

EXPLORING THE LINGUISTIC IDENTITY CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY BAGRI LANGUAGE COMMUNITY IN SINDH, PAKISTAN

Shah Nawaz Barich

*PhD Scholar at Institute of English Language & Literature, University of Sindh
Jamshoro*

Email: ali.shahnawaz1235@gmail.com

Dr. Saima Murtaza Pandhiani

*Assistant Professor, Institute of English Language and Literature, University of
Sindh, Jamshoro Pakistan*

Email: saimajafri1@gmail.com

Muhammad Idrees Shar

Assistant Professor, GC University Hyderabad

Email: m.idrees.shar@gcu.edu.pk

Engr Faisal Maqsood

University of Chester, United Kingdom

Email: faisalmaqsood99@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper aims to explore through qualitative study the linguistic identity challenges faced by one of the most indigenous communities called Bagri living in Sindh and the Punjab, Pakistan. They also dwell in some provinces of India. They practice Hinduism and speak Bagri language. This language encounters plethora of imperceptible challenges in the multilingual country, Pakistan, which is the abode of more than seventy languages. Many of these languages are soon to be extinct and will pathetically be placed in the list of dead languages. These speakers of such languages are prone to encountering the challenges of the preserving the linguistic identity amidst the emerging trends of the modern world. The Bagri community is unfortunately discriminated by other dominating communities of Muslims and Hindus. Their constitutional position is referred as citizens of the scheduled caste and considered to be untouchables. It was difficult to collect the data from the people of this language community which is socially and educationally marginalized. The purposive sampling was done in the process of the selection of participants from the different age groups dwelling in the districts Matiari and Hyderabad. Semi structured interviews conducted produced enriching and in-depth data which was thematically analyzed by thematic analysis paradigm of Braun and Clarks (2006) The results, this study produced, emphasized that Bagri language is drastically drifting towards the disappearance or language shift in the active presence of the mainstream dominating languages which have official support and supervision through publications and promotions by the government in the province of Sindh.

Keywords: Bagri, Untouchable, Scheduled Caste, Identity Challenges.

1. Introduction

The word 'Bagri' denotes the meaning of both: the people and the language they speak in. They aboriginally belong to the Rajput tribe known as one of the sub castes of Jat. According to some commonly prevalent views among the local people in Sindh, the word Bagri has its roots in the word *Bagh* which stands to mean *Orchard*. The serving men in the orchard are called Bagri,. Kumar (2018) revealed that Bagris hail from the area Bagar geographically situated in India. They

are named after that area. According to Shah (2007); (Tunio, 2014) & Kumar (2018), they are an indigenously Dravidian community. They were declared to be 'Scheduled Caste' in 1956 by the Government of Pakistan. They practice Hinduism. They are considered marginalized community with meager social, political and economic resources. In their religious domain, they are even today taken as untouchables like Bheel, Menghwar and Kohli. The total members of this community in Pakistan are 306,000 and majority lives in the suburb and slums of cities and rural areas of the country (Tunio, 2014). They are discriminated by the other communities in Pakistan on the bases of their way of living as they eat various wild creatures as wild cats, porcupines and lizards considered un-hygienic among other communities in Pakistan. They lead a nomadic life. They travel in search of livelihood. There are many tribes of the Bagri who possess no personal property in Sindh. A Bagri woman holds sway in the family matters (Tunio, 2014 & Shah, 2007). According to Moti Lal quoted in *The Express Tribune* published on February 08 2014, the Bagri woman is mostly a breadwinner. Her dominance is a likely factor. Males are not so vigorous and active to earn. The woman in Bagri family contributes to administer the house. The Bagri people are misconstrued on the religious diversity. They are disallowed to use common utensils at hotels. They choose to carry own paraphernalia like plates, cups and glasses, whenever they travel. They have abandoned the practices of eating wild reptiles as mentioned earlier. They mostly eat common food items as chicken and vegetables but the misperception among the people about unhygienic food still persists. According to Kumar (2018), they have unsystematic works to do. They have almost 5% rate of literacy. They lack modern opportunities of economic upbringing. They work under the landowners as bonded labor. They are commonly perceived as unclean and non- Bagri communities avoid making social ties with them. Their identity is called with derogatory ways (Shah, 2007).

According to the Sociolinguistic Survey conducted in India by Eldose K. Mathai (2011), the Bagri community is segmented into several exogamous fraternities. Monogamy is a common practice they follow, with some distinctive features in matrimonial process such as a young woman wears a toe ring when she gets married. Before her husband, she wraps herself in veil as a sign of modesty and shyness. Widow re-marriage is not forbidden in Bagri community. She is entitled as per set rules to marry the brother of the dead husband. She has to pay the substantial amount of her personal belongings if she avoids following this practice of remarrying the brother of dead husband. In certain clans of Bagri, women are sold for marriages. The price of widow and married woman is higher than the unmarried maiden or girl to marry. Some people in this community choose to be Vishno, who holds a distinctive position. The Vishno abstains himself from taking meat or even egg as food (http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code5/1498.html).

Additionally, A Prospects of Studying the Marginalized Communities of Pakistan in Subaltern Studies Framework indicates that Bagri is a marginalized section of the Pakistani society. They experience multiple strains of marginality and social segmentation. They possess no political participation. They have rare access to the basic needs of life such as a permanent land to live on, clean water and sanitation, gas and electricity. They are one of the 41 scheduled castes of Pakistan in accordance with the Scheduled Castes Ordinance 1957.

According to Elias, Ben and Paradies (2021), these internal disparities escalate the exiting patterns of inequity, discrimination and economic marginalization and health predicaments for the communities who face linguistic and identity crises. According to Mishler (1999), identity itself is a multi-faceted concept. It is composed of different covers of sub-identities. It is a social brand

which attaches every member to a particular group composed of well unified mannerisms distinguishing the individual from other group of individuals. Linguistic identity appears to be a concept of uniqueness. Rationally, this is a complex entity which is difficult to be expressed in the definite terms. This identity complexity bewilders the language speakers in the selection of one particular individual identity amidst the multiple identities (Andrews, 2010).

Generally, this composition of identity matches the prevalence of different frames of people living in Sindh and Pakistan. The multilingual and multi ethnic diversity is composed of different communities. Pluralism in the country enhances its social construct but it poses many challenges to the minority communities to uphold the linguistic and cultural identity as in Pakistan where the minority groups like Bagri, Oad, Kohli, Manghwar, Kalashi and other strive for the survival of identities. Broadly, the individual speakers expose the identity even the linguistic one in the light of dominantly existing languages and communities in the regions they live in. This phenomenon prevails in Sindh Pakistan in terms of multiple identities. A Bagri speaker defines his linguistic identity as a part of minorities in the province of Sindh, although he is fluent at local languages of majority groups whom he is associated with.

This study attempts to present the linguistic identity challenges of Bagri community living in two adjacent districts Matiari and Hyderabad. They have a much marginalized position in every walk of life. Their children attend village schools but they are soon assigned the odd works and the small business errands to perform for the livelihood. The rate of dropout from secondary and higher secondary schooling is comparatively longer than that of other minority language communities in these areas. The people of Manghwar, Kolhi and Oad language communities are less reluctant to discontinue the education than Bagri language community. Their presence in the colleges and the universities for education is rare. They may be seen out of the premises of educational and professional institutions with fruit carts and balloons to sell. Their children drift to the pastime of begging with the parental consents. The village dwelling Bagri in Matiari and Hyderabad are mostly confined to agricultural works of different landowners who take them as the cheap labor easily found at their back and call. This study is based on the viewpoints of common Bagri language speakers. Their language is neither researched from the linguistic dimension nor does the academia have any evidential proof for such linguistic minorities in the context. This adversely affects the local indigenous languages in the region. The research appears to be with the curiosity to find out the burgeoning challenges encountered by the Bagri language community about the linguistic identity. They have number of challenges for their survival. The area which guides the study contains the questions of identifying the challenges which are encountered by the speakers of Bagri language in these two districts, when they define their linguistic identity.

2. Literature Review

According to the *Ethnologue* (2022), Pakistan is an abode of 77 recognized and established languages. Of these 9 are non-indigenous and 68 are indigenous. In positions of their existing strength, 4 are categorized as institutional; 24 are developing, 30 are dynamic, 15 are in danger and 4 are dying. Bagri language stems from Indo-Aryan language. This language is exposed to the challenges wherever it is spoken in the presence of institutionalized form of languages. It is spoken in various parts of Pakistan and India. May (2000) declares that it is a complex idea to define identity through language. The linguistic identity stands to be open to questions through diverse methods. Though, identity explanation and definition by the means of language is the most inevitable way of identity. Therefore, dissociation of language from identity is inescapable.

Individual identity is recognized in the language he is primarily associated. In Pakistan, identity may be defined from different religious, national and political outlooks but the linguistic identity is somewhat the most durable form of defining the identity.

The locally indigenous languages are replaced by both English and Urdu as the languages of education in Pakistan. They are extensively used in power domains and authorities. They have widely influential power in the corridors of bureaucracy, law and military (Tariq Rahman, 2006; (Mahmood & Gondal, 2017). The prominence of Urdu as the national language is considered symbolic of national identity and solidarity in the country (Tsui & Tollefson, 2017; Kalin & Siddiqui, 2020). According to Nathan (2016), Urdu is a non-native language of the indigenous people. At the partition in 1947, it was the native language of migrated people from India to Pakistan. They were rehabilitated in the urban Sindh, the province of Pakistan. They were greatly educated. Despite their numerical minority, they attained the majority of bureaucratic positions in the country. Urdu has almost eight percent of native speakers but it serves the role of a lingua franca in Pakistan. (Mahmood & Gondal, 2017; Abbas, A & Shehzad, 2018; Kamran, 2017; Mahboob, 2017) The English language also enjoys the position of prominence in the country as a second language. It is importantly operative in every spheres of life (T. Khan, Imran, Azhar, & Ilyas, 2015; Khalid, 2016). It is considered a status symbol of the legacy of British colonization. It is widely spoken and holds the high influence among all segments of the population. It is reflected as a social capital. The institutions are officially encouraged to promote the dissemination of English across the country. It indicates that the elite and the ruling class consider it to be a social distinction for seeking influence in the power (Umrani & Bughio, 2017; T. J. Khan & Khan, 2016; T Rahman, 1997).

Additionally, Punjabi language has the maximum number of speakers in the country. They are more than 44 percent of the total country population. The Punjab has a significant numbers of Punjabi speakers but it is spoken in the whole country (Tariq Rahman, 2017; Mahmood & Gondal). Over the recent years, the native Punjabi educated are reluctant to use the mother language in the interaction with their children and prefer Urdu to Punjabi in the educational and social upbringing (Zaidi, 2010). In this way, Urdu succeeded in gaining the special privilege as to be the symbol of Pakistani identity and got the acknowledgement of the majority in Pakistan (Murphy, 2018).

According to Nisa et al. (2023), the minority language like Bagri enjoys no official stance in the multilingual and multicultural society of Pakistan. They are a symbol of destitution and stigma. They face discrimination. The language policy of Pakistan gives special treatment to some languages over others. This uneven treatment influences the language speakers socially, economically, politically and educationally. The study revealed that there is a dire need to implement other languages along with English so that the multilingualism can be of benefits for all people in Pakistan

In the diverse linguistic profile of the country, according to Abbas and Bidin (2022), the carefully cautious language planning is needed to propagate the growth of indigenous, provincial and national languages. In the post-independence period, the British developed language policy was perpetuated until the initial process of the rehabilitation in every area of the country. The policies in the later period were modified on the rubric of the colonial British authority. It is mandatory to put into considerations the pre-independence era to comprehend the establishment of the language policy. The most notable document of the pre-partisan era is *Macaulay Minutes* (1835). It is vehemently recommended in this historic document to institutionalize English for the assertion of

its supremacy and hegemony with the sole purpose of developing Anglicized Indians. This was later promoted as the formation of "the white mind with black skin" (1835). This policy document abolished several oriental learning centers. Fewer books were allowed to be published in Persian Arabic and Sanskrit. The remuneration being spent on the study and publication of the oriental subjects was halted without the description of cogent reason. Lord Macaulay established English medium instructions amidst the resistance of the local Indians but to no avail. English as the medium of instruction was promoted in the school system in India. This development led to the gradual sway of English in the United India.

In perpetuation of the similar policy, the state of Pakistan, according to Nawaz. et. al (2012), supports and promotes English language totally at the cost of indigenous language. Minority languages remain conspicuous by their absence in the patronized promotion and support. English language is officially disseminated for the promotion of national harmony and integrity to pave the way for modernity. As a result, the indigenous languages are encountered with a severe segregation. The language policy in Pakistan ruins locally indigenous language. This is instrumentally playing the role of the suppression of linguistic identities. Consequently, many indigenous languages face rigorous process of linguistic endangerment in Pakistan (Manan et al., 2021).

Relatively, the study of Issa, M., Khan, H. K., Hussain, M. S., & Ali, M. A. (2023) about the falling status of the indigenous languages in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan claims that the indigenous languages do not lose their status of their own but the negative attitude and sheer negligence of the language speakers to the mother tongues serves as a slow poison to contribute in its shift, erosion, extinction and death. They collected the data from the speakers of indigenous languages such as Balti, Domaki, Khowar, Wakhi, Brushaski and Shina. This was the qualitative study conducted through the observatory field notes in the particular context.

Language is considered to be a pivotal source for a specific ethnic identity to serve as a cultural indicator. Dominant support and prevalence of majority languages present a number of obstacles for ethnic and linguistic minorities. The preservation of the genuine form of the language becomes a mighty challenge for the minority language. Kaur, C., Kaur, A., & Kaur, P. (2023) revealed in the Malaysian Punjabi Sikhs context that their language in the presence of the dominating Malay and English language deteriorates in the unsupportive environment. Their Punjabi language lacks a parental initiative and exposure to socio-religious resources. This research concluded that the perseverance of Punjabi in Malaysian Sikh community depends on the efforts of both parents and local authorities. Their mutual concerns can save the Punjabi language from extinction in Malaysian Sikh community.

The qualitative empirical study of Solangi, N. A., Buriro, W. M., & Abbasi, M. H. (2023) indicated that the Dhatki language speakers dwelling in the different parts of Sindh are faced with linguistic identity challenges under the influence of majority languages in Pakistan. Their aboriginal and indigenous language Dhatki encounters a gradual loss. They are reluctant to communicating in Dhatki in the presence of academically documented majority languages. It has no recorded and documented form to be applied in social and educational spares. This negligence to Dhatki in the hands of governmental authorities leads it to a language shift.



Figure-1 (Display of Recent Studies on Linguistic Identity)

As cited categorically in Solangi N.A et al (2023), the speakers of the minority indigenous languages in Pakistan are tackling numerous linguistic identity challenges:

- A) For the maintenance and preservation of linguistic identity, the attitude and approach of the speakers of indigenous language plays a pivotal role. The speakers of Punjabi are reluctant and feel ashamed of using their mother tongue (Rehamn, 2022).
- B) The indigenous languages have no official recognized stance. They are legally abandoned and neglected by the most of the successive governments in Pakistan. (Manan et al., 2021).
- C) The speakers of indigenous language are often put socially into persecution and humiliation as there languages are considered the markers and indicators of cultural shame (Rehman, 2022).
- D) They are considered to be rustic and uncivilized ones.
- E) There is a small space for indigenous language speakers in jobs prospects. The opportunities to the speaker are equal to none in the functions of the country (Ahmed& Khan, 2017).
- F) English language is all pervasive in educational convention and locally spoken languages have no official place in domains of education of Pakistan.
- G) The indigenous language speakers face political polarization and social segregation. They typically live in remote rural areas. They migrate out of poverty to urban areas for their existence.

These attributed adverse labels to the indigenous language speakers are the causes of resentment and embarrassment. This brand of thinking influenced by the hegemonic patronization looks down minority languages as the indicative of the inferior and the backward. The weak segments are prone to surrendering before the patronized dominant language. They get disassociated from

the mother tongues among the comity of elite and educated people .According to Jhatial & Khan (2021) the minority language speakers in the province of Sindh do not have abundant freedom to use mother languages in society in contrast to Sindhi and Urdu. Kiani, et al. (2020) found that Hindko speaking students are ridiculed in classes among their classmates when they speak their mother tongue. The speakers of Punjabi are labeled as 'Paendu'. They feel ashamed of being in the so called labeled frame as man of village and rustic.

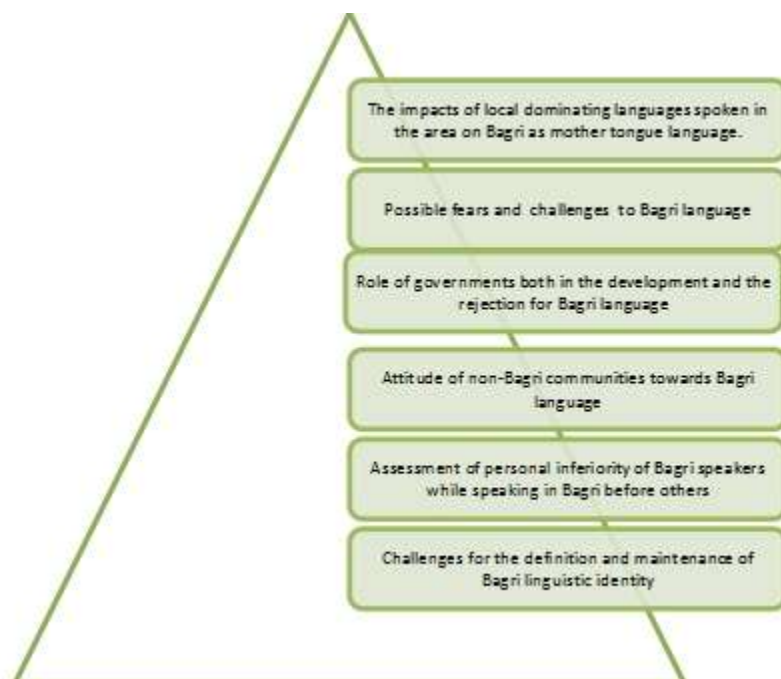
The linguistic identity challenges for indigenous language speakers like Bagri are faced with multiple challenges. They live distant from every development in the province of Sindh either it is social, political or economic. This pause is meant to be much adversely affective in all their domains of life. The continuity of this stagnant disassociation of the speakers of Bagri language from all modern trends of survival will lead them to the shift of their language and extinction of identity. According to Nawaz, et al (2012), many indigenous minority languages are drifting towards the extinction in Pakistan and causing sheer cultural identity crises in the communities who abandon mother tongues.

3. Methodology

This study focused on the viewpoints of the individuals of Bagri community. The purpose was to get their personal experiences about the challenges of linguistic identity they are facing. The qualitative approach was found to be more suitable in getting the perceptions of the participants. Therefore, the qualitative data collecting way was used instrumentally through semi structured interviews from the participants of Bagri community. According to Creswell (2014), this comprehensive approach helps to gain, in the genuine setting, the behavioral description of the participants. The focus of the study was on the views of the selected and available people of Bagri community who were the residents of the neighboring district Matiari and Hyderabad. They live near the city Hyderabad. They have in this way an easy approach to be available for agricultural works in the nearby fields and going to the markets of Matiari and Hyderabad for selling fruits and other items at the same time when they are off from the agricultural works. The researcher has some specific areas of questions developed during the comprehensive review of the relative literature to ask in the semi structured interviews. These are:.

- 1) The impacts of local dominating languages spoken in the area on Bagri as mother tongue language.
- 2) Possible fears and challenges to Bagri language
- 3) Role of governments both in the development and the rejection for Bagri language
- 4) Attitude of non-Bagri communities towards Bagri language
- 5) Assessment of personal inferiority of Bagri speakers while speaking in Bagri before others
- 6) Challenges for the definition and maintenance of Bagri linguistic identity.

Figure-2 (Interview Areas)



These were the key areas to depend upon in the semi structured interviews but the people of Bagri community are very loquacious and chatty.

3.1. Population

This study explored the challenges, the Bagri speakers face, for their linguistic identity. They belong to some of the areas falling in the adjacent areas of districts Matari and Hyderabad. The people of Bagri community are scattered in different villages. They don't have a traditional village named after any Bagri identity. They live in small number in different villages almost every third village in the researched area. A few of them have developed themselves into possessing the fruit and mango orchards on yearly tenant basis. They have succeeded in having brick made houses and keeping domestic animals and auto conveyance. Their presence at schools and colleges in area is simply rare. They have the fascination of earning livelihood but they are inconsiderate of their linguistic identity. The majority of the people of Bagri community are deprived of basic necessities of life. They live in the clay made barn houses covered by the thorny hedges for the protection. They serve in agriculture lands as seasonal farmers when the season of any particular crop is over; they find the ways into city areas for selling fruit and other items. They are exposed to different social, political and economic problems. They are minority groups who face various challenges to preserve their culture and culture in the emerging trends of the society.

3.2 Sampling

The researcher followed in this study the purposive sampling to collect the data with a view to explore the linguistic identity challenges of the Bagri community. Seventeen participants were identified and tried for the availability to conduct the semi structured interviews. Out of seventeen, the eleven participants ensured the availability. Three participants were approached for face to face interviews and seven of the eleven participants were contacted through mobile calls. Every participant was given different codes as P1, P2 (Participants' description is given below) One of the distinguished persons of Bagri community in Matari named Gopal Bagri helped a lot.

Subsequently, the collected data was translated into English from Sindhi language spoken clearly by Bagri participants in their different accent. The data was analyzed through thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Table 1: for the description of the participants

Serial	Code	Participant Name	Age	Village Name	Profession	District
1	P1	Gopal	42	Central Matiari	Tenant	Matiari
2	P2	Mohlo	67	Mitho Hajano	Farmer	Hyderabad
3	P3	Badami	61	Mitho Hajano	Fruit vendor	Hyderabad
4	P4	Vasand	40	Mevo Hajano	Balloon Seller	Hyderabad
5	P5	Wirdas	38	RB Khoso	Farmer	Matiari
6	P6	Sito	41	Gahalo Village	Farmer	Matiari
7	P7	Wakeel	43	RB Khoso	Tenant	Matiari
8	P8	Arjan	42	Central	Lawyer	Matiari
9	P9	Mohan	37	Central	Teacher	Matiari
10	P10	Lalo	60	Central	Toy seller	Matiari
11	P11	Wasso	45	Mitho Hajano	Farmer	Hyderabad



FIGURE-3 (Findings Display)

4. Findings of the Study

4.1 Supremacy of Majority Language

The majority language which is Sindhi in villages and Urdu in market places has the authority to be spoken and understood among the people. The speakers of majority languages do not deliberately enforce the people of Bagri community but the Bagri people themselves speak Sindhi in the local setting to communicate with the people. The Bagri people also viewed that the common non-Bagri people look down upon at our accent of Sindhi influenced by Bagri accent. Their language is only confined to their houses. They don't speak Bagri for months when they are away homes for different work related sojourns.

P3, other people do not disturb our Bagri so we speak their language easily.

P7 ...I don't know what I am speaking, my Sindhi looks like Bagri language.

P9. I was in Multan during mango season for three months, their; I spoke in Urdu with my Siraiiki workmates.

P1, what shall we do, sometimes other people shout and make fun of our mother languagei don't mind but I feel different when my mother tongue is mocked out of jokes

4.2 Apparent Challenges to Bagri Language

Majority of participants were of the opinion that they are less associated with our language. The role of media and educational institutions impart the respective services in Sindhi, Urdu and English language. The youth of Bagri community fails to understand the Bagri antiquity and folklore. They use in conversion the modern versions of Sindhi and Urdu language propagated by TV serials and social media. The famous textual version followed and taught academically has no trace of Bagri ancestry and language. Some local TV Sindhi channels these days are airing the programs with the nominal Bagri lady host who make the mockery of Bagri accent in comedy shows.

P12, our young fellows have no thinking for our language...

P7. My nephews study in schools, they read different lessons about many famous personalities like Hassan Ali Afandi, Helen Keller etc or other cultures in Pakistan but they find no Bagri and their culture to read in book lessons.

He further says: *our girls and boys watch dramas and movies in other language. They text through cellphone in Urdu and Sindhi, they know nothing about Bagris of past*

P10, in evening on Mehran TV a program of Bagri girl making jokes with her other person is not good for us. People watch this and make fun of us.

4.3 Apparent Causes for the Challenges to Bagri Language

The majority of the participants expressed that the leading people who hold the alienation to different legislative people do not pay heed to their language and culture. They vow for nominal steps of sanitation improvement but not the promotion of culture. They demand their worthwhile mention and presences in the main stream policymaking decisions. Local established indigenous people do not motivate and encourage for the development. They are given a bit importance during the period of election after the annulment of the separate electorate for minority promulgated in the rein of Gen (Rtd) Mushraf.

P5 our Mukhi is often going to Jamot sb but he does not say anything to him for our Bagri people
P13, Jamot sb and his companion only take a little care of us when election comes near after the time of Moshrif

P7, we are butchered by mosquitos in nights and our children and women are sick. They give us nothing and they will never importance to our language

4.4 Role of Official Authority for Bagri Language

The role of government in the promotion and development of Bagri language is in negation. The official cultural publications should have a space for every minority indigenous languages so as to uphold the dignity and integrity of all minority language speakers.

P2 we don't have Bagri written book and newspapers

P9 Culture department men should give us importance

4.5 Discrimination for Using Bagri Mother Tongue Language

Some of the participants viewed that the mother tongue they use is taken as the lowest in honor and respect. When they use even the majority local languages like Sindhi and Urdu during their short term bread winning ferry, the people laugh and severely look down upon them. Certain letters in the pronunciation like J in the place of Z etc. is ridiculed. They said that they are accustomed to these practices of the people.

P11, people laugh and make fun when say speak Maja at the place of Maza.....

P9. We have names known to local people but they call us Oh Bagri.....

P13,nothing will change we are as were before...we are born to be insulated...

4.6 Preservation of Linguistic Identity among the Challenges encountered by Mother Tongue Language Speakers

The participants generally felt that they are marginalized at every level. Their data available with the government authorities is undercounted. They are not informed of their actual documented locality. They neither read the instructions nor any circulation of information and alert circulated through mobile phone messages and alerts. The mainstream languages practiced in the official domains of the country are undecipherable to them. They are mostly deprived of the charity and donated incentives on the grounds of the inaccuracy in their documents. As one says

P9, where I go for any work to hospital or union councils for help, they say to bring the card of wife and form for my sons and daughters. They are not made.

P5, every people got money from Imran Khan during Corona Virus time, I was said your card is not of this place....

5. Discussion on the Study

5.1 Supremacy of Majority Language

The findings of the study clearly exhibit that the minority language Bagri has been under the ascendancy of the dominant languages. These dominating languages like Sindhi, Urdu and English have the general presence in every walk of life. They have left no space for the minority language like Bagri to grow considerably for making its marks in the presence of mainstream majority language. The Bagri language has experienced adverse consequences. Their words are disappeared owing to the cross language infiltration of vocabulary into the Bagri language. The indigenous vibrancy of the mother tongue loses its historically valuable stature. This is in consonance with the view point of Bishop (2007) that the interaction between the dominating and the dominated language slowly paves the way to the language shift from the dominated to the dominating one that is characterized as the slow death of the dominated language. These changes are reasonable, according to Philipson (1992), in multilingual culture and context, the dominating language adversely influence the dominated language. And, the dominated ones are prone to faltering before the dominating ones. This circumstance stands to be relevant to Bagri language. Bagri language has never be marginalized and suppressed by Sindhi language nor have they been segregated by Sindhi community. The multilingual scenario adversely affects Bagri language.

5.2 Apparent Challenges to Bagri Language

Some participants expressed the denial of any apparent challenge but they were stunned at the gradual absence their mother tongue among the people of Bagri community. However, the majority of the participants held the view that the mainstream media is completely devoid of Bagri language programs. The program on the local TV channel *Mehran* is aired with the name *Radha & Gamhu* that ridicules and mock the indigenous tone of Bagri people. This dehumanized the community as a filthy mocking stock. The government allows foreign languages to be on TV programs. They televise Arabic, Turkish, Chinese and mainstream local Pakistani language programs but the minority languages like Bagri stands to be neglected. Similarly, the educational institutions promote Sindhi, Urdu and English as medium of instructions. The academic books published under the supervision the Provincial Government of Sindh carry a substantial amount of text segmented into English, Urdu and Sindhi. The segments of language text vary from class to class. The private schools have their own unbridled authority to promote English language as medium of instructions and notably Urdu and Sindhi have optional positions in their text. These private brand schools are always reluctant to follow the unified policies imposed by the government. Resultantly, the Bagri language is nowhere to be present either in the policy of private schools or in the policy of government schools. These constraints are apparently enough to curtail the growth of any indigenous language like Bagri. David (2005) rightly states that the indigenous languages are generally exposed to the common challenges shifting language to loss: the internal loss is done through the negligence of minority language from education whereas the external loss is negligence in the language policies formed by the government. In case of Bagri, the government neglects it in educational domain amidst the authority of the main stream dominating language. And, the language policies time and again support to promote dominating language. In the context of Pakistan, every formulation of language policy is restricted to the promotion of Urdu and English. They have been discriminatory towards minority languages like Bagri.

5.3 Apparent Causes for the Challenges to Bagri Language

Many participants held the view that Bagri language has no assessment and documents produced by the authorities. This appears to be a big challenge to their mother tongue. The dissemination of majority dominating languages through media and the adverse attitudes of the other communities towards Bagri stand to be one of the main reasons of Bagri alienation from the mainstream of the country. *Ethnologue* (2022) declares that there are more than seventy languages spoken in Pakistan. The ten of the total number are documented. This complex multilingual society should be taken into consideration for the acceptance of all dominated and minority languages as essential language. Bagri is not documented in Pakistan but it is documented, according to Eldose K. Mathai (2011) in India in Devangri script. Some measures were taken politically in the time of General (Rtd) Pervaiz Mushraf (2002) to end the segregation of the minorities previously promulgated in Zia's era. Substantial number of minority men entered into the Parliament. Minority languages are still waiting to be state owned and fully supported through a holistic way of researching minority languages like Bagri.

5.4 Role of Official Authority for Bagri Language

The official authorities based provincially and federally in Pakistan have no acknowledgement for indigenous languages. Urdu is the only language for the authorities as a national integration assimilation (Rehman, 2012). The status of majority speaking language Punjabi has no valuable

position in the language policy (Kiani, et. al.2020). The place for Bagri in these pathetic circumstances is far from consideration. This role of the authority has curtailed the progress and development of Bagri language.

5.5 Discrimination for Using Bagri Mother Tongue Language

The majority of respondents viewed that they experience harsh discrimination of the majority language people against the mother tongue. They were of the view that their language is nowhere to be found and it is the backward language of the backward. One of the participants expressed that they are mostly criticized and goaded for speaking Bagri language at one public place. The younger ones of the majority language ridicule more Bagri than the older ones. The nominal number of Bagri pupils at schools avoids speaking Bagri in classes as a learning interaction because the teachers there do not respond and the class colleagues shout out of mockery and degradation. This is in consonance with Xiulan (2007) that the majority nationalistic stance ultimately diminishes the importance of minority language like Bagri and their smaller culture. And, the dominating languages always proclaim their dominance over the smaller cultures and languages. Similarly, this phenomenon is relevant to the Bagri language.

5.6 Preservation of Linguistic Identity among the Challenges encountered by Mother Tongue Language Speakers

For the participants, the challenges to preserve the linguistic identity had variegated views. The common challenge is the absence of the mechanism for the reservation of linguistic identity of Bagri. The preserving mechanism is consisted of the availability of organized documentation of language, restoration of alphabet, systematic array of script and well-grounded grammar. The absence of these fundamental linguistic paraphernalia causes the low standing of the language. The dominated language in the absence of such fundamental items is prone to losing its identity. One of the biggest challenges the Bagri language faces is its academic absence in the educational avenues of the country. Nor, Bagri language is placed as one of the minor or optional subjects in any of the examinations held under the provincial and federal domains of the country. The Bagri language's erosion from every domain relates to the viewpoint of May (2000). He states some stages for the ineffectiveness of the minority and dominated language like Bagri in the presence of the dominating languages. The minority language speakers are coerced without having any other option to speak the majority language in the academic sphere. In a multilingual society, the dominating and the dominated language co-exist and the speakers of dominated language no longer speak their mother tongues and they are overtaken by the dominating languages after some substantial time period.

6. Conclusion

Bagri is one of the indigenous languages. It has turned to be a minority language of Pakistan. The Bagri speakers believe that their linguistic identity is in sheer jeopardy amidst the dominating presence of English, Urdu and Sindhi. Their presence at all levels of the country has left no space for Bagri to float and flourish as the language of the people and the places. Bagri is encountered with the challenges of its survival and linguistic identity. It is under the linguistic subjugation and suppression of the mainstream dominating languages. The institutional negligence and disregard for Bagri in Pakistan has narrowed down its significance. The media and educational disownership for Bagri is drifting it to language shift. The researcher in this regard takes a chance to think that Bagri language will experience a language shift.

References

- Abbas, A., & Shehzad, W. (2018). Prospects of Mother Tongue as Medium of Education in Pakistan. *ARIEL-An International Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, 28, 17-29.
- Ahmed, A. & Khan, A. (2017). Provincial Autonomy and Devolution of Language Policy in Pakistan: Retrospect and Prospect. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)*, 37(1), 241-254
- Andrews, M. (2010). What about Linguistic Identity?. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 6(2), 85-102.
- Bishop, M. (2007). An Exploration of Language Dominance. MA Thesis. School for International Training.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- David, M. K. (2005). Reasons for language shift in Peninsular Malaysia. *Journal of Modern Languages*, 15(1), 1-11.
- Eldose K. Mathai (2011) SIL International® All rights reserved SIL Electronic Survey Report 2011-048, December 2011 Copyright © 2011
- Elias, A., Ben, J., Mansouri, F., & Paradies, Y. (2021). Racism and nationalism during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44(5), 783-793. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1851382>
- Fiaz, A. Prospects of Studying the Marginalized Communities of Pakistan in Subaltern Studies Framework. (http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/studies/PDF-FILES/7_v24_2_23.pdf)
- Issa, M., Khan, H. K., Hussain, M. S., & Ali, M. A. (2023). Language erosion: an overview of declining status of indigenous languages of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. *Language*, 25(2).
- Jhatial, Z., & Khan, J. (2021). Language shift and maintenance: The case of Dhatki and Marwari speaking youth. *Journal of Communication and Cultural Trends*, 3(2), 59-76.
- Kalin, M., & Siddiqui, N. (2020). National identity, religious tolerance, and group conflict: Insights from a survey experiment in Pakistan. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 37(1), 58-72. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894217724568>
- Kamran, S. (2017). Globalization and language use on social media in Pakistan. *European Journal of Language and Literature*, 3(2), 79-84. doi:<https://doi.org/10.26417/ejls.v8i1.p79-84>.
- Khan, T., Imran, M., Azhar, M. A., & Ilyas, Z. (2015). 01 Multilingualism and Cross-gender Language Proclivity: A Sociolinguistic Perspective of Pakistan. *Journal of Gender and Social Issues*, 14(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2016.42021>
- Khan, T. J., & Khan, N. (2016). Obstacles in learning English as a second language among intermediate students of districts Mianwali and Bhakkar, Pakistan. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(02), 154. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2016.42021>
- Khalid, A. (2016). A study of the attitudes and motivational orientations of Pakistani learners toward the learning of English as a second language. *SAGE Open*, 6(3), 2158244016665887. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016665887>
- Kiani, Z. H., Khan, A. Q., Yasmin, M., & Iqbal, M. J. (2020). Language Shift in Muzaffarabad: A case study of Hindko and Kashmiri. *Kashmir Journal of Language Research*, 23(1), 95-108.

- Kaur, C., Kaur, A., & Kaur, P. (2023). Panjabi Bolo: Endless Obstacles to Minority Language Survival. In *CoMBInES-Conference on Management, Business, Innovation, Education and Social Sciences* (Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 321-332).
- Kumar, P. (2018) "PressReader.com." PressReader.com Your Favorite Newspapers and Magazines, 2018, www.pressreader.com/pakistan/dailymessenger/20180406/281745564956241. Accessed 21 November 2023.
- Manan, S., Channa, L., Tul-Kubra, K., & David, M. (2021). Ecological planning towards language revitalization: The Torwali minority language in Pakistan. *International Journal for Applied Linguistics*. 31 (3), 438-457.
- Murphy, A. (2018). Remembering a Lost Presence: The Spectre of Partition in the Stories of Lahore-Based Punjabi-Language Author Zubair Ahmed. In *Partition and the Practice of Memory* (pp. 231-254): Springer. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64516-2_11
- May, S. (2000). Uncommon languages: The challenges and possibilities of minority language rights. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural development*, 21(5), 366-385.
- Mahmood, T., & Gondal, M. B. (2017). Effect of school environment on students' achievement: cross comparison of Urdu and English medium classes in Punjab province. *Pakistan Journal of Education*, 34(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.30971/pje.v34i1.19>
- Mahboob, A. (2017). English medium instruction in higher education in Pakistan: Policies, perceptions, problems, and possibilities. *English medium instruction in higher education in Asia-Pacific*, 71-91. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51976-0_5
- Mishler, E. G. (1999). Models of narrative analysis: a typology. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 5, 87-123.
- Nathan, A. J. (2016). The Pakistan paradox:: Instability and resilience. *Foreign Affairs*, 95(2), 60.
- Nawaz, S., Umer, A., Anjum, F., & Ramzan, M. (2012). An Analysis of Factors Involved in Language Shift. *Global Journal of Human Social Science Linguistics & Education*. 12 (10), 72-80
- Nisa, A., Sarfraz, Z., Naveed, A., & Mehmood, F. (2023). A survey-based study of challenges of multilingualism in Pakistan. *English Education Journal*, 14(2), 580-593.
-
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Tsui, A. B. M., & Tollefson, J. W. (2017). *Language policy, culture, and identity in Asian contexts*: Routledge. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315092034>
- Rehman, T. (2022). Language Policy, Multilingualism and Language Vitality in Pakistan. *Academy of the Punjab in North America*.
- Rahman, T. (1995). *Language planning and politics in Pakistan*, 1-51.: Sustainable Development Policy Institute.
- Rahman, T. (1997). Language and Ethnicity in Pakistan. *Asian Survey*. 37(9) (Sep., 1997), 833-839. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/2645700>
- Rahman, T. (2006). Language policy, multilingualism and language vitality in Pakistan. *Trends in linguistics studies and monographs*, 175, 73.
- Rahman, T. (2007). Language planning in higher education: A case study of Pakistan, 41 (2): 433-436. . In: JSTOR.
- Rahman, T. (2017). Soft Power of Punjabi: Language in the Domain of Pleasure. *Journal of Punjab Studies*, 24.

- Solangi, N. A., Buriro, W. M., & Abbasi, M. H. (2023). Exploring Intergenerational Linguistic Identity of Dhatki Speakers in Sindh, Pakistan. *International Journal of Linguistics and Culture*, 4(1), 37-47.
- Shah, Z. (2007) "Long behind schedule: a study on the plight of scheduled caste Hindus in Pakistan." 2007. Indian Institute of Dalit Studies & International Dalit Solidarity Network.
- Tunio, H.(2014) "Women Power: Where Women Lead and Men Follow." The Express Tribune, 8 Feb. 2014, tribune.com.pk/story/669068/women-power-where-women-lead-and-men-follow. Accessed 17 November 2023
- Umrani, T., & Bughio, F. A. (2017). Language politics and role of English in Pakistan. *ARIEL- An International Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, 26.
- Xiulan, Z. (2007) "China's policy towards minority languages in a globalising age", *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry*, 4, 1
- Zaidi, A. (2010). A postcolonial sociolinguistics of Punjabi in Pakistan. *Journal of post-colonial cultures and societies*, 1(3), 22-55.

..