffer from an inferiority complex that undermines their identity. "*Har language ki apni value ha, Mein ney samajti key koi language less prestigious ha, bas ghar ki murghi daal barabar samji jati ha, yeh hamar aik complex ha*" (every language has its own value, I do not think any language to be less prestigious, just self-possession is undermined, we are suffering an inferiority complex).

Due to this undignified social portrayal of indigenous languages, their speakers are suffering from an inferiority complex and are moving away from their identity languages.

Language Stereotypes

Unfortunately, our ethnic languages are victims of language stereotypes. They are inferior and incompetent in our existing linguistic hierarchy. It has made a cruel impact on perception of the individuals regarding their language choices.

So native speakers feel reluctant and even embarrassed to use and transmit their linguistic heritage to the next generation.

Asif (2011) in the article "Shame-A Cause of Language Desertion" observed it as an important cause for the desertion of Sairiki by urban Multanis. Pothoahari like other indigenous languages is facing the stereotypical attitudes of people. It is considered the language of the uneducated, inferior, poor, and uncivilized class. The following belittling remarks of participants show the negative attitude of the native community towards the maintenance of their community language.

1. Interviewee 2 family no. 3: "*Pothohari aik harsh language ha, Urdu ki tarah is mein softness ka element nahi ha shayed yahi waja ha key loug isko pasand nahi krtey*" (Pothohari is a harsh language, it does not carry element of softness like urdu, maybe this is the reason due to which people do not prefer it).

2. Informant 1, family no. 2: "loug tou *Pothohari bolney wale ko jahil samajtey han means ye rakhrakhao ya manners wali zuban nahi lagti*" (Pothohari speakers are considered uneducated and backward means it does not look the language of etiquettes or manners).

3. Respondent 2, family no.3: "samjehn ye gaon ki zuban ho chuki hoi ha" (consider it a village language now).

4. Informant 1, family no. 6: "*Obviously jou languages better future opportunities offer krti han loug unhi ko seekhtey ha jese dekhen English language proficiency aur IELTS apki foreign studies key ley mandatory han. Yaha apki Urdu aur Pothohari ya koi bi native language ha wo incompetent ha so this is the difference that prioritizes language*" (obviously the language which offers better future opportunities people prefer to learn them like see the case of English, English language proficiency or IELTS is mandatory for foreign studies, here your

Pothohari or Urdu or any other native language is incompetent so this is the difference that prioritizes a language choice).

These statements of the informants project that Pothohari is an underprivileged language that is not coming up to the communicative, educational, and social requirements and emotional satisfaction of its speakers.

Lack of Pothohari Literacy Skills

Effective communication cannot take place

without competency in a particular language. Pothohari speakers lack competency in basic skills like reading and writing due to the reason that Pothohari has mainly oral tradition and no well-refined writing system. A small amount of written literature exists which is not available to general readers easily. This deficiency creates a communicative gap that the users fill by adopting code-switching, code-mixing or entirely shifting to the dominant languages. The majority of my research participants admitted that they lack competency in Pothohari reading and writing skills.

1. Informant 1 in family no.4: "*hum Pothohari bol aour samaj letey han lekin kabi pari nahi aur na hi likhne ka itefaq hoa*" (We can speak and understand Pothohari but never got a chance to read or write it).

Nearly all the participants admitted that they are very poor in Pothohari's reading and writing skills. They highlighted the fact that they had never read or written anything in Pothohari. They are completely blank in both these competencies.

2. Informant 1, family no. 3: *Pothohari mein kabi koi kitab nahi parhi, Urdu literature hi parha ha whoi easily available ha*" (I did not read any book in Pothohari, I have read Urdu literature which is easily available).

It shows the lack of reading and writing skills in Pothohari is discouraging for the speakers.

Basic language skills not only ensure communication efficiency but also play an important role in making language choices. The findings of recorded conversation have also demonstrated extensive use of code-switching, code-mixing, and a complete shift from Pothohari to Urdu. These facts show compatibility with the aforementioned assumptions drawn from the interview recordings.

Trends in Language Use in Urban Areas

In a multilingual situation language preferences and usage vary on a community, family, and even individual basis. However, there are some distinct patterns of choices and use that are identifiable through the speech activity. These distinguished patterns identified in sample data are enlisted below.

1. Urdu is the family language. The majority of the participants irrespective of age, qualification, and career have good competency and fluency in its use and it is being used in formal and informal conversations.

2. Intergenerational communication is taking place in Urdu. Speakers from all age groups are using it to communicate with each other.

3. Pothohari is no longer in use as a family language. A few illiterate and old people are maintaining its use. They have the least proficiency in Urdu; and have less social exposure and professional activity. Informant 1 in family no. 1 reported: "*Mama parhi likhi nahi han unko Urdu nahi aati, wo Pothohari hi bolti han*" (mother is illiterate and does not know Urdu, she only speaks Pothohari). When questioned about language influence from her urban environment the reply came: "*hum koi tees saal phely yahan shift howe the, hum teenoun behan bahai blind han so mama per responsibility zyada thi unko chance hi nahi mila key ghar sey bahir jati aur apney ap ko update krteen*" (we

moved to the city almost thirty years ago, we three siblings are blind so due to our responsibility mother did not get a chance to go outside and update herself).

4. Urdu with English code-mixing and code-switching is the dominant speech style. The use of English vocabulary in Urdu speech is unnecessarily high.
5. Urdu in combination with English has become the style. The use of unnecessary code-mixing and code-switching in English is common in the everyday language of urban speakers.

These facts are proven by live conversational recordings as well as interview-based data.

Increasing Influence of Bilingualism

Being a native speaker and on the basis of my general understanding of the tri-lingual situation of the Pothohari community in urban areas, I reached the research participants. But I encountered the situation quite contrary to my supposition. The facts revealed that native speakers have abandoned the use of Pothohari. According to them, it does not hold pragmatic values so they are not transmitting it to their future generation. They hold the opinion that Urdu and English are important languages that bear pragmatic value. In this context what they believe is quoted here.

1. Respondent 2 in family no. 3: *Pothohari tou ab ghaib ho chuki ha aur trend Urdu is English ki taraf tezi se jar aha ha*" (now Pothohari has disappeared and the trend of language adoption is quickly moving from Urdu to English)
2. Interviewee 1, family no. 6: *Urdu aur English ke baghair survival mumkin nahi, ap ne parhna ha, job krni ha, is ke ly Urdu aur English definitely chahye*" (without Urdu and English now survival is not possible, you need to study, you need to do the job, definitely you need English and Urdu for it).

These remarks show subtractive bilingualism at work where the dominant language is given more importance than the minor or weak languages (Janse, 2003). This type of bilingualism in the present context predicts a dark future for the community language

Attitudes of Urban Community towards Pothohari

The attitude of the urban community towards their heritage language is not positive. They consider it weak and inferior so are not convinced to maintain its use as an everyday part of life. Some of the research participants admitted that it is part of their social identity. It needs to be promoted and protected. But such remarks are just vague statements contradictory to the encountered reality. Because they are not maintaining its use all the participants expressed that they prefer Urdu over Pothohari for everyday family conversations.

Intergenerational Transmission

Intergenerational transmission of a language is a key factor in its maintenance or shift (UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages, 2003). According to them a language that is not transferred to children or there is partial or limited transmission of language is unsafe. The current research findings also demonstrate that Pothohari is unsafe because the community members are not transmitting it to future generations. They believe that it does not carry pragmatic value. It is worthless and disadvantageous academically and economically. Socially it is backward and of low esteem. So people do not prefer its learning and use. These observations echo in the following replies.

1. Interviewee I from Family 5: "We *no longer prefer it for our kids*".
2. Respondent 2 from family 6: "*I feel children have no future without English. That is why I prefer English for my children*".

3. Respondent 5 from family no. 2: *humen apne bachoun ki future needs to madenazar rakhtey hoe faisla krna chaahye key wok on ci zuban sekhen*" (we need to make the choice of a language by keeping in view the future needs of our children)

4. Respondent 3 from family no. 1: "*I don't think without learning English we can compete in society because it's our official language*"

These remarks reflect the negative attitude of the community towards learning Pothohari.

Efforts on the Part of the Community to Restore the Status of Pothohari

Positive attitudes of the community towards their language play an important role in its maintenance and vitality. My research findings revealed that the Pothohari community's attitude toward their native language is not very positive. They are not interested in learning and maintaining its use. There are no efforts on the part of the community for its development. When I questioned my research participants about community efforts or activities being carried out to promote and secure the language all of them expressed their sheer ignorance.

1. Respondent 2 from family no. 1: "*Mein eis tarah key kisi special program ya activity key bare mein nahi janata, han TV aur radio pey sometime alaaqai program chaltey han who I think hamari local languages ko hi promote krney ki aik effort ha*" (I do not know about any such program or activity especially, but on TV and radio certain regional programs are telecasted and broadcasted. I think that is an effort to promote our regional languages).

2. Interviewee 2 in family no. 6: "*kabi kabi social media me koi drama ya clip dekh lete han is se zayda muje nahi maloom ke is pe koi kam ho raha ha*" (sometimes we see drama or clip in Pothohari on social

media channels, otherwise I do not know about any work carried on it).

3. Informant 1 from family no 4 came up with a very insightful answer "*Hum is mein keya kar saktey han zayada sey zayada apni gar mein hi promote kar saktey ha, community level ya government level par aiysa koi set up hona chaye key wo eis ko improve karney key leye initiative lein, means esey education, media wagaira mein ley kar aien, tabi iska revival mumkin ha otherwise gar mein tou ye phaley bi boli ja rahi ha lekin media, education key influence ki waja sey loug is ko bare pamaney pe quit kar rahey han*" (what can we do for it, maximum we can promote its use in the home, there is need to take initiative at community and governmental level to improve it, means it should be introduced in media and education then only its revival is possible, otherwise it is being used in homes already but due to influence of education and media people are abandoning it on large scale).

These facts reveal lack of activities or efforts for the promotion and revitalization of Pothohari.

Conclusion

The investigations of the study demonstrate a lingual shift from the mother tongue Pothohari to socially and officially recognized languages Urdu and English in urban localities. It illustrates the weak position of Pothohari as a family language as speakers are not maintaining its use in everyday home conversation and also predicts its uncertain and endangered future as community members are not transmitting it to the next generations. The community discerns a negative attitude by declaring it incompetent and less prestigious. Moreover, there are no revitalization efforts on the part of the community to restore its use. The study is a valuable contribution towards raising awareness regarding the vulnerable condition of Pothohari. It is focused on the

exploration of speech practices of the Pothohari-speaking families in the home domain. Further research studies in other communicative domains are needed to predict the status of Pothohari exclusively.

References

Akhtar, T.M. and Talib, N. (2020). Tendency of language shift in Pakistani students. *Hamdard Islamicus,* XLIII,(1)

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Ali, Z., Ibrar, K.K. and Khan, T. (2021). Language shift and maintenance: The case study of Hindko community in Peshawar, Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Society, Education and Language,*7 (2).

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Anjum, U. (2007). A comparative study of attitudinal shift among three generations of Potohari speakers, a manuscript submitted at NUML, Islamabad.

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Asif, S. I. (2011). *Siraiki: A Sociolinguistic Study of Language Desertion.* https://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/id/eprint/133467/

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Canagarajah, A. S. (2008). Language shift and the family: Questions from the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora1. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *12*(2), 143–176. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2008.00361.x

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Ethnologue World Atlas (2022). Accessed from https://www.ethnologue.com/statistics/

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Hale, K. (1998). On endangered languages and the importance of linguistic diversity. In *Cambridge University Press eBooks* (pp. 192–216). https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139166959.009

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Inam Ullah, (2012). Documenting Languages in Danger, Mother Tongue and heritage for education and research.

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Janse, M. (2003). Introduction: Language death and language maintenance. In *Amsterdam studies in the theory and history of linguistic science. Series 4, Current issues in linguistic theory* (pp. ix–xvii). https://doi.org/10.1075/cilt.240.02jan

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Karan, E. M & Stadler, J. (2000). Assessing motivations: Techniques for researching the motivations behind language choice. *SIL International.*

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Karidakis, M., & Arunachalam, D. (2015). Shift in the use of migrant community languages in Australia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *37*(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2015.1023808

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Krauss, M. (2000). Preliminary suggestions for classification and terminology for degrees of language endangerment.

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Lothers, M., & Lothers, L. (2010). Pahari and Pothwari: A sociolinguistic survey. *Journal of Language Survey Reports.*

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Nazir, N. (2019). Local languages of Pakistan on the verge of extinction.

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Rahman, T. (2008). Language policy and education in Pakistan. In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 383–392). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-30424-3_28

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Ravindranath, M. (2009). Language Shift and the Speech Community: Sociolinguistic Change in a Garifuna Community in Belize. In*.* https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED515601

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

(UNESCO, 2003) Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages. Language Vitality and Endangerment. Document submitted to the International Expert Meeting on UNESCO Programme Safeguarding of Endangered Languages. *UNESCO*

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Weinreich, M. (2010). Language shift in northern Pakistan: the case of Domaakí and Pashto. *Iran & the Caucasus*, *14*(1), 43–56. https://doi.org/10.1163/1573384101274341918 9342

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Zaidi, A. (2016). Ethnolinguistic vitality of Punjabi in Pakistan: A GIDS approach. *Linguistics and Literature Review*, *02*(01), 01–16. https://doi.org/10.32350/llr.21.01

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext