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Language Shift Phenomenon: A Case Study of Shina Language

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Abstract

This study has investigated the domination of English and Urdu over the Shina language, which is spoken in the mountainous regions of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. It has examined the degree to which Shina speakers have maintained or shifted away from their mother tongue. The data was collected from five Shina-speaking families residing in the Nagar district using purposive sample techniques. These families belong to various walks of life with a diverse representation of experiences. The total pool of the sample includes twenty-six respondents. The data was gathered through 30-minute interviews along with the observations. The recordings were made with the participants' consent. Subsequently, the recorded data was transcribed into International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) notation for a one-minute excerpt from each family member. In addition, the observed data were also taken into account during the analysis. The findings revealed that Shina speakers are more inclined towards Urdu than English. The research has specified that older speakers use the Shina language in all domains of their lives, while their children prefer to use English and Urdu.

Keywords: language shift, lingua franca, multilingual, Shina

Introduction

Language shift is a sociolinguistic phenomenon in which a linguistic community is inclined toward the dominant languages of that locality over time, often leading to a decline in the use of its mother languages. The phenomenon is related to various linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic factors. The study investigates the phenomenon of language shift in the context of the Shina language-speaking community of Northern Pakistan. Pakistan is characterized by its diverse ethnic groups, cultures, and languages. Among these, the dominant languages are Urdu and English, which receive special treatment in government policies. Urdu, the national

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language of Pakistan, serves as the lingua franca, while English is gaining prominence as the language of education (Sökefeld, [2014](#)).

In Pakistan, there are more than seventy languages spoken, with some on the brink of extinction and many others facing significant challenges. It is a genuine concern that the number of living languages may decrease in the 21st century (Baart, [2003](#)). Grimes ([2001](#)) reported that Pakistan hosts seventy-two living languages, some under severe risk of disappearing. Similarly, in recent years, numerous languages worldwide have been considered endangered. There is a possibility that around eighty percent of the world's languages may vanish in the coming century (Crystal, [1997](#)).

The term “language shift” refers to a process in which speakers of a particular language, at both individual and community levels, gradually lose their fluency and connection to their mother tongue over time in favor of other dominant languages (Fishman, [1964](#)). A hierarchical arrangement typically emerges in communities with two or more languages, with one language becoming dominant and the others taking on subordinate roles (Sasse, [1992](#)). Consequently, the stability and preservation of a language depend on the behavior and attitudes of its speakers. When individuals shift towards more influential local languages, their connection to their native tongue weakens (Anjum & Siddique, [2012](#)). Additionally, the ability to speak multiple languages provides users with greater opportunities for personal fulfillment compared to those who speak only one language. Therefore, speakers often switch to more prestigious languages, such as Urdu and English, to pursue better opportunities of job and career (Nazir et al., [2012](#)).

Shina is the mother tongue of the majority of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. Shina speaking areas are going through a remarkable transition. The people of this region are experiencing social and cultural changes, which have resulted in a change in their customs, beliefs and practices. The formation of new business centers, schools, colleges, and universities in the area allows the locals to learn new languages, which are influencing the Shina language. Shina language is one of the primitive languages of Pakistan, and it is spoken in different parts of Gilgit-Baltistan. Shina is mainly spoken in the city of Gilgit however, a large number of speakers of this language live in scattered villages, namely Yasin, Ishkoman, Punial, Gilgit, Haramosh, lower Hunza, Nagar Valley, Diamer District, Darel, Tangir, and Astor Valley (Biddulph, [1985](#)). Besides this, Shina is also

spoken in some valleys of the south of the Himalayan range. The western parts of Shina speaking areas (Palas, Jalkot) are linked to the Hazara province of Pakistan. In other words, Shina language is the northern neighbor of Kashmiri.

Shina speakers are divided into four basic ethnic castes: Shins, Yeshkuns, Kamins, and Doms. Their proper home is the northern part of Yaghestan, namely the valleys on both sides of the River Indus and lower Chilas (Jettmar, [1961](#)). Gilgit-Baltistan, the remote mountainous region of Pakistan, has seen remarkable changes in socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions in recent times. This transition can be linked with the construction of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), which connects China and Pakistan. After this development, the people of this area have been connected to the rest of the world. Recently, the people of this region have come to know about new means of livelihood and farming. The Government of Pakistan and non-government organizations have started many developmental projects. These projects have opened new ways of learning to the people of this region. Shina is the mother tongue of most people in this area; however, it has been badly influenced by sudden language shift. As a result, Shina has been listed among the five vernacular languages of the world in the Red Book published by UNESCO every year (Grenoble, [2024](#)).

The study has examined Shina speakers' outlook towards English and Urdu over their mother tongue. The research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of the Shina language by examining demographic and socio-economic factors. Through this investigation, the study wants to develop all-inclusive strategies to encounter shifting phenomena of small languages. Moreover, it seeks larger considerations about Shina language maintenance and revitalization. The overarching question of this study is to explore the extent to which Shina speakers use English and Urdu words. This study searched to answer the following questions within this context:

1. What concerns have led Shina speakers to shift away from the Shina language?
2. How might demographic and social factors have contributed to the transition from the mother language to English and Urdu?

Literature Review

The term “language shift” has been commonly used since American linguist Fishman coined it. It is frequently employed in sociolinguistic analysis (Veltman, [1983](#)). Language shift causes language death, affecting many languages across the globe. Globalization has amplified the influence of powerful languages like English, weakening smaller and native languages (Campbell, [1994](#)). In some cases, language shift can even result in language extinction and death if not addressed (Blommaert, [2010](#)). The indigenous languages of Gilgit-Baltistan include Shina, Balti, Brushhashki, Khowar, Whaki, and Domaki. Shina is primarily spoken in Gilgit, but a significant number of Shina speakers live in scattered villages throughout Gilgit-Baltistan, including Yasin, Ishkoman, Punial, Haramosh, lower Hunza, Nagar, Diamer District, Darel, Tangir, and Astor vallies (Biddulph, [1985](#)). Shina has various dialects, such as Gilgit Shina, Astori Shina, Chilasi Shina, Gizri Shina, and Balti Shina. Shina is the only language spoken in all districts of Gilgit and some parts of the Baltistan region. Speakers of Shina dialects can understand each other's dialects and communicate effectively (Dani, [1991](#)).

Weinreich ([2010](#)) emphasizes the critical attitude of speakers as a significant factor in the existence of any language. He examines this outlook among the speakers of one endangered language in Gilgit, named Domaaki. A small community in northern Gilgit-Baltistan speaks Domaaki of blacksmiths and musicians known as the dooms. Unfortunately, Domaaki speakers are often stigmatized for their profession and ethnicity. They have turned to Shina and Brushhashki as their primary means of communication, pushing their language to the brink of extinction. Moreover, he warns that if this negative attitude persists, it is highly likely that all remaining Domaaki speakers will shift to Burushaski or Shina, resulting in the death of their original mother tongue. Sometimes, the anxiety of a foreign language and a lack of vocabulary in the target language also leads to a language shift (Hussain et al., [2023](#)). Pashtu speakers in Gilgit-Baltistan are facing similar consequences. For example, Pashtu migrants living in Gilgit have mastered the languages of their host communities, such as Shina, Khowar, and Brushhashki (Blau, [1956](#)). They primarily use their original mother tongue, Pashto, at home or with other Pashto-speaking individuals in the marketplace. Among permanent Pashto migrants, the older generation

remains fluent in Pashto, but younger individuals are increasingly inclined to use the dominant languages of the region (Baart & Sagar, [2004](#)).

Bashir ([2010](#)) highlights the differences among Shina dialects, which have also become influential factors in language shift. These differences manifest in changes in verb tense and pronoun forms. For instance, “bili” and “bigi” convey similar meanings but have different pronunciations. These differences have led to changes in the structure and tense of the Shina language, potentially affecting its form and function in the future. Rehman and Baart ([2005](#)) experiences a similar situation with the Kundal-Shahi language in Neelam Valley, which has been heavily influenced by Hindko, leading its speakers to shift to Hindko. A similar shift can be observed in the Gawri language, spoken in Upper Dir Valley, where the population, influenced by dominant languages, is gradually transitioning to Pashto (Baart, [2003](#)).

Rehman and Baart ([2005](#)) points out that the economy is another major driver of language shift. For example, the migration of Pothwari language speakers from northern Punjab to urban areas in search of job opportunities has affected their mother tongue. Pothwari speakers believe that dominant languages have restricted their social status and position concerning their mother tongue, which influences their decision to use their native language or shift to a dominant one (van Aswegen, [2008](#)). Pothwari speakers have increasingly moved to other parts of the world for better education, job opportunities, and livelihood, exposing themselves to other dominant languages. Their children grow up in diverse cultures with multiple languages, often choosing to adopt the new culture, leading to a shift away from their mother tongue and culture (Jahan, [2014](#)). Paulston's ([1985](#)) Social Mobilization Theory examines how social movements and societal collective actions influence language use and change. This theory posits that language shift and maintenance are closely tied to broader social, economic, and political forces. Overall, Paulston's Social Mobilization Theory highlights the interplay between language, identity, and power, showing how collective social actions can drive language use and preservation changes. Similarly, Milroy's ([2000](#)) social network theory elaborates on the social circle, which affects the speakers' attitudes. This theory has a deep influence on language shift and maintenance. The theories justify the ways to comprehend the dynamics of the Shina language shift. Social

mobilization theory is concerned with preserving a small language like Shina, which is facing a shifting phenomenon.

Moreover, it educates us regarding the maintenance of a language that is a collective obligation of a community. Likewise, social network theory helps explain how social connections' structure and nature influence individual and collective language choices like migrations, education, and socio-economic background. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing and addressing the language shift phenomenon in the Shina-speaking community. Moreover, through the conduct of the theories, the study investigates how social networks such as friends, family, and community influence Shina language use.

Method

Sample and Procedure

This study was carried out in the Nagar district of Gilgit-Baltistan. The Nagar district valley is divided into about twenty-seven small villages containing around 100,000 inhabitants. The data were collected from the five villages of the district of Nagar, that include: Chalt, Ghulmat, Thole, Sikandarabad, and Minapin. These villages cover the Shina speaking geographical length and breadth of the entirety of the district, starting with Chalt and ending at Nagar Minapin. The majority of the population speaks the Shina language. The study's sample size is limited; its findings and recommendations cannot be generalized to other contexts experiencing language shift phenomena. Hybrid research method was employed to investigate the language-shifting behavior of five Shina speaking families situated in the Northern cluster of Gilgit/Baltistan, specifically focusing on the Nagar district. Moreover, one family from each village was chosen through purposive sample technique. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and recorded observations, involving thirty minutes spent with each family. With their consent, we recorded interactions by using a sound recorder. Out of the thirty-minute recordings, one minute of observation for each case was transcribed by using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) (see Tables 6 and 7).

The study's qualitative aspect encompasses the participants' perspectives, while the quantitative component involves transcribing the one-minute recordings. Subsequently, the data were analyzed to determine the frequency and percentage of borrowed words from Urdu and English.

The participants in each family varied from one another in terms of number, age, education, and access to information and technology. In addition to this, the relation of the household head (HH) with other respondents of each case is shown in terms of demographic elements.

Data Analysis

This section shows the demographic elements of each case, along with a Table showing family members, gender, age, education, and access to IT of each member. Subsequently, it reflects the code-switching of the speakers from Shina to Urdu and Shina to English, with the percentage of speakers switching from their native to national and international languages.

Demographic Elements of the Case No. 1

The demographic information of the case, regarding gender, age, education, and information technology (IT) is given in the following:

Table 1

Demography of the Case No. 1

Family members	Gender	Age	Education	Access to IT
Household Head	Male	4	Master	Yes
Wife of HH	Female	32	Middle	Yes
Son of HH	Male	12	Grade 3	Yes
Daughter of HH	Female	09	Grade 1	Yes

Shift from Shina to Urdu

The data has discovered that the respondents frequently use a mixture of Urdu language lexicon and language. In the context of this family, shift has contributed to expanding vocabulary in the Shina language from Urdu. They often switch to Urdu when they cannot find suitable vocabulary in Shina, such as words like "kəmi" (lack), "təlim" (education), "fədə" (interest), "fəbəf" (good), "hmət" (confidence), and "təjə:r" (ready) are frequently included in their conversations.

Moreover, the participants opine a few reasons behind this shift in the Shina language. First, very few people are familiar with the authentic Shina vocabulary. Second, they may not have a sufficient vocabulary, particularly when discussing modern gadgets and discoveries. They also say Urdu is the predominant language used outside the home, in markets, and worship centers. Consequently, the speakers often use Urdu quantifiers and

sentences, including like "kəɪ kəmiː nəhɪ heɪ" (there is no deficiency), "səb saɪ pəhɪd" (first and foremost), and "ʃəbʃ əb dʒəʊ" (that is good, go now) among others.

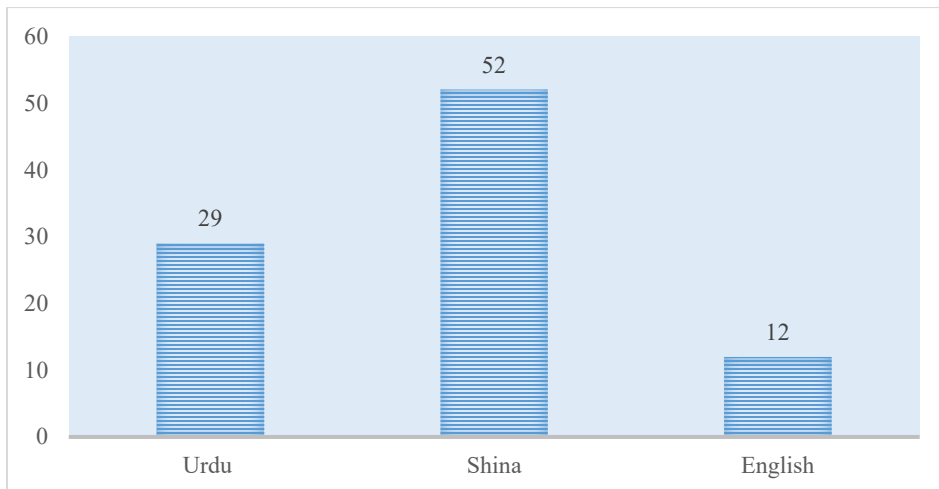
Shift from Shina to English

The respondents of the family used expressions of English, primarily nouns, with a few exceptions, including verbs. For example, words like "taɪm" (time), "mæstər" (teacher), "pæs" (pass), "jʊnəvɜːrsɪti" (university), "hləʊ" (hello), "stɔːrɪs" (stories), and "səʊʃəl stʌdi" (the name of the subject social studies) are commonly used. Speakers within the Shina family are proficient in articulating these nouns. In most domains of their conversation, parents primarily conversed in Shina, except when they use words like "time," "pass," and "teacher." Additionally, the speakers often incorporated English compound words and expressions, such as "taɪm əveɪl" (utilization of time), "taɪm pæs" (hanging out), and "dʒəst meɪnteɪn" (keep up).

The youngsters, however, exhibited a stronger inclination towards foreign languages and cultures. The parents mentioned that they occasionally intentionally introduce such words to their children to enhance their fluency and competence in the dominant language. The primary reason behind this linguistic shift is that the head of the family is well-educated and values multilingualism.

Figure 1

Percentage of Language Shift of the Case No. 01



This figure illustrates the proficiency levels of the speakers in Shina, Urdu, and English. The members of this family have a reasonable command over Urdu and English, respectively. Moreover, study uncovered that the children play a significant role in shifting Shina to Urdu and English, especially in comparison to their parents. As indicated by the bar representing 29% of the words, Urdu contributes a significant portion of vocabulary in the case of the shift in the Shina language. In the case of English, the family's shifting ratio is 12%, which shows that the members' inclination toward English is not significant to Urdu. According to the participants, the primary reason for this difference is the limited practice of the English language in Shina-speaking areas compared to Urdu.

Demographic Elements of the Case No.2

The demographic information of case two regarding gender, age, education, and access to IT is given in the following:

Table 2

Demography of the Case No. 2

Family members	Gender	Age	Education	Access to IT
Household Head	Male	45	Intermediate	Yes
Wife of HH	Female	34	Matric	No
Sister of HH	Female	50	Illiterate	No
Sibling of HH	Female	48	Illiterate	No

Shift from Shina to Urdu

The data from case two reflects a higher shift from Shina to Urdu. The observed words used by the participants displayed in Urdu include: *gədi* (vehicle or vein), *kha:təm* (end, finish), *tækɪ* (that is why, so), *zɪjda:* (much, more), *nɔ:ksæn* (lose), *jkɔ:məkɪt* (end of the month), *bæɪ* (brother), *ta:kli:f* (discomfort). It is also discovered through case two members that a few words and expressions in Urdu have become catchphrases, highlighting the respondents' preferences for Urdu over other languages. These catchphrases include: *gədi kha:təm* (destroy vein), *bækɪ ti:k heɪ* (the rest of them are fine), *kɔ:dəs kair* (May God bless them), *ku:dæs əkɒl* (God has given wisdom), and *kɔ:da:s sɪhət* (God give them health).

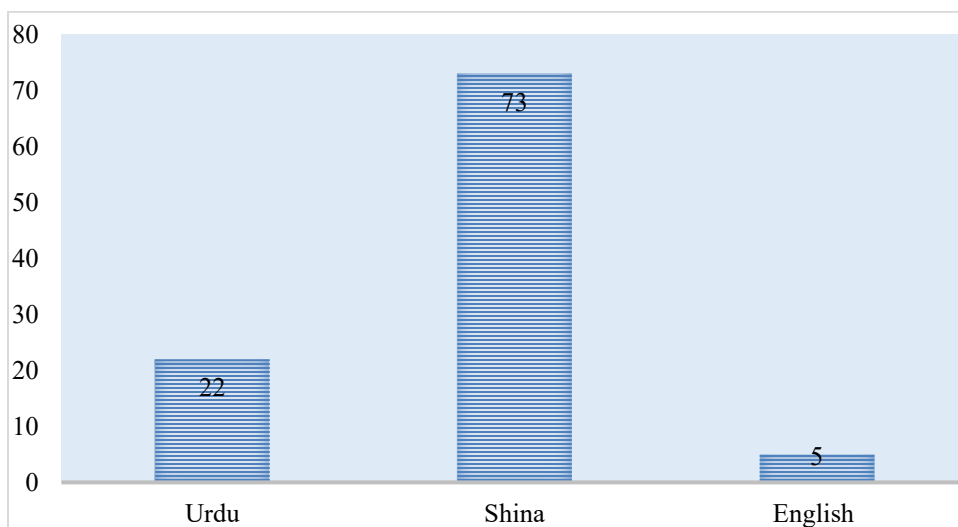
Shift from Shina to English

In this case, the respondents do not possess good literacy skills. They have limited access to media and little interaction with people from other

cultures. Despite these barriers, they incorporate a few English words into their conversations. For example, they use words such as "æksɪdənt" (accident), "fæməli" (family), "raʊd" (road), "mæltɪnəʃnəl kʌmpəni" (multinational company), and "dʒɒb" (job). The low frequency of English words in their speech indicates that the means of language shift towards English are limited compared to Urdu. The study's results suggest a lack of competency and proficiency in the English language on their part.

Figure 2

Percentage of Language Shift of the Case No. 02



The current graph shows that Shina is higher than Urdu and English. The figure illustrates a higher percentage of proficiency in Shina, 73%. In this case, the assimilation of Urdu words into Shina is more pronounced than that of English, which is 22%. The participants in this study show a stronger commitment to preserving their culture and language, which is evident in their efforts to incorporate it into most discussion areas. The results indicate that they have maintained 73% of their conversation in the Shina language while Urdu 22% and 05 % in English.

Demographic Elements of the Case No. 3

The demographic information of the case no.3 regarding gender, age, education, and access to IT is given in the following:

Table 3*Demography of the Case No. 3*

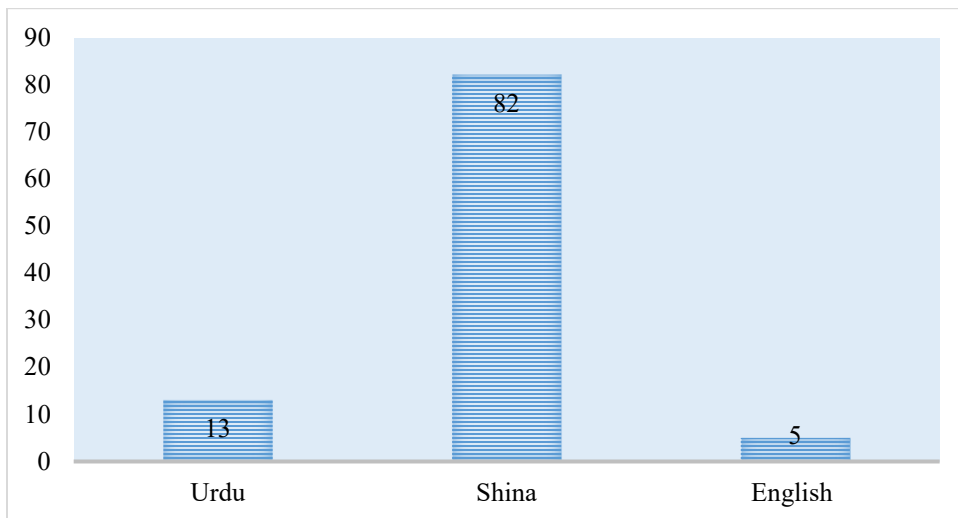
Family members	Gender	Age	Education	Access to IT
Household Head	Male	75	Illiterate	No
Sister of HH	Female	40	Illiterate	No
Brother of HH	Male	66	Illiterate	No
Son of HH	Male	28	Matric	Yes
Son of HH	Male	24	Bsc	Yes
Niece of HH	Female	14	Middle	No

Shift from Shina to Urdu

In contrast to the two previous cases, where Urdu has significantly impacted Shina, this case exhibits some differences. The older speakers in this family lack formal education and are emotionally attached to their cultural norms and language. Consequently, there is a lower degree of shift from Shina to Urdu. For example, they use words like "pəhlə" (before), "mətləb" (means, meaning), "ləzmī" (compulsory), "vərdī" (uniform), "fɪkɜːr" (exploration, thinking), "ləkɪn" (but), "təvɔː" (attention), "bəki" (remaining), and "səbək" (study). According to the opinions of the older family members, there are instances when they feel compelled to switch to other languages to keep up with their younger generation.

Shifts from Shina to English

In this case, as indicated in the graph, the usage of English is extremely low. Only 5% of the Shina speakers' words shift to English, which is limited to different objects' names. One of the participants emphasized that the key factor for the survival of the Shina language lies in avoiding a shift to Urdu and English. This case serves as an excellent illustration of this sentiment, as the respondents switched to English only four times during observations. These English words primarily consist of commonly used nouns, such as "sɜːr" (sir), "kəʊlɪdʒ" (college), "ʃɜːrt" (shirt), and "əˈmerɪkə" (America). These vocabulary items are pronounced in English due to the lack of equivalent words in the mother tongue of Shina speakers. Similarly, the Shina speakers use only two English verbs, "pæs" (pass) and "fæl" (fail).

Figure 3*Percentage of Language Shift of Case No. 03*

In this case, the level of language shift, as indicated by the preceding graph, demonstrates a significant change, with a 13% shift to Urdu, 82% to Shina, and 5% to English. The results from this figure highlight that 82% of the discussions were conducted in the Shina language, underscoring the participants' strong attachment to their mother tongue. In the case of Urdu, the younger generation exhibits a preference for learning the language. They believe it enhances their practical life and strengthens their relations with other communities. On the other hand, the minimal 5% shift towards English signifies a lack of interest and competence, stemming from factors such as illiteracy and a deep-rooted attachment to their native language. The respondents, being elderly, do not show much enthusiasm for acquiring vocabulary from a powerful language like English.

Demographic Elements of the Case No. 4

The demographic information of case no. 4 regarding gender, age, education, and information technology (IT) is given in the following:

Table 4*Demography of the Case No. 4*

Family members	Gender	Age	Education	Access to IT
Household Head	Male	54	M. Phil	Yes

Family members	Gender	Age	Education	Access to IT
Wife of HH	Female	50	Matric	Yes
Daughter of HH	Female	33	Bsc	Yes
Daughter of HH	Female	29	Matric	Yes
Grandson of HH	Male	16	Matric	Yes
Daughter of HH	Female	10	Middle	Yes

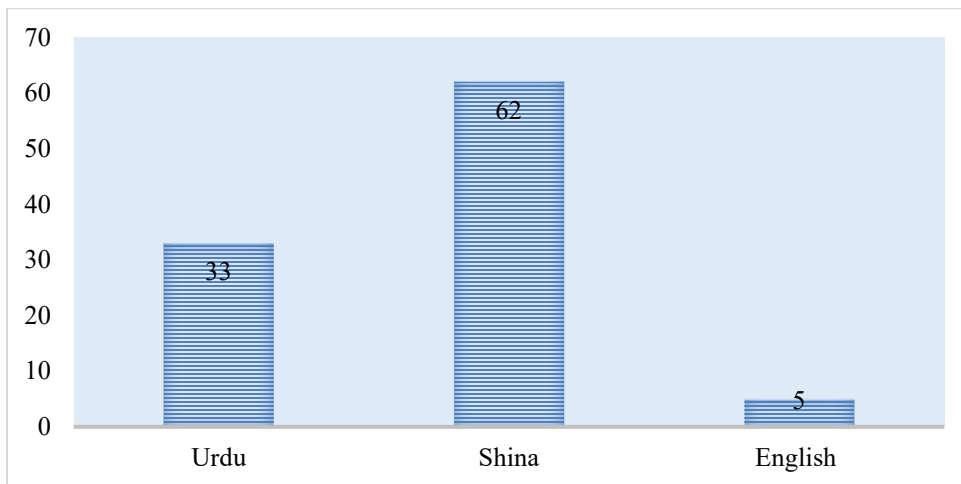
Shift from Shina to Urdu

The respondents of the case four consider Urdu quantifiers as convenient and easy to use such as *əgər* (if), *peɪdɔɪf* (birth, beginning of something), *ək trɪf* (one side), *kəfer* (pagan), *ʌfzəl* (superior, great), *ləkɪn* (but), *dʒəb tək* (until that), *əzabɪr* (punishment), *tɔ:bə* (rectify). Most of the words mentioned above are prepositions and conjunctions. In this case, the respondents also incorporated phrases and words from other languages, such as: *əgər tɔ:bə bəd dɔ:brə gɔ:na:h* (if make any mistake after rectification), *pəhədɪ mɔ:ktlɪb kɪsmɑɪ* (mountains have different types), *mɔ:ktlɪb baɪtə* (different matters), *fəbəf əb dʒaʊ kənə lə aʊ* (good now go and bring the food).

Shift from Shina to English

In the context of the language shift from Shina to English, the participants, in this case, utilize only a small number of English words. As a result, the degree of language shift is very low. The researchers have documented a limited number of English words that have been incorporated, such as: *start* (beginning), *rɪgən* (area), *gəsi* (different gases), *pəɜ:rts* (segments), *sɒp* (soup). It is worth noting that, despite the family members in this case being educated and having easy access to information technology, the extent of language shift remains minimal.

This figure 4 provides essential data concerning the usage of the three major languages, as observed by the researchers. The prominence of the Shina language, which accounts for 62% of the data, indicates its significant influence. The study documents that there is an acknowledgment that other influential languages have impacted Shina through education and information technology. However, individuals still find comfort in conversing in their mother tongue. The results also reveal a distribution of 33% for Urdu and 05% for English. In this context, there is a notable language shift towards Urdu, unlike English, where the shift rate is relatively low.

Figure 4*Percentage of Language Shift of the Case No. 04***Demographic Elements of the Case No. 05**

The demographic information of case five regarding gender, age, education, and access to IT is given in the following:

Table 5*Demography of the Case No. 05*

Family members	Gender	Age	Education	Access to IT
Household head	Male	57	Illiterate	No
Wife of HH	Female	48	Illiterate	No
Daughter of HH	Female	26	Primary	No
Daughter of HH	Female	23	Matric	Yes
Daughter of HH	Female	20	F.A	Yes
Son of HH	Male	14	Middle	Yes

Shift from Shina to Urdu

There are six participants in this case, and every participant varies in age, education, and access to information technology. The researchers documented the incorporation of words borrowed from Urdu, such as əʃə (well, good), bɑ:r bɑ:r (equal, balanced), ʌk səθ (altogether, collectively), məzi:d (furthermore), səhi: (genuine), ju:ku:ru: (grateful to God), ʃəjd (maybe), and məʃɪrər (in society). These borrowed words encompass various parts of speech and grammatical forms. This linguistic shift reflects

the speakers' linguistic and cultural ties to the Urdu language due to socio-cultural interaction.

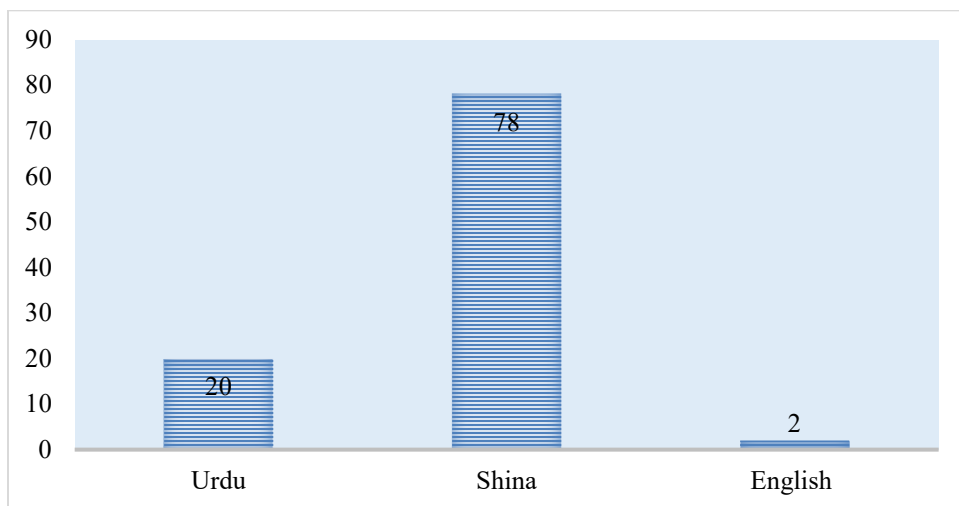
The participants shown that Urdu is introduced in schools starting from the first grade in our society. As a result, individuals raised in such an environment inevitably come under the influence of this language. Shina speakers frequently incorporate Urdu phrases and expressions into their language, such as *təjr hər vək̤t* (ready at all times), *ʌk səθ* (together), *hər vək̤t məzk* (always fun), and *kəbɪl ɪnsənʌk* (talented human being). They mentioned that they have not formally learned these expressions through any medium but have naturally integrated them into everyday conversations from their surroundings.

Shift from Shina to English

In this case, the recorded ratio of English words is relatively low. The researchers have only listed a few English words, which are primarily nouns, such as *ʃʌk* (see, check), *ɪkspiəriən* (experience), *taim* (time), and *mu:bail* (mobile). Interestingly, the older illiterate respondents and the younger literate participants prefer to converse in Shina rather than English. This suggests that the level of language shift is low, which shows the participants have never been exposed to English learning environment.

Figure 5

Percentage of Language Shift of the Case No. 05



The figure shows that the Shina language takes the top spot with a substantial percentage of 78%, significantly higher than Urdu at 20% and English at 02%. The participants expressed uncertainty about how previous generations passed down the language. They desire Shina to remain a vibrant and living language, and this sentiment is strongly supported by the results, which reflect the 78% majority. The study's outcomes about the Urdu language disclose that the younger participants, being literate, tend to communicate with their parents using this language. However, illiterate parents do not have direct access to these words, leading to a noticeable shift of Urdu into Shina, as reflected in the 20% percentage. As far as English is concerned, participants stated that they lacked basic knowledge of the language. The few English words they use are picked up from society and through exposure to information technology. The documented language shift from Shina to English is only 02%, a very low figure compared to Urdu.

Conclusion

The study has investigated the factors that have affected the shift in the Shina language. The findings have revealed that most inhabitants use Shina as their mother tongue. However, many Shina speakers have switched to Urdu and English slowly and gradually. The tendency of language shift towards Urdu is higher than that of English. This shift has added a stock of new words in the domestic language of Shina speakers. A very brief representation of all families and the words used by the participants are shown below (see Table 6).

Table 6

Data of Language Shifting from Shina to Urdu

Urdu Words	Transcription in IPA	Gloss in English
کمی	kami:	Shortage/ scarcity
تعلیم	ṭali:m	Education
منافع	faɪd̪a:	Profit
شاپاش	ʃa:bɑ:f	Good/ excellent
ہمت	himaṭ	Self-assurance
تیار	ṭʃa:r	Ready
گاڑی	ga:ti:	Vehicle (wagon)
ختم	xaṭam	End
زیادہ	ziɐd̪a:	Excessive/ too much

Urdu Words	Transcription in IPA	Gloss in English
نقصان	noksa:n	Lose
بھائی	ba:hi:	Brother
تکلیف	ʔakli:f	Agony / pain
پہلا	Pahle	First
مطلب	maʔlab	Means/ meaning
لازمی	la:zmi:	Compulsory
وردی	vra:ʔi:	Uniform
فکر	fıkar	Sophisticated/ Think
لیکن	Lekin	But
توجہ	ʔovəʔʒo	Attention
باقی	ba:ki	Remaining / lasting
سبقی	Sabak	Lesson
اگر	Agar	If
پیدائش	peʔa:	Birth
اختلاف	akʔaraf	Disagreement
کافر	ka:fir	Disbeliever
افضل	Afzal	Greater/ superior
جب تک	dʒab ʔak	Nonetheless
عذاب	aza:b	Malediction /curse
بار بار	ba:r ba:r	Again and again
ایک ساتھ	ek sa:ʔh	Altogether
مزید	mazi:ʔ	Additional
صحیح	sahi:h	Right
معاشرہ	ma:ʃrar [sic.]	In society
جنگل	dʒanʔgal	Forest
رات	ra:ti [sic.]	Night
بچت	baʔʃaʔ	Saving
وجہ	vaʔʒa	Cause / reason
واقعات	va:kiʔaʔ	Happenings
سوچ	soʔʃ	Thinking
آرام	ara:m	Relax / comfort
بندوبست	bandobast	Arrangement
دیسی	ʔesi:	Indigenous / local

The above data show that the speakers shift from Shina to Urdu in their daily conversation. The data revealed that the participants do more code-switching in Urdu than in English (see Table 6). Perhaps since Urdu is the speakers' national language and is commonly used in most daily activities.

It reveals that Shina speakers learn different Urdu word expressions through national TV channels and newspapers. Likewise, in society, Urdu is taught as a school subject from grade 1 and practiced as a lingua franca throughout the country. In addition, the speakers who grew up in such an environment are influenced by Urdu.

Table 7

Data of Language Shifting from Shina to English

English Words used in Shina		
time avail	time pass	just maintain
accident	Family	Road
multinational company	Job	Start
Region	Parts	Soup
Time	Teacher	Pass
university	Hello	Stories
accident	Road	International company
Shirt	College	See
experience	Mobile	Police
Change	Market	Father
cigarette	Uniform	Exam
late	Firing	Message
friend	Brother	Study
travel	Interest	Cake
discuss	Teaching	dear keep it up
rest of life	Education	struggle

Shina speakers used different English words during routine conversations with their family members. The above data are the reflections of the respondents towards the English language. The participants had different social, educational, and economic backgrounds and were of different ages and genders. Most of the upper-age participants were illiterate and had no access to information technology. They rarely shifted to English and Urdu and mostly used Shina words. In contrast, as they were literate, the young speakers used words of Urdu and English in their conversation. The study shows that the young age group borrowed words from their academic activities and information technology, which became the reason for the high language shift level compared to the elders. Moreover, it was also noticed during the discussions that the educated participants used more words in English and Urdu. The children of educated families were more

exposed to mass media such as TV and the internet, and they used expressions of other languages frequently during their conversation. The study notes a notable tendency of educated speakers toward foreign languages and cultures.

The study also reveals a strong connection between the social status of the language speakers and their language choices. Consequently, the younger generation has a more direct relationship with English and Urdu, making them more susceptible to the lexicon of these dominant languages. One significant finding of this study is the absence of regional language instruction in the region's schools, unlike other provinces in Pakistan, where regional languages are taught at the school level. Moreover, this study's findings suggest that the language speakers' social structure plays a pivotal role in the shift towards other languages and the potential loss of their first language. The study emphasizes the role of various languages in a social setting and the attitudes of speakers in the evolution of a language. Furthermore, this study demonstrates the differing attitudes of Shina language speakers towards their mother tongue and mainstream languages. Shina speakers are thoughtful about language mobility, as they are concerned about their potential language loss.

The study concludes that the extent of the shift from Shina to English and Urdu varies across the families examined. The most common factors contributing to the shift from Shina are the influence of dominant languages, advancements in information technology, increased social interaction, intercultural marriages, economic relationships, and the educational background of the speakers. Additionally, the research highlights that older Shina speakers continue to use the Shina language in all aspects of their daily activities. At the same time, their children tend to use English and Urdu, which are influenced by the trends set by modern society.

The study population was small, limiting the ability to conclude regarding all Shina-speaking areas in Gilgit/Baltistan. However, the observed language shift in Shina indicates a broader trend seen in other endangered and indigenous languages in the region. Consequently, further investigation into different aspects and regions of the Shina language in Gilgit/Baltistan is needed to gain a more comprehensive perspective.

This study may open up possibilities for further research about Shina language shift. Based on the study's outcomes, it suggests that parents

should educate their kids about their indigenous language and culture. In the present scenario, it is essential to maintain and preserve Shina for the next generations. The study suggests that the universities of Pakistan ought to enhance the importance of regional languages. Moreover, there is a need for the basics of the mother tongues to be taught in schools to kids till grade fifth so that they may get well acquainted with their mother tongue structure.

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

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

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