

1 Language Shift An Analysis of Factors Involved in Language 2 Shift

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6 **Abstract**

7 This research is intended to ascertain the factors that are responsible for banishing Punjabi
8 language and a corresponding adoption of English language, though apparently the panoramic
9 milieu is hostile to this shift. Language shift is a societal trend and society formation is based
10 on collaborative work of certain factors, by following this line of reasoning, a hypothesis is
11 formed that language shift is burgeoned, motivated and accelerated by an implicit working of
12 historical, cultural, social, economic and psychological factors. In order to examine the
13 validity of hypothesis, data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire with a
14 sample size of hundred people. The result shows that these factors are involved, though at
15 varying degree, in this germinating trend of shift from Punjabi to English language.

17
18 **Index terms**— Ascertain, banishing.

19 **1 I. Introduction**

20 The incubating globalization has established English language as a standard of communication, inciting the entire
21 world to the extent of leaving no chance of immunity to adopt this standard for better survival and utilitarian
22 benefits in this global community. To cope with this need of hour an ever growing trend of abandoning native
23 languages in favor of English language sprouts. In such a bilingual speech community, the speakers retract their
24 allegiance to the second language. And whenever "a big and a powerful language such as English appears in
25 foreign territory, small, indigenous languages will die" (Jan Blammaert). This language shift so far becomes the
26 initial step of the course of language death. Language death occurs in unstable bilingual or multilingual speech
27 communities as a result of language shift from regressive minority language to dominant majority language. "A
28 language is said to be dead when no one speaks it any more. It may continue to have existence in recorded form,
29 of course—traditionally in writing, more recently as part of a sound or video archive (and it does in a sense 'live
30 on' in this way)—but unless it has fluent speakers one would not talk of it as a 'living language' (David Crystal). It
31 is the speakers who determine the future of native language. Owing to the genesis of speakers' outlook and value
32 system, the main determinant of language shift—the attitude towards the mother or native tongue, is evolved.
33 This attitude speaks of speakers' choice of and their aptitude towards their own native tongue, ultimately dictates
34 the future of the language.

35 Pakistan in lieu of all language diversity is facing this extinction threat to many native languages; this uncertain
36 future of the vernaculars is by dint of language shift. In case of Punjabi the case is severe. It is not just a threat to
37 this language but also to the process of enculturation, the growing of an individual in native linguistic perception,
38 the participation in the history of language production and they know-how of the knowledge and values embedded
39 in it.

40 **2 II. Problem Statement**

41 Despite the facts that both languages are poles apart from each other in respect of their scripts, sentence structure,
42 and lexicological items, and, as our data shows, majority of the people is not in the favour of this shift, people

6 D) PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS:

43 are heading towards English. Poor result in English at every level also demonstrates the level of difficulty in
44 learning English language but the problem is that this trend is taking rest at nowhere.

3 III. Theoretical Consideration

45 Language-shifting is a complex and affected phenomenon, motivated and stimulated by accumulative force of
46 historical, cultural, economic, social and psychological factors. All these factors are interrelated and cannot be
47 analyzed in isolation. a) Historio-cultural factors:

48 The imperative impact of colonization in our land, decades ago, did identify the frolicsome notion of inferiority
49 complex, the genesis of our sociopolitical, economic and educational setup and the traces of such impact still
50 persist in our culture institution. "The linguistic relation between the center and periphery has been and
51 continues to be one of dominant and dominated languages. English was originally imposed on a number of
52 countries in the periphery and has through deliberate contrivance, successfully displaced, or replaced some of
53 the indigenous languages of these countries. The dominance of English has also resulted in the imposition of
54 the Anglo-Saxon Judeo-Christian culture that goes with it so that indigenous cultures have been undervalued
55 and marginalized" (Bisong-Language choice and culture Imperialism). This was Language Imperialism leading
56 to culture imperialism; Lord Macaulay, when announced the English structure of education, the planning was
57 to create a mixed breed, sub continental in skin but English in thought, blood and appearance. This colonial
58 implication did contrive a room for its rule in cultural and social structure of the subcontinent. English became
59 a language of the upper strata of society; a kind of modernized and civilized air was associated with it. This
60 marginalization of the native tongues in the hegemony system of rule and power devised the concept of "linguistic
61 imperialism", which ran parallel to the cultural and geographic imperialism."

62 The study of linguistic imperialism can help to clarify whether the winning of political independence led to a
63 linguistic liberation of Third World countries, and if not, why not. Are the former colonial languages a useful
64 bond with the international community and necessary for state formation and national unity internally? Or are
65 they a bridge head for Western interests, permitting the continuation of a global system of marginalization and
66 exploitation? What is the relationship between linguistic dependence (continued use of a European language in
67 a former non-European colony) and economic dependence (the export of raw materials and import of technology
68 and know-how)" (Robert Phillipson, "Linguistic Imperialism." Concise Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics, ed.
69 by Margie ??terns. Elsevier, 2010) In the historical background of Punjab, in colonial era when English culture
70 interacted with indigenous culture and this interaction created a notion of superior and inferior culture owing to
71 their relation with superior colonizer and inferior colonized.

73 4 b) Socio-cultural factors:

74 Besides this, the British constructed a social structure in which an English speaking person enjoyed a privileged
75 position and the others were marginalized. Because nobody wants to be away from center and to be marginalized,
76 so it became a compulsion for Punjabispeaking masses to venerate English language and consequently to ignore
77 Punjabi language. Our present social structure is a replica of that social structure that was delineated by the
78 British so we see that same treatment with both languages.

79 Language is an integral part of a culture. We cannot separate a language from its respective culture and
80 vice versa. The British knew this fact so they intentionally portrayed and presented Punjabi culture as
81 uncivilized, crude, unsophisticated and inferior. They made their waiters and servants to wear the dress of
82 Sardars, Chaudharies and Nawabs, specially the turban that is an emblem of prestige. This systematic and
83 organized portrayal of Punjabi culture as inferior left a permanent impact on our collective unconscious and we,
84 quite unconsciously, started to unrelated ourselves with our culture, including language. That imperial experience
85 influenced our collective thinking and made it extremely difficult for us to be out of this influence. We have
86 assumed them, unconsciously but firmly, as superior to ourselves. Did you ever think that why we call Faisalabad
87 as Manchester or Bhalwal as California of Pakistan? Why do we say that Waris Shah is Shakespeare of Punjabi?
88 Why not we say Shakespeare is Waris Shah of English? Think about it.

89 This urge to disassociate ourselves with our native culture throws some light on the reason behind current
90 popularity of Western dress, food and etiquettes.

91 5 c) Economic factors:

92 According to Marxist point of view, economical factors are the basis for overall social patterns. English language
93 promised and promises financial security. You can get high level jobs only if you know English language. The
94 importance of English for success in any field can hardly be emphasized because it is the language of financial
95 activities. While Punjabi language does not promise you any financial assistance. Karl Marx would argue that
96 this shift from Punjabi to English is totally driven by economic factors.

97 6 d) Psychological factors:

98 As we know that this region, known as Punjab, a homeland of Punjabi people and the birthplace of Punjabi
99 language, had been under the rule of British Empire. This historical fact has cultural, psychological and social
100 consequences which are present here even today and are responsible for this shift from vernacular to foreign

101 language. The British, speakers of English language, were the ruler of the Punjabis, speaker of Punjabi language.
102 This relation of master and slave and analogous relation of master language and slave language and a strong
103 desire on the part of slave to relate himself or herself with masters is a considerable factor in this shift from
104 Punjabi to English among the people of Punjab.

105 The systematic and organized portrayal of Punjabi culture as inferior left a permanent impact on our collective
106 unconscious and we, quite unconsciously, started to unrelated ourselves with our culture, including language. to
107 be out of this influence. We have assumed them, unconsciously but firmly, as superior to ourselves.

108 **7 IV. Literature Review**

109 Dr. Tariq Rehman in his research named "Language policy, Multilingualism and Language Vitality in Pakistan"
110 states the fact of elite's and government's patronage of English language at the cost of native tongues but in
111 the name of efficiency and modernization. "It is understandable that members of this elite had a stake in the
112 continuation of English because it differentiated them from the masses; gave them a competitive edge over those
113 with Urdu-medium or traditional (madrassa) education; and, above all, was the kind of cultural capital which
114 had snob value and constituted a class-identity marker."

115 The psyche of the native speech communities, he relates to the social hierarchical system where the culture
116 capital of the natives is associated with shame and inferior legacy by the elite, resultantly the natives are
117 embarrassed about their languages. Dr. Saiqa Imtiaz Asif also propounds the synonymous view on the point of
118 language and culture shame in a bilingual or multilingual society in "Shame -A Cause of Language Desertion".

119 Languages in Pakistan are losing their large reservoir on account of less transfer of this knowledge to the new
120 generation. Language maintenance occurs at two inter linked level ;where Parents adapt their own language use
121 in order to promote desired linguistic competencies in their children and secondly Parents learn new language
122 varieties, or elements thereof, from their children, who have greater access to the new varieties and eventually start
123 to use them at home. This is the type of child-parent language socialization (Children as Socializing Agent) "Every
124 14 days a language dies .By 2100 more than half of the more than 7000 languages spoken on Earth-many of them
125 yet not recorded -many disappear, taking with them the wealth of knowledge about history, culture, the natural
126 environment, and the human brain." This deduction of the research "Educating Voices Project ", conducted by
127 The National Geographic Society is the consequence of shifting trend among the speech communities.

128 **8 V. Data Collection a) Instrument**

129 Instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire comprising ten questions about the causes, nature and
130 consequences of this shifting phenomenon, along with some space for the respondents to comment freely. This
131 questionnaire was distributed among the people of varying age group with different educational and social
132 background. Our respondents were mainly from University of Sargodha, including both students and teachers,
133 and then common people from Sargodha, Faisalabad and Lahore.

134 **9 1.**

135 English language is very necessary for survival in contemporary global community. a)
136 Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e)
137 Strongly Disagree

138 **10 2.**

139 This shift from Punjabi language to English language will lead to a cultural shift, from Punjabi culture to
140 English culture. Strongly disagree What, according to you, are the reasons of this shifting from Punjabi language
141 to English language? Comment.

142 - ??

143 _____
144 _____
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151 _____ - (D D D D) b) Data
152 Analysis

153 The objective of our questionnaire was to ascertain the rationale of language shift. It was designed in such a
154 way as to probe the impetus for abandoning and adopting Punjabi and English respectively.

155 The findings are very interesting, cementing our hypothesis, and in some cases contradictory.

156 Our first question was about the inevitability of English language for survival in this global village, both at
157 individual and collective level. And, as was expected, everyone is agreed about its inevitability. As illustrated in
158 the graph, 100% people think that there is no other way to compete in modern world except to equip ourselves

14 VIII. CONCLUSION

159 with this modern lingual-weapon, English language. What is noticeable in this result is that those who are
160 totally illiterate (certainly we had to explain our questions to them in Punjabi), they are aware with the sheer
161 importance of English.

162 The response for question No. 2 is in conflict with that of first question in the sense that, although all think
163 that we cannot thrive without English, 90% respondents consider English language as a threat for their indigenous
164 culture. Question No. 2 and question 10 are thematically identical, so response for both is also same, that is
165 90%.

166 Question No. 3 relates economic security with English and 57% people opine in affirmation, that English
167 secure economic security in an insecure world.

168 63% respondents are of the view that speaking English gives one a superior social position. Question No. 6 of
169 the questionnaire probes the relation between English language and notion of civilization. As people usually, in
170 this area, equate English language with knowledge, civilization, mannerism, sophistication and etiquettes.

171 Question No. 7 is intended to check people's view about English culture in general and English dress in
172 particular. 56% people consider English dress code as a symbol of social superiority.

173 Question No. 8 directly asks the people that whether this shift is positive or negative and interestingly, 77%
174 people are against this shift. When a substantial quantity of people is not in favour of this transference, why is
175 it taking place rapidly?

176 11 Data analysis

177 observation throws some light on the complexity and intricacy of this phenomenon.

178 In response to Question No. 9, 79% people take English as a difficult language to learn for a Punjabi speaking
179 person.

180 It seems paradoxical that 77% people are against this lingual conversion and according to 79 %, it is not easy
181 to learn but, despite of all this, language shift is gaining momentum day by day. As we provided space for our
182 respondents to comment and to say something about language shift if they think that these questions do not
183 give ample opportunity to express their views about matter in hand. In accordance with our hypothesis, we
184 asked unambiguously our worthy respondents to name the reasons for their opting of English. The results shown
185 in above graph are actually simplified deduction of our respondent's comments, as they did not mention these
186 factors clearly.

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188 The analysis of the comment section of our questionnaire holds economic factor primarily responsible for lingual
189 conversion. 40% of our respondents see this shift from a Marxist perspective, asserting that it is backed by the
190 fact that English language ensures economic security, opening a wider horizon of well-prospective jobs. This
191 result strengthens the Marxist interpretation of language shift.

192 Economy's role in language shift is comparatively obvious, but what is striking in this data is the fact that
193 next to economy, comes psychological considerations. According to 30% respondents, speaking English language,
194 reading English literature and newspapers, watching English movies, listening English songs, wearing English
195 dress and behaving in an English manner exerts a psychological effect on others. One of our respondents shared
196 a personal experience with us, telling us that he has never been stopped by security personnels and by traffic
197 police when he is in English dress. But whenever he is in indigenous dress, he is often stopped and interrogated
198 by police. It is because our long experience of subjugation, not only physically but also culturally and mentally,
199 has affected our collective unconscious, as in Jungian psychology.

200 The other three factors i.e. historical, cultural and social share equal contribution in promoting English and
201 a corresponding demoting of Punjabi language.

202 13 VII. Results

203 The result of our research is, to some extent, in agreement with Marxist assumption about the formation

204 14 VIII. Conclusion

205 The present lingual scenario of Punjab is very complicated. On the one hand, there is a consensus that native
206 language should be saved by giving it its due position because English is a foreign language, endangering our
207 native language and culture. And also it is causing problems for our students as they have to, coercively, learn
208 it. For this, there are seminars, symposiums, discussions, forums and articles, urging the masses to do their part
209 for their language. But, on the other hand, English is escalating in all direction, taking no notice of the concerns
210 of the natives. In short, when majority is against it, then why is it so popular?

211 The answer, deducted by our research, is that language shift is a social phenomenon and social phenomena
212 are the result of cumulative work of historical, cultural, social, economic and psychological factors. At present,
213 these shaping elements of society are in such an arrangement that is auspicious for English. Religion is also one
214 of the major shaping elements of a society but on an overall social canvas, its influence is relatively feeble. As
215 we can see that Arabic is religiously sacred language for Punjabis, but Arabic is not enjoying the same position
216 as that of English. Reason is that Arabic fulfills spiritual needs while English can fulfill physical and material

217 needs, and as Maslow propounds in his 'Hierarchy of Needs', physical needs are our immediate concerns. Any language that has economic considerations attached with it, will enjoy superior position. ¹



Figure 1:



Figure 2: Volume

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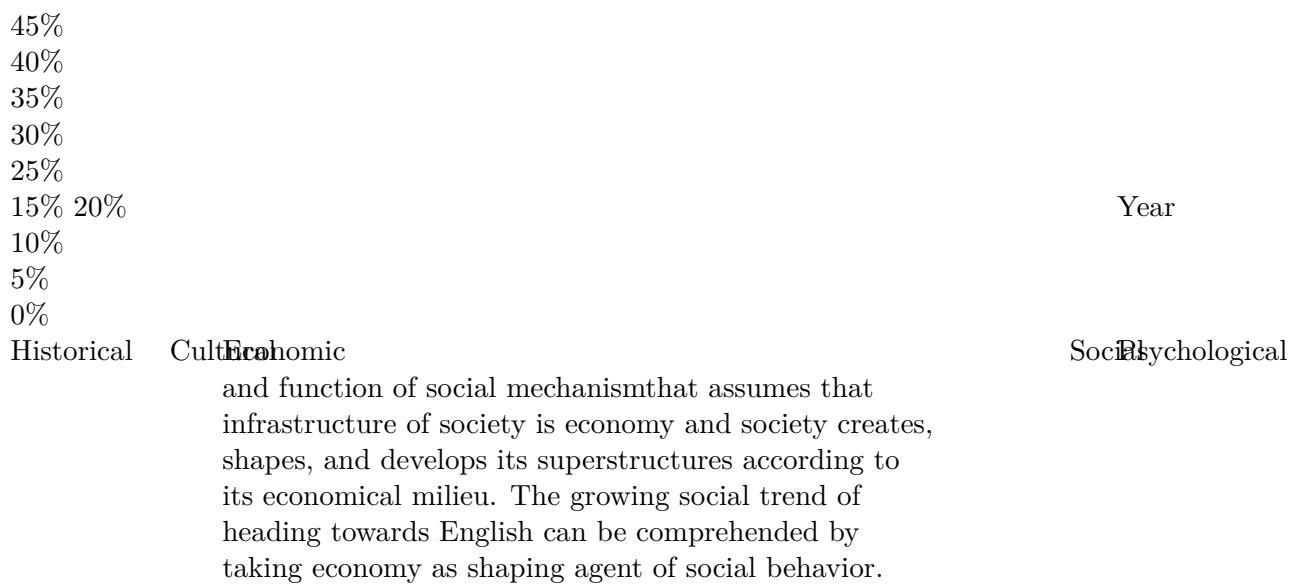


Figure 3:

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