Ethnolinguistic dilemma and static maintenance syndrome

A study of language policies and language perceptions in Pakistan

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Only two out of over 70 indigenous mother tongues are recognized in schools in Pakistan. This study examines orientations of the governments' language-in-education policies, and scrutinizes the influence the policies exert on vitality of indigenous mother tongues, and the perceptions of their speakers. Using undergraduate students as samples, the study employed mixed-method for data collection. Linguistic diversity and multilingualism have been looked upon as problem than asset in successive government policies. We find that although indigenous mother tongues enjoy strong roots and oral presence in informal private domains; however, they suffer from acute shrinkage in more literate domains such as schools and different media as majority of respondents passively assimilate towards Urdu and English languages. Language policies and current linguistic hierarchy appear to have exerted appreciable effect on respondents' attitudinal and cultural orientations. Although, respondents demonstrate sentimental attachment towards their languages as cultural and identity signifiers; however, they overwhelmingly support English and Urdu as their desired languages-in-education leaving their own mother-tongues marginalized. Respondents' approach is marked by 'static maintenance syndrome, an attitudinal conundrum, in which they rationalize the 'supposed inferiority of their languages' vis-à-vis English (the official) and Urdu (the national) languages. Top-down and bottom-up orientations are characterized by neglect towards linguistic diversity.

Keywords: language policy and planning, indigenous mother tongues, Urdu & English, static maintenance syndrome, language-as-a-resource and language-as-a-problem

Introduction

This study examines the orientations of the governments' language in education policies in Pakistan and scrutinizes the effects of the policies on the vitality of the existing languages and attitudes of the speakers. The issue is critical as a vast majority of school children in Pakistan do not get education in their mother tongues. According to Coleman (2010), about 95% of the children speaking indigenous languages, have no access to education in their mother tongues. Previously, Rahman (2005) highlighted the social ghettoization of most of the indigenous languages into private domains. UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (UNESCO, 2013) listed 28 languages in Pakistan as endangered. Among those languages, 7 are vulnerable, 15 are definitely endangered while other 6 are severely endangered. Language endangerment is a global issue and a number of studies confirm the endangerment of linguistic and cultural diversity (Crystal, 2000; Harrison, 2007; Kraus, 2007; Maffi, 2001; Nettle & Romaine, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; UNESCO, 2003).

Language policies are viewed as one of the major macro-level contributors towards the weakening of many languages and ethno-linguistic communities (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). They are in turn driven by attitudes that manifest at multiple levels: National/governmental level; among the majority population (if there is one); and finally, at a local/community level (Grenoble and Whaley (2006). The attitudinal orientations of the governments represent political ideology of the nation-sates as in many instances, many multilingual states tend to '… see the value of a language in state building; the underlying idea is that a single language has a unifying effect and has great symbolic value. This stance has an impact on national policy, as it gives priority to only the national language' (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006, p. 11). In addition, language planning may also be guided by one or more orientations: (i) language-as-a-problem, in which linguistic diversity is viewed as a problem to be overcome; (ii) language-as-a-right, the negotiation of language rights, often in contested contexts; and (iii) language-as-a-resource, the promotion of linguistic democracy and pluralism (Ruiz, 1984). With reference to language vitality and language endangerment, UNESCO's document (UNESCO, 2003) included the local community's language attitudes as one of the factors that can either vitalize or weaken the language.

Pakistan is a multilingual and multiethnic country consisting of 77 languages of which 72 are considered as indigenous while the remainder 5 languages are labeled as immigrant (Ethnologue (2014). Although the society is highly diverse, but the language planning and language policy (LPLP) is contrastingly monolingual and subtractive. Practically, only English and Urdu languages are emphasized in schools except Sindhi, and to a lesser extent Pashto. English, the official

language, stands at the apex of linguistic hierarchy while Urdu, the national language also wields considerable power and prestige. The institutionalized prestige and power of both English and Urdu make the speakers of indigenous languages to value these languages higher than their own languages. As a result, most of the indigenous languages appear to have turned into social ghettos, pushed to private informal domains and intra community interactions. Language shift and culture shame among participants belonging especially to the Punjabi community have also been reported in the previous research (Mansoor, 1993, 2004b; Rahman, 2005; Zaidi, 2010).

In light of the exclusion of the indigenous languages and the challenges associated with acute hierarchical linguistic landscape, this research shall demonstrate the impact, which the current linguistic hierarchy leaves on language use of respondents speaking the indigenous languages. The issue is critical, as the institutionalized dominance of the Urdu and English languages does not only appear to displace almost all the indigenous languages from every important domain, but also poses endangerment to the rich cultural and ethnolinguistic diversity of the country. Precisely, the study addresses the following objectives:

– To discover how the three languages, Urdu, English and mother tongues, are adopted, accommodated and negotiated in the day-to-day lives of Pakistanis;
– To examine the effects of the current language policies on the sociolinguistic, attitudinal and cultural orientations of the speakers of the indigenous languages; and
– To examine the perceived vitality of the respondents maintenance of their mother tongues vis-à-vis Urdu and English languages.

Attitude formation, policy and planning

Several critical scholars on language policy and planning problematize the top-down policies, and politicize the governments' institutionalized mechanisms and apparatuses that influence people's language beliefs and engineer their attitudes in favor of state-favorite languages (May, 2003, 2005, 2006; Pennycook, 1998, 2001; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The above scholars posit that behind the institutionalized engineering of attitudes are larger political and ideological motives which May (2005) terms as the 'politics of state-making'. To achieve their ideological aim of unifying a diverse multilingual and multiethnic population, governments employ discursive strategies for legitimization of their policies through mechanical 'hierarchization' of languages (May, 2006); which may leave many languages 'invisibilized' (Kontra, Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Várady, 2000), and many

other languages dialectalized and minoritized (May, 2005). According to Bourdieu (1991), 'it is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language' (p. 45). Similarly, McCarty (2009) believes that in the inculcation of negative attitudes, the broader debates of weak and strong, important and unimportant, powerful and powerless languages play vital roles and that linguistic shame is not a function of language per se, but rather of wider societal discourses that marginalize and demonize the indigenous/minority languages and their speakers. The discourses associate them with poverty, traditionalism and 'backwardness', while standard (ising) English or other dominant languages.

Sociolinguistic situation and language policies in Pakistan

The federal constitution of 1973 sets out the language policy of the country in following words:

1. The National language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for it 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.

Historically, only the ethno-nationalist political parties from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly known as NWFP, Sindh and Balochistan have raised support for the promotion of the indigenous languages, while the rest of the political parties with majority power are in favor of indigenous languages as politically controversial and symptomatic of disintegration of the state. The issue of language and identity is believed to have triggered the separation of Bangladesh (formerly known as East Pakistan) from the federation. Rahman (1996) made a comprehensive study of the volatile history of language, politics and ethno-nationalist language movements against the centrist policies of the different civil and military regimes. There is apprehension that the official recognition of the indigenous languages might pose a threat to national unity or disintegration of the federation (Ayres, 2009). Evidently, the official stance looks upon linguistic diversity as a problem, envisaging a uni-national thesis for national unity (Rahman, 1997). The evidence unfolds that the history of language policy is rather volatile, which is fraught with numerous ethno-nationalist movements for the institutional recognition of the regional

languages (see Rahman 1996 & Ayres 2009). Following is an overview of the language situation in Pakistan in relation to the status the official policies designate to different languages.

Policy towards Urdu

Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, is used by 7.57% (GOP, 2001) of the population as a first language and it is the local lingua franca of the Urdu-medium vernacular schools and media. Urdu also has an intra-national role as it serves as a link language or language of wider communication (LWC) in the urban centers. Historically, the Muslim League used Urdu as the symbol of Muslim identity during the independence movement. Rahman (1997) argued that the founders of the nation believed in 'uni-national thesis'; they thought Urdu as the national language would help bring together the ethnically and linguistically diverse population, and foster a sense of nationhood (p. 148). Consequently, Urdu became the dominant language because the people who used Urdu were by far the most powerful people in politics then (Siddiqui, 2010).

Policy towards English

English is the official language of Pakistan and used in domains of power – government, courts, universities, media, corporate sector, research, etc. The English language functions as a medium of instruction in the following streams and levels of education: the elitist schools such as armed forces schools, public schools, private English-medium schools, and at the university level (Rahman, 1997, p. 146). English is a medium of instruction in the elitist schools, first language to a very few highly Anglicized elites, second language to affluent and highly educated groups, and a foreign language to all educated others (Rahman, 2001, p. 242). Education and proficiency in the English language are viewed as a passport to social and economic mobility and to privileges and prestige in Pakistan (Bari & Sultana, 2011; Coleman, 2010; Coleman & Capstick, 2012; Mansoor, 2004b; Rahman, 2002; Rassool & Mansoor, 2007; Shamim, 2008). In view of the potential role English language plays in access to prestigious domains and the ancillary material benefits, Mahboob (2002) argued that there is no future without the English language in Pakistan. According to Rahman (1997), 'English remains the language of power and high social status in Pakistan and it serves as entry of the rich and the powerful into elitist positions while filtering out those who are educated in Urdu' (p. 151).

Policy towards indigenous languages

The State's institutional support of indigenous languages is negligible, particularly in the education sector. With the exception of Sindhi in Sindh province and to a lesser extent, Pashto in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, none of the other indigenous languages either gets recognition or receives any support in the mainstream domain including education. The language-in-education policy in Pakistan is fraught with both conceptual as well as practical problems (Mansoor, 2004a). According to Mustafa (2011), the policy makers have historically overlooked what she terms as vital question of language in education for political expediency while 'the role of language in the cultural, psychological and intellectual development of individuals and the communities they live in has by far and large been ignored'.

Methodology

This study used a mixed method of data collection involving a questionnaire and interviews, a method Edwards (2003) terms as 'direct assessment'. The study took place in a public university in Pakistan. The respondents were from different regional, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds representing the typical ethnolinguistic diversity of Pakistan. A total of 162 students responded to the questionnaire while 30 of them participated in the interviews. The respondents were randomly selected in terms of academic programs; however, they were purposively picked up from diverse linguistic backgrounds to make the sampling as representative of the existing language groups as possible. The language background of the participants is presented in the following section. For the analysis, the data was arranged in tables and graphs using frequency counts and percentages while the interviews were used for triangulation purpose. Inputs from interviews were incorporated and simultaneously explained with the results from the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

Questionnaires

A total of 162 students responded to the questionnaires. The questionnaire was partly adapted from Baker (Baker, 1992) and Lasagabaster and Huguet (2007) and divided into the following sections: biographical information, self-reported language use across various domains, beliefs and the affective dimensions of their attitudes to language/s use. Some modifications were made by the researchers so that the questionnaire could be adjusted to the context of the present study, and items were added to bring it in line with the research objectives.

Interviews

A total of 30 students participated in the interviews. The design of the interviews was semi-structured and open-ended with occasional probes added allowing participants to elaborate further on the points under questions. The contents of the interviews were the same as in the questionnaire.

Results

Linguistic background of participants

Table 1 illustrates the language background of participants. It shows that participants belong to diverse linguistic and regional backgrounds as they speak 12 different regional languages as mother tongues. They represent both major and minor languages (see Table 1 for details). It is crucial to understanding the power dynamics of languages in Pakistan as the dominant languages draw power from the institutional and political base, not the numerical strength of the speakers using the language (see Mansoor 2004a). Urdu, for instance is numerically non-dominant language used by only 7% of the population; however, owing to the political motivations of the earlier founders of the nation, it was declared the national language despite resistance from the ethno-nationalists of regional/provincial languages (Ayres, 2003; Rahman, 1996).

Table 1. Language background of participants

Mother tongue	Number	%
Pashto	37	23
Punjabi	24	15
Siraiki	23	14
Persian	16	10
Urdu	13	8
Balti	13	8
Baluchi	12	7
Shina	6	4
Burahvi	6	4
Hindko	5	3
Sindhi	3	2
Kashmiri	3	2
Torwali	1	1
Total	**162**	**100**

Language use within the family

Table 2 provides information about the language use of participants within the family. The figures show that the respondents almost exclusively use the mother tongues at home with their parents and siblings. This also includes 8% of participants who use Urdu as their mother tongue. Generally, speakers of the indigenous languages come into direct contact with Urdu in urban areas while the contact between them is negligible in the rural areas. The influence of Urdu to the speakers of the indigenous languages is normally realized in the larger cosmopolitan cities, which functions as a link language between speakers of different indigenous languages. Notably, English, a foreign language to the majority of Pakistanis, is not used in the home domain for social chitchat; its use is limited to formal domains. The figures also demonstrate an important fact that the indigenous languages are widely used at informal interactions at homes and intra-community interactions. The respondents also suggested the exclusive use of mother tongues but none suggested the use of English language.

Table 2. Language use within family

Language used	Father	Mother	Siblings
Always M.T	91%($N = 147$)	92%($N = 149$)	83%($N = 134$)
M.T more often than Urdu	4%($N = 7$)	5%($N = 8$)	5%($N = 9$)
M.T & Urdu about equally	2%($N = 3$)	($N = 0$)	4%($N = 9$)
Urdu more often than mother than M.T	2%($N = 3$)	3%($N = 4$)	5%($N = 8$)
Always in Urdu	1%($N = 3$)	1%($N = 1$)	3%($N = 4$)
Total	100	100	100

Use of media

Table 3 illustrates the use of media by the respondents in their day-to-day routine. In contrast to the use of language within the family, media presents a different picture in terms of language preference. One can find a major difference between the use of language in media and the use of language within the families. The respondents predominantly use Urdu and English in media. The percentages in the first three rows in Table 3 point to the relatively decreased use of mother tongues in that particular media. From the fourth row downward in Table 3, the figures gradually start to increase displaying an increased use of Urdu and English. Urdu

is largely dominant language in most media but for the internet use, English stands as the most frequently used consisting of 51% of respondents who use English for their internet usage. The medium of instruction policy gives nearly exclusive exposure to Urdu and English while no formal literacy takes place in the indigenous languages. In light of the policy, one may argue that schools would have influenced their language choice in the media. Urdu and English are preferred because they are perceived as more modern, advanced and sophisticated languages than the indigenous mother tongues.

The findings are also evident that the participants do not read newspapers in their mother tongues for two reasons: firstly, majority of respondents with the exception of Urdu speakers remarked that they could not read or write in their languages; secondly, almost all of them revealed that newspapers or other print media in their mother tongues were not available. Newspapers, magazines or such other sources of print media in the indigenous languages have generally very limited readership and publication except in the Sindh province where the Sindhi press enjoys considerably wider readership.

For all the media outlets specified, the results show an emphasis on the choice of Urdu and English while the indigenous languages appear marginalized. Music in Urdu and English is more popular than in the indigenous languages. Urdu songs from Indian movies and the latest pop music mainly from India and marginally from Pakistan generally capture their imagination. Over 80% of the participants said that the traditional/local music did not excite them because it lacked the sophistication they found in the modern Indian and Pakistani Urdu pop and English songs. Furthermore, they gave the impression that listening to traditional/local music is normally associated with uneducated people and villagers; therefore, they tend not to take a lot of interest.

Table 3. Language(s) use for different media

Language (s) used	TV	Print media	Music	Radio	Internet
Always M.T	7%	6%	9%	7%	–
M.T more often than Urdu	8%	1%	5%	6%	–
M.T & Urdu about equally	15%	6%	14%	7%	–
Urdu more often than M.T	22%	9%	19%	14%	8%
Always in Urdu	16%	50%	19%	57%	–
English more often than Urdu & M.T	14%	19%	12%	–	32%
English, Urdu & MT about Equally	11%	–	10%	9%	9%
Always in English	7%	9%	12%	–	51%
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Importance of indigenous languages

This section seeks to show the beliefs of respondents about the indigenous languages. The rationale for this section was to determine the perceived or subjective ethnolinguistic vitality about the indigenous languages. The figures in Table 4 suggest two different attitudinal orientations: pragmatism and sentimentalism. In the first four rows in Table 4, the level of importance attached to mother tongues is considerably lower than in the last seven domains. Reading, writing, watching TV and schooling are considered practical needs and the respondents realize that since their mother tongues have little pragmatic value and market demand therefore, they hold back their support. However, respondents attach greater importance to their languages in the domains that apparently invoke sentimental or emotional reactions. Those include transmission of mother tongues towards their children, harmony with community, and upholding history, literature, folklore, culture and identity. The respondents demonstrate some degree of affective attitudes towards the value of their mother tongues; however, they also show a pragmatic approach in the evaluation of the existing languages. Although, they value the mother tongues; however they also employ repeated use of 'but' and 'however' to indicate their tentativeness for a number of domains. For example, some of them said:

– *I would like my children to study only and only English because in my view, it is the most important language. I love my language, it has great literature, history, and culture, but practically English is more important because it gives better future economically, and in profession.*
– *I like all languages – my mother tongue, Urdu and English. For reading and writing, I think we should admit that English and Urdu are more important than mother tongue. Literacy in mother tongue may be good; however, in our society English is most important.*

From the perspective of social psychology, the cognitivists often assume a tripartite model of attitude formation, differentiating between the cognitive, affective and conative components (McKenzie, 2010). Cognitive orientation involves an individual's beliefs based on the understanding of practical needs in the world; affective orientation on the other hand, is the emotional response to an object while conative orientation is an individual's predisposition towards behaving in a certain manner, a predetermined response towards an object. In view of these orientations, the respondents' orientations may also be classified as cognitive and affective-conative.

Table 4. Beliefs about the importance of indigenous languages

Situations/domains	Important	A little important	Unimportant	A little unimportant
Read	43%	31%	18%	8%
Write	38%	29%	20%	13%
Watch TV	27%	38%	17%	18%
For schooling children	12%	18%	56%	14%
For bringing up children with	90%	6%	1%	2%
Be liked by others	64%	23%	8%	5%
To be accepted in community	67%	22%	6%	5%
Know history	63%	22%	9%	6%
Know literature	47%	33%	10%	10%
Know folklore	44%	36%	13%	7%
Maintain heritage language & cultural identity	85%	9%	3%	3%

Importantly, although the respondents demonstrate affective orientations towards their languages and the combined cultural ingredients, they practically show little knowledge about their literature, folklore and history. They love their mother tongues, yet they hesitate to accept their value across all situations and domains. In other words, the respondents themselves register and legitimize the ghettoization which most of the indigenous languages undergo. This fact also points towards a dichotomy that the sentiments held about the value of literature, folklore, history and culture do not translate into practical actions. The dichotomy and tentativeness noticed in the respondents' orientations could be termed as 'static maintenance syndrome' (Alexander, 2002, 2007; Bloch & Alexander, 2003), an attitudinal dilemma of parents in the South African context who used between English and their native language languages. The syndrome signifies that,

> …the native speakers of the languages believe in and cherish the value of their languages, that is, the vitality of the languages is, within certain limits, not placed in doubt. However, they do not believe that these languages can ever attain the same power and status as, for example, English or French.
>
> (Alexander, 2007, p. 18)

Respondents' favorite language policy in schools

The following figure illustrates the desired language in education policy the respondents would like to have in schools. As the quantitative data suggest, the largest number of them which is 43% favors only English and a significant number which is 25% wants Urdu and English, a bilingual policy subtracting indigenous languages. Similarly small number of respondents variously supports the following language policies: '*Mother-tongue+Urdu*', '*Only Urdu*', '*only mother-tongues*', and '*Mother-tongues+English*'. In addition, a tiny segment, which is 13%, supports a multilingual policy. The main reasons for the overwhelming support of only English and partly Urdu are due to – English being international language; language of higher education; professional discipline including medical sciences, engineering, communication technologies, IT, civil service, armed forces and international exposure. Generally, English is instrumental for social mobility and social prestige while Urdu is the symbol of national identity and the language spoken all over the country as a lingua franca especially in urban areas.
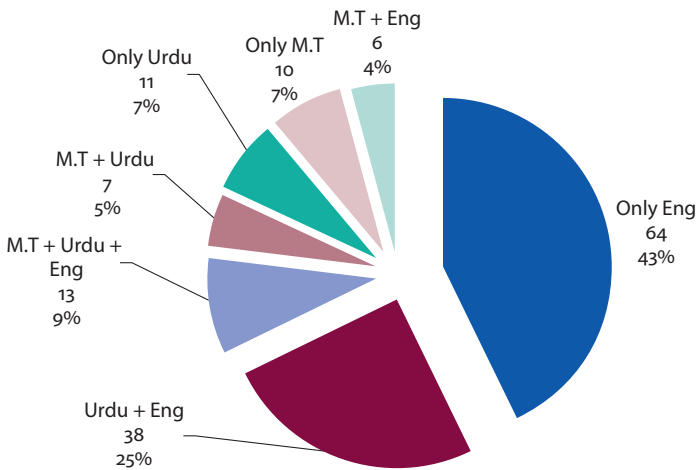

Figure 1. Desired language policy in school

Discussion

In this section, we will interweave the research objectives with the major emerging themes of the data. Upon analysis, we identified three major themes: (1) *The local attitudes – indigenous languages and domain shrinkage*, (2) *The official attitudes – language-as-a-resource versus language-as-a-problem*, (3) *Static maintenance syndrome and ethnolinguistic dilemma.* Each of these themes is discussed in the following sections.

The local attitudes – indigenous languages and domain shrinkage

The first objective of the study was to explore the way respondents adopt and negotiate Urdu, English and the indigenous languages across different domains and situations. The indigenous languages hold strong roots within the informal domains such as family. Language use for different media clearly suggests the reduced use of mother tongues than Urdu and English languages. Urdu stands as the most frequently used language for media outlets except internet. The decreased use of mother tongues across the above media is significant in the linguistic vitality. Mother tongues significantly shrunk not only in terms of use, but there is also a perceptible negative attitude towards their importance. Indigenous languages also suffer from visible shrinkage in the use of TV, newspapers, radio and internet. Formal academic literacy in mother tongues is next to nil. In terms of oracy, the indigenous languages hold strong transitions; however, there is a serious absence of literate culture in the form of publishing, reading, writing and other related segments. UNESCO (2003) document for language vitality and endangerment terms education as essential for language vitality. Grenoble & Whaley (2006) regard education as a crucial signifier of language vitality and,

> 'A critical domain for language usage is education. When mandatory schooling occurs exclusively in a national language, the use of local languages almost inevitably declines. When local languages are part of the formal educational process, they typically maintain a higher degree of vitality. (p. 10)

Given the overall use and circulation of the indigenous mother tongues vis-à-vis Urdu and English languages across a number of domains, we come to realize that the vitality of the indigenous languages is on the decline, and the decline manifests at both institutional and individual levels. One could argue that the shift from the indigenous languages towards Urdu and English languages may not have taken place in the traditional sense; however, there is a visible shift towards the two powerful languages in terms of subjective perception and tastes. As a whole, indigenous languages become vulnerable to decreased use in some domains of communication (shrinkage), a sign that scholars do not associate with a healthy development of a language. As Grenoble & Whaley (2006) argue, 'a healthy, vital language is used in a range of settings with a wide variety of functions, and the healthiest language would accordingly be a language used for all functions and purposes. If a language is used in increasingly fewer domains, it is a sign of lessening vitality' (p. 9).

The official attitudes – language-as-a-resource versus language-as-a-problem

The official attitudes are also called governmental or institutional attitudes, and those 'are often reflected directly in language and education policies and in policies which determine the allocation of financial resources'. In retrospect, the historical review of the various language policies and their follow-up mechanisms from the very inception of the country clearly point towards an orientation marked by 'languages-as-problem' than 'languages-as-resource'. Although, at the rhetorical level, there is always a mention of the indigenous languages in the policy documents; however, the policy is yet to be implemented. Despite the rhetoric, Urdu and English still stand as the universal languages across schools. Even though, the ethno-nationalists from different parts of the country registered strong demands for the official recognition of the regional languages; however, the center never approved of linguistic diversity in schools. According to Rahman (1999b), the center was apprehensive that the recognition of the regional language of the major ethnolinguistic groups might trigger separatist and secessionist tendencies; therefore, Urdu, the language of a minority group was imposed to unify and integrate a diverse population. The very first glimpse of the typical exclusivist orientation of linguistic ideology is witnessed in the speeches of the founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The position of Jinnah clearly transpires the 'languages-as-a-problem' ideology. Muhammad Ali Jinnah once declared that:

> …the State Language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan. Without one State language, no nation can remain tied up solidly together and function.
>
> (Jinnah, 2000, p. 150)

In this connection, Durrani (2012) argues that 'This statement also illustrates the development of Urdu as a linguistic emblem of national identity and any identification of a non-Urdu language with Pakistan is deemed a treasonous act' (p. 35). This fact transpires in one of the public speeches of the founder of Pakistan. The imposition of Urdu received mixed reactions. Many saw it in 'pragmatic terms' as a 'useful link language' between various ethnic groups (Rahman, 2005, p. 74). On the other hand, the privileging of Urdu over other indigenous languages also evoked ethnic resistance by the language activist and some of the ethno-nationalists (Rahman, 1996). Urdu also served the ideological goal as an identity marker and emblem of national unity. According to Ayres (2009)'Pakistan's leaders declared Urdu the national language, a primary marker of this civilizational heritage, despite the fact that it was the first language of no more than three percent of the country's overall population'(p. 189). An array of scholars testifies to the fact that political ideologies and language policies are deeply intertwined. The same holds true for Pakistan as scholars discuss the relationship between political ideology of the state and its

approach towards the use of indigenous languages (Ayres, 2009; Durrani, 2012; Jalal, 1995; Khurshid, 2009; Mustafa, 2011; Rahman, 1996, 1999a, 2002; Shackle, 2007).

UNESCO (2003) distinguishes six levels of the way governments treat local languages vis-à-vis the national/official languages: (1) equal support; (2) differentiated support; (3) passive assimilation; (4) active assimilation; (5) forced support; and (6) prohibition. Contextualizing the treatment meted out to the indigenous languages from the policy perspective shows that treatment is far from that of equal support. The government certainly allocates differentiated support to Urdu and English than to the rest of the indigenous languages. It seems that there is no overt policy of active linguistic assimilation, forced support, or prohibition; however, the tendency to passive assimilation does surface in the policy. Passive assimilation signifies that the government adopts a policy of deliberate neglect, and devises no policy of support to the indigenous languages, which consequently leaves extensive space for the state-mandated national and official languages to dominate the language ecology. The data across domains clearly manifest the ghettoization of the indigenous languages into informal private domains. Torwali (2014) a local writer and language activist also refers state's language ideology driven by institutional homogenization of languages arguing that; 'cultural and linguistic diversity has never been a favorite subject in our national discourse'. He argues that,

> The policy of enforcing a single language by education and security policies in order to achieve an imagined national cohesion strikes down the very objectives for which it was created. This 'one language-one religion-one nation' policy establishes the hegemony of a single language; and consequently of an alien culture because language is the most effective driver of culture.
>
> (http://www.thenews.com.pk/The-beauty-of-diversity)

Static maintenance syndrome and ethnolinguistic dilemma

In light of the data especially the way respondents view the value of their mother tongues (see Table 4), the orientations of the majority of respondents are characterized by an ethnolinguistic dilemma and what Alexander (2002) termed as static maintenance syndrome. By this, Alexander (2002) means that,

> …the people begin to accept as "natural" the supposed inferiority of their own languages and adopt an approach that is determined by considerations that are related only to the market and social status value of the set of languages in their multilingual societies.   (p. 119)

Although respondents consider the use and maintenance of their mother tongues essential as identity marker and cultural signifiers; however, they tend to undervalue their languages for schools and literacy purposes. They hesitate to provide

any such alternative policy that would emancipate the indigenous languages at the formal institutional levels. Simultaneously, their stance indicates their ethnolinguistic dilemma. With complete endorsement to the current language policy configuration, most of the respondents opt to rationalize the exclusion of their own languages from the mainstream domains specifically the schools. Their overwhelming support for *English-only* and *English-Urdu* languages as desired policy lends testimony to their perceptions. Apparently, they are contented with marginalization of their own languages and complain to their resultant ghettoization within the informal private domains restricted to oral roles. Simultaneously, the respondents naturalize the top-down exclusionary language policies – an attitude that aptly fits in the theoretical frameworks of 'Governmentality' (Foucault, 1991) and the 'Symbolic Power of Language' (Bourdieu, 1991). On the individual level, their attitudes can be described as positivist, apolitical and deterministic towards the reduction of indigenous languages as determined in the top-down policies. Crucially, they keep away from politicizing or critiquing the policy, a critical, political or skeptic stance (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2000; Pennycook, 2001; Tollefson, 2006; Tollefson & Tsui, 2004) and many other linguistics from critical school of applied linguistics envision. As Tollefson and Tsui (2004) argue that, 'behind the educational agenda are political, social and economic agendas that serve to protect the interests of political and social groups' (p. 2). Thus, the respondents appear to suffer from the Status Maintenance Syndrome for their ambivalent position towards their mother tongues. They like their mother tongues for private domains, but consider those languages supposedly inferior for any formal domain. They avoid to challenge either the current policies or suggest other possible policy alternatives, alternatives which might raise the status and role of their mother tongues in institutional terms – education or other domains. Their narratives are replete with repeated 'ifs, 'buts' and 'howevers' about the use of mother tongues in domains beyond home and intra-community interactions.

The motivation among the majority of the participants is indicative of a blend of both instrumental and integrated. Overwhelming support also goes to the English language. The instrumental and transactional value of the English language, both locally and globally, is the prime reason behind the preference of English over other languages. The symbolic power of the English language has also plenty to do with this attitudinal position. It is primarily the power, wealth and the other associated 'goodies' (Lin & Martin, 2005), that gives primacy to the English language over Urdu and other indigenous languages. As English stand at the apex of language hierarchy and it is the language of power and high status in Pakistan (Rahman, 1997); therefore, the respondents also realize its vitality, a cognitive orientation to which a number of previous studies also support (Mahboob, 2002; Manan & David, 2013, 2014(forthcoming); Mansoor, 1993, 2004b; Rahman, 2005).

Conclusion and the way forward

To sum up, the study concludes that the data points to few prominent trends. One, despite the exclusivist governmental language policies, the indigenous languages the respondents use, has strong roots and presence in the informal private domains. The obvious reason for their strong oral tradition could be the larger population, geographical proximity of their speakers, the traditional rural lifestyle, and huge number of illiterate parents whose contact with the English and Urdu is limited in day-to-day life. Ethnic sentiments and cultural pride in their languages would also have contributed to the vitality of oral traditions. More importantly, the vitality of the indigenous languages shrinks significantly within the oral rather than in literate culture. Language policies significantly play its part from the development of literate culture as almost all languages remain institutionally excluded from schools barring Sindhi and partly Pashto. Manan and David (2013) found low level of academic literacy amongst undergraduate students in their mother tongues as results suggested that 'the respondents' proficiency levels in academia-oriented skills like reading and writing are considerably lower in mother tongues than in Urdu and English languages' (p. 203).

Two, in the formal domains such as schools and the media, the indigenous languages suffer from considerable shrinkage as large number of respondents orientates towards Urdu and English than the mother tongues. Language policies and the current linguistic hierarchy appear to have exerted serious effect on their attitudinal and cultural orientations. Signs of passive assimilation towards Urdu and English are in evidence. The respondents largely see languages as commodities, a view which scholars term as commodification of languages. The signs of Status Maintenance Syndrome are manifestly seen in their approach towards categorizing and hierarchizing languages. They appear to demonstrate sentimental attachment towards their languages as cultural and identity signifiers; however, they subscribe to the 'supposed inferiority of their languages', suggesting them not to feature in the mainstream domains such as education. Finally, the states' policies towards the use of indigenous languages are also ideology-driven, and marked by 'languages-as-problem', rather than 'languages-as-resource' (Ruiz, 1981). As a whole, the use of the indigenous languages is on the decline in literate domains, and their shrinkage into mere homes and private domains do not augur well for the vitality of most of those languages. Given the multilingual realities and the replacive language policies, the way forward could well be what Hornberger (2003) proposes for a multilingual landscape such as that of Pakistan that, 'Multilingual language policies which recognize ethnic and linguistic pluralism as resources for nation-building are increasingly in evidence" (p. 317). The policies as she suggests will assist in "transforming former homogenizing and assimilationist policy discourse into discourses about

diversity and emancipation…opening of ideological and implementational spaces in the environment for as many languages as possible and in particular endangered languages, to evolve and flourish rather than dwindle and disappear".

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