



RESEARCH PAPER

The Impact of Dominant Languages on Regional Languages: A Case Study of English, Urdu and Shina

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate how Urdu and English have influenced the Shina lexicon in the time span of three successive generations which has been divided into three categories of 'Youngsters', 'Middle Age generation' and 'Older generation'. For this research, the data was collected through a questionnaire. The people of three successive generations were asked to choose the most frequently used lexical item in conversation from English, Urdu and their mother tongue Shina. The responses showed that young Shina speakers have been greatly influenced by the dominant languages English and Urdu. The middle aged Shina speakers indicated the direct influence of the Urdu language on the variety of Shina spoken by them. It was revealed that the old generation is not influenced by any of the dominant languages as the only language they can speak is Shina. The present study indicated that Shina might become an endangered language in future if it is not properly documented. Linguistic anthropologists can replicate similar research methods to see impact of dominant languages on other regional languages. Future researchers can also conduct a large scale corpus based study investigating the approximate number of lexicons that have been borrowed from the dominant languages

Introduction

Shina is widely spoken by the Dardic tribes in the administrative division of northern Pakistan known as Gilgit-Baltistan. The areas of Diamer, Kohistan, Gilgit Division, Ghizer, Astore and some parts of Hunza, Nager and Baltistan are home to Shina speakers. The region of Gilgit-Baltistan is naturally a mountainous area famous for its well-known and highest mountain ranges named the Karakoram, Hindu Kush

and Himalaya. The mountainous ranges and inaccessible terrain resulted in less interaction with the world outside in the past.

The secluded status of Gilgit-Baltistan started to vanish with the advent of the British Empire at the time of Great Game in subcontinent. This mountainous region of Gilgit-Baltistan received the attention of the big powers like China, Russia and United Kingdom. As a result, the British political agents and army officers serving in the region started learning and documenting the regional languages of Gilgit-Baltistan.

The British came to the region with their own governance structure and conventional educational institutions, which was an outcome of modernism. These new innovations played the role of catalyst in introducing English and Urdu languages to so far inaccessible mountainous societies of this remote region. With the arrival of British in northern Pakistan, the so far isolated area was linked with the other cities of Pakistan through a small jeep able road in late 1950s. A big change of accessibility to this area was witnessed during the late 1970s when the famous Karakoram Highway (KKH) was built which was felt as a change catalyst. The KKH opened the ways of modernization to the societies of Gilgit-Baltistan. It linked the previously inaccessible region to the neighboring country China on one side and the other cities of Pakistan on the other side. Consequently, it increased the level of communication among different communities, cultures and languages due to which the young Shina speakers can fluently speak Urdu and English as compared to their mother tongue Shina.

Though, the construction of KKH and the other latest modes of communication facilitated the region in many socio-economic ways, but the price had to be paid by the local communities and cultures. One of the disadvantages of modernization was the growing threat to the existence of local vernaculars, customs, traditions, local values and its folk literature etc. Which are perceived as the precious assets of the people living in Gilgit-Baltistan. This modernity has also caused an irreversible harm to the wild-life, biodiversity and folk lore of the region.

These remote areas of Gilgit-Baltistan are known for their significant features of natural beauty, wild life on one side and cultural, linguistic and social diversity on the other. This mountainous region is home to a number of linguistic and ethnic groups such as Sheens, Yaskuns, Baltis, Wakhi and Brushu with their indigenous languages such as Shina, Balti, Brushashki and Wakhi with many of its dialectal varieties. The cultural diversity of this region provides an exceptional opportunity to the linguists, anthropologists and other social scientists to study the evolution of culture and ethno linguistics. All the languages in in this area are oral and its culture is orally transferred from the one generation to the next.

The word "Shina" refers to the language of Shin people which is one of the ethnic group. According to Namoos (1961), during the ninth century AD, the Shin people were the rulers of Gilgit. Jettmar (1980) is of the view that the Shin conquest

followed the Tibetan rule in a peaceful manner. It is believed that the original inhabitants of Gilgit while keeping their ethnic identity adopted Shina language at that time. Currently people of different ethnic groups including Shins, Ronos, Yashkuns, Gushpurs, Kashmiris and many others are mother tongue speakers of Shina language.

Shina is one of the Dardic languages which is a sub branch of Indo-Iranian group of languages. Most of the Dardic languages are being spoken in mountainous regions of northern Pakistan which stretch into some parts of northern Afghanistan in the west and Kashmir on the east. The other prominent Dardic language is Khuwaar which is being spoken in Ghizer district of Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Some of the other Dardic languages in Chitral include Kalasha in famous Kalaash region Palula in Kohistan and Dameli (Carla and Backetstrom, 2002; Taj, 2011; Dukhi, 1995; Usman, 1991; Muhammad, 1905; Dani, 1989; Namous, 1961; Jetmar, 1980).

Shina is extensively spoken in Daras, Kargil, Gurais valleys of Indian Occupied Kashmir on the other side of Line of Control. It is also spoken and understood by a large number of people in Indian side of Neelum and Kishan Ganga. Majority of the Shina speakers live in northern part of Pakistan which includes Kohistan, Tangir, Darel, entire Chilas region, Shinaki areas which constitute the lower part of Hunza, some parts of Nagar, the entire Gilgit and Astore regions and some parts of Ghizer and Baltistan (Radloff and Backetstrom, 2002). Bailey (1924) is considered one of the authentic and pioneer western researchers on Shina. His is of the view that Shina speaking areas include Gures, Daras, Rondu, Chilas, Gilgit, Astore, Hunza, Nagar, Ishkoman, Kharmang (Baltistan), Punial etc., which are valleys located on mountain peaks. It is important to mention that all of these valleys are located on Karakoram, Himalaya and Hindukush, which are famous mountain ranges. In addition, feudal monarchs and local chieftains ruled the homeland of Shina. The dialects of Shina language could not undergo an even development due to communication barriers among the speakers, inaccessible and hard landscape of the valleys

According to Bailey (1924), one of the pioneer works in research work on Shina, Shina is spoken in various valleys located in the mountain crests including Dras, Gures, Chilas to Kohistan, Rondu and Kharmang (Baltistan), Astore, Gilgit, Nagar, Hunza, Punial, Ishkoman etc. It is worth noting that all the valleys are situated in the mountain ranges of Karakorum, Himalaya and Hindukush. Moreover, homeland of Shina was ruled by local chieftains and feudal monarchs. Dialects of the Shina language did not undergo a uniform evolution for many reasons such as communication gape among the speakers; isolated and difficult terrain of the valleys, scattered royal domain made it difficult to easily communicate with each other. Till early seventies people nearby areas including Hunza, Nagar, Chilas and Punial were considered outsiders and were not allowed to stay overnight in Gilgit. Consequently, dialects of Shina spoken in different royal domains undertook an entirely unique course of evolution.

Century's old oral literature in the form of riddles, folk songs and tales and Shina vocabulary is on the verge of extinction due to non-availability of an approved system of orthography. In the past, these different folk genres were the only means for the medium of education for the young generation to inculcate various moral values prevailing in the society as there were no conventional schools in remote areas of this mountainous and remote region. In such a situation the folksongs and sayings were the only means to convey the inner feelings, emotions, love, respect, devotion, honor or respect etc. by both men and women of all ages in these remote areas and this tradition was orally transmitted to the next generation. In this way the language was also transmitted and preserved orally. As in the past and no effort has been taken to document or preserve this valuable oral literature, as a result, the folk wisdom as well as its vocabulary has died out due to pressure from the dominant languages like English and Urdu.

The present research is very important as Shina like other less spoken oral languages of region is on the verge of extinction as no effort has been made to preserve it through a proper writing system. This situation has been aggravated by the influence of dominant national and international languages. Additionally, the century old oral Shina literature and its vocabulary is dying out because the younger generation has diverted its attention towards English and Urdu which are medium of instruction in schools, colleges, universities and everyday life.

Therefore, this study concentrates its attention on the point that how the younger generation is more tilted towards English and Urdu in society. By doing so, the present study investigates the influence of the dominant languages like English and Urdu on more marginalized languages like Shina which on the verge of extinction.

It has been observed that many socio-economic, political and global factors are involved in the change of Shina language as it happens with most of the marginalized languages. The Shina speakers are being exposed to English, Urdu and other languages due to education, media and other means of communication. When the young Shina generation goes to schools and colleges, they are taught in Urdu and English. Even outside the academic institutions, they need to learn Urdu for the purpose of trade, commerce, shopping, medical check-up and other requirements as Urdu is used as a lingua franca in daily life.

Apart from it, the use of English and Urdu has also become a marker of high status in the society. Shina is undergoing changes due to the influence of modern technology in the form of print, electronic and social media. Shina has also been changed due to the strong desire of Shina speakers to connect and communicate with the rest of the world.

There is a considerable difference between the Shina spoken by the current Shina speaking generation and their grandparents. Young Shina speakers find it quite challenging to comprehend the variety of Shina spoken by the first generation

as the lexical items used by them have been replaced by Urdu and English vocabulary items. One possible reason of changes in Shina vocabulary is a good number of borrowings from Urdu and English. The researchers are interested in studying in influence of the dominant languages on the minority language Shina on one hand and the influence of external factors like globalization, the need to communicate and business purposes on the other hand.

Literature Review

There is scarcity of research on the culture, traditions and language of the Shina speaking people. Recent studies on Shina have been conducted by Shams and Anwar (2019), Taj (2011) and Carla (2002), Kohistani and Schmidh (1998), Dukhi (1995), Namus (1981) and Buddruss (1964). Biddulph (1980) was the first person to demarcate the geographical boundaries of the people who speak Shina. He observed that Shina speech community has a unique culture, customs and traditions. The current available literature on Shina includes a few books written on the languages and culture of the region by the British army officers and political agents during the time of Great Game. Among the few of the foreign writers are: Grierson (1924), Leitner (1893), Baily (1924), Lorimer (1954), Cunningham (1853) and Biddulph (1880). Baily and Grierson compared Shina with the other languages of Dardic group whereas Biddulph and Leitner provided a general description of history, culture, demography of the area and languages. Muhammad (1905) and Lorimer (1924) conducted ethnological studies on Shina.

Radloff and Backstrom (2002) are of the view that majority of the oral languages spoken in Gilgit-Baltistan can be grouped together as part of the Indo-Aryan or the Indic group. The Dardic branch of the North-western group includes Wakhi, Shina and Khuwaar, while the endangered Domaki language belongs to the Central group of languages. The Balti language is spoken in Baltistan region which as been categorized as part of the Sino-Tibetan group. They observed that besides the Indic family of languages in northern Pakistan, there are some of the languages which belong from Tibeto-Burman group of languages in different areas of Baltistan division and language isolate Brushashki which is being spoken in some parts of Ghizer district, Hunza and Nager.

In addition to the wide-ranging linguistic and cultural diversity of the area, Radloff and Backstrom (2002) also observed that there are higher levels of sociolinguistic variances which can be seen in the form of multilingualism, cultural and ethnic diversity all over the northern part of Pakistan. They propose that commonly, the speakers of most linguistic groups in Gilgit-Baltistan indicate realistic attitudes towards learning the dominant languages like Urdu and English due to which these very languages have become a symbol of prestige and power. Gilgit-Baltistan is a multilingual region, due to which it is quite natural for the people of area to speak more than one language quite proficiently. Print, electronic and social media along with the formal education system of schools and colleges played a vital role in promoting Urdu and English in the society. Their study reveals that the

languages like Domaaki, "indicate signs of declining linguistic vitality and preference for more dominant neighboring languages among the younger generations". Radloff and Backstrom (2002) have cited a report of UNISCO (2003) according to which signs of the declining vitality of Domaki language are quite alarming due to a very few numbers of the Domaki speakers are left who speak their mother tongue. This attitude in turn has made it the most endangered language around the globe.

As compared to Domaki, most of the other regional languages of Gilgit-Baltistan have retained to some extent as these are spoken frequently by the native speakers for the purpose of general communication especially in rural areas which are still less influenced by effects of globalization. In the cities, these languages also face threat from the national and international languages as the younger generation is using English and Urdu instead of Shina. Shina is one of the widely spoken languages in the mountainous region of Gilgit-Baltistan. The people who speak Shina as their mother tongue live in different parts of Gilgit, Diamer, Astore, Ghizer, some parts of Hunza and Rondu area of Baltistan. Biddluph (1880) presented a new theory regarding the spread of the Shina language in the mountainous regions of the northern Pakistan. He suggests that the Shin conquers whose language was Shina came from the Indus valley and conquered the region which comprised of the present day Gilgit-Baltistan. These conquerors stretched their rule up to the Baltistan and Leh in Ladakh. He suggests that after the conquest, the Shins pushed back the original inhabitants of the region to the far flung areas and imposed their language on them which later on was used as a common means of communication by everyone. As a result of this conquest, the members of other language community groups shifted to the high inaccessible valleys such as Hunza, Nagar and Yasin. Biddluph is of the opinion that before the arrival of Shins in the area, the original residents of the Gilgit area were Yeshkuns who are one of the ethnic groups and speak the same Shina language as their mother tongue. Lorimer (1923) also advocates that Brushashki was the indigenous language of the Gilgit region before the Shin invasion in the area, but Jetmaar (1080) is of the view that Shin invasion was a peaceful process and as a result of which the spread of the Shina language became possible in the entire region.

Language is used as a tool of communication and in most of the human cultures, it is being considered as the most integral part of the social identity and cultural classification. Due to economic, historical and socio cultural reasons Shina speakers have to use more than one language for communication. The reasons of the requirement of using more than one language in communication include education, migration, urbanization, colonization in the past and globalization. Shina speakers choose different language varieties from their linguistic repertoires in order to communicate with diverse group members in the same manner as any heterogeneous group. The choice of a particular language in a specific context is not random rather based on specific factors such as the conversational norms of the specific speech community.

Researchers are of the view that Shina, as all the other languages, is constantly changing in its form Shams and Anwar (2019), Carla (2002), Taj (2011). A language is like an alive organism which is born, grows, decays and even dies. There can be lexical, phonetics and phonological, spelling, semantic and syntactic changes in a language with the passage of time.

Material and Methods

Questionnaires were circulated to 100 respondents to collect data. The respondents of the study represented different age groups of three successive generations i.e. young, middle and old Shina speakers. Questionnaires were distributed and supervised personally by the researcher. It was inevitable as the education level of old generation was quite low as compared to the young generation. The researchers tried to find out to which degree the dominant languages like English and Urdu have influenced the Shina vocabulary. For conducting this study, the researchers had designed a questionnaire of 50 daily used vocabulary items in which three options of English, Urdu and Shina were given. The respondents were asked to encircle the word they use more frequently in their daily conversation. A random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the present study in which each respondent had an equal probability to be left out or selected. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS to find out the frequencies and percentages of the responses in three different languages by three age groups of Shina speakers.

Results and Discussion

The findings of the study reveal that there is a significant difference in the variety of the language of Shina speakers by three successive generations such as older, middle aged and young generation. The results support the basic hypothesis of the research that Shina is rapidly undergoing changes due to the effects of the globalization and pressure from the dominant languages. The present research also indicate that older generation of Shina speakers take pride in being part of the Dardic culture and member of the Shin speech community while accepting the fact that their culture and language is changing rapidly. They do not want their language to be changed under the influence of exogenous factors which according to them is corrupting their pure mountainous culture and language. They want their language to be intact and pure in its original form. It was interesting to know that almost all the respondents consider their language Shina a marker of their social identity, but in practice, English and Urdu enjoy the status of elites and prestigious languages which is also a common trend in the entire country and Shina speaking community is not immune from it.

This trend suggests that the remote areas of the Gilgit-Baltistan are also influenced by political, cultural and social changes taking place in the rest of the world. The participants were of the view that in today's globalized world, the importance of English cannot be negated as it is considered key to success, knowledge, progress and good jobs all over the world. They think that learning

English is the need of the hour as it is being used in academic and professional circles in the entire country. The modern communicative means like internet, print, electronic and social media have also played a vital role in learning English by the younger generation and realizing its importance.

The research findings reveal that though the younger generation perceives the influence of English and Urdu on their native language as a positive trend, but on the other hand they are of the view that their language and culture need to be documented and preserved as it is dying out rapidly. Unlike the older generation, the school going younger generation want English, Urdu and Shina to coexist in the society, but they do not want the dominant languages like English and Urdu to completely replace their mother tongue as it is their social and linguistic identity which differentiates them from the rest of the nations and communities.

The Youngsters

The analysis of the responses collected from the younger generation clearly illustrates that the dominant languages English and Urdu have influenced Shina of this generation quite significantly. For a comprehensive analysis, the questionnaire was designed into four different categories such as 'Edibles', 'clothing', 'Utensils', and 'Everyday Words' in English, Urdu and Shina to check the influence of dominant languages on the regional language Shina.

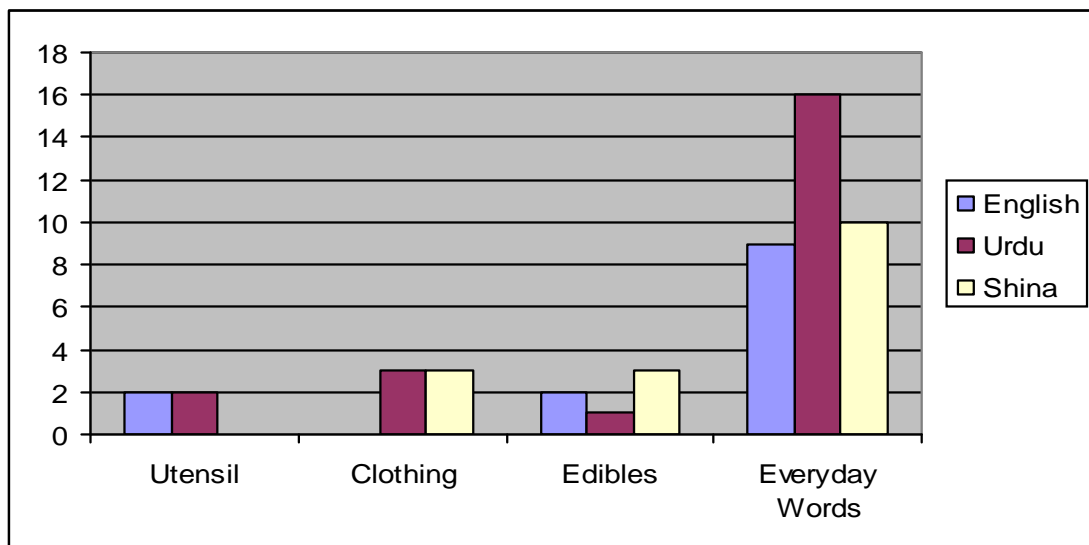


Figure 1: Words Breakdown for Youngsters

The results in figure 4.1 depict that the educated younger generation prefer to use English and Urdu words for Utensils. They were even unaware of the names of wooden utensils used in earlier times by their forefathers. In the past, beautiful wooden spoons, plates and cauldrons were prepared by using '*diyaar*' which were

called 'khapain', 'gudu' and 'turu' in Shina, but the younger generation is unaware of these Shina vocabulary words as these utensils are no more used by the society. Instead of using the pure Shina names, they use the English or Urdu equivalent such as 'tea spoon', 'plate', 'water and dinner sets' which are frequently used by the younger generation. The results indicate that in the Clothing category, they use both Urdu and Shina instead of English. In 'Edible' category, they use all the three languages.

Middle Aged Group

The results in figure 4.2 indicate the influence of the national language Urdu on the conversation of the middle aged group. The results depict that as compared to the language of youngsters, the language of this age group has been significantly influenced by Urdu. Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and it is used as a lingua franca all over the country. The reasons for the more significant impact of Urdu on Shina of this age group are:

- Urdu is being used as medium of instruction in government schools and colleges in the region.
- In Gilgit-Baltistan, most of the business and official matters are dealt in Urdu language.
- Shina has been influenced by Urdu due to the travel and trade by the Shina speakers with the people from other cities of Pakistan.
- Due to the demand of new technology use, more words have been borrowed from English and Urdu into Shina.
- Different Urdu words have been penetrated into Shina due to Urdu movies and music.

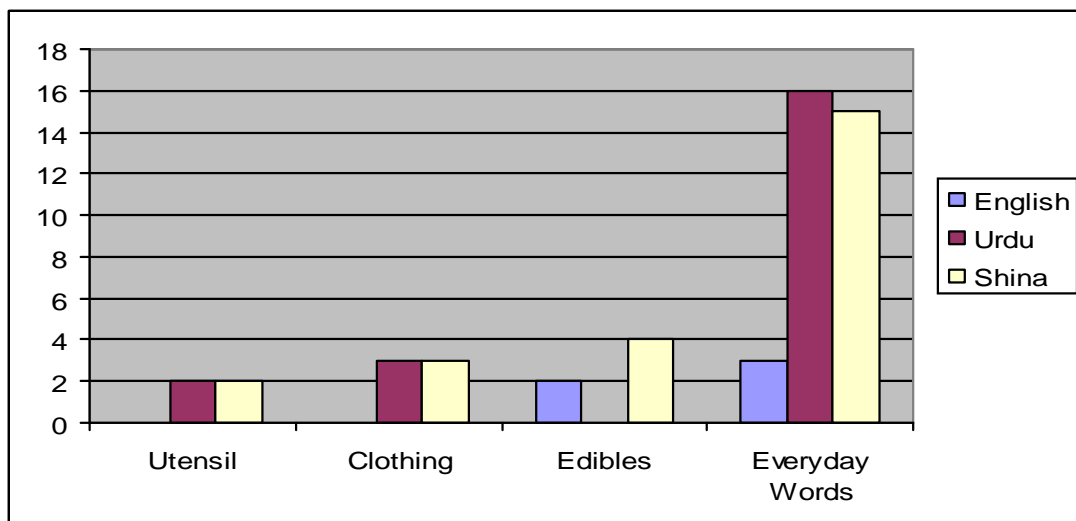


Figure 2 Words Breakdown for Middle Aged Persons

Older Generation

The research findings of the data in figure 4.3 collected from the older generation reveal that they prefer using their own mother tongue in their daily conversation instead of using any other language. They are of the view that even their young generation should use Shina at least when they are in their home town. The results also indicate that they seem to show some positive attitude towards the national language as well. The people of this age group consider the national language a valuable asset as they think that through learning this language, one can have greater opportunities in the society and it widely used all over the country.

The results of the responses of older generation indicate that Shina is still being spoken in its pure form by old people who are in their late seventies. Their Shina seems to have been not effected by English or Urdu. The younger generation is unaware of the archaic Shina word, which the older generation still uses in their daily conversation. These archaic words are dying out from Shina rapidly.

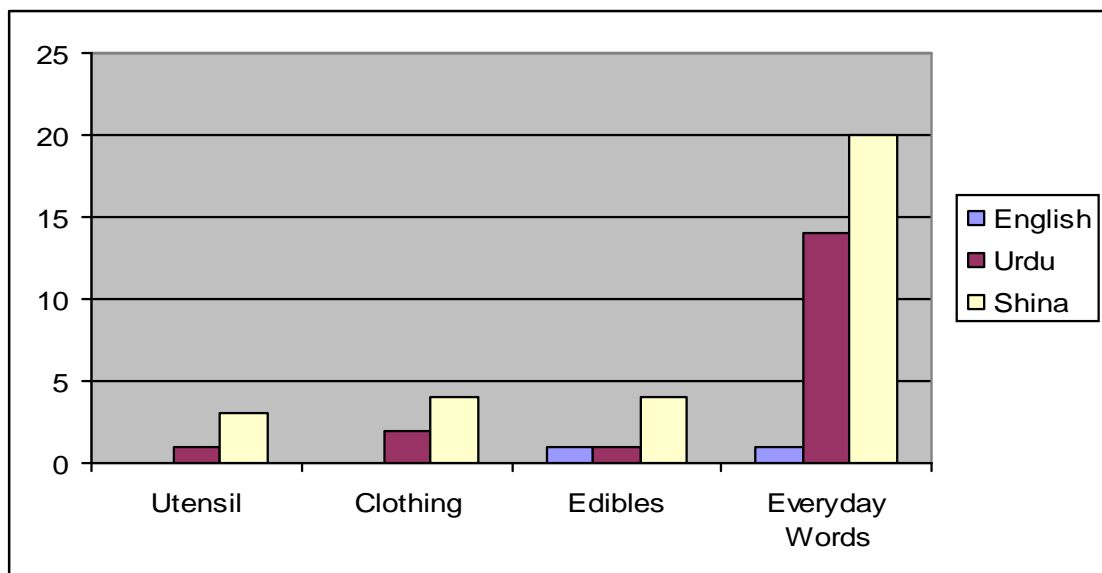


Figure 3 Words Breakdown for Old Generation

Discussions

The researchers have observed that like every living language, Shina is rapidly changing due to its contact with Urdu and English. In schools and colleges of Gilgit-Baltistan, the medium of instruction is either Urdu or English from primary level to the higher level in universities, so the students have to learn both English and Urdu from the beginning. Moreover, Urdu is used as a lingua franca in the entire region as people from different linguistic backgrounds like Balti, Khuwaar, Wakhi and Brushashki communicate with each other in Urdu. Urdu is also used for trade purposes and by tourists from other parts of the country.

Many words from Urdu have entered into Shina and these words have become a permanent part of the Shina lexicon, but the data from younger generation shows that many words from English have also become part of the Shina vocabulary. These English words are extensively being used by the younger generation in their daily conversation. Moreover, by realizing the importance of the English language and education, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan are sending their children to other cities of Pakistan and even to foreign countries for their education. This changing attitude of people has played a catalytic role in bringing changes to their language and culture. Now they have realized the fact that English is no more a foreign or an alien language to them. The English language has now become a need and also a status symbol in society. This research reveals that in certain cases of lexical borrowings in Shina, the pronunciation of Urdu and English loan words have also been changed and the pronunciation of these words have been assimilated with the Shina sounds. This study reveals that the young Shina speakers feel more fascinated towards using English and Urdu whereas the older generation of Shina speakers feels more easy and proud in speaking their mother tongue. This occurrence was also investigated with reference to linguistic prejudice.

The research findings of the young generation indicate that they are more persuaded to use English and Urdu words in their daily life instead of using the Shina vocabulary. This study also reveals that the young Shina speakers are not aware of the Shina archaic words related to domestic or agricultural tools as they are no more used in daily conversation. The data from the middle aged people reveal that they are influenced by Urdu to a considerable extent. The reasons of the impact of Urdu on Shina were also discussed by the researchers. The results of the responses of the old generation indicate that the language of older generation is not affected by English and Urdu because of which the variety of Shina they speak is purer as compared the Shina of younger and middle aged generation.

The general analysis reveals that the attitude of the people of different age groups towards their mother tongue is different from each other. The changes in their language indicate that there is a significant difference in the variety of Shina they speak during their daily conversation. It also indicates that older generation takes pride in their mother tongue and perceives it as their cultural and social identity. The middle aged group is more influenced by Urdu and also realizes the importance of English. They also showed a positive attitude towards changes in Shina. The Shina of the younger generation is more affected by English as compared to the other two age groups. They are aware of the changes taking place in Shina due to Urdu and English. They view English as a status symbol and a requirement in the modern age to progress in the society.

Conclusion

It is a natural phenomenon that every living language undergoes changes all over the world. These languages change due to social, political or psychological factors. Human beings require new lexical items related to latest scientific inventions

such as domestic appliances and industrial equipment. Languages also undergo changes due to the contact with other languages as due to the influence of Urdu and English, Shina is undergoing changes. Speakers of different social and educational background, age groups and gender also speak in a different style. This research revealed that Shina speakers representing different age groups and educational background speak differently.

Shina is one of the minor languages of Pakistan being spoken in the northern parts of Pakistan, but this language might not die out completely as still a good number of people especially in rural areas use it as a means of communication. It has been observed that people look at language extinction in two ways: the younger educated class perceive the changes as a natural process and have a positive attitude towards the changes in Shina, while the older generation look upon the process with apprehension because they are of the view that language death leads to the death of the culture and identity of the people. This research revealed that Shina is not an endangered language today, but the global forces of the change are quite strong which can change Shina completely in future if it is not documented and preserved.

The analysis of the data collected for the present research indicated that the old Shina generation is worried about the future of Shina. The older generation considers the changes in Shina as a threat to their identity. They are of the opinion that language symbolizes the culture of its community and losing a language entails a loss of identity. The researchers are of the view that they should realize the fact that the process of change is natural and unavoidable. Variations are bound to occur in every living language. The present study indicated that Shina is not an endangered language at the moment but it can become an endangered language in future, if it is not properly documented and preserved. The Shina speakers and researchers should take responsibility of documenting and preserving of the Shina before it dies out. In this way the centuries old oral literature of Shina can also be preserved.

Very limited research studies are existing on Shina and the researchers noticed that several areas have not been explored by any researcher yet such as morphology, syntax and word paradigms. This research has also revealed that English and Urdu have affected the syntax and the pronunciation of Shina as well, which needs to be studied. This study needs to be extended as it is a preliminary investigation. Efforts should be carried out to preserve the unique Shina language and culture on scientific basis before it becomes extinct due to the impacts of globalization. It has been observed that the new generation of Shina community is showing a tendency towards advancement and transformation which can make the documentation and preservation of Shina language and culture a challenging task in future.

The influence of Urdu and English on other regional languages of Pakistan also needs to be studied. Such studies on regional languages of Pakistan will help to

comprehend the background of the cultural and historical currents that shape the unique character of Pakistan.

Some of the recommendations that can help in preserving the Shina language can be:

- In order to teach Shina, proper classes should be arranged in educational institutions.
- To promote the Shina language and literature, seminars should be organized.
- Shina dictionaries should be written to preserve Shina archaic words.
- Local people should be trained to write and read Shina.
- Dramas and talk shows in Shina should be developed for radio and television programs
- Workshops and conferences and should be arranged to introduce the unique Shina culture and language to the world.
- The young Shina generation should be motivated to realize that their culture and language is worth maintaining.
- The Shina language should be used in the local mass media.
- Parents can transfer their mother tongue to their children by speaking Shina with them.
- The Gilgit-Baltistan provincial government should establish a separate department for the promotion and preservation of Shina language and its literature.
- The Karakorum International University can help documenting and preserving the Shina language through different research projects as it is the only seat of higher learning in this region.

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