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Impact of Multilingualism on Shina Language in Urban Setting: Issues of Language Shift among Youth

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Abstract

The present study explores the impact of multilingualism on the Shina language in urban settings and examines issues related to language shift among native speakers of Shina. The sample consists of one hundred urban-educated Shina speakers, aged 18-25 years, of both genders, who are studying at universities in Rawalpindi/Islamabad. The study adopts a mixed-method approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data were collected through a questionnaire and group discussions. The domains used to design the questionnaire and group discussions are based on Sabiha Mansoor's (1993) 'Punjabi, Urdu, and English in Pakistan: A Sociolinguistic Study'. Shina, an important language spoken in Gilgit-Baltistan, is endangered due to its speakers' social and economic need to learn English and Urdu for education and employment. The findings reveal that Shina is rarely spoken in the domains of interactions with strangers, social gatherings, and communication with teachers, with the exception of the home domain, where it is spoken by 81% of the respondents. The respondents exhibit negative attitudes toward Shina and positive attitudes toward English and Urdu. In urban settings, where a diverse range of languages coexist, languages inevitably influence each other—a phenomenon also observed in the case of Shina.

Keywords: language desertion, language shift, multilingualism, shina language

Introduction

Pakistan is a multilingual country with six major and over fifty-nine minor languages (Rehman, 2003). Urdu and English are the official languages of Pakistan along with other provincial and regional languages, e.g., Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi, Shina, Khowar, Brushaski, Wakhi, Siraiki and Swahili etc. Hence, like the rest of the world, multilingualism is a norm

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rather than an exception in Pakistan. Moreover, a corollary of multilingualism is language shift, which involves a process in which successive generations of speakers, both at individual and at community levels, gradually lose proficiency in their mother-tongues or the language of their speech community in favour of other languages.

The process may lead to language loss among individuals or even language death for an entire community (Fishman, [1964](#); Veltman, [1983](#)). Such a phenomenon is visible in the linguistic landscape of Pakistan where due to the impact of dominant languages (Urdu and English), minority and regional languages lose ground. Shina, a regional language in Pakistan is also a case in point. Shina is a dominant language, spoken by approximately 60 per cent people of the region of Gilgit-Baltistan, and in parts of Indian Kashmir. As Gilgit-Baltistan is stepping into the world of knowledge and information which comes with so many other languages, the people are also taking to learn these languages. The group that is more vulnerable to the change in their attitudes of shift from their native language is the youth group. Whether it is a language that has written literature like Urdu and English, or a language that solely exists in the oral form like Shina, Brushaski, etc., the purpose of all languages is to convey the thoughts, ideas, feelings to others. All these languages are equally important, as they define a particular ethnic group's identity and existence. The current study explores this phenomenon of language shift in the younger generation of native speakers of the Shina language, who reside in the urban areas in Pakistan.

Research Questions

1. What are the language preferences of the urban-educated Shina language speakers?
2. What are the reasons for the language shift among urban-educated Shina speakers?
3. How does multilingualism impact the Shina language?

Literature Review

Language is a tool to communicate ideas, thoughts, feelings, and emotions to each other: “Language is what makes us human” (Trask, [1995](#), p. 1). Language does not merely serve as a medium of communication, but also defines the identity, personality, and status of its users in a society. As Coupland and Jaworski ([1997](#)) mention, “Language or its variety may

represent social classes” (p. 27). Trask mentions that he grew up speaking a variety of English languages which held a low status in society, and he spent many years acquiring middle-class English, in order to be a part of the people of professional academics (Trask, [1995](#)).

In the urban society of Pakistan, the major language spoken and understood, for a variety of purposes is Urdu, however, people learn other languages for pragmatic reasons (Rahman, [2002](#)). Those who migrate from rural areas, where they speak their native language as opposed to the Urdu language, later learn Urdu. This allows them to put aside their native language and shift their attitude towards Urdu. Urdu in an urban setting, serves economic, educational and social purposes.

Multilingualism includes both national as well as regional languages (Franceschini, [2011](#)). According to Jenkins ([2008](#)), in language use, attitudes are of significance. The definition of multilingualism also includes the identity of the speaker of a particular language. Pakistan is a multilingual country as there are more than sixty languages spoken in the country (Gordon, [2005](#)).

Around the world, in bilingual and multilingual communities, the use of code-switching is considered to be “robust” (Noguchi & Fotos, [2001](#)). Due to a strong use of code-switching, few studies show negative attitudes towards it. For example, Chana and Romaine ([1984](#)) conducted research on Punjabi and English in the United Kingdom, which concluded that speakers of the Punjabi language consider code switching to be a sign of lack of language competency.

The language that is spoken at home eventually flourishes as a heritage language of an individual, and this heritage language is not one of dominant languages of the larger society (Valdes, [2005](#)). The varieties of languages mentioned above, are the heritage languages in Pakistan. The focus of the present study is on the Shina Language, which is now considered a language merely spoken at home, in the domestic domain, by its native speakers: “A language dies when no child learns it” (Fromkin et al., [1999](#), p. 467). The reason for languages to shift towards other languages or die out permanently is because these are absorbed by other cultures with different languages. The idea that “indigenous” languages are in need of special protection rests on the assumption that they establish the accurate expressions of indigenous cultures (Nettle & Romaine [2000](#)).

The way children acquire a language, today, matters a lot in retaining it in later years of their age (Fromkin et al., [1999](#)). The native languages in Pakistan are not acquired by children properly, and nor are they taught in their pure form (Rahman, [2006](#)). Usually, individuals speaking a native language incorporate words of both English and Urdu in their speech. According to Kießling and Mous ([2004](#)), “Youth in several urban centres of the African continent are continuously creating their own languages in order to set themselves apart from the older generation” (p. 303). Young people are responsible for the transference of language and heritage to the next generations. According to Rahman ([2006](#)), there are more than fifty languages spoken in the northern areas of Pakistan (Gilgit-Baltistan), which are under huge pressure and in danger of dying out. The urbanization brought into Gilgit-Baltistan through Karakorum Highway, is the main cause, as it brings more people into the area with different languages, particularly, Urdu and English. Rahman ([2006](#)) also shows concern over Shina language being impeded by English and Urdu.

Many studies on the phenomena of language shift and desertion have been conducted all over the world in the past. Berman et al. ([2011](#)) conducted research to examine the attitudes toward Icelandic, Polish and English languages and cultures in four young Polish adolescents in Iceland. Interview method was used for the data collection. The results showed that the young generation of Iceland was motivated to learn the language, and was also trying to integrate into Icelandic society while maintaining a certain proficiency over the Polish language as well. The adolescents, unlike their parents, were very optimistic about living in Iceland and were hopeful to create a bright future within their own culture. Similarly, Riaz ([2011](#)) conducted ethnographic research with the aim to explore the status of Punjabi language in Pakistani society, by looking into the attitudes of Punjabi native speakers and employing a constructivist qualitative paradigm as a theoretical framework. The findings revealed that the Punjabi native speakers did not give importance to the Punjabi language, as it played no vital role in their economic or educational purposes. On the other hand, in the rural areas, the participants showed a great affiliation with the Punjabi language. They used it as their everyday language in the town. These findings suggest that language desertion is an urban phenomenon.

Moreover, Ianos ([2014](#)) conducted research on Catalonia immigrant students and explored language attitudes in a multilingual and multicultural

context. The study followed the research tradition started by Sharp et al. (1973) and supported by Baker (1988), about language attitudes. The results of the study showed that different languages entail a different process in attitude formation. In the same manner, attitudes toward the two official languages of the region, Catalan and Spanish, showed different patterns of construction and influence as compared to English language. The review of the literature given above shows limited studies on Shina speakers living in urban areas, particularly focusing on youth. The present study can fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on how multilingualism affects Shina among urban youth by suggesting ways to sustain the language.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a mixed-method mode of inquiry. For the categorization of the data and analysis, a quantitative approach has been used, while data collected through focus group discussions has been interpreted and analyzed qualitatively. A total of a hundred participants who were urban-educated Shina speakers of age 18-25 years, of both genders, studying in the universities in Rawalpindi/Islamabad, comprise the sample of this study.

From the same hundred participants, two focus groups were formed for the interviews, consisting of ten participants in each group. The first group was taken from Fatima Jinnah Women University, and the second group was taken from the National University of Sciences and Technology. The domains that have been used to design the questionnaire and group discussions are based on Sabiha Mansoor's 'Punjabi, Urdu, and English in Pakistan, a Sociolinguistic Study' (1993), and they focus on home/family, teachers, friends, neighbors, strangers, shopping, and work.

Mansoor's questionnaire was wider in scope, being a PhD dissertation, however the questionnaire used in the present study, though follows the same domains, was scaled down in terms of numbers of items in each domain. Likewise, the questions asked from the focus group members were also based on Mansoor's (1993) questionnaire but was in line with the scope of the present study.

Data Analysis

The data analysis chapter consists of two main parts. In part 1, the data was obtained through questionnaires, and in part 2 focus group discussions were analyzed.

Questionnaire Analysis

This section deals with the representation and analysis of questions one and two in the survey questionnaire. This section is further sub divided in two parts.

Language Background

The first section of the questionnaire finds out the respondents' language background. All the respondents were native Shina speakers. Apart from Shina, the respondents could fluently speak English and Urdu languages. The respondents were not merely fluent in English and Urdu, rather the results suggested that they could understand many other languages in the urban setting, e.g., Punjabi, Hindko, Siraiki, Balti, and Khowar. This clearly shows the influence of multilingualism.

Language Use

The other important information from this language background section was about the use of native language in different domains in urban settings as shown in Table 1. The highest among the three languages is the Urdu language. Urdu dominates the other languages, constituting over seventy per cent of the total ratio, reported in the 'always' category, being spoken in the domains mentioned, by the respondents in urban settings. On the other hand, English is the second dominant language in academics, as shown in the domain of teachers. Shina is only restricted to the domain of family, as shown in the table, which is reported to be over 8%.

Table 1

Use of English, Urdu, and Shina in different Domains in Urban setting (N=100)

Domain	Language	Always	Frequently	Rarely	Never
Family	English	1	22	58	19
	Urdu	15	54	29	1
	Shina	81	10	5	3
Teacher	English	29	56	13	2
	Urdu	73	22	4	0
	Shina	2	2	11	81
Friends	English	9	48	31	3
	Urdu	68	28	2	0
	Shina	27	28	39	4

Domain	Language	Always	Frequently	Rarely	Never
Strangers	English	4	30	56	10
	Urdu	71	24	2	2
	Shina	8	15	40	35
Offices/banks	English	11	48	35	6
	Urdu	70	27	1	0
	Shina	2	4	28	64
Social Gathering	English	6	58	32	3
	Urdu	63	33	3	0
	Shina	18	25	37	17
Shopping	English	0	21	60	19
	Urdu	71	24	3	1
	Shina	11	16	23	47
While visiting other provinces	English	0	37	53	10
	Urdu	83	13	3	0
	Shina	5	4	31	59

The following table shows the results of the use of Shina in the given domains by the respondents. The results depict a clear shift in language. It is visible from the results that the native speakers of the Shina language are shifting from Shina to the more dominant languages, e.g., English and Urdu, in urban settings. In the 'Never' section of the domains, Shina language holds the highest percentage, i.e., teachers = 81%, offices/banks = 64%, shopping = 47 %, and visiting provinces = 59 %. These domains constitute the everyday life of a person in an urban setting. If a native language is not used in everyday domains, then eventually the language is in danger of extinction.

Table 2

Use of Shina in the given Domains (N=100)

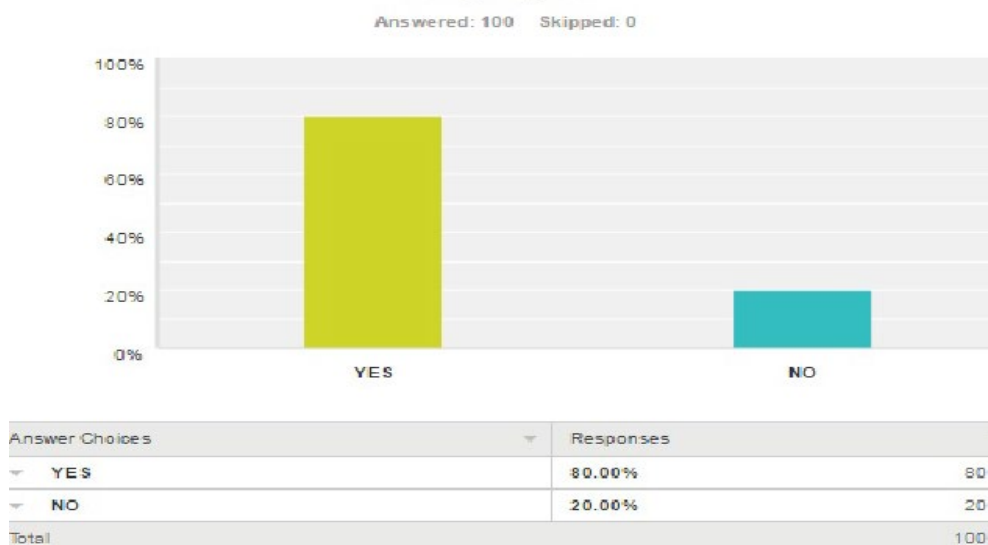
Respondent s	Teacher s	Stranger s	Offices/Bank s	Social Gathering s	Shopping	Visiting other province s
Always	2	8	2	18	11	5
Frequently	2	15	4	25	16	4
Rarely	11	40	28	37	23	31
Never	81	35	64	17	47	59

Language Preferences of the Respondents

This section of the chapter represents the data collected through questions three, four, and five in the survey questionnaire. The questions basically explored the attitudes and preferences of the respondents regarding urban settings and their choice of language.

Figure 1

Effect of Urban Setting on Native Language (N = 100)



80% of the respondents agreed that living in an urban area affected their choice of native language. Due to the dominance of Urdu and English in urban areas, most interactions occur in either Urdu or English. As from the previous table, it is evident that the majority of the languages, e.g., Urdu and English are taking up most of the place in the urban society, where this hold importance in academic and social set ups. So, a person is compelled to adopt these languages to prosper and live a better life, yet at the cost of their native languages.

In this section, the respondents were asked about the language in which they preferred to speak while they were in an urban setting. 70 % of the participants responded that they preferred to speak in Urdu language. The rest of them preferred English. About 1 % of the respondents said that they would like to speak in their native language, Shina, but that is not always

convenient for them because of the linguistic gap that Shina is not understood by the majority of people in urban settings.

From the responses to this question, it could be inferred that Urdu and English are their preferred choices in urban settings. The reason for the choice of these languages is that Urdu is the language understood by the majority and is used for communication purposes. Likewise, the same is the case with English. All these reasons point towards the shifts of attitudes of the respondents of the research towards other languages from their native language. Even though a few of the respondents tried to and would have liked to speak their native language, they felt helpless as the people among whom they lived were not able to understand their language. Furthermore, the academic importance of English and Urdu made the respondents more inclined towards these two major languages as compared to their native language.

More than 60 % of respondents reported that their everyday language was either Urdu or English while living in an urban setting in Pakistan. The rest of the 40 % of the respondents gave mixed answers, as a few said that they would switch from Shina to Urdu and English. This shows how little the Shina language is being used by its native speakers who reside in urban settings.

Language Preferences in Academic Domain

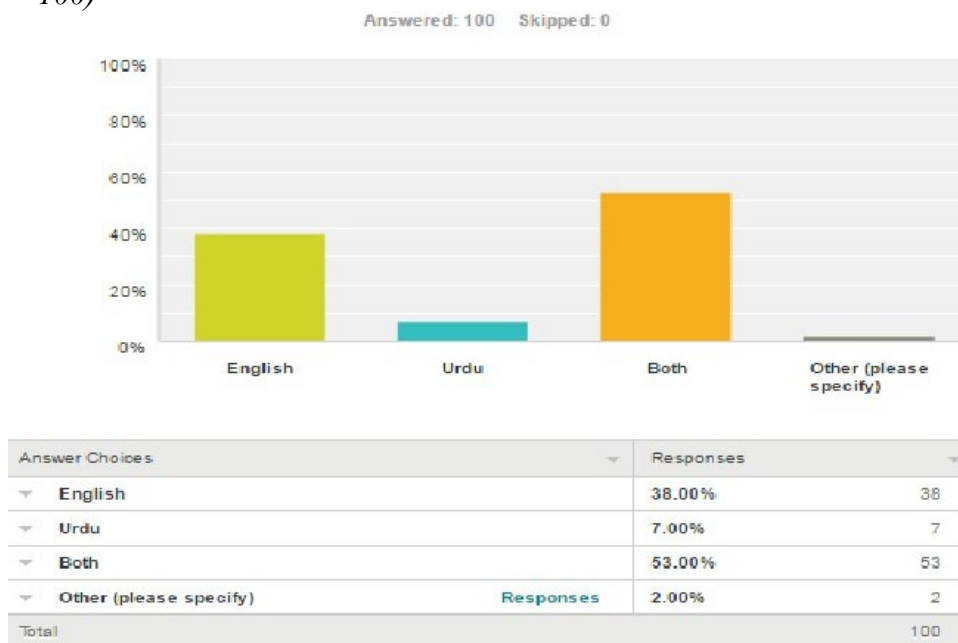
This section deals with the data presentation and data analysis of questions six, seven, and eight in the questionnaire. These questions are based on the use of Shina, Urdu, and English in academic institutions.

Language Used in the Academic Institutions

Table 2 shows that both English and Urdu languages are used as mediums of instruction in urban schools for educational purposes. As in the table, the results show that 53% of the participants responded that the medium of instruction used in the educational institutes is both English and Urdu. 38 % of the participants responded that English is the only language being used as a medium of instruction in educational institutes. The use of English is more frequent than the Urdu language in urban settings, as English is reported to be in use by about 38 %, while Urdu as 7 %, by the respondents of the research. When Urdu, being the national language, is left behind in the academic scenario, then there is hardly room for any of the native languages spoken in Pakistan.

Figure 2

Language Used as a Medium of Instruction at Educational Institutions (N = 100)



Further, when the respondents were asked about the language they would have preferred to study in, English, as evident in the table below.

Table 3

Language Preference for Education (N = 100)

English	Urdu	Native Languages	Any other (Arabic, Chinese, French)
82	17	00	1

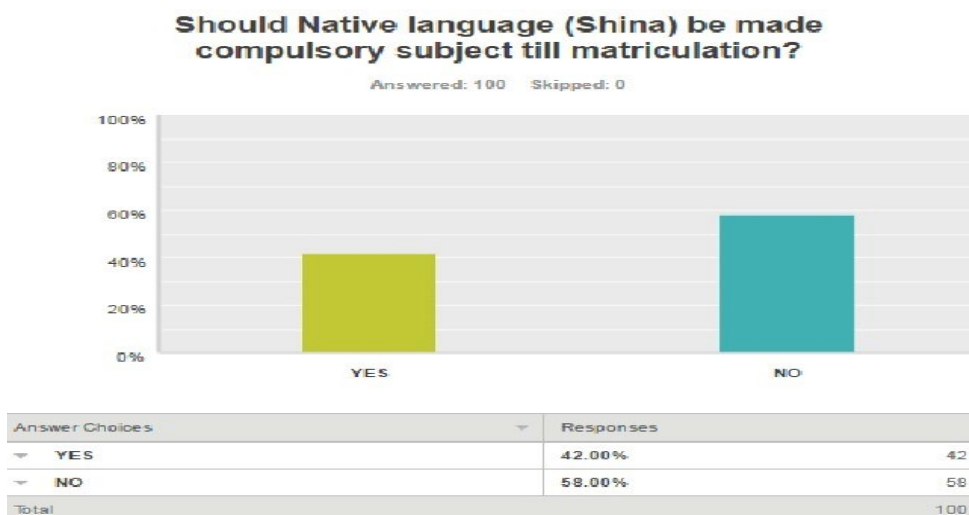
The attitude towards native languages in academic institutions is very negative in urban settings. The attitude towards learning in English is stronger in the younger generation as eighty-two of the total respondents wanted to study in English. Only seventeen participants responded that they would like to study in Urdu. Earlier in table 2, Urdu and English were favoured by 53 % of respondents to be the medium of instruction in educational institutions, here only English was preferred over all other languages. One subject reported that she would have liked to prefer Arabic

for educational purposes as it is a holy language. None of the respondents showed any preference to study in their native language, Shina.

The researcher asked the respondents whether Shina language should be made compulsory for native speakers until matriculation. The results demonstrated that respondents held a negative attitude toward the Shina language, as the majority opposed the idea of making it a compulsory subject. According to the results, 100 participants responded to the question. 58% of respondents did not want Shina language to be a compulsory subject for its native speakers, while 42 % of the respondents preferred Shina language.

Figure 3

Shina as a Compulsory Subject for the Speakers (N= 100)



The reasons for opting for English were mostly because of the global importance of the language. Even, the books consulted by the students in Pakistan, are in English. In table 3, it is shown that 82 % of the respondents wanted to study in this language. It is a huge number. Some respondents saw English as a language which would help them in academics, while others, because of its status as an official language. A few respondents preferred it because this language would allow them to find better jobs. Some respondents preferred it because all the international universities required English Proficiency Test scores. Due to a lack of published

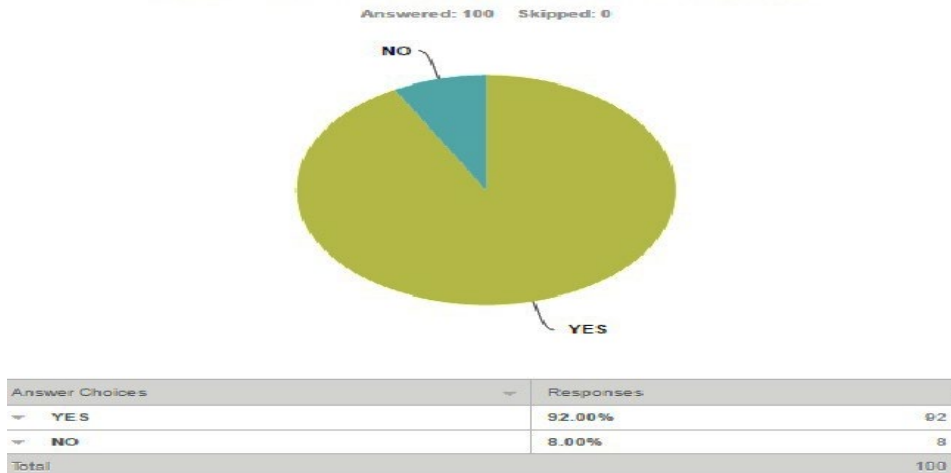
material in Shina language, young people preferred learning English language instead.

The preference for Urdu has more or less similar reasons. The participants showed preference in learning Urdu language because of its status as the national language. Furthermore, the respondents gave numerous reasons for not wanting Shina as a compulsory subject till matriculation. 58 % of the respondents, disagreed having Shina language as a part of the academic syllabus, as shown in table 4. On the other hand, 42 % of the participants agreed that the Shina language should be a compulsory subject till matriculation.

The respondents who were not in favour of Shina being part of the academics reported that Shina had no use for academic purposes, and they already knew enough to communicate so there was no need for it in an institution. Further, they added that “it is restricted to one area or community”, so everyone would not be able to understand it. According to the responses of the participants, Shina language lacks written literature, importance in academia, and national and international status, hence it is of no practical importance. In urban settings, Urdu and English are the major languages. They believed that these languages were more important to learn than Shina. The 42% respondents who agreed to have Shina as a part of the academics believed that Shina was their identity and it needed to be preserved through formal teaching at schools. If this language was limited to mere domestic spaces, other languages would impede it and it will eventually die out.

Impact of Linguistic Pluralism on Shina: Knowledge, Influence, and Language Loss

This section deals with the last five questions of the survey questionnaire. In this section, data presented is based on ‘Knowledge of the native language’, ‘Influence of linguistic pluralism on Shina language’, and ‘Loss of a native language or a minor language (Shina)’. To start with, the respondents were asked if they borrowed words from other languages, while conversing in their native language. In the pie chart 4, the results show that 92 % of the participants responded in affirmative. This has been further proved by the focus group analysis, where the sample from the participants conversing in Shina language was analyzed and borrowing was clearly identifiable in the conversation.

Figure 4*Borrowing Words While Conversing in Native Language (Results in %)*

The participants were asked to elaborate on the reasons why they could not converse in Shina without borrowing words from other languages. They reported that there was a lack of sufficient vocabulary, written literature in Shina, and they had a comparatively greater exposure to other languages, e.g., English and Urdu in urban settings. They found it easier to pick words from these languages than to think hard in Shina.

Further, the respondents were asked to convey the reasons for their lack of comprehension of Shina language and the choice to avoid it in conversations. The respondents were given choices to pick from and 76.84% of the respondents reported the reason to be their exposure to multiple other languages leading to their lack of fluency in their native language, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4*Reasons: Shina Speakers Not Fluent in Speaking Shina (N = 95)*

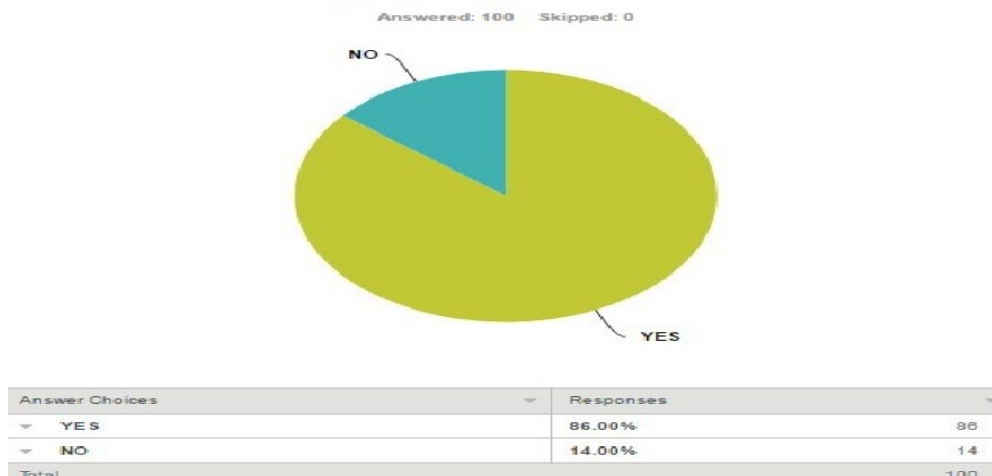
Answer Choices	Responses
Parents don't use it at home	15.79% 15
You yourself didn't try to learn it	29.47% 28
Because of multiple languages you are exposed to	76.84% 73
Parents didn't teach it consciously	17.89% 17
Because of low prestige (low status) associated with it	11.58% 11
Total Respondents: 95	

29.47 % of the participants reported that they themselves did not try to learn the native language. It is very much clear from the attitudes of the

respondents in the Table 3 and Table 4, where the respondents did not prefer their native language for educational purposes, and did not want the Shina language to be part of the curriculum, respectively. 17.89% of participants responded with the reason of parents not teaching the native language to their children consciously. 15.79% of the respondents gave the reason of parents not using the native language at home. The rest of the 11% of the participants gave reasons of low prestige being associated with the Shina language, which made them not learn it and eventually resulted in their lack of fluency in this language.

When the participants were asked if they would be able to transfer the language to their children, the response was positive. The results are shown in the pie graph 5, where 86 % of the participants responded that they would be able to transfer the language to their children, and the rest of the 14 % responded that they would not be able to transfer it to their children. This is ironic as in the previous section, respondents strongly agreed to the borrowing of words from other languages, which put their native language in danger. By the time they would be able to transfer it to their children, half of the language would also be lost from their lives. This concern is addressed in the section on Focus Group Discussions.

Figure 5
Language Transfer to Children (Results in %)

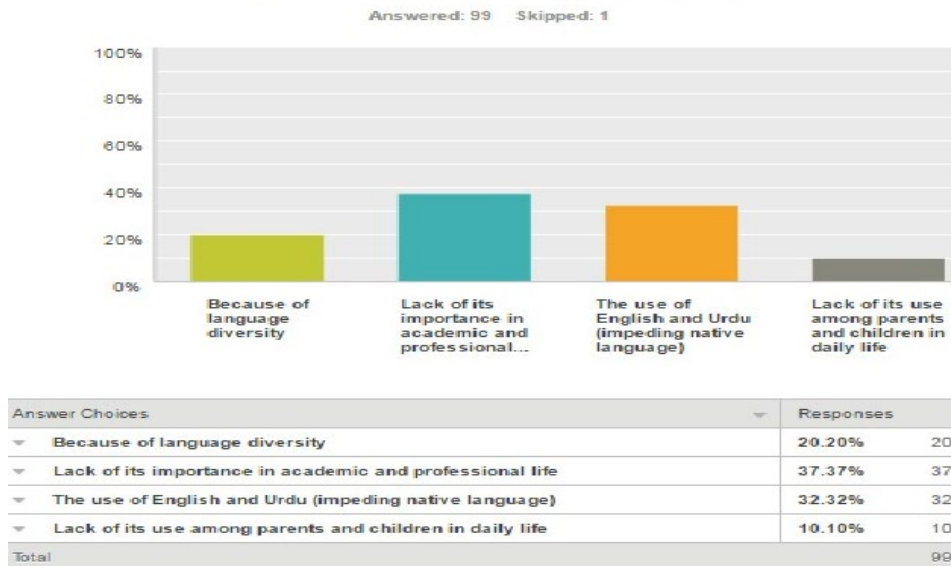


In the last question in the questionnaire, the participants were asked to express their views on the issue of native languages being lost. They were asked why these minor languages died out. Most importantly, they were

asked about the less use of native language. The responses given by the respondents are presented in the following bar graph.

Figure 6

Reasons for the Loss of the Use of Native Languages



The major reasons for the loss of the native language given by the participants were:

- The lack of importance of a native language in academic and professional life. 37.37% of participants favored this reason.
- The use of English and Urdu, impedes the native languages, eventually the native language is completely taken over and it dies out. 32.32% of the participants responded with this reason.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

This section deals with the Focus Group Discussions. Two focus group discussions, consisting eight participant each, were arranged. Focus Group 1 is denoted by FGD I and Focus Group 2 is denoted by FGD II, in this section. A semi-structured interview in Shina language was constructed by the researcher to lead the participants to the discussions later on the research topic. Participants are mentioned here as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, according to the sitting arrangement of the participants in the group, with reference to the sitting point of the researcher, considering the position as zero.

Analysis of the Focus Group Discussions

The discussion was initiated by asking them the implication of multilingualism and its impact on weaker languages, like Shina. Participant 4 in FGD I commented that as in Gilgit-Baltistan, many languages prevail, like Wakhi, Khowar, and Brushaski, likewise the same phenomenon is happening in urban settings. Participant 2 in FGD II said that many languages were spoken in the urban setting and one was bound to mix up the words and sentences eventually in their native tongue, as the exposure to other languages was huge. Participant 6 of FGD II gave an example of how the words of different languages got mixed up; if a Shina speaker was learning the word for ‘water’ in the Khowar language, they would learn ‘Ookh’ for water in Khowar. Likewise, the same was for a Khowar natives if they learned the word for ‘water’ in Shina, it would be ‘Wai’. When both the speakers sat together, they would be naturally uttering the words. Participant 1 of FGD I and Participant 4 of FGD II further added to the discussion that in an urban setting there was a lot of room for friends to socialize. Friends while connecting with each other tried to learn some common words in the language of their peers. This was how languages mingled up eventually.

The next question was related to the maintenance of Shina language in an urban setting. Everyone enthusiastically participated in the discussion. Participant 7 of FGD I and Participant 5 of FG II commented that they talked to their parents more frequently in the Shina language at home. Participant 2 of FGD I commented that she hanged out with her friends who were also native speakers of the Shina language. Participant 6 of FDG II commented that she used Shina music to maintain her Shina language in an urban setting. According to her, she had learned words that she was not familiar with before. She quoted some words learnt while listening to music, such as Birdii (Earth) and Hagaii (Sky).

The discussion of how languages could be maintained when there was a lot of other languages prevailing in the society was also taken up. When the researcher asked if the participants borrowed words from other languages, there was a strong positive response from the participants of both focus groups, that they borrowed words and phrases from other languages. The following words were commonly borrowed words from the English language in the conversation, by the participants: ‘area, word, society,

diversity, different, culture, school, gathering, time, friends, hostel, university, communicate, unintentionally, mix, basically, etc.’

Further, when asked why they borrowed, the answers were the same as given in the survey questionnaire. They said that Shina had no accessible written resources and there was no written literature to read. Further, Shina had no academic importance and the speakers also did not give much importance to the language. Borrowing made it easy for the speakers to convey their ideas more effectively. Participant 4 of FGDII commented that they were not able to speak Shina fluently in its purest form, because of its limited vocabulary. However, the rest of all of the participants disagreed.

Moreover, Participant 8 of FGD I commented that Shina had not been given any academic importance and held no productive outcome, that was why its native speakers were deserting it and shifting to Urdu and English. Almost all of the participants used either English or Urdu words to complete their sentences. None of the participants from both groups could speak a pure form of Shina language. Upon asking the question of the future of the Shina language in the next ten years, the responses received from the participants were very pessimistic. They saw no future for Shina after ten years. Participant 7 of FGD II commented that if they were able to speak Shina, it was because their parents spoke the language at home. The Shina they speak today was not in its purest form, and ten years from now, this version of Shina would get more impure.

The most common reason pointed out by the respondents in shifting towards English and Urdu was because of the variety of languages they were exposed to in Gilgit-Baltistan as well as in the urban setting of Pakistan. Having listened to the arguments regarding Shina being less practiced by its native speakers, the researcher suggested the idea of Shina being made compulsory till matriculation at academic institutions. The participants responded with mixed answers. Many of the participants responded against Shina being a compulsory subject till matriculation. They gave several reasons for it. Participant 2 of FGDI gave a reason that there is already a lot of burden on students. They had to take eight to nine courses.

On the contrary, some participants argued that Shina should be made compulsory due to the shift of attitudes of its native speakers away from Shina to English and Urdu language. Participant 6 of FGD II commented that Shina could be made compulsory in an oral tradition. Preserving a

language did not necessarily mean that it would be written and crammed. In agreement with Participant 6, Participant 3 of FGD II said that it would be best if Shina were made compulsory. Participant 4 of FGD I suggested that Shina should be made compulsory till primary school. According to them in that initial time children would be able to learn more about the language both at school and at home.

The analysis of data pointed to the fact that Shina language is being threatened by its very own speakers, the youngsters, as they prefer to use Urdu and English, rather than Shina language. Shina speakers, when migrate to cities, adopt Urdu as a language for communication, which eventually becomes the first language in the home domain as well. From the results of the data, it is inferred that Shina is still the first language of its natives in the home domain, as out of 100 participants, 81 participants have it as a language spoken the most at home. But, in the rest of the domains like with friends, neighbours, social circles and social gatherings, it does not have the highest number of speakers. Today, because of the home domain, the Shina language seems to be secure and intact, but in reality, it is not. The youngsters who are considered to be the protectors of their mother languages, are themselves deserting the Shina language.

Moreover, young people exhibit a declined fluency and scanty vocabulary in Shina language. This also leads to increased code mixing in Shina language. The responses to the first two questions show that the youngsters can understand and speak Urdu and English more frequently than Shina. The results report that Shina language is not used in interaction with the strangers, in social gatherings, and with teachers. Except, for the home domain, where it is spoken by 81% of the respondents.

Further, the focus group discussions revealed that the native speakers of Shina borrowed words and phrases from Urdu and English languages. Upon asking the reason for the borrowing, they said that it was because of a lack of written literature and compiled dictionaries in Shina language. Further, parents do not use much of the Shina language at home. Due to this, there is a lot of code mixing and borrowing in Shina.

Further, while exploring the reasons for the language shift among urban-educated Shina speakers, the researcher has found that in the domains of social gathering and strangers, instead of Shina, either English or Urdu is used. When the respondents were asked whether living in an urban setting

affects their preference of language, 80% of the respondents responded in affirmative. Living in an urban setting does affect individuals with different native languages. In the urban setting of Pakistan, Urdu language is mostly used, because it is the national language of Pakistan and understood by the majority of the population. So, it impedes Shina language the most.

English impedes the Shina language at a large scale too, if academics are taken into account. This is because 38% of the respondents out of a hundred responded that they have English language as a medium of instruction in academic institutions. Only 7% of the participants responded that they have Urdu as their medium of instruction. So, it is more likely that the English language impedes Shina more than Urdu in academic institutes. This allows the researcher to infer that Shina language having no use in academic institutes, impacts negatively on its survival. Its native speakers are shifting their attitudes towards such languages which have importance in academics. This way Shina remains in grave danger. This is not only putting Shina in danger, but the native speakers are themselves a great threat to it. That is because they are not serious about learning the Shina language. In response to a question about whether the respondents wanted the Shina language to be made compulsory till matriculation, 58% of the respondents said NO and only 42% of participants favoured it to be made compulsory. In the focus group discussions, the respondents discussed that it would not be easy to get a competent teacher either.

Furthermore, in exploring the impact of multilingualism on Shina Language, the researcher asked the respondents to give reasons for native speakers' inability to speak and understand the Shina language fully. To this, 73% of the respondents commented the same reason that it is due to the effect of multiple languages one is exposed to in an urban setting that a native speaker of Shina is not fluent in speaking the language. 28% of the participants responded that it is because they themselves do not try to learn it.

When the researcher asked the participants about the reasons for the desertion of their native language, 37% of the participants responded that a native language that lacks importance in academic and professional life, would eventually be lost. 32% of the respondents responded that the frequent use of English and Urdu allows a native language to be impeded. 20% of the participants commented that it is because of the language diversity in the urban settings. 10% of the participants responded that it is

because parents do not use it at home. These results align with the findings of Rahman (2002) and Anjum (2016), which indicate that respondents preferred Urdu and English over Punjabi, their native language. These responses made the researcher ponder on the need for Shina to be made academically important if it needs to remain alive and be less influenced by the dominant languages in the urban settings.

Conclusion

This study aimed to find out the attitudes of young native speakers of Shina language towards Shina and other languages, e.g., Urdu and English. English and Urdu, being the dominant languages of Pakistan are spoken in almost every domain of life. Shina language being the oral traditional language of a particular community in the northern region of Pakistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, is easy to be overlooked in social situations.

On the basis of the results of this study, it can be concluded that urban setting has a huge impact on native languages, especially the ones which have a very small number of speakers. As urban setting has diversified culture of different languages, all the languages have some influence on each other. The same phenomenon is happening to Shina native speakers as well. Among the speakers, the most affected are the youth. Youth is the group of Shina language speakers, who have migrated to the cities of Pakistan, in search for higher education. That is why they suffer the most cultural shocks, among which, language is an important one.

The findings demonstrate that the young people are deserting the Shina language and there is a shift in their positive attitudes towards English and Urdu languages. This might lead to language death. This issue needs to be tackled by its very own native speakers by using more Shina language. It has been found from the study that Shina speakers are shifting from Shina to many other languages that are dominant in the urban setting of Pakistan, e.g., English and Urdu. This in turn affects Shina language drastically.

In order to maintain Shina language, the research recommends that Shina should be given priority at home. Literature of Shina needs to be documented as soon as possible. Native speakers of Shina need to have some formal form of document to consult when in difficulty finding vocabulary or other information regarding the language. Shina needs to have academic importance as well. Lastly, Shina native speakers need to

have the awareness that Shina is not given priority and will eventually die out.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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