

Effect of Gender, Age, Language Ethnicities, and Education Level on the Choice of Language Usage: A Case Study of Family Domain of Pakistani Youth

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ABSTRACT

This research paper discusses the priorities of language choices of Pakistani youth at the domestic level and tries to find out the effect of gender, age, language ethnicities, and education level on language choices of Pakistani youth. The quantitative method was used for this purpose and data was collected through a questionnaire. Data was analyzed by basic descriptive analysis and cross tabs. Results indicate that mother language (Punjabi and Siraiki) is the most preferred language of Pakistani youth in the family domain and gender, age, language ethnicities, and education level has a direct effect on language choice. The limitations and suggestions for further researchers are also mentioned at the end of the research paper.

Key Words: *Pakistani youth, Language Choice, Family Domain, Gender, Age, Language Ethnicities, Education Level*

INTRODUCTION

In the country with the inhabitants of different language identities, people feel more comfortable to use their indigenous language in their speech group (Elias, 2008). In such a multilingual social setup, there is always a formal language besides their mother tongue, and it is used for the formal language events such as educational settings, judicial environment and governmental debates (Adams et al., 2012). This language may be a colonial or promoted indigenous language. This formal language can also be

selected as the National Language of any new state (Ferguson, 2006; Cooper, 1989). The national language is selected on two bases: it can be in the reaction of colonialism or it can be for nation-building purposes (Cooper, 1989; Fishman, 1975).

Pakistan As Multilingual Country

Pakistan is a culturally plural country with many ethnicities, languages, and cultures (Mansoor, 2004). According to the census of Pakistan took place in 1998, different languages are used in the four provinces of Pakistan (Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh, and North West Frontier Province). The percentages of different language users in various provinces of Pakistan are presented in the table given below:

Sr. No	Languages of Pakistani Provinces	Percentages of Users
1	Punjabi	44.15%
2	Siraiki	10.53%
3	Sindhi	15.42%
4	Balochi	3.47%
5	Pashto	15.42%

(adapted from Mansoor, 2004)

Each group of languages has its subdivisions of languages and cultures (Hayes, 1987). More than 24 languages and many dialects have been used in Pakistan. In the province of Punjab; Punjabi and Saraiki both languages are used while in the province of Sindh, the Sindhi language is used mostly in the rural Sindh, the Urdu language is used in the urban areas of Sindh and Gujrati language is being used by many influential minorities of Sindh. In NWFP, the Pashto language is mostly used by the people of NWFP while some minorities also use Hindko. On the other hand, Balochistan is a multilingual province with the languages of Pushto, Brohi, Balochi, and Siraiki and Punjabi (Haque, 1983). Urdu is declared as the National Language of Pakistan in 1947 but it is the mother language of only 7.57% of Pakistanis. On the other hand, English is also used as the second official language of Pakistan. In Pakistan, English is the language of powerful and influential people like Military and Bureaucracy (Haque, 1983). It also helps in getting the best government, private and other jobs. Even though regional languages have more number of users but “English and Urdu” have high status politically, economically, and culturally, these are not only the language of press and media but also it is taught as a compulsory subject in the schools, colleges, and universities of Pakistan (Mansoor, 2004).

Higher Education in Pakistan

Higher Education is very important in the social and economic development of any country. It provides social and fundamental benefits to society (Yasmeen, 2005). Higher Education consists of all courses, texts, and curriculum after the intermediate level (Batool, Sajid & Shaheen, 2013). According to the census of 2012, the population of Pakistan is almost 180 million. PS & LSM (Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measures) took a survey in 2014-15 and according to the report of this survey the literacy rate of Pakistan is almost 60% in which 70% are males while 49% are females. This report also reveals that almost 25 million are university students. Education plays an important role in the

development of human society. It is not only essential for individual knowledge but also the development and change (Noureen, 2011).

Gender Education in Pakistan

Pakistan is one of the progressive countries in which women are getting high leadership positions from the head of the government and parliament to the Oscar Winner. Education can allow access of women to politics. No doubt there is gender discrimination in the education sector in Pakistan. Females have to face many socio-cultural hindrances in getting an education. But in recent decades the number of girls is increasing at a higher level of education. Even in some cases, the number of females students is greater than males students in universities of Pakistan (Shaukat & Pell, 2015).

In a multilingual society such as Pakistan, speakers used to shift from one language to another language. The reason for this language shift is mostly due to the speaker's social identities i.e. ethnicity & gender instead of any social situations (Gal, 1979). Hence social setting has a great effect on choices of language in a particular situation (Rahman, Chan, & Ain Nadzimah, 2008).

Age and language choices

The individual speaker of any language also represents a place in his or her life stage and history. Age or aging can be analyzed in four perspectives i.e. biology, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Biology deals with biological changes over time while Psychology deals with the maturity of mind (Mahdad, 2012). In sociology, aging is related to a person's perception and reaction to the aging process (Murphy, 2010). On the other hand, anthropology deals with the cultural and social importance of human age (Kertzer & Keith, 1984). This factor is also supported by Eckert (1984, 1997).

This study is not free from limitations. The data was collected from the males and females students of the University of Sahiwal; therefore results of this study can not be applied or generalized to all the students of Pakistan. Further, its results cannot be applied to the general public and the students studying at a school and college level. Future researchers are suggested to collect the data from the general public and form students studying at college and school level for more comprehensive results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language Ethnicity and Language Choice

Language and ethnicities are interlinked with each other. According to Fishman, Gertner, and Milan (1985),

'The sensing and expressing of links to one's own kind (one's own people), to collectivities that not only purportedly have historical depth but, more crucially, share putative ancestral origins and therefore, the gifts and responsibilities, rights and obligations deriving therefrom' (p. 4)

Language is not merely the possession of any one person but it also belongs to the whole speech community. Language determines the sense of belonging to a particular tribe and ethnicity. Members of one speech community have a common tendency to use their own language in their own communal relationship (Hudson, 1980). There are three dimensions of 'being, knowing, and doing' of ethnicity (Yeh, et al. ,2004 Fishman et al. ,1985). Therefore, language not only changes an individual's perception but it also provides a way to perform social life. Language is a marker for social and ethnic identity and can be used in governmental policies to provoke language identities (Fishman, 1975). The basic question of this research is that language choice is affected by language ethnicity or not. Ethnic identities undergo two levels: conscious and unconscious. Language use and the choice is a conscious act but to save the

associated language, it may revive unconsciously. Ethnic groups start to use their mother tongue (Fishman et al. 1985, Kamwendo, 2006).

The relation between Gender and the Language Choice

The relation between gender and language is very controversial. Gender is considered a non-significant factor in some Malaysian studies (Rahman et al. 2008). This study complements research conducted in Taiwan by Chan's (1994) to find the effect of gender on language choices and gender did not appear a significant factor. On the other hand, some researchers reported the significant role of gender in language choices (Lu, 1998, Yeh et al. 2004). According to Lu (1998), language choices are directly affected by gender among Taiwanese participants. On the other hand, Yeh et al. (2004) also found gender as an important factor in choosing the Mandarin language instead of three other ethnic groups of Taiwan.

Higher Education and Language choices

Multilingualism not only permits people to use more than one language but also provide choices of using languages in different situations (Rehman et al. 2007). According to him, 'Language choice may be constrained by several factors which include language policy, language proficiency, ethnicity, gender, profession, socio-cultural background and in particular, the domain in which language is used'. The study aims to find out the effect of higher education on language choices. The use of dominant languages (colonial languages) in curriculum development instead of mother language has created many problems (Spolsky, 1986). Mainly they have created a westernized educated elite. So, it is important to know which language is used by these educated elites in the family domain.

Age and Language choices

Age and aging can be perceived in two perspectives individual life and comparison to coherent people (Eckert, 1997). She discussed three categories of aging i.e. Chronological age, Biological age, and Social age (ibid, 156). Age grading is a change in the behavior of an individual with time. Some researchers (Hockett, 1950) used this term only to describe the language used by children. Various changes in society and situations affect a person's identity and growth (Seifert, et. al, 2000). The aim of this study to find the relation between language choice and age in the family domain.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The main point of the present research is to disclose the motivational factors in the wake of the language choices of Pakistani Youth in the in-home domain. Motivation means a conscious or unconscious choice of language in a social context. So this study attempts to probe the influence of gender, language ethnicities, and higher education on the choice of language use in the family domain.

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

Pakistan is a multicultural and multilingual country. Gender, various language identities, and education are some influential characteristics for language choices (particularly in the Family domain). This study aims at investigating the relationship of Pakistani youth and the picking of the language used in the domain of family and the effect of gender, language ethnicities, and higher education on that choice. Hence, the participants' gender, language ethnicities, and higher education are measured as independent variables while the students' choices of languages are taken as dependent variables. This study is conducted to explore the answers to the following two research questions:

1. What are the most used languages of Pakistani youth in the family domain?

2. What is the relationship among the most used language of Pakistani youths and their gender, age, language ethnicities, and higher education in the family domain of language use?

METHODOLOGY

University of Sahiwal (UOS) was selected as the location of the study, it is a well-known university in the Province of Punjab. The number of students in the said university is 2000 (N=2000) which is studying in the eight different departments of UOS. Among the 2000 students, a sample of 300 students was selected to conduct the survey. All students were local with different language ethnicities i.e. Punjabi, Saraiki, Urdu, and some other languages.

A Stratified proportional sampling technique was used for the random sampling and the data collection, except that the selection was from subgroups. For the proportional sampling to the population size of all faculties, participants were selected randomly. On the other hand, to know about the profiles of the participants, their perception of ethnic identity, and their choices of languages in the domain of the family, a self-administered questionnaire was used. It was comprised of two sections.

Section 1 of the questionnaire was designed to gather the demographic data of the participants. Gender, age, language ethnicities, and education level were considered as the independent variables. Section 2 required to gather data about the choice of languages.

Sample Description

For data collection, the final questionnaire was distributed to 300 students studying at the University of Sahiwal. Upon follow up, I managed to collect data from 216 students. Table 1 describes the sample of this study. In this study, 48% of the respondents belong to the department of computer science, 22% to the department of applied psychology, 15% to the department English, and 14% of the respondents belong to the department of business administration, law, and chemistry. In addition to this, 40.7% and 59.3% of the respondents are enrolled are Bachelor and Master programs respectively. 29.6% of the respondents have ages between 17 and 19 years, 51.9% have ages between 20 and 22 years, and 18.5% have ages between 23 and 25 years. In this study, 52% of the respondents are male. Further, 33.3% and 67.7% of the students enrolled in the year 2016 and 2017 respectively. In addition to this, 51.9% of the respondents have Urdu as a mother tongue and 48% have Punjabi as a mother language.

Table: Sample Description

	Frequency	Percent
Department of the Respondents		
Department of Business Administration	8	3.7
Department of Applied Psychology	48	22.2
Department of English	32	14.8
Department of Computer Science	104	48.1
Department of Law	8	3.7
Department of Chemistry	16	7.4

Total	216	100.0
Program of the Respondents		
Bachelor Program	88	40.7
Master Program	128	59.3
Total	216	100.0
Age of the Respondents		
17-19	64	29.6
20-22	112	51.9
23-25	40	18.5
Total	216	100.0
Gender of the Respondents		
Male	112	51.9
Female	104	48.1
Total	216	100.0
Mother Language		
Urdu	112	51.9
Punjabi	96	44.4
Siraiki	8	3.7
Total	216	100.0
Year of Education		
2016	72	33.3
2017	144	66.7
Total	216	100.0

Influencing Factors of Language Choice in:

Numerous factors influence the choice of language in the family domain. These factors are discussed below.

Influence of Language Ethnicities (Mother Language):

Table 2 describes the influence of language ethnicities on the language choice in the family’s domain. The results have shown that language ethnicities influences the selection of language while talking to their grandparents (p-value = 0.005), parents (p-value = 0.000), siblings (p-value = 0.000), and guest/relatives (p-value = 0.000). It also influences the choice of language when expressing their anger (p-value = 0.000), discussing personal matters (p-value = 0.000) and jokes (p-value = 0.000) with family matters. Mother language was also found relevant when speaking to family members in the presence of relatives/guests (p-value = 0.000).

Table2: Influence of Language Ethnicities- Pearson Chi-Square Tests

Items	Value	df	Sig. Value
Communication with grandparents * Language Ethnicities	7.714 ^a	1	.005
Communication with parents * Language Ethnicities	56.581 ^a	3	.000
Communication with siblings * Language Ethnicities	33.288 ^a	3	.000
Express their happiness towards their siblings * Language Ethnicities	3.976 ^a	3	.264
Express their anger towards their siblings * Language Ethnicities	29.230 ^a	3	.000
Discuss a personnel matter at home * Language Ethnicities	79.813 ^a	3	.000
Joke with their family members at home * Language Ethnicities	25.873 ^a	3	.000
Watch movies/television * Language Ethnicities	16.197 ^a	3	.001
Speak to a relative/guest * Language Ethnicities	91.029 ^a	3	.000
Speak with family members in the presence of a relative/guest of a different race * Language Ethnicities	73.938 ^a	3	.000

It has been noticed that respondents having Punjab and Urdu as a mother language prefer to use Punjabi and Urdu while speaking to their grandparents respectively (Urdu = 92.9%, Punjabi = 100%). They appear to use a combination of Punjabi and Urdu while talking to their parents and siblings. However, Urdu and Punjabi speakers prefer their mother language while talking to their grandparents, parents, and siblings. The respondents appear to uses a combination of languages while expressing their happiness and anger towards their siblings and watching movies. The respondents appear to prefer their mother language while speaking to their relatives/guests.

Influence of Age of the Respondents:

Table 3 describes the influence of the age of respondents on the choice of language oThe results have shown that age of respondents influences the selection of language while talking to their grandparents (p-value = 0.000), parents (p-value = 0.000), siblings (p-value = 0.000), guest/relatives (p-value = 0.000), and family members in the presence of guests/relatives (p-value = 0.000). It also influences the choice of

language when expressing their anger (p-value = 0.000) and happiness (p-value = 0.000), and discussing personal matters (p-value = 0.000) and jokes (p-value = 0.000) with family matters.

Table 3: Influence of Age of the Respondents -Pearson Chi-Square Tests

Items	Value	df	Sig. Value
Communication with your grandparents * Age of the Respondents	19.731 ^a	2	.000
Communication with your parents * Age of the Respondents	27.077 ^a	6	.000
Communication with your siblings * Age of the Respondents	67.285 ^a	6	.000
Express their your happiness towards their siblings * Age of the Respondents	51.339 ^a	6	.000
Express their anger towards their siblings * Age of the Respondents	35.960 ^a	6	.000
Discuss a personnel matter at home * Age of the Respondents	31.307 ^a	6	.000
Joke with their family members at home * Age of the Respondents	31.166 ^a	6	.000
Watch movies or television shows at home * Age of the Respondents	44.108 ^a	6	.000
Speak to a relative or guest * Age of the Respondents	63.849 ^a	6	.000
Speak to their family members in the presence of a relative or guest of a different race * Age of the Respondents	51.056 ^a	6	.000

The result shows that the respondents of all age groups appear to prefer the Punjabi language to speak to their grandparents and use a combination of languages (Punjabi, Urdu, and Combination o Punjabi and Urdu) to speak to their parents and siblings. They use a combination of languages to express their happiness and anger towards their siblings and watch movies/TV.

Influence of Gender of the Respondents:

Table 4 describes the influence of gender of respondents on the choice of language in the family domain. The results have shown that gender of respondents influences the selection of language while talking to their grandparents (p-value = 0.005), siblings (p-value = 0.006), guest/relatives (p-value = 0.000), and family members in the presence of guests/relatives (p-value = 0.001). It also influences the choice of language when expressing their anger (p-value = 0.000), sharing happiness (p-value = 0.000), discussing personal matters (p-value = 0.001), and sharing jokes (p-value = 0.000) with family matters. The gender of the respondent influences the choice of language while watching movies/television (p-value = 0.000).

The results show that 100% of females appear to use the Punjabi language to speak to their grandparents while 92.9% of males use the Punjabi language. Both male and female appear to you combination of languages (Urdu, Punjabi, a combination of Urdu and Punjabi) to speak to their parents. However, male respondents some time use a combination of Urdu, Punjab, and English to speak to their parents (7.1%). The results have shown that both males and females use a combination of languages to express happiness and anger towards their siblings. However, the ratio of females (38.5%) who use Punjabi to express their anger is greater than the ratio of Male who uses the same language (14.3%). Male and female respondents

appear to use a combination of languages to discuss personal matters, to watch movies/TV, and to speak to their guests. However, it has been found that male respondents use a combination of Urdu, Punjabi, and English to speak to their guests but none of the females use this combination while talking to their guests.

Table 4: Influence of Gender of the Respondents -Pearson Chi-Square Tests

Items	Value	df	Sig. Value
Speak to their grandparents * Gender of the Respondents	7.714 ^a	1	.005
Speak to their parents * Gender of the Respondents	7.714 ^a	3	.052
Speak to their siblings * Gender of the Respondents	12.336 ^a	3	.006
Express their happiness towards your siblings * Gender of the Respondents	22.134 ^a	3	.000
Express their anger towards your siblings * Gender of the Respondents	22.821 ^a	3	.000
Discuss a personnel matter at home * Gender of the Respondents	16.615 ^a	3	.001
Joke with their family members at home * Gender of the Respondents	34.774 ^a	3	.000
Watch movies or television shows at home * Gender of the Respondents	43.528 ^a	3	.000
Speak to a relative or guest * Gender of the Respondents	36.554 ^a	3	.000
Speak to their family members in the presence of a relative or guest of a different race * Gender of the Respondents	16.259 ^a	3	.001

Influence of the level of education of Respondents:

Table 5 describes the influence of the level of education of respondents on the choice of language in the family domain. The results have shown that level education of respondents influences the selection of language while talking to their grandparents (p-value = 0.042), parents (p-value = 0.000), siblings (p-value = 0.006), and family members in the presence of guests/relatives (p-value = 0.010). It also influences the choice of language when expressing their anger (p-value = 0.003), sharing happiness (p-value = 0.000), discussing personal matters (p-value = 0.000), sharing jokes (p-value = 0.002) with family matters and watching movies/television (p-value = 0.001).

100% of the respondents having 15 years of education and 94.4% of the respondents having 14 years of education speak the Punjabi language while talking to their grandparents. These respondents appear to use Punjabi, Urdu, and mixture of Urdu and Punjabi when talking to their parents. One surprising thing, that respondents having 14-years of education also use a combination of Punjab, Urdu, and English for talking to their parents (4.6%). The respondents having 14 Years of education and 15 years of education appear to use either Punjabi, Urdu, and mixture of Punjabi Punjabi, Urdu, and English when talking to their siblings and expressing their happiness and anger with them. It has been noticed that respondents having 15-years of education prefer Punjabi and/or Urdu for talking to siblings, express happiness and anger with siblings, and discuss personal matters with them.

Table 5: Influence of Year of Education -Pearson Chi-Square Tests

Items	Value	df	Sig. Value
Speak to their grandparents * Year of Education	4.154 ^a	1	.042
Speak to their parents * Year of Education	18.900 ^a	3	.000
Speak to their siblings * Year of Education	42.577 ^a	3	.000
Express their happiness towards your siblings * Year of Education	37.800 ^a	3	.000
Express their anger towards their siblings * Year of Education	13.886 ^a	3	.003
Discuss a personnel matter at home * Year of Education	57.000 ^a	3	.000
Joke with their family members at home * Year of Education	14.400 ^a	3	.002
Watch movies or television shows at home * Year of Education	16.941 ^a	3	.001
Speak to a relative or guest * Year of Education	6.000 ^a	3	.112
Speak to their family members in the presence of a relative or guest of a different race * Year of Education	11.400 ^a	3	.010

Conclusion:

The purpose of this study was to determine different factors such as gender, language ethnicities, and age and education level on language choices of Pakistani youth. The results have shown that mostly used languages in the domain of family are Urdu and Punjabi or their mother language. The results have also shown that gender, age, language ethnicity, and level of education influence the choice of language in the family domain.

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