

# Language shift or maintenance

## The case of the Sindhi language in Pakistan

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Pakistan is a multilingual country with six major and over 59 minor languages. However, the languages used by the domains of power, (government, corporate sector, media and education), are English and Urdu. Compared to the other regional languages in Pakistan, the Sindhi language has a more emancipated position in the state-run schools and some other domains. The present study seeks to explore the extent to which the use of Sindhi language has been shifted or maintained, and to survey the patterns of language use in certain domains through Fishman's domain concept for the determination of language shift within the community concerned. A mixed method data collection including questionnaires and in-depth interviews was conducted to find out whether Sindhis in the Sind province of Pakistan maintain their heritage language in specific domains and to ascertain the impact of Pakistan's language policy on Sindhi language. The results show that Sindhis in Sindh province fully maintain their language and behold sentimental affiliation with it as part of their cultural identity. The Sindhis have successfully uplifted and maintained their language in education and other vital domains. The Sindhi community enjoys a higher ethno-linguistic vitality than the other ethnic groups in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Sindhi language, language maintenance, language policy, cultural identity, ethno-linguistic vitality

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 The sociolinguistic setting of Pakistan

Pakistan is a country with a diverse multilingual, multicultural and multi-ethnic landscape. The present population of Pakistan is 180121027 (Pakistan, 2012). The population is heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, language and culture. Urdu

speakers are very widely distributed throughout the urban as well as the rural areas but the official language is still English as it was when British ruled the country as part of British India. In addition, there are 72 living indigenous languages (termed as regional languages) spoken in the country (Lewis, 2009) and varying numbers of regional language speakers. The following Table 1 sets out the major languages and the number of speakers.

**Table 1.** Languages in Pakistan

Language	Percentage % of speaker	Number of speakers
Punjabi	44.15	66 225 000
Pashto	15.42	23 130 000
Sindhi	14.10	21 150 000
Siraiki	10.53	15 795 000
Urdu	7.57	11 355 000
Balochi	3.57	5 355 000
Others	4.66	6 990 000

*Source.* Census report 2002, Government of Pakistan

Sindhi is the official regional language of Pakistan's Sindh province. The Sindhi language is the predominant language spoken by the Sindhi ethnic group in the Sindh province of Pakistan. Cole (2006) wrote about the number of Sindhis, not only in Pakistan, but in India and other countries to which the Sindhis have emigrated. Sindhi is spoken in the province of Sindh, Pakistan, home to an estimated 35 million people (projected from the 1981 census data). Nearly half of the population of Sindh lives in rural areas, where Sindhi is the primary language. In the urban areas of Sindh, Sindhi competes for status with and speakers of Urdu (the national language of Pakistan) and, increasingly, English. Outside Pakistan, the Sindhi language is spoken by about 2.5 million people in India, including the Sindhi communities of Gujarat, Mumbai, and Pune, where immigrants from Sind relocated after the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan.

The Sindhi language is spoken by more than 35–40 million individuals, primarily in Pakistan and India. Smaller Sindhi communities exist in the United Kingdom, the United States, Oman, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore. Studies of the Sindhi communities in Manila, Jakarta, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore suggest that the community is shifting away from its heritage language.

In Pakistan English language is the medium of instructions in all private schools, all public secondary schools and higher education institutions. Urdu and English languages are commonly used in all major cities and the metropolitan cities like Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta and Hyderabad.

## 1.2 History of the Sindhi language

Various historians and scholars working on the origin and ancestral links of the Sindhi language have postulated various theories regarding its origins. Trumpp (1872) argued that an examination of vocabulary and root words suggests that the Sindhi language is a derivative of Sanskrit and stated categorically that “Sindhi is a pure Sanskrit language, more free from foreign elements than any of the North Indian vernaculars.” Another historian, Mr NG. Shrivastava of Hyderabad (2012), one of the pioneers of research into the history of the Sindhi language, is of the view that, “...the Sindhi language is probably, so far as its grammatical construction is concerned, the purest daughter of Sanskrit. It has a small sprinkling of Dravidian words, and has in later times received large accessions to its vocabulary from Arabic and Persian”.

Yet, there is another group of scholars who believe that Sindhi is even older than Sanskrit. For instance, Siraj-ul-Haq (1959) stated that, “The history of Sindhi is older than that of Sanskrit and its related civilization or culture are derived from the civilization or culture of Sindh and from Sindhi language...Sanskrit is born of Sindhi – if not directly, at least indirectly”. Baloch stated that, “Sindhi is an ancient Indo-Aryan language, probably having its origin in a pre-Sanskrit Indo-Aryan Indus Valley language”. Adding more to this debate, Baloch (1962) stated that “Sindhi belongs to the Semitic group because there are some words in Sindhi which cannot be found in the Sanskrit language”. George Grierson too placed Sindhi as a near relative of the Dardic languages.

The Sindhi language is a member of the Indo-European language family, thus belonging to the Indo-Aryan language group (Lewis, 2009). Cole (2006: 384) wrote that, “Sindhi is an Indo-Aryan language with its roots in the lower Indus River valley. It takes its name from the Indus River, known in earlier times as the Sindhu”. Khubchandani (2000), traced Sindhi to the ‘*Vraṇcad.a Apabhramśa*’ or to an earlier *pre-Vedic Prakrit* language”.

Pakistani sociolinguist, Rahman (1999: 21) wrote that, “Sindhi is probably the oldest written language of Pakistan. Even when Persian was the official language of the Muslim rulers of Sindh, Sindhi was given more importance in the educational institutions of Sindh than the other languages of Pakistan”. From the 17th century onwards, a number of religious and other books were written in Sindhi and were probably part of the curricula of religious seminaries. It was the only indigenous Pakistani language which was taught officially by the British at various levels of education.”

### 1.3 A brief history of Sindhi language movements

In order to understand the language policies affecting the Sindhi language, knowledge about Sindhi language movements in India and Pakistan is necessary. Sindhi and Bengali were two languages many speakers of which had strong sentimental attachment (Jahan, 1972). Rahman (1999: 26) argues in this connection that, "In independent Pakistan the only provinces in which the indigenous languages were the medium of instruction in the non-elitist state schools were Bengal and Sindh. In Sindh the feeling for Sindhi was high because it had already been part of the struggle against the administrative domination of Bombay".

Compared to other regional languages of Pakistan, Sindhi language had taken far deeper roots. Rahman (1999) also stated that at the first years of independence, Sindhi was powerful. It was the medium of instruction in state schools and universities, at the lower levels of the administration and the judiciary as well as in journalism.

The fortune and supremacy of the Sindhi language as the predominant language in the Sindh province received a serious setback with a huge influx of migrants called '*Muhajirs*', who left India on the eve of the communal riots, which resulted in clashes between Muslims and Hindus. The after-effects of these events involving the settlement of millions of Urdu-speaking migrants were enormous and long-lasting as it also impacted other socio-economic factors such as resource distribution, power struggles, and political divisions. This left the linguistic and cultural landscape of the Sindh province profoundly altered and left Sindhis threatened and marginalised.

The declaration of Urdu as the national language was bound to give the *Muhajirs* an upper hand over the Sindhis, as now Urdu was the recipient of state patronage and was considered as a symbol of Muslim identity. Moreover, the migrants were more educated than the Sindhis and therefore could compete for higher jobs and positions. Collectively, the above conditions multiplied the miseries of the Sindhis and they clearly felt alienated in their own province (Rahman, 1996).

The woes of Sindhis were further compounded by the fact that the vast majority of *Muhajirs* settled in the urban areas where Urdu easily displaced the Sindhi language. Rahman (1996) pointed out that the urban population often ridiculed and denigrated the Sindhi language as rustic, uncouth and unsophisticated. Therefore during this time, for the reasons referred above, the Sindhi communities underwent a form of social trauma finding their political, linguistic and cultural identities jeopardized (Rahman, 1996).

An important event in fact that side-lined the Sindhis was the government's decision to make Karachi the federal capital of Pakistan. Rahman explains:

As Karachi was made the federal area, the new university was not even part of Sindh in name and was seen to be antagonistic to Sindhi. Thus, when in 1957–58 the University of Karachi forbade students from taking examinations in Sindhi, the Sindhi nationalists protested strongly. Among others, Hyder Baksh Jatoti, president of the Sindh Hari Committee, said that the new order was a signal to Sindhi students to: ‘Leave Karachi, go to Sindh if you want to retain Sindhi, Karachi is none of yours.’ (Rahman 1996: 28)

It is important to highlight that in the post-independence period no concessions were allowed to Sindhi language, especially by military regimes which deliberately attempted to further reduce its position and status. For instance, the “One Unit period” reduced the Sindhi language, as Rahman (1999) puts it, to a ‘regional, hence peripheral’ language. Furthermore, the subsequent “Martial Law period” under Ayub Khan was even worse for the Sindhi language as the army looked at language activism with suspicions and distrust.

The Sindhi nationalists and sympathisers put up severe resistance to Ayub Khan’s policies that declared Urdu as a medium of instruction in West Pakistan from class VI to class IV.

The brief historical account as presented above demonstrates how the history of the post-partition period characterizes the perpetual struggle of the Sindhis for the upliftment of their language. Moreover, it also illustrates the fact that Pakistani Sindhis carry strong sentiments and are conscious about their ethno-nationalist and ethno-linguistic identity.

#### 1.4 Language-in-education policy and the local languages of Pakistan

The language-in-education complexity is rooted primarily in the lack of uniform language-in-education policies and practices as there are four different education systems operating in parallel with equally different language policies. The complexity is further compounded by the dichotomy between the stated governmental policy and the actual practices (Rahman 2004; Mansoor 2004; Rasool & Mansoor 2007). The extent of this perennial complexity was clearly set out by Mustafa (2011): “the choice of language in Pakistan’s education system has proved to be a complex issue. Initially it was driven by the politics of ethnicity and subsequently by class and economic considerations. Language teaching and the medium of instruction have never been determined by factors related to education such as competence of teachers, availability of books and the mother tongue of the students” (Mustafa 2011: 11).

The official policy concerning the language(s) in education is enshrined in the Article 251. Chapter National Language, Para 1 p. 99 of the 1973 Constitution in the following terms:

1. The National language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day.
2. Subject to clause (1), the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.
3. Without prejudice to the status of the National language, a Provincial Assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language.

The history of the country has been quite volatile in terms of language conflicts and language and identity issues have constantly cropped up. The complex language situation in Pakistan poses serious conceptual and practical challenges to authorities for negotiation of the issue and formulation of a policy acceptable to everyone in the country. Bullivant (1981) cited by Mansoor (2004) remarked that, Pakistani policy makers are faced with the classic 'pluralist dilemma'.

English and Urdu are the languages of the domains of power-government, corporate sector, media and education. This policy has resulted in English becoming a symbol of the upper class, and power.

## 2. Literature review

In order to understand this study, it is vital to explicate the terms shift and maintenance. Fase, Jaspert & Kroon's (1992: 4) explained the distinction between maintenance and shift that language "maintenance relates to the continuing use of and proficiency in a language concerning both groups and individuals in the face of competition from another language. Shift is to do with a reduction in use of a language among a language group. Loss is to do with a reduction in language proficiency and is particular to an individual".

Fishman (1971) introduced a systematic model of inquiry for the investigation and research of language shift and maintenance. He proposed three factors, psychological, social and cultural and examined their relationship to stability or change in habitual language use; behaviour towards language in the contact setting, including directed maintenance of shift efforts; and, habitual language use at more than one point in time or space under conditions of intergroup contact (cited in Sercombe 2002: 1).

As Wienrich (1953: 3) stated, "a full account of interference in a language contact situation is possible only if the extra-linguistic factors are considered.

Generally, the elderly generation is found to be more protective of the language while the language shift is seen in succeeding younger generations. This is

because the older generation has better affiliation with the heritage language. The younger generation finds themselves more exposed to the mainstream languages around them. Clyne (1976) and Demos (1988) have pointed out age and inter-generational differences in language proficiency, as significant factors in language maintenance or shift in an immigrant language group. When the old members of a community are found using one language and the younger speakers use more of another, this can be an indicator of shift (Fasold, 1984). Some other studies have found that the shift often occurs within the third generation (Hoffman 1991, Romaine 1994, David 1996).

Another group of factors that play an important role in language shift are the socio-economic factors. The presence of grandparents and other close relatives forms an active familial network, hence providing more opportunities for ethnic language use than situations where such family networks are missing. It was maintained that, "...the sociological backgrounds of the parents, the socio-economic status and the language choice patterns of the parents have an effect on their children's language choices and the patterns of linguistic interaction" (Saravanan 2002: 137).

However, it can be said that Sindhi media is a strong factor that plays a vital role in language maintenance in Pakistan.

## 2.1 Language shift- the Sindhi diaspora

The situation that has transpired in Sindh province reflects high ethno-linguistic vitality and exhibits strong linguistic networks. However, the Sindhi communities scattered all over the globe, have largely failed to maintain their heritage language. The studies on language shift or maintenance on the Sindhi in some countries have reported almost full shift by their speakers towards the dominant languages of that country.

For instance, in a study on the Sindhi community in India, Daswani and Parchani (1978) found that the Sindhi language has a very restricted sociolinguistic role. Its use is limited to in-group members, mainly maintained by the women and elders of the community. The educated youngsters and the cosmopolitan Sindhis are not maintaining it.

In Malaysia, David (1999) conducted a study on the Sindhi community. The findings of the study portrayed a dismal picture as the community has made a total shift towards the English and Malay languages. The use of Sindhi has shrunk to private lives and, even in that context, a mixture of English and Sindhi predominates. David (1999: 65) stated "Sindhi is being replaced by an international language which is neither the national language nor the majority language".

David (2003) conducted a study on language shift in Peninsular Malaysia and found that there "... is a combination of reasons working in tandem over time

and working differently for different families which eventually cause a shift away from the use of the ethnic language” (David 2003: 111,12). David (2003) found varying reasons for language shifts in different minority language communities in Peninsular Malaysia. For instance it was discovered that elders in the Sindhi community motivate and encourage their children to use the English language as they asked ‘What will they do with Sindhi? They think that English holds far more transactional value than Sindhis.

The Sindhi community in Hong Kong is also reported to have shifted away from the ethnic language Sindhi, mainly to the English language (Detaraman & Lock, 2003). Since English is the medium of schooling and the medium of general communication, the new generation of Sindhis appears to have been forced to shift to English.

In a study on the Sindhi community in Metro Manila Philippines, Dewan (1987) concluded that “language shift takes place primarily from the first generation to the second and is completed by the third” (Dewan 1987: 254).

### 3. Objectives of the study

Sercombe (2002: 1) explained that the concept of Language Maintenance and Language Shift (LMLS) “deals with the extent of change or retention of language and language features among a group that has more than one code for communication both within and outside the group”.

The present study investigates language shift or maintenance of the Sindhi language in the Sindh province of Pakistan. Considering this sociolinguistic backdrop, the present study seeks to explore the extent of shift or maintenance of the Sindhi language, and to survey patterns of language use in certain domains in the Sindh Province of Pakistan. The objectives were investigated and analysed in the following domains based on the research question below:

- Do Sindhis in the Sindh province of Pakistan maintain their heritage language in following domains?
  - a. *Home domain*
  - b. *School domain*
  - c. *Language use by Professionals*
  - d. *Workplace domain*
  - e. *Transaction domain*
  - f. *Media domain*



## 4. Methodology

This study employed a mixed data collection method which involved elaborate questionnaires, followed by in-depth interviews with experts such as academicians, the business class, social activists, and political and religious leaders. Fishman's domain concept for the determination of language shift among the community concerned is used as the background theory. Purposive and random sampling was used in the study. Domains were selected through purposive sampling method. The selection of the respondents was made randomly.

The questionnaire and interviews covered those domains of language use which are considered instrumental in keeping a language alive. The use/ lack of use in the following domains were investigated:

1. *Home domain* : Language use with mother father, siblings and close relatives
2. *School domain*: Language use in primary & secondary schools, colleges and universities.
3. *Language use by Professionals*: Doctors, lawyers and other professionals.
4. *Workplace domain*: Communication in office, public dealing and correspondence.
5. *Transaction domain*: Language use with shopkeepers, in the market places for shopping/dealing
6. *Media domain*: Language use Newspapers, magazines, TV and Radio and research journals and other publications.

### 4.1 Sampling

The data was collected from almost the whole of Sindh province, covering a diverse group of respondents from different sectors of society as is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 shows 16 districts out of the total 26 districts of Sindh Province Pakistan which were selected for the study. However, 20 respondents were selected from each ( $N = 20 \times 16 = 320$ ). The selection of districts was made on the basis of different features: Jamshoro and Dadu districts represent the mountain areas; Thatta and Badin are mostly coastal belt districts; Matiari and Tando Muhammad Khan are plain land areas and are close to Hyderabad city; Tharparkar and Umerkot are desert areas; Khairpur and Sanghar are bordering with India; Ghotki and Kashmore have border with Punjab province; Jacobabad and Qamber Shahdadkot are bordering with Baluchistan province; Karachi and Hyderabad are the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual districts. In this way the researchers ensured the representation of entire Sindh province.

**Table 2.** List of selected districts

S/#	Name of district	Number of respondents	S/#	Name of district	Number of respondents
01	Jamshoro	20	09	Ghotki	20
02	Dadu	20	10	Kashmore	20
03	Thatta	20	11	Jacobabad	20
04	Badin	20	12	Qamber Shehddad kot	20
05	Matiari	20	13	Sanghar	20
06	Tando Muhammad Khan	20	14	Umerkot	20
07	Tharparkar	20	15	Karachi	20
08	Khairpur	20	16	Hyderabad	20
Sub total		160			160
Grand total					320

**Table 3.** Details of sample size of respondents

Professional background	Male	Female	Total	Selection criteria of respondents
Academician	1	1	2	Language expert working in any institute
Politicians	1	1	2	Legislator (Elected Member of Parliament)
Officers	1	1	2	Grade Twenty Officer working in Cultural Department
Social leaders	1	1	2	NGO Leader (Head of the NGO)
Journalists	2		2	Editor of Sindhi Newspaper or TV Channel
Writers	1	1	2	Columnist
Businessman	1		1	Head of the Private Company
Religious leaders	1		1	Head of the Religious organization
Professional	2	2	4	Doctor and Lawyer
Total			20	
Summary				
Total districts : 16		District wise representation: 20		Grand total: 320

Table 3 illustrates details of the total 320 respondents representing 16 districts out of 26 of Sindh Province (from each district 20 respondents were interviewed). The respondents were chosen from both genders in different social sectors. Eight female and 12 male respondents participated in the study from each district. Out of the 20 participants who completed the questionnaires and took part in the data collection process one was a businessman and one was a religious leader (both males). Two participants (one male and one female) belonged to each of these community sectors: academicians, politicians, officers, journalists, writers, professionals and four from other sectors as shown in the table.

5. Data analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires is presented in the forms of graphs with focused variables and ratios. The information obtained from the interviews is embedded within this analysis to give additional explanation, accuracy and validity to the findings.

5.1 Age of respondents

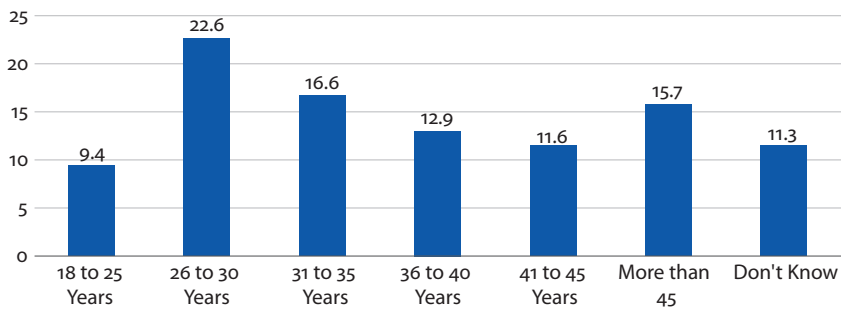


Figure 1. Age of respondents

The above graph illustrates the age(s) of the respondents ranging from 18 to 45 (excluding those who did not answer the questions).

5.2 Perception about the dominant Language

This question was asked to ascertain the respondent’s perceptions about the dominant language in Sindh province. 58.3% perceived Urdu to be the dominant language of the province in contrast to 31.3% who regard Sindhi to be the dominant language. A small number believed English, Dhatki, Balochi were the dominant

languages. The respondents who believed Urdu to be the dominant language have accepted the powerful position of Urdu as the national language which enjoys the unreserved instrumental support of the government. Moreover, it appeared that a sizable majority of the respondents have low perceptions of the vitality of Sindhi vis-à-vis Urdu, which is indeed a realistic portrayal of the situation “on the ground” in the Sind province. Nevertheless, a substantial number of people believed Sindhi to be the more dominant language as compared to Urdu and this obviously reflects their sentimental ethno-nationalist inclinations.

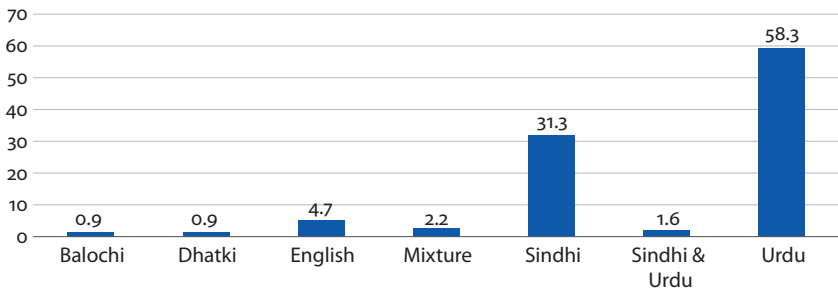


Figure 2. Perception about the dominant language

### 5.3 Income of the respondents

Socio-economic factors do contribute to language shift (Calvet, 1998; Mufwene, 2002). It was therefore deemed appropriate to seek information about respondents' economic positions. As illustrated in Figure 3 respondents' monthly salaries ranged from Pakistan Rupees 4000 to 40000. However the majority belonged to the lower middle class and only a few to the middle class. (Poverty ratio formula is \$1.25 a day as stated in World Bank Indicators 2012. This reflects  $\$1.25 \times$  at the rate Rs. 107  $\times$  30 Days = Rs. 4012. If the income of any person is less than Rs. 4012 he comes under lower income category).

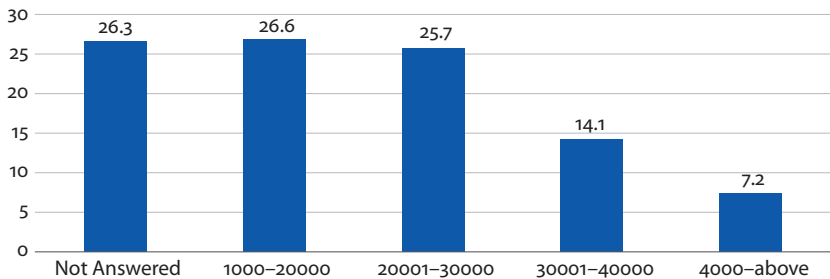


Figure 3. Income of the respondents

Fishman (2001) regards home as the most vital domain for the maintenance of the heritage language. Almost all the Sindhis (89%) use Sindhi in this domain as shown in Figure 4 below. Rahman (2003) wrote of the current vitality and the ethno-nationalist or ethno-linguistic orientations of the Sindhis. According to him, Sindhi and Pashto are the two languages the speakers of which take pride in using, asserting and promoting their languages, viewing them as instrumental in forming their distinct linguistic and cultural identities. “Sindhi, and Pashto are both big languages and their speakers are proud of them. Sindhi is also used in the domains of power and is the major language of education in rural Sindh.” (Rahman, 2003: 8).

5.4 Language use with relatives

Figures 4 and 5 clearly show that majority of respondents use their mother tongue with their elders and even with younger people. However, Urdu and mixed varieties are emerging in their speech.

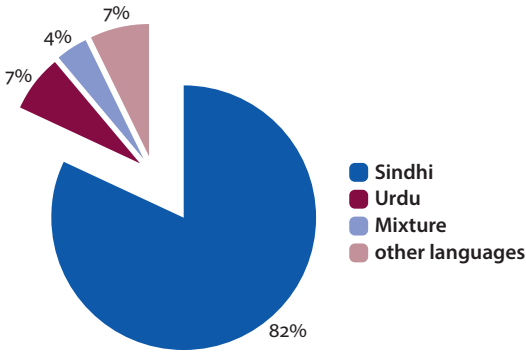


Figure 4. Respondents’ language use with elderly

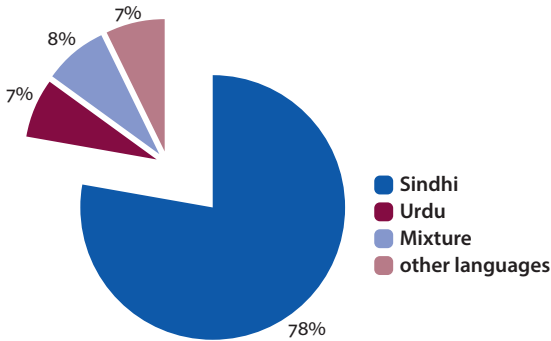


Figure 5. Respondents’ language use with younger

### 5.5 Sindhi language in low and high income Sindhi families

Those with low incomes tend to maintain their heritage language (85.3%) as shown in Figure 6. Those who belong to the higher income group tend to shift to Urdu.

Figure 7 depicts that Sindhi language is used by 76.4% in upper class families as compared to 85.3% in lower class families.

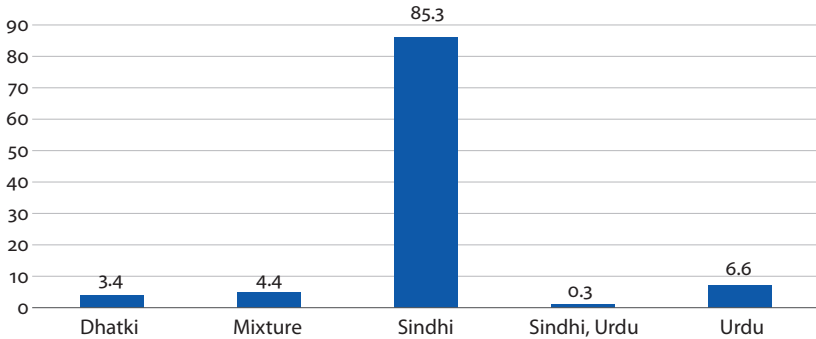


Figure 6. Sindhi language in low-income Sindhi families

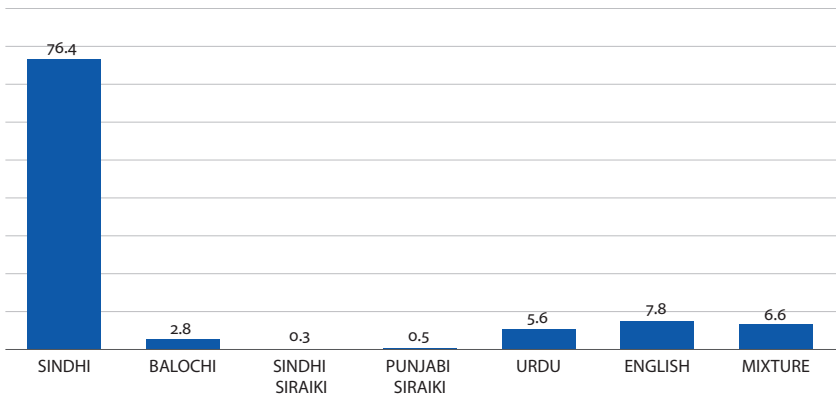


Figure 7. Sindhi language in high-income Sindhi families

### 5.6 Business language

Language choice with shopkeepers in the neighbourhood is shown in Figure 8. The majority of the respondents of all age groups use their mother tongue with owners of small shops regardless of whether the latter are Sindhi or not. It is important to note that the respondents use only Sindhi with both Sindhi and non-Sindhi shop-keepers because these merchants, although have different languages as their

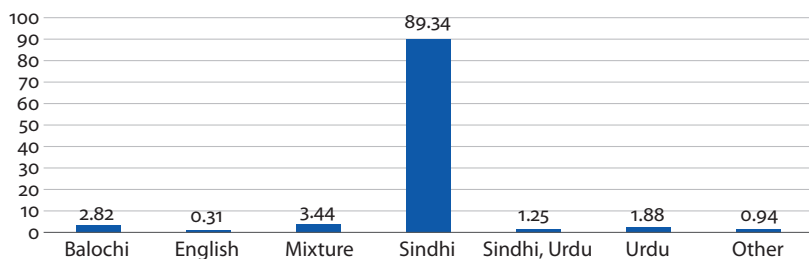


Figure 8. Business language

mother tongues, have learnt Sindhi to accommodate to the language choice of their Sindhi customers.

### 5.7 Language use in education

Figure 9 clearly shows that, at the primary level, many of the respondents use only Sindhi language. At the secondary level, students begin using other languages too

Additive multilingualism is beneficial not only from the educational perspective, it is also highly rewarding, enhancing the ability to learn other languages (Cummins 2008). It appears that the Sindhis are also conscious of the instrumental role of other languages such as Urdu and English and therefore, they gradually move towards the use of English and Urdu.

### 5.8 Language use in media (electronic and print media)

Pakistan television provides more than 50 channels some of which air programs in different languages. The majority of them are in Urdu. The responses show that in Sindh, 29% of families watch Sindhi language channels, 23% watch a mixture of

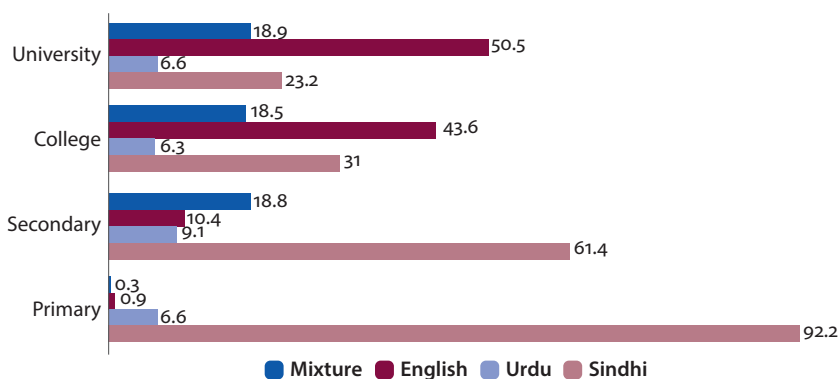


Figure 9. Language use in education

channels and 10% watch English language channels. Of those who watch Sindhi language channels, 58.3% watch KTN Channel, a Sindhi channel, which apparently is the most popular and widely followed. There are 16 Pakistani radio frequencies airing radio programmes but 34.5% of respondents do not know about most of those channels. Hyderabad FM 92 and FM 101 are commonly listened to by the community according to the respondents regardless of age.

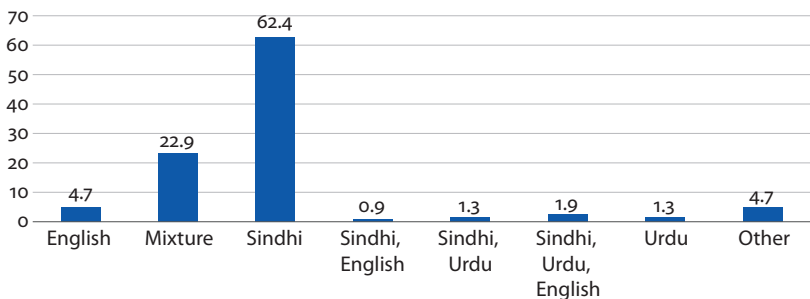
Regarding readership of the Sindhi newspapers, majority of the respondents (82.1%) read Daily Kawish while 7.5% read Daily Ibrat. Besides this, 20 Sindhi weekly and monthly magazines and 13 research journals are also published. In response to the question about research journals and book publication, most of the respondents expressed their lack of awareness about it.

### 5.9 Language use by Sindhi doctors, lawyers, educationists, engineers and other skilled professionals

As Figure 10 illustrates, Sindhi stands out as the most widely employed choice by the professional segment of the community, which shows a higher level of Sindhi maintenance in this vital domain too.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

Compared to the Sindhis scattered all over the rest of the world, the Sindhis in the Sindh province of Pakistan have strongly maintained the bond with their language as part of their culture and identity. The figures drawn from the data for this study show that in the domains covered by the study, the Sindhis mainly use their ethnic language. It also indicates that the Sindhis hold strong ethno-linguistic sentiments and ethno-nationalist orientations towards their ethnic language. Historically, the



**Figure 10.** Language use by Sindhi doctors, lawyers, educationists, engineers and other skilled professionals



fierce adherence to their language, culture and identity was seen in the Sindhi nationalist and activists movements which had always shown strong defiance to the unsupportive policies and informal practices of the national government. Furthermore, Sindhi is the only regional language of Pakistan which enjoys formal institutional support in the schools and is far the most developed and the richest in terms of literature and books.

This study shows that the Sindhi speakers in the Sindh province of Pakistan have undergone serious challenges and difficulties over the years for the deserved recognition of their language. The entire struggle characterises the pride of the Sindhis in their heritage and culture which they strive to keep intact enjoying the highest ethno-linguistic vitality than the other ethnic groups in Pakistan. Responding to the objective of this study the data presents ample testimony to the fact that the Sindhis in Sindh province of Pakistan fully maintain their language in education and other vital domains and carry sentimental affiliation with it.

In comparison to the Sindhis in Pakistan, the international Sindhi community has largely failed to maintain its heritage language and has made an almost complete shift to the other dominant languages. Notwithstanding this however, the Sindhi community still strongly maintains its ethno-cultural and identity consciousness. The Sindhis, dispersed all over the world, still proudly identify themselves as Sindhis wherever they may be.

Given the desperate times for the local languages of Pakistan and the reported language shift among some ethnic groups, it is the strong ethno-cultural and ethno-linguistic traditions, embedded in the volatile history of the Sindh province that have kept the Sindhi language on a steady path of maintenance and development.

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