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The Dynamics of Language in National Perspective: Can We Ignore Lingua Franca?

Abstract:

Language is not only a means of communication but also provides basis for developing and sustaining cultures and values. Historical evidences proved the effects of language on social, culture, economic, politics, society and education. History also revealed that the language of the conquerors became a common language for captors. This phenomenon still exists, the role of language in national development is inevitable and thus language is considered as foundation for a nation. Taking into account the role of language, this review paper which is grounded in theory provides a deep insight to study the above mentioned factors which contributed in transforming societies with a particular focus on Pakistani context. Next, this paper highlighted the role of national language and will discuss the related controversy. English and Urdu are declared as official languages and the nation is still perplexed to solve this issue. There is a strong social pressure that Urdu should be prioritized but this dream could not turn into reality yet. On the other hand, English as being an international language cannot be ignored for the sake of achieving international goals and standards.

Keywords:

Urdu English Lingua-Franca Language Culture History Language

Introduction:

Language has a vital role in the rise and fall of civilizations. Languages shape, analyze and color our views to see the world (Ostler, 2005). The growth of civilizations is linked to language and language rise with the development of society; it is indeed the identity of human beings (Janson, 2002). Language, in fact, is a repository of the history of human beings. Presently, there are almost 7000 languages being spoken in the world. The history of languages is as long as of the human beings. Perhaps language is the only tool which has preserved history. During the course, some language changed their structure while some extricated. Some of the languages could not survive longer than others (Lobachev, 2008). Language has also contributed in nation building and ultimately country's development. Historical evidences proved that empowered countries enhanced their power through their language (Friedrich, 1989). Warriors were not only conquered a piece of land but conquered the cultural roots of that particular region (Janson, 2002). All the colonial states have their own history of languages and suffered the dilemma of languages as well (Friedrich, 1989). For example, in British colonial time there is a controversy of language between the Muslims and the Hindus. After partition, this controversy emerged in a different perspective and we, the Pakistanis are still perplexed (Rahman, 1997).

Pakistan is a linguistically diverse country and multiple languages are spoken across the country. However, the official languages are Urdu and English whereas Urdu is declared as the national language. Urdu as an official language has been a burning issue since decades. However, the statistical proofs shows that Urdu is the mother tongue of only approximately 8% people in the country (Rahman, 2003). Local languages like Punjabi and some others are the native languages of greater number of people than Urdu (Wazir & Goujon, 2019). As to National stance, a number of policy decisions and provisions of the constitution are available to promote the national language and make it as a mean of communication among people living in different parts of the country.

Article 251 of the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 declared Urdu as an official language of the country (Kamath, Kamath & D'Souza, 2018). In addition, the Constitution adopted a provisional status of English for official use until the

substantial measures are taken for its replacement with Urdu. The available facts prepared a platform to initiate a discussion of official and national language. Even after decades, the situation couldn't be changed and English has been used as an official language. After 42 long years of the promulgation of the Constitution 1973, the Supreme Court of Pakistan directed to enforce Urdu as the ONLY official language in the country (Kamran, 2015). The campaign shifting from English as official language to Urdu has received considerable attention during this decade.

Every language has its history and culture. Likewise, Urdu has a rich and remarkable history and enormous amount of literature is available in prose and poetry. Urdu has also produced some of the world's finest poets, novelists and fiction writers. These celebrities have added to the everlasting glory of the language. But beyond these facts, considering the diversity of cultures and languages in Pakistan, the enforcement of Urdu after seven decades of independence is like trying to catch a missed train (Kamran, 2015).

Presently, the status of Urdu as an official language has once again under discussion in news and on social media. If we take into account the status of Urdu in our national institutes, the situation is very interesting. As to government provincial and federal institutions, the first choice is Urdu for communication, but when it comes to official correspondence English is obligatory. The situation becomes more interesting when it comes to educational institutes, public schools have opted Urdu as the medium of instruction but private schools solely dependent on English. In fact, language is the prime attraction in private schools (Saba, 2017) which shows parents' interest in educating their kids in English medium.

In this scenario, where we have a language controversy for decades after independence, we need to work for putting a full stop over this discussion. In this discussion paper which is grounded in theory will provide an in-depth analysis of the role of language in culture, society, economics, politics and education. We will also examine the role of language in the national development of a country particularly in Pakistani context. Moreover, the controversy of national and official language will also be discussed.

Historical background of language:

Over the centuries, multiple languages took the attention of the world.

Nowadays, one way to measure the popularity of language is to look at the size of the population. However, some of the languages were imposed through imperialism and colonialism e.g. English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, German and French (Swadesh, 2017). All these languages have their strong history but it is pertinent to know how language is propagated.

Around 10,000 years ago, the main source of income was agriculture. People started sowing according to their domestic needs. In addition, people also domesticated animals to serve their necessities. Mainly the settlements were developed near the running waters and rich fertile lands. The main sources of living were remained agriculture and livestock while the population rate kept increasing (Janson, 2002). A dense growth in population was observed in the Mediterranean, Europe, India and China. Natural calamities and shortage of water and grass compelled the people to keep shifting from one place to the other. Along with people and their cattle, culture and language shifted and amalgamation of languages emerged. For example, agriculture was introduced in Australia and Western North America when Europeans arrived there (Janson, 2002).

Agriculture and livestock assisted people to explore wider areas of the world, people moved to those areas where they find good weather conditions for the living of their animals and for themselves. Farming also made people rich, owning land and animals were also a source of power. They were started facing disputes. To handle with such disputes, there was need to maintain order. They formulated some laws and regulations to live peacefully. The enforcement of law was also a crucial challenge. Society became more complex when people start trading with each other. If people were facing any clash, the person who yield power taken the lead over others and sometime they used force to threaten and control others (Quinn, 2017).

Live-stock and agriculture mainly appeared in the following regions, which are nowadays Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Israel. These societal groups were having different languages according to their geographical areas and land. There are mainly two reasons that explain the changes in lifestyle of Indo-European languages. Obviously, the first one focuses on war and conquests. Indo-Europeans were warriors who expanded their dominance on land from the Black Sea to all

Europe and half of Asia. These people who came under this way abandoned their original tongues and adopted the languages of the conquests (Gamkrelidze & Ivanov, 1990). Renfrew (1980) linked the second reason to farming. This explains the origin and expansion of languages. Historically, economy and power were the two main reasons of language, expansion & transformation and also the death of language (Wurm, 1991).

History is evident that how economic reasons stimulate people to communicate and to travel to far reaching areas. These economic reasons drive you to develop new technologies and new ways of trade with the support of foreign people. Societies nurture on this pattern and then the process of socialization help to accommodate new languages (Norton & Toohey, 2011). The new languages brought new culture, traditions and trends in the society. With these transformations the local languages become weaker and the process of disappearance started and gradually it reaches to language death.

Social standing of language:

Language provides social connectivity to share ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions with others. History of languages also proved that people need a common language to communicate with each other e.g., at time of slavery when slaves were bought for agriculture and plantations reasons, they were unable to communicate with each other because of their different origins. But, gradually, they learnt a common language for communication and that language belonged to the colonial kingdoms (Janson, 2002).

Similarly, the language of masters and conquerors of the territory became the language of slaves and colonized. The language of colonized was degraded purposefully both mentally and culturally to hold the power (Grzywacz, 2013). In this context, Lo Bianco (2010) stated that each territory has its own culture, traditions, values, beliefs, and ethnicity to live in their own way. These attributes of the society guides masses to understand the sanity of each other to maintain a balance in the society. Schiffman (2006) further added, language is grounded in linguistic culture e.g., set of behaviors of people, assumptions, cultural values and traditions, belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes and ways of thinking. Altogether, language is contributed to build a nation and to maintain unity among masses

(Grzywacz, 2013).

So, to create social harmony and to be intact with social norms and beliefs it is imperative to stick with one languages and that call the national language representing the norms, values, beliefs, customs, traditions of each unit of the society. If we discuss in Pakistani context, the case is different. As mentioned earlier, Urdu - the national language - is the language of almost 8% people in Pakistan (Rahman, 2003). Despite constitutional legislation to promote Urdu as a national language, English appears to play that role and 'English is the language of power in all official domains' (Rahman, 1997, p. 223). Literature proved that languages cannot be enforced rather they are opted. However, the history of languages provides us example of enforcement of language but that case cannot linked to this situation as the stage couldn't be set for equality of both languages and English is still considered a key component for success.

Multiple languages belong to various communities in Pakistan. However, for social connectivity people are dependent on Urdu. This phenomenon is as old as our country. In recent past, people are increasingly opting English language as means of communication, English is considered as an international language for communication and there is no doubt about its worth, popularity and acceptability - the language of power (Sharifian, 2009).

Twenty first century is considered as the century of modernism, liberalism and social connectivity. The social connectivity is dominating in this list. English language is widely used for social connectivity. Many countries accept this change with open heart and declared English as the official language next to their national language (Sharifian& Jamarani, 2013). Pakistan is also one of the countries, but the acceptability is always under discussion. Due to this social connectivity, we cannot have escape from English, wherever you go or whatever means of communication you opt to communicate, it is mostly in English.

This social standing of language also affects your identity and testing generational ties e.g., if children are fluent in English but their parents cannot understand them, this create dependency of parents on their children. In some families, children and parents increasingly struggling to find common grounds to interact with each other. Thus, linguistic dominance has contributed to a social

divide in Pakistani society, since it is associated with the propagation of liberal values (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Culture and language:

Next to social standing of language, highlighting the effects of language on culture is equally important. The language policy has given rise to "the paradox of preserving or building national cultural identities and promoting a foreign language that embodies different values, cultures, and traditions" (Crystal, 2012, p.3). Linguistic culture is based on cultural and religious beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Basically this key concept assumed by Schiffman and Ricento (2006) who believed that language policy is grounded in linguistic culture.

Linking English proficiency to national development, constructing national cohesion and cultural uniqueness and using English as a tool to promote national, cultural identities to the rest of the world is quite fascinating, but at the same time it creates tension among different ethnic groups who are not equipped with foreign language (Ochs, 1993). This inequality gives boost to the division of ethnic groups on the basis of languages and regions. They claim to save their languages and associated cultural heritage of their generations and ancestors and often they tagged stereotypes. Multiple transformations and inventions come along with foreign language which influences the culture, traditions, values, beliefs, attitudes, and ways of thinking and the uninvited change becomes need of the time (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

For example, in case of English, Marsh (2006) stressed that English is the language of business and academia; it is widely transmitting associated culture and traditions. This transmission ultimately enhances the power and legitimacy of language worldwide. This also strengthens the economic and political affairs of the country.

In Pakistani context, drastic changes have been observed during the last decade. With the popularity of the English language and an unprecedented transformation in our society e.g., language brings taste in our country, we have a lot of international chain restaurants; language introduced modern clothing style, and we have many international clothing outlets in our country; language brings new traditions and we are celebrating Halloween, Easter and Valentine day;

similarly language changes beliefs, and nowadays our society is more modern and liberal (Khalique, 2007). This means foreign language brings common cultural repertoire and when a foreign language is functioning in the social and cultural setting for a long time, it replaces everything quietly and it severely affects the attitude of masses.

Economic influence of language:

Historically, economically stronger societies get over on weaker economic populations. Language and culture work together and enhance the economy since transformation is linked to economic welfare. There are four major directions established by theorists for language and economy. First, political economy of the country sets ideology and then determines language. Secondly, the political economy determines the complexities of language and ideology, which entirely intertwined (See, Janson, 2002). Thirdly, to determine how language intervenes between ideology and political economy (Mannheim, 2013). Lastly, language may be completely mingled with political economy. From this complex fusion, ideology appears as primary output governing human acts and attitudes. On the other hand, the political economy defines classes and resultantly conflicts start occurring among classes and go on within a language context (Voloshinov, 1973). There are other possibilities as well where sometimes ideology rests dominant and other time economy.

In the era of knowledge-based economy, the economy of the modern world is linked to language which directly influences efficiency of communication. Ahmad (2016) argued that the relation of economy and language was first discovered systematically in the Marxist theory where language was considered as structure while economics was considered the foundation of the structure. Thus, language has a crucial role in technology and knowledge transfer which is completely based on linguistic skills (Gee, 2000). Colonial territories like South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa find themselves at a disadvantage by using colonial languages to cope with new technologies and knowledge which is not convenient in their native languages. Faulconbridge and Beaverstock (2009); Short and Kim (1999) also point out that in order to participate in the global economy and to handle with international politics, Asian countries are strongly encouraged their

people to learn English. Because English is considered a global language for connectivity, international trade, economic policies, and diplomatic relations (Tsui & Tollefson, 2017). Wrum (1991) discussed in his paper, monetary benefits led the countries to get it required goods and services, employment and other economic advantages but at the same time it influences the local language and giving a sense of realization to its people that their local language is impractical and ultimately this makes the language weaker.

Political position of language:

Historically language was treated as strong political weapon to conquer others (Solarz, 2014). In the 19th century, many European countries supported the idea to have separate state on the basis of language (Szeptycki, 2011). However other authors are criticize this idea (Laitin, 1996) as they claimed that sometime other factors are dominant on language and people considered practical adaptation, for example, getting employment and civic rights, sometime strong ethnic groups force a language on minorities. Though, it's not easy to enforce a language in spite of substantial payoff and resultantly it causes retaliation and unrest among masses. For example, during the Soviet period, only a relatively small number of non-Slavic people in the Soviet Union switched to Russian, despite the political advantages of doing so. Thus, whatever the case is either economic or ethnic advantages depends on the people how much they are passionate for their country and related possessions (Laitin, 2000).

Language is not only contemplate for nation building but also for political control. This is the reason that ethnic minorities use language. For example, their demand for bilingualism was a political strategy during protests against political domination (Grzywacz, 2013). A significant example is the case of Hindi and Urdu confrontation in the region though alphabets of both languages are grounded on Sanskrit and Arabic but formed two different languages because of enduring political and religious conflict between two nations (Rahman, 1997).

As discussed earlier, linguistic identity is always due to political landscape of the country; if a country has unresolved tensions and political disputes, warring factions and strong sectarian dividedness then sometimes these differences are blown up to justify their existence. The difference is not only the language

difference but prejudice communication between people who are not willing to communicate with other sects.

A number of languages like Dutch, English, and French have a strong political background for their existence. These languages enforced on people during the war to get control over them (Janson, 2002). The purpose of the war was not solely base on economic benefits but also to scratch the roots of the occupied countries to mark the long lasting effects on future generations.

Education and language:

Language paves the way for education to determine curriculum and teaching methods. We are living in a language-based economy dependent on sophisticated linguistic skills, discursive knowledge or 'multi-literacies'(Gee, 2000). Language connects people with other traditions and culture. Each language and cultural group has its own semiotic system, traditions and values. Learning in a foreign language gives you exposure of other cultures, traditions and values. It also helps to conceptualize about the inhabitants of that language, their living style and their cultural and religious beliefs (Lo Bianco, 2010).

Globalization and modern technologies are resulting in the transformation of many societies on an unprecedented scale. The one common point is a shared linguistic medium of instruction. The English language secured an exceptional place as language of communication within this globalization linguistic order. The choice of English has been observed from the socio-economic point of view; others consider it a lingua franca. In the past, other languages also got the status of lingua franca i.e. Latin and Spanish languages. Though, the status of the English language is - nowadays and for the coming decades - assumed as the language of the global world (Graddol, 2005).

Taking into account the global trends and advancements, countries envisage their goals and objectives and achieved those goals through education and development. The role of language is important while you are preparing your educational policies, especially in those countries where English is not the first language of its people. There is a number of sovereign countries who are struggling with diversity of languages e.g., Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Luxembourg and Comoros etc. These languages have been declared as a medium

of teaching till high school and/or college levels in the respective countries (Marsh, 2006).

As to higher education, most of the countries declared English as the medium of instruction. During the last two decades, the world has shown serious interests in adopting English as medium of instruction. Adopting English as medium of instruction may be challenging and at the same time useful as well. In many developing countries where English is not the first language, high drop-out rates and failures have been observed. On the other hand, there is a useful aspect also as English is playing its role in successful political and economic decision making in these countries (Marsh, 2006). The problems due to medium of instruction are not only linked to developing countries, but many developed countries are facing rapid educational overhaul in response to globalization and ethnic reasons.

In sub-Saharan African countries, school wastage has been broadly observed due to the language barrier (Heugh, 2000). Also in South Asian countries, English is a dominating language in all aspects of education. In Indo-Pak context, during the British colonial era the official language in education policy was Urdu as the medium of instruction for the masses and English for the elites. This shows, the controversy of first and second languages root quite deep in the sub-continent. The conflict of the official language in Pakistan is still not resolved and the medium of instruction remained the same as it was in colonial times.

There is a lot of literature discussing this key problem either should focus on learner's first language in view of teaching or the target language (Littlewood & Yu, 2009). In Pakistan, both Urdu medium and English medium systems are running successfully in their domains. However, at time of job interviews, a clear difference has been observed in candidates from Urdu medium and English medium schools. Similarly, if we review it from teachers' point of view, the grooming of both teachers - from Urdu and English medium - are different. In case of teaching English in government schools, teacher use to translate the content in Urdu to make the lecture more comprehensive (Awan & Shafi, 2016). This could be the reason of failure of students in exams. Same is the case with science subjects in schools. Science subjects are being taught in Urdu and English (optional) but students who belong to government schools hardly opt English to learn science to

stay in their comfort zone. This could be linked to failure of students in F.Sc exam and similarly in the admission test for medical and engineering fields.

Regardless of official and national language, there should be workable classrooms; students should be prepared according to the societal and future needs. An increasingly integrated world has led to increasingly integrated curricula and methodologies. If there is a mismatch in the language of learning and official language then the importance of change becomes acute (Marsh, 2006).

Discussion and conclusions:

This review paper is to provide an in-depth analysis of language from historical, cultural, social, economic, political and educational point of view with a particular focus on Pakistan. Undoubtedly, the role of language in national development is inevitable and language is considered as a foundation for a nation. Considering the above mentioned facts from history, language proved itself a strong contributor in transforming culture, economy, politics, and also playing its role in societal changes and setting educational dimensions.

Since the very beginning of human life on earth, people have been in a need of a language to communicate with each other. That communicative language usually belongs to a dominating power and that paves the way for language to bring related culture, tradition, values and beliefs which slowly penetrate in the lives of people. In this way the 'dominating power' rule people not physically but also they control their brains.

This phenomenon is as old as the history of human beings. Since people have different religions and cultures so one of the reasons of colonialism is to change the beliefs of people through language to change their religion and culture and this applies in modern times too, but now this phenomenon has been becoming more sophisticated (Janson, 2002). There are multiple way to bring changes and transformations in the lives of people to get hold on them. Gradually, local languages lost their power and standings and replaced with the new ones. A common user of that language may not understand this phenomenon but with the passage of time when certain transformations come into view they realize this change.

The replacement with new language cannot be linked to one factor but there

might be multiple factors which can create a space for new language. The most prominent factors is always economy. As mentioned earlier in this manuscript, agriculture and livestock were the main source of the survival of humans in the past and certainly this adds to shapeup economy.

Nevertheless, not all community members are part of the language transformations, but when change occurs everyone gets affected either way, sometime a part of community embrace this change openly but other part might not be ready to accept it. It triggers a cultural and language clash in the society. In such situations, if a society has a strong will for their national language they can survive but if the dominating language is more powerful than the local one, then the mighty language always succeed to deepen its roots and people start feeling themselves elite by speaking that language (Wrum, 1991).

The scenario is alike in Pakistan, where conflict of national and official language has been under discussion since ages. After the above review and discussion, it is very clear that there are many countries which have more than two national/official languages. Indeed, they had been through the crisis, tensions, social and cultural transformations, but they have survived successfully (Rahman, 2010). In Pakistani case, the situation is somewhat different. Since, the ideology of Pakistan is based on Islam and everything in the country will be based on Islamic principles. Urdu declared as national language of the country. Urdu is a fusion of Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and Hindi texture. Some authors claimed Urdu is simply another dialect of Hindi (Wrum, 1991)

Next, the question of its users make it more critical, on the other hand, the education system of Pakistan is also a major source of accelerating this tension. The division of language started with the different education systems. So far, government is making promises to launch a single education system which seems very challenging. Moreover, as discussed above economic policies has a strong link with language e.g., China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), we have observed a significant change in our society since the launching of this project. A lot of Chinese restaurants, shopping outlets and language centers are being inaugurated across Pakistan. Certainly it will thrive Chinese language as well. Same is the case with English because our higher education is entirely in English and we are the

witnesses of flourishing the English language in the country. Along with language, many western outlets are available reflecting the English culture in our society. We are not trying to develop a link between the English language and higher education but when you have a continuous connection with a language of course, you will adopt the related stuff because language has proven itself a key source of transmitting culture and traditions.

Recently, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has again declared to implement the national language in the country, keeping in view the above discussion, a lot of challenges arise to make this dream true. Especially, when Pakistan is facing a lot of political, national and international challenges and we are politically detested in the world. In spite of struggling with such petty issues, we need to make some efforts to get back to mainstream to get a status in the world (Sharifian, 2009).

Accepting the reality is better than fighting with it. We should admit the utility of the English language as our rival - the Indians, did. If you search for 'English languages' among other languages on Google the results show you 'Indian English.' In spite of struggling with languages the Indians accepted its usefulness and owned it successfully. This is what which Sir Syed Ahmed Khan emphasized in his sermons that Muslims could only come out of their isolation when they would compete the world according to their style i.e., getting the modern education without compromising their identity.

As to developing a single education system for masses is a challenging dream. Practically, it might take ages to develop such system and to convince people to own this system. It seems ridiculous when you think of higher education in our national language without strengthening and enlarging its scope. At one hand, we are trying to meet the 21st century standards, but can we meet our goals by ignoring *lingua franca*?

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