



A Lexical Analysis of Pashto Language

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Language, English, Pashto, Language shift, Mala, Belcha, Kodaly, توتگولي (chindro), Tutguli, Corresponding Author: Neelam Shah, English Lecturer at Bacha Khan University Charsadda, Email: Neelamshah9912@gmail.com	Language changes over time. Apart from many other reasons, some words become dormant and remain no more in use. In this research, an attempt has been made to show language change in Pashto language. For this purpose, images of different cultural items belonging to different cultural domains were tested for intelligibility from the speakers of the Pashto language. Thirty participants were taken randomly from the students of BS English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan belonging to both urban and rural areas. They were given a test containing 30 items. For sorting out the research, the five domains of Robert J. Baumgardner (1994) model was applied. The results show that most of the participants belonging to urban areas were not able to comprehend images of different cultural artifacts. Also, the majority of the participants could not answer correctly to the given items. It can be concluded from the study that because of urbanization, and many other advancements, language changes gradually.

1.1 Introduction

Language is not only a medium of communication but also as a repository of cultural identity, history and social consciousness. In the global world today, countless communities live together, they come in contact with one another through different languages. Therefore, the linguistic diversity of the world faces magnificent setbacks due to the phenomenon of globalization. Across the globe, certain languages have got the status of dominant language often overshadowing the less spoken languages. This factor has greatly influenced the linguistic plurality of languages within various communities as the focus has shifted from minority languages to majority or global languages, such as English, French, or German. South Asian countries have largely influenced by this phenomenon due to their long history of foreign influence.. this region's beauty lies in its multilingualism factor and the people from diverse

cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In this region, communities are categorized on the basis of their distinct dialectical variations. In Pakistan, particularly, almost 74 languages are spoken (Siddiqui, 2019), however the official language is English. National and co-official language is Urdu while little attention is given to the regional languages, despite their longstanding demand for recognition as a national language. The provinces within Pakistan are further sub-divided into rural and urban settings based on the economy and development. In rural areas the situation is quite stable, English and Urdu both enjoy their privilege, however, in urban areas the situation is quite drastic. In urban areas many languages are spoken, in which, maintaining good position for regional language is a tough competition. As a result, there are greater chances of linguistic erosion in the urban settings. The indigenous communities in these areas are more vulnerable to the process of language shift, language loss, or language death in the mother tongue. Therefore, several socio-linguistic, economical, political and technological factors result in diverting the focus of natives from their mother tongue to the dominant language.

According to Garret (2006:63), 'Language shift refers to a situation in which a community of speakers effectively abandons one language by shifting to another (not necessarily by conscious choice).' Language shift involves the gradual replacement of the communicative functions of one language by another that the user considers serving the maximum linguistic and social benefits of a particular place and time (see also Trudgill 2000: 191). In language shift, the functions of the minority language diminish concerning the more prestigious language whose functions expanded to cater to previous functions of the minor language. This trend of 'linguistic diminishing returns' can lead to language extinction and death (see also Philips 2006:482). It implies therefore that if language shift is not controlled and checked, it can result in language death. Other terms used instead of language shift are language transfer, language replacement, and language assimilation. Umrani and Memon (2016), define the process of Language shift; as the reduction of the number of language domains in the urban setting. David (1998, 1999, 2000, 2001a) explains this concept; by highlighting the situation of Malaysia, Singapore, and London; where the minority language has faced language shift due to the reduction of the use of the mother tongue; in some of the cases the language has been reduced to merely private lives. There are various factors responsible for such a change which include exogamous marriages, urbanization, social sphere, technological advancement and language attitude (David, 2001a).

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Language is changing from time to time, having different reasons. Sometimes, because of time and different advancements, changes in languages occur that lead some of the words to extinction or at least to little or no understanding. The purpose of this research is to explore this phenomenon of language change in Pashto and see how the Pashto language has passed from such changes and how the speakers vary in their understanding of some Pashto words.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives are:

- 1) To explore how far speakers of the Pashto language know less-used words from different domains.
- 2) To know the intelligibility level area wise (urban/rural)

1.4 Research Questions

Q 1. How far speakers of the Pashto language know less-used words from different domains?

Q 2. What is the difference between the intelligibility in respect of cultural items of students belonging to urban and rural areas?

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

The study is delimited to the students of BS English and five cultural domains only.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

Cheng (2003), introduces a new element in the field of language shift studies by measuring shift among mixed communities i.e. Malaysian and Chinese families, over five generations. The result showed that various generations acquired Malay and English and the shift tends to occur from the second and third generations. While the fourth-generation code switches in Thai and Malay, a total shift among the fifth generation occurred. However, Zaid, Mee, and Hei (2012) observed that language choice in mixed marriages is influenced by age, domains of communication, attitude, and identity among Sino-Indians in Malaysia. While David and Caesar (2009) focus on different minority group to explain the reasons for the shift among minority groups in Kuching (Malaysia) and concluded that the pressure of Malay as a lingua franca in the linguistic environment and English which has an economic value, made the younger generation more comfortable with English and Malay rather than the heritage language in home domains.

Wright (2008), studied the case of language use in Hong Kong by analyzing pre- and post-1997 situations shaped by the language policy. The result showed that the shift towards English was due to the prestige and dominance of global English. Also, the rapid increase of diglossia and cross-functional bilingualism that has derived from individual attitudes in recognizing the utility of either language. Such an outlook also stimulates the language shift in a generation. Bodomo, Anderson, and Dzahene-Quarshie (2009) surveyed Accra, the capital city of Ghana, which was concerned with the language habits of different generations and the importance of regional language. The findings showed that children born in urban centers were acquiring ex-colonial (Britain) language as their first language and a regional language. Both languages were becoming more important among the youth while the mother tongue gained less proficiency. As a result, the multilanguage shift seemed to occur in these areas, shift from mother tongue to regional language and ultimately to the language of the masses. Like in Eastern region: Nabit to Gurenne to English. It is well known that language shift is the most common course of language death (cf. Campbell 1994: 1960ff.). However, even when occurring over a prolonged period and on a scale involving more than just a few households, not all situations of language shift will automatically bring a non-dominant language to the brink of extinction. In order to assess the actual grade of endangerment of a given shift-affected language and to make a meaningful statement about the possible risk of its disappearance a variety of additional, often closely interrelated factors will have to be taken into consideration. Among these factors are the social and economic environment of the speakers, their marriage practices their educational level, their religious affiliation, their settlement patterns, and many others. All these factors contribute to the formation of the speakers' outlook on life, their internal value system. It is based on this value system that the speakers then develop what could be regarded as the main determinant of language shift: their attitude towards their mother tongue. Attitude is crucially important because it sets the speakers' mind towards using their traditional mother tongue or not using it, and thus, ultimately, defines their choice to stay with their language or to move to another, dominant one (cf. Winter 1993: 313ff.). Language shift may lead to an ultimate loss of language, which is language death. Fasold (1984:213) therefore defines language death as when a community shifts to a new language totally so that the old language is no longer used. In linguistics, language death is also referred to as language extinction or linguistic extinction. Language death is a process that affects speech communities where the level of linguistic competence of speakers of a given language is decreased. Language death may affect any language including its dialects.

Language shift may also result from language spread that brings about language replacement. When colonial languages like English and French spread very fast in the world, their economic and technological gains influenced most people to learn them and after some time these international languages replaced the indigenous languages. 2 Globalization has thus accelerated the process of language replacement and shift especially in African societies. Crystal (2000:19) concludes therefore that about half of the world's languages will not survive the next 100 years. Saville-Troike (1989:205) states that theories of cultural change are based on two facets operating within a society namely (1) a change and (2) persistence, stability, or maintenance. She posits that 'Especially in culture contact situations, the possible outcomes for the multiple languages or language varieties involved include their maintenance as separate entities, changes in one or both language systems under influence from the other or the abandonment of one in favor of the other.' Societal and language contact often results in sociolinguistic change. In language shift, phonological and grammatical patterns are more resistant to changes and shifts. Loanwords and borrowing are rather more prominent and adapted to the recipient language. The language shift is also based on the diffusionist theory.

Mother tongue languages are not given prior position, once the importance of majority language increases (David, 1998). David (2001a & 2001b), observes that in most of the context; minority languages are replaced with international language. Hence, Pashto speakers due to the changed political situation after the partition have gradually adopted Urdu. Due to such a status of minority languages over the years, the phenomenon of language shift has started to emerge as the importance of mainstream language has increased. Therefore, the present study offers to study the linguistic behavior of the Pashto community and analyze the different factors responsible for language shift among the Pashto youth by exploring their linguistic journey.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with data collection, data analysis, data collection tools, and sampling. For data collection, the researchers collected different items pictures, which is basically from different categories like household items, agricultural/farming related items, Pashtun culture related items, games, and plants categories as well. Then, the researchers prepared a questionnaire and took an intelligibility test from the 30 respondents.

3.1 Data Collection

For the data of collection, first the researchers collected different items picture, which is basically from different categories like household items, agricultural/farming related items, Pashtun culture related items, games, and plants categories as well. Then, the researchers prepared a questionnaire and took the intelligibility test from the 30 respondents randomly within the Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan,.

3.2 Sampling Method

The respondents of this study were from the English department, Abul Wali Khan University, Mardan. They have identified the items which were mentioned in the questionnaire. Random sampling were used for the selection of participants.

3.2 Data Analysis

The researchers followed the quantitative method in the analysis of data and showed the main categories that came up from the data. The data was collected from 30 respondents through an intelligibility test. The respondents responded differently to the mentioned categories which were given in the questionnaire.

3.3 Research model

In this research, for organizing and sorting out the data, the Robert J. Baumgardner (1994) model was applied. But, in this paper, only five domains from Baumgardner's model, which are agricultural, cultural, traditional, plants related and games related domains/ categories to find out that how far speakers of the Pashto language know less-used words from different domains.

4.Data Analysis

In this section, the researchers followed the qualitative method in the analysis of data and showed the main categories that came up from the data. This section covers the analyzed data from the survey respondents. This chapter is divided into five different categories i.e. farming related items, households' items, Pashtun culture related items, plants category, and games related category.

4.1 Procedures

For the analysis or collection of data, first the researchers prepared a questionnaire and took an intelligibility test from the various students of different ages and genders. Mostly, the respondents were female and were between the age of 22-25. The survey was conducted in the department of English at Abdul Wali Khan University, where some of the respondents were from urban areas and some were from rural areas. During the conduction of the test, the researchers explained each item to the respondent which is mentioned in the questionnaire and also gives them some hints for identifying the given items. Some of the respondents gave the correct answers while some were not familiar with the given items and left the concerned box blank.

Sometimes, because of differences in dialects, the items were given different names. To confirm it, the researcher confirmed from the speakers of that dialect about the correct answer. The data which is collected from the respondent is mentioned below in the following tables.

4.1. Farming Related Items

In table 4.1, some of the respondents gave the right answer while some of the respondents gave the wrong answer while some leave the paper blank. The table summarizes the findings:

Table 4.1

s.no	Parts	English Name	Correct Answers	Wrong Answer
1	ماله (mala)	Primitive wooden wheel	0	30
2	بښابښه (khakhy)	Gardening fork	12	18
3	بیلچه (belcha)	Shovel	29	01
4	پنڅخۍ (panjakha)	Rake	08	22
5	رمبی (rambi)	Hand trowel	26	06
6	لور (lor)	Sickle	27	03
7	کوټرا/توکه (toka/kotra)	Grass cutter hand machine	11	19
8	کودالۍ (Kodaly)	Hoe	19	11
9	څاټک (satak)	Hammer	29	01

Mostly, the right answers which were given by the respondents were belonging from rural areas. And the respondents who belonged from urban areas were not familiar with the given items. The majority of the respondents called the "ماله (mala)" as Paaya (wheel) and 30 out of 30 respondents were given the wrong answer. Likewise, other items were recognized by the respondents and some were not recognized as shown in table 4.1. رمبی (rambi) /Hand trowel was the most familiar with the given items and 26 out of 30 respondents were give the right answer. Likewise,

item no 06, لور (lor)/Sickle in table 4.1 was the most recognized item and 27 out of 30 respondents were familiar with the item.

Table 4.2 Household items:

A quantitative analysis was done on household items for the collection of data, different answers and names were given to the given items by different ages respondents.

Table 4.2

s.no	Parts	English Name	Correct Answers	Wrong Answer
1	بوڤه (boqa)	Well water bucket	13	17
2	کرکری (karkary)	Well water pulley	09	21
3	تونتری (tawrnay)	Old wooden box	06	24
4	تنبتهپوش (takhta posh)	Namaz posh	26	04
5	گرونجھ (garwanj)	Clay pot stand	08	22
6	درمپایه (drampaya)	Ladder	23	07
7	ریل (rail)	Quran holder	25	05
8	شکور (shkor)	The bread serving plastic tray	30	00
9	پیتارگی (petargi)	Japi cane bread storage basket	17	13
10	چتوکانری (chatokanri)	Mortar and pestle	23	07

Mostly, female respondents were familiar with the items which are shown in table 4.3.1. The item 08, شکور (shkor)/Bread serving plastic tray was most recognized and were recognized by 30 respondents out of 30. Item 03, تونتری (tawrnay)/Old wooden box was not that much familiar among the respondents and only 06 respondents give the right answer. Similarly, درمپایه (drampaya)/ Ladder was corrected by 23 respondents among 30.

4.3: Plants categories:

Table 4.3. The researchers illustrates that the items which are related to Pashtun culture, most of the respondents were not intimate to the mentioned items and the majority of the respondents give wrong answers.

Table 4.3

s.no	Parts	English Name	Correct Answers	Wrong Answer
1	توتگولی (tutguli)	Hibiscus	02	28
2	بیہے (behay)	Quince	00	30
3	توت (tut)	Mulberry	23	07

4.4 Pashtun culture related items:

The opinion of the respondents from table 4.4 was generally unfavorable, they do not know the item exactly which were mentioned in the table.

The respondents do not know the item 02 بیہے (behay)/Quince in table 4.5.1, some respondents called it “hybrid nashpati” (pear) and some respondents leave the paper bank, 30 out of 30 respondents give wrong answers to item 02. Item 03 توت (tut)/ Mulberry was the most familiar item among respondents, while item 01, was correctly answered by 02 respondents out of 30.

The most indistinguishable item was دري (darai)/Pans rack, only 05 respondents of 30 recognized that item. Although, because of differences in dialects, the given items were given different names by different respondents. Similarly, بالې (balay)/Door canopy, was corrected by only 08 respondents out of 30 respondents. Item no 05 i.e. نغاري (naghari)/Clay stove, was the most familiar item and were answered correctly by 21 respondents.

Table 4.4

s.no	Parts	English Name	Correct Answers	Wrong Answer
1	انگېټې (angetay)	Chimney	19	11
2	دري (darai)	Pans rack	05	25
3	چاټې (chaatay)	Curd churning machine	14	16
4	بالې (balay)	Door canopy	08	22
5	نغاري (naghari)	Clay stove	21	09

4.5:Games:

Table 4.6.1 is consist of old games which is most probably played in Pashtun societies. The opinion of the respondents was quite favorable and the majority of the respondents give the right answers to the mentioned items. The table summarizes the findings:

Table 4.5

s.no	Parts	English Name	Correct Answers	Wrong Answer
1	ليندا (lindha)	Catapult	27	03
2	چيندرو (chindro)	Hopscotch	24	06
3	گوليدهندا (gullidhanda)	Tipcat	22	08

Item no 01, ليندا (lindha)/Catapult was the most known item, and 27 out of 30 respondents were given the right answer of that item. Item 02 in the table were correctly answered by 24 respondents and only 06 respondents gave the wrong answer. Item 03 which is گوليدهندا (gullidhanda)/Tipcat, was corrected by 22 respondents. Sometimes, item 03 was given different names because of different dialects

5.SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The Intelligibility test was taken from thirty respondents in the department of English at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. The test was taken randomly from the respondents belonging from different areas i.e. urban and rural areas. The respondents who belong to rural areas were more familiar than the respondents who were from urban areas.

In table 4.2.1, the correct answers mostly came from those respondents who belong to rural areas while the respondents from urban areas were not that much familiar with the given items. Whereas, different names were given to the different items mentioned in table 4.3.1.

Similarly, from table 4.4.1 the correct answers were mostly from those respondents who were from rural areas. Some of the respondents give different names to the mentioned items because of different dialects while some of the respondents left the paper blank because of not knowing the mentioned items.

5.2 Conclusion

This research investigated the shift or change of a Pashto language in different categories. The primary data were collected randomly by sharing a questionnaire with 30 respondents. As mentioned earlier in the introduction chapter the purpose of the study was to investigate how far speakers of the Pashto language know less-used words from different domains, and how to explore this phenomenon of language change in the Pashto language.

The following conclusion can be drawn that those who belong to rural areas have more knowledge about household items, farming-related items, and plants and game categories as compared to those who belong to urban areas. One of the main reasons for not knowing the mentioned categories in urban areas was the new development in the material world as well as discoveries in different fields.

The results of this study show that new advancement in technologies can change the lifestyle of a person and then they can use new words for new things likewise the original word for that thing in a language become extinct and a new word takes its place.

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