





A Critical Analysis of the Language Planning and Policy (LPP) in Pakistan and its Impact on Indigenous Languages of Pakistan

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Received 18 November 2021 | Received in revised form 7 April 2022 | Accepted 26 April 2022

APA Citation:

Abbas, F. & Bidin, S. J. (2022). A Critical Analysis of the Language Planning and Policy (LPP) in Pakistan and its Impact on Indigenous Languages of Pakistan. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(1), 85-96. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.911521>

Abstract

A well-devised formulation of language planning and policy creates a sense of ownership among speakers of all languages. At the same time, its absence may lead to asymmetrical power relations among speakers of different languages. This article aims at presenting a critical analysis of language planning and policy (LPP) in Pakistan and its impact on the indigenous languages of Pakistan. The research draws on secondary sources of data such as the policy documents, the research articles written on language planning and policy in Pakistan and the views of the language critics. The data shows that the language policies devised at various times in Pakistan have failed to prove fruitful as the multilingual language profile of the country was not taken into deep consideration. Critics argue that the policy practices at the national level patronized the use of Urdu and English at the cost of indigenous languages. Language planning and policy (LPP) reflects an ambivalent attitude as some provinces paid attention to it as a sensitive matter; others ignored it altogether. Overall, language planning and policy (LPP) shows traces of colonial imprints. The promotion of the English language resulted in its emergence as a power and status symbol, while that of Urdu resulted in ethnolinguistic resistance. Therefore, there is a dire need to build solidarity with all the languages, acknowledge them, and provide them equal growth opportunities through effective LPP. The implications of the research highlight that equal growth opportunities must be provided in practice to all indigenous languages. It is recommended to overhaul language planning and policy in Pakistan. If the situation of unequal growth persists and the existing deep sense of deprivation suffered by local ethnolinguistic groups is not alleviated, it may lead to devastating consequences.

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Keywords: Language planning and policy (LPP), indigenous languages, Pakistan, ethnolinguistics

Introduction

The term 'language policy' is a social and cultural construct comprising elements of explicit and abstract nature, including judicial, administrative, belief systems, and attitudes (Johnson, 2013). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) define language policy as a set of rules and laws which are part of a careful and intentional language plan with a top-down orientation endorsed by some authoritative body such as the government. Tariq Rahman (1995) discovers that language policy as a term is attributed to Weinreich, who had coined it in 1957. However, language policy in the modern world is not so simple and uninvolved a field as it was considered at its inception. It involves the ideological, socio-cultural and historical underpinnings of how a language is treated,

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.911521>

managed and perceived within a society (García & Menken, 2015). If language policy acts as an ecological lens, it must include the recognized language varieties of a speech community and the entire sociolinguistic repertoire. It is contextual and cannot be considered without political, social, cultural, economic and ideological contexts (Spooner, 2012). Similarly, Hassan, Dilpu, Gill, and Kasuar (2015) argue that crucial factors such as social needs, religious, technological and financial conditions must be considered in devising any language policy.

The need for language policy also emerges from the concepts of 'linguistic imperialism' – transfer of a dominant language to the masses (Rose and Conama (2018) and 'linguistic genocide' – any deliberate action undertaken to undermine a language by prohibiting its use (Truscott & Malcolm, 2010). Language policy may do both since a positive and fruitful language policy can boost the linguistic conceptions of a speech community in terms of preserving its language. Conversely, the absence of a robust language policy can undermine the value of a language, thus resulting in its shift. T. Ricento (2006) argues that language shift results from asymmetrical power relations in a society based on social structures and language ideologies. In such a context, the language attitudes of a linguistic community may encase a certain sense of deprivation and linguistic marginalization, as is in the case of the Siraiki language in Pakistan. The lack of a potential language policy appears to have negatively influenced the language attitudes of the Siraiki community. With the emergence of nation-states in Europe, the importance of language planning and policy has multiplied, with every state endeavoring to assert its distinct identity through language. Mansoor (2004) explains that careful linguistic choices should be made without disrupting the social structure besides keeping the country linked with the world. Any language planning and policy (LPP) is the systematic pursuance of political, cultural, or society-driven goals. It is the systematic manipulation of language in pursuance of specific state or society-driven goals. Since these goals are also political (connected with the distribution of power in society), LPP is related to politics and governance.

With the dawn of critical approaches in LPP, the view of LPP shifted from a macro-level governmental activity to a more focused institutional, societal, group and individual level training. Tollefson (1981) was among the first scholars who argued that language policy involves macro-/micro-level policy goals and implementation decisions. Hornberger (1994); T. Ricento (2006) attempted to make better sense of the complexity of LPP at different levels, focusing on the critical role of educators. In their "multi-layered onion" metaphor of LPP, they equated legislation and political process to the outer layer, state agencies and institutions (like schools) to the mid-layer, and the classroom practitioners to the heart of the onion. T. K. Ricento and Hornberger (1996) conclude that LPP is a multi-layered construct, wherein essential LPP components, agents, levels, and processes of LPP permeate and interact with each other in multiple and complex ways to enact various types, approaches, and goals of LPP. The micro-level of language planning, often unnoticed and unrecorded, is also referred to as unplanned micro language planning (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997).

Interactions between the micro and the macro, between the local and the national, can operate in either direction, and language planning activities that begin at the local level can influence macro-level decision making and vice versa. Similarly, schools as an interface between the macro-level of language planning and the micro-level, are not only the sites of the government's language planning initiatives but may influence how those broader language goals are played out in their contexts (Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008). Baldauf Jr, Li, and Zhao (2008) also distinguishes the local context as the site of macro-level LPP implementation, which he defines as localised LPP, and the local context as a site of micro-level LPP implementation, which he terms local LPP. As such, one may essentially consider localised LPP as top-down where micro-support is given for the implementation of macro-LP; power thus resides at the macro-level (Baldauf Jr et al., 2008). On the other hand, in the local or micro-level LPP, authority resides with a micro-level LPP agent rather than with an implementer. A good example of top-down LPP at the local level (localised LPP) can be found in Windham (1975) study about the efforts to involve local government in macro-planning. Similarly, the survey by du Plessis (2010) on the Xhariep community's language initiatives in South Africa, and the study by Barkhuizen and Knoch (2006) reporting on the South African immigrant community's language practices in New Zealand, are good examples of LPP at the local level.

The LPP activities at the micro-level, where power lies or is given to the local actors, may also influence the official policy. Such policy initiatives are referred to as bottom-up (Bamgbose, 1989), grassroots-initiated (Kamwendo, 2005) or non-governmental (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997)

type of language planning. In this respect, Starks and [Barkhuizen and Knoch \(2006\)](#) observe that while top-down decisions taken by those with power are imposed on those with less power, bottom-up planning also occurs on the ground. Thus, the top-down (macro and official) and bottom-up (micro and grassroots) concepts of LPP are often associated with explicit and implicit LPP, respectively. [Baldauf Jr et al. \(2008\)](#) argue that LPP may be an "ideology-driven, non-consultative, and top-down ideology" similar to the 'English only movement' in the United States. Or it may be more bottom-up driven and benign in intent, as the commercially driven individual demand for English in Tunisia. Top-down implicit LPP also operates in Pakistan, where the official LPP establishes Urdu as the primary language of the state and its institutions.

To summarize, there are two approaches to language planning and policy (LPP): top-down and bottom-up approaches. Whatever the direction, top-down or bottom-up, the schematic grounding of the language policy relies heavily on what the people of a language think about it. Consequently, the concept of 'what people think should be done' [Aghyisi and Fishman \(1970\)](#) emerges from research on the language attitude of communities. The present article offers a detailed critical analysis of the language planning and policy (LPP) in Pakistan and its impact on indigenous language communities. It is better to present the language profile of Pakistan for providing the context of the planning so that the effects of any planning may be understood better.

Problem statement and Theoretical Framework

Language planning and policy (LPP) generally draws on the principle that the pragmatic communication needs of a community determine its linguistic choices ([Wright, 2004](#)). Therefore, the most contesting issue with language planning and policy is the controversy between the need for minority language preservation and its low demand in different aspects of practical life. [Yudina, Melnichuk, and Seliverstova \(2020\)](#) argue that the speakers of local minority languages are confused about whether to speak their language or use the dominant language. Approaching the concept of language as social capital [Abbas, Jalil, Zaki and Irfan \(2020\)](#) argue that a language with higher capital value is considered a valuable asset, asserting the competitive value of a powerful language. On the contrary, it is also essential to consider measures to maintain the minority languages.

The problem with the modern language policy and planning is that it cannot but pave the way for the promotion of the English language since it is the language of international linkage. With the emergence of globalization, language planning and policy (LPP) has helped reinforce foreign language values in small and developing countries. Presenting a picture of language policy and planning in Kosovo, he furthers that there is a lack of measures taken to promote language skills in minority languages.

The current research aims at providing a critical analysis of language planning and policy in Pakistan over time. Presenting the language profile of Pakistan will help us understand the important linguistic information about Pakistani languages and contextualize the current research. Furthermore, the research will offer a critique of language planning and policy in Pakistan. Besides that, it will also encompass the impact of these policies on the indigenous languages of the country. To facilitate the understanding, an analysis of the issues why the indigenous language communities of the country feel marginalized and linguistically deprived would also be discussed.

Results and Discussion

• *Language profile of Pakistan*

Pakistan is a heterogeneous multilingual country home to 73 languages, making it a rich locale for linguistic research. This list of languages includes the national language Urdu which is widely used in all nooks and corners of the country ([Kamran, 2017; Mansoor, 2004](#)); the provincial languages like Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi used in respective provinces and other indigenous languages used in local territories. In addition, the English language also remains present in all-important power spheres of life ([Noreen, Ahmed, & Esmail, 2015; Tariq Rahman, 2006](#)). All these languages serve their purposes in specific domains of life with the expectation that each language is given due importance in the context of the country, but this is not true. The summary of the language profile of Pakistan is presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Language profile of Pakistan

Language	Percentage	Main areas
Urdu	7.08%	Karachi and disintegrated all over Pakistan
Punjabi	38.78%	Central and Upper Punjab
Sindhi	14.57%	Sindh province
Pashto	18.24 %	Khyber Pakhtoon Kha province
Balochi	3.02%	Balochistan province
Siraiki	12.19 %	Southern Punjab

Source: Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan (2017)

Both Urdu and English are the languages of education and are widely used in power domains such as law, military and bureaucracy (Mahmood & Gondal, 2017; Tariq Rahman, 2006). Urdu occupies the status of the national language and is considered representative of national identity in the country (Kalin & Siddiqui, 2020; Tsui & Tollefson, 2017). It is the native language of the people who migrated from India to Pakistan at the time of partition. Most of them started living in urban Sindh, the southern province of Pakistan. Since they were highly educated, they occupied most of the bureaucratic places in the country despite their numerical minority (Nathan, 2016). Although Urdu has less than eight percent of native speakers, its importance is enormous as it serves the role of a lingua franca in the country (A. Abbas & Shehzad, 2018; Kamran, 2017; Mahboob, 2017; Mahmood & Gondal, 2017). The status of the English language is that of a second language and remains operative in important spheres of life such as law, education, media, and others (Khalid, 2016; T. Khan, Imran, Azhar, & Ilyas, 2015). As the legacy of British colonizers, it is considered a status symbol (T. J. Khan & Khan, 2016; Umrani & Bughio, 2017) and is spoken widely by the highly influential portion of the population. English is considered social capital as various institutions that teach the English language indicate the inevitable role of English in the country. The ruling elite supports English as it ensures social distinction (T Rahman, 1997).

Among all the languages spoken in the country, Punjabi has the highest number of speakers and makes more than 44 percent. This language is majorly used in the whole country, but the province of Punjab has a significant concentration of Punjabi speakers (Mahmood & Gondal, 2017; Tariq Rahman, 2017). However, over recent years, the importance and use of Punjabi are on the decline. The main reason is that many educated parents prefer to speak in Urdu rather than engage in conversation in Punjabi with their children (Zaidi, 2010). As a result, Urdu has gained special status with the state of inertia and emotional association with Urdu as the chief icon of Pakistani identity. However, since it is the language of the majority, its importance remains well acknowledged (Murphy, 2018).

In other provinces such as Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtoon Kha, provincial languages like Sindhi, Balochi, and Pashto are widely used. Sindhi language is the provincial language of Sindh province and belongs to the Indo-Aryan family of languages (Cole & Bruch, 2006). It represents Sindhi identity and cultural heritage (Tariq Rahman, 2006), and is spoken widely in the Sindh province. This language has its native speakers in Pakistan and some parts of India like Mumbai and Gujarat (Cole & Bruch, 2006). Besides Urdu and English, it is also used as a medium of instruction at the school and college levels (Shamim, 2008). It is the native language of more than 14.57% of the total population of the country (Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan, 2017).

Similarly, the Balochi language is the provincial language of the Balochistan province and has the 3.02% of the native population in the country (Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan, 2017). Besides Pakistan, it is also spoken in Iran and Afghanistan. This language has been associated with Baloch ethnic community as they use it to mark their ethnic and cultural identity. Likewise, the Pashto language is the language of most people living in the Khyber Pakhtoonkhawa and has more than 18.24 % of the population in the country (Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan, 2017). More than 70 percent of the Khyber Pakhtoonkhawa and the majority of the related tribal territories (i.e., about 16-17 million people) use this language (Weinreich, 2010). Pashto speakers identify themselves as an ethnic group T. J. Khan and Khan (2016) since they believe their culture and linguistic practices are distinct from the other cultures and languages. Tariq Rahman (2006) contends that Pashto has been deployed as a marker of Pakhtun identity by the ethno-nationalist Pakhtun leaders. Therefore, they desire to make it a symbol of identity and use this language in power domains. It is essential to mention the Siraiki language here, which though not a provincial language but is

among the six major languages spoken in the country. Its native population is concentrated in the southern part of the Punjab province, contributing 12.19 % of native speakers to the population of Pakistan (Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan, 2017).

- *Language planning and policy in Pakistan*

The country's linguistic diversity indicates that careful language planning is required to keep a strong relationship between the federation and linguistic groups. Two constitutional bodies formulate language policies in Pakistan; the parliament and the provincial assemblies. The parliament can develop any language-related laws or policies (The constitution of Pakistan, 1973) as the national policies of language in education have been devised at various times by the parliament. For example, Urdu was made the national language to unite ethnic groups hailing from diverse linguistic backgrounds under the auspices of the Urdu language (Bughio, 2014). Concerning policy-making at the provincial assembly, the provincial assembly as a policy-making body at the provincial level may also formulate language policies to be implemented within the boundary of a province.

Roistika describes that a provincial assembly in the country may prescribe measures to teach or promote an indigenous language without any bias against the national language. Examples of provincial-level policies include the Sindh provincial assembly implementing the Sindhi language in education policy by making Sindhi a medium of instruction and promoting its teaching at various levels in the province of Sindh (The LEP Sindh, 2006). The Balochistan assembly has also implemented the teaching of the Balochi language. Unfortunately, there has been no attention paid by the provincial assembly of Punjab to formulate language policies for language promotion and preservation (Tariq Rahman, 2017). As a result, Punjabi and Siriki, the two major languages operative in the province, have become socially stigmatized languages.

The case is quite different in the Punjab province as the critics Tariq Rahman (2017); Rose and Conama (2018) argue that Punjabi being in the majority, have not intentionally allowed it to happen. They are already closer to power spheres like bureaucracy and the army; therefore, they find no need to raise any linguistic promotion, resulting in the implementation of another language in the province or at the national level. The Punjabis have been trying to merge other language communities, especially the Sirikis (Ashraf, Turner, & Laar, 2021). Unfortunately, being more powerful, they have benefited from the circumstances. Some critics Tariq Rahman (2006, 2007, 2017) believe that the Siriki community has also not made any committed efforts to promote and preserve their language. They do not feel pride in their language and do not want to implement it despite the feeling that they are being marginalized on socio-economic and political grounds.

As mentioned earlier, the linguistic profile of Pakistan is quite diverse and demands careful language planning to promote the growth of national, provincial and indigenous languages. Pakistan achieved independence in 1947, and during the earlier years of its independence, it used the language policy developed by the British in colonial times. Therefore, it is necessary to study the pre-independence era to understand the formation of language policies of the country to understand the language policies of Pakistan developed later on. The most important document to study in this regard is *Macaulay Minutes*, published in 1835. This document recommended that English be institutionalized to assert the supremacy of English. Lord Macaulay propounded that the purpose of the language policy was to develop an Anglicized Indian nation with what he called "black skin with the white mind" (1835). This policy document led to the abolition of oriental learning centers. As a result, fewer books were published in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit, with no stipend being spent on the study of the oriental subjects. Even though there was much resistance by the Indians, Macaulay established English medium instructions and a school system in India, leading to the gradual influence of English and its promotion in the United India (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh).

In post-independence Pakistan, the language policies show traces of the British language policies. Even after its independence in 1947, English has remained an important language in Pakistan in important spheres of life. With the emergence of globalization, English poses an even more severe threat to the local languages in Pakistan since it is used in education and law (Roistika). Besides English as an official language, Urdu was used as the national language in the country and a source of cohesion for uniting the various linguistic units in one bond. The result

was that Urdu was promoted in excess, which led to downplaying indigenous languages' roles. From the very start, the decision was criticized and there existed serious disagreement between East Pakistan (Currently Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (Currently Pakistan) regarding the status of Urdu and Bangla. The Bangla-speaking community expected that their language would be given the status of the national language since the majority spoke Bangla or Bengali. The reason behind all this was the lack of farsightedness of our policy-makers that language policy should consider political, social and regional ideas (Hassan et al., 2015). The first-ever discussions on language policy in the meeting on education held in Karachi in 1947 led to the eruption of linguistic riots (T Rahman, 1997). In addition, there was severe resentment regarding the various steps taken to reduce the role of Bengali in the country. This resentment was reflected in the results of the 1953 Election, where the Bengali language became a triumph card.

Keeping in view the tension between East and West Pakistan, the Sharif Commission was established to investigate the situation and present its report. This Commission, appointed in 1959, recommended that both Urdu and Bengali should be made the languages of education in government schools from 6th to matriculation. The situation had already worsened since the recommendations came relatively late; the rift between East and West Pakistan was at its boiling point. The slogan "one nation, one language" has damaged the collective interest of the nation. The East division separated itself from the West and consequently, Bangladesh was created as a result in 1971.

The following important phase in the formation of the language policy of Pakistan was the formation of the first comprehensive constitution of Pakistan. As per the constitution, Urdu will be the national language of Pakistan which should replace English as a medium of instruction in the next 15 years (1973 – 1988). English will continue to work as the official status until Urdu becomes mature enough to support all official matters. Moreover, regional or provincial languages may be used in the provinces and support the national language (251 Article of the 1973 Constitution). According to this,

Clause 1. The national language of Pakistan is Urdu and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within the fifteen years from the commencing day.

Clause 2. Subject to clause (1), the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.

The constitution clearly stated that efforts would be made to replace English with Urdu and that Urdu would serve as the national language and unite the nation. English was given legal protection under this constitution. As such, there was no significant change in the language policy.

The first comprehensive national education policy was devised in 1978 by General Zia ul Haq according to which Urdu should be used for teaching and all official matters. In the same year, National Language Authority (Muqtadra Qaumi Zuban) was established to promote the Urdu language and complete all requirements related to the Urdu language to help it obtain the status of official language. This policy reflected a radical shift away from English as the English medium schools were advised to shift to either Urdu or any other provincial language (NEP, 1978). English was only introduced in class 6th, while Urdu was made to serve as a medium of instruction. The official speeches were also to be made in Urdu. The establishment of Muqtadira Qaumi Zaban (National Language Authority) in 1979 was another radical step towards promoting Urdu to meet national demands of language. This policy was received with much criticism and revised in 1992, promoting Urdu or English.

In 2002, Punjab and Singh governments initiated a conversion plan from Urdu and Sindhi language to the English language as a medium of instruction from class 6, but that failed due to the human, material and financial resources (Tariq Rahman, 2017). Moreover, the plan failed due to a lack of research on the issue, flawed pragmatic concerns, and riddled political tensions; the status quo continues. The language educational policy introduced in 2009 by Musharraf Regime declares that English would be taught as a compulsory subject from class one. The national language policy and language education policy (2009) elaborated that there were problems with implementation in the way of its goals. There are significant problems such as poverty reduction, social stratification, diverse educational institution and gender division which are to be solved by the education language policy.

Based on the policy of 2009, the provinces developed their policies as per their needs. The Sindh province imparted education in the Sindhi Language as per their Sindh Education Sector Plan for 2014-18, intending to improve educational conditions in Rural and Urban Sindh (SESP, 2014). The mother tongue was to be used for the educational purpose of the Sindhi population. The situation in Khyber Pakhtoon Kha (KPK) was no different from Sindh, as the people of the region established an institution for the promotion of local languages and selected Pashto as a medium of instruction for secondary education. The KPK government seemed to be working to devise the syllabus in their regional languages. At the same time, English would be used for higher education (KPSP, 2010). In the Punjab province, the education sector plan was introduced in 2013. As per this plan, English and Urdu proficiency was the central part of learning at the secondary school level. However, English would be considered the medium of instruction at the higher education level. Baluchistan followed the footprints of Punjab since its education policy promoted mother tongues and Urdu at the primary level. At the same time, English was adopted as the medium of instruction in higher studies at the secondary level (Baluchistan Mother Tongue Act, 2014).

The latest language policy was introduced in 2017 (NEP, 2017-2025), in which the policy-makers have tried to shift away from English centric education system. The primary role in the educational sector has been allocated to the Urdu language, while efforts have been initiated towards replacing English with Urdu in law and bureaucracy. Special attention has been paid to the Arabic language by implementing its teaching in schools to help them understand Islam. The current policy also aims at providing education to the learners in their mother tongues to facilitate learning at the school level. At the same time, the importance of English has been highlighted as a language of global connectivity. There have been some organizations that have played an important role in promoting local languages. Amongst these, the role of the National Language Authority (Urdu) has been remarkable in promoting the Urdu language (A. Abbas & Shehzad, 2018). The Pashto speakers have also invested time and energy in promoting the Pashto language under *The Pashtu Academy*, in which they provide learners with the opportunity to speak and promote their language.

A critical perusal of the development of language policies in Pakistan indicates that the focus has been oscillating between English and Urdu. One of the important issues was the selection of an appropriate medium of instruction to be implemented in education. The study of language policies formulated at the national level shows that the ethnic languages were not provided much space for growth. Urdu was considered ethnic neutral language and was promoted to bring all ethnolinguistic communities under one platform. Although English was estimated to undergo its replacement by Urdu by 1988, as stated in the constitution of 1973, unfortunately, it could not be materialized (Roistika). The overriding dominance of English as the global language and the aggressive promotion of Urdu as the national language have focused on language planning and policy in Pakistan. The policy-makers have neither paid due attention to ethnic and linguistic groups nor evaluated the reaction of these linguistic groups to different language policies in Pakistan (Ahmad & Khan, 2017; Ashraf et al., 2021). With reference to provincial-level policy-making, the provinces of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Paktoon Kha have made serious efforts towards promoting the provincial languages Sindhi, Balochi and Pashto respectively. But unfortunately, languages other than the provincial languages have been ignored in the policy initiatives at the provincial level.

- *Impact of language policies on indigenous languages of Pakistan*

A close examination of language policies of Pakistan reveals that Urdu has been promoted excessively at the cost of the indigenous languages (Tariq Rahman, 2007). As a result, the speakers of languages like Punjabi, Siraiki, Pashto, Sindhi and other languages feel deprived because their languages have not been provided equal growth opportunities. The sense of deprivation among the speakers of indigenous languages has resulted in an uprising among these communities and they have started voicing their linguistic rights. The significant consequence of the favoring of Urdu was ethnic resistance to it (T Rahman, 1997) and a deep sense of dispossession among the speakers of other than the Urdu language. The speakers of these languages believe their language to be their ethnic identity and a symbol of their existence (Tariq Rahman, 1995, 2006). Even though the ethnic activists agree that Urdu provides a valuable networking language between various ethnic groups, they resist it because of its over-emphasized patronization by the ruling elite (Rahman,

2011). In short, the patronization of Urdu has created ethnic antagonism, strengthened ethnicity and threatened the linguistic and cultural diversity prevalent in the country.

The formation of ethnolinguistic communities has resulted from such a situation given above. These speech communities are also called ethnolinguistic communities because they share different elements of ethnicity like ancestry, geographical area and cultural norms. The speakers of these languages consider their mother tongue languages a marker of their identity and strive for certain rights based on their language. They have presented demands for recognizing their economic, political and linguistic rights. These communities qualify to be called ethnic speech or ethnolinguistic communities in the light of the framework provided by Fishman (2001). Fishman (2001) identified subjective parameters such as belief in common descent, focus on symbols and phenomenology, and objective characteristics, including language practices and cultural practices for forming an ethnic community. The speakers of Pakistani indigenous languages qualify to be called ethnolinguistic communities as they use their mother language as a marker of their ethnic identities and strive for their rights. The linguistic map will help the readers mark the geographical locations of the ethnolinguistic communities and the concentration of their population in the country.



Fig. 1.1. *Ethnolinguistic Regions of Pakistan*

The formation of ethnolinguistic communities is not a recently emerged phenomenon but has roots in history. Since the separation of Pakistan from the United India, there had been a severe conflict on which language would be given the status of the national or state language. The Bengali language was the most widely spoken and Bengalis demanded to make it the national language (Islam, 2008). This politico-lingual problem kept on gaining momentum over time and ultimately led to the separation of East Pakistan, now called Bangladesh. However, the government's language policy always missed the balance between nationalism and nation-ism (Mansoor, 2004).

Despite the Bangladesh episode, no efforts were made for the national unification of language policies or to provide a solid base for solving the language problems. Hassan et al. (2015) further argue that the dilemma is not of implementation, but the lack of attention paid to regional and provincial languages. The fruitless one-prong approach to impose Urdu as a unifying force and marker of national identity continued and has ultimately resulted in many linguistically oriented movements in the country. The separation of Bangladesh was also the consequence of language conflict, similar to the situation in the Sindh province. Hassan et al. (2015) narrated that the Sindhi community felt that the Urdu speakers availed themselves of better job opportunities because of their language. Consequently, the Sindhi community protested this linguistic racism and protested to replace Urdu with Sindhi in language policy.

A critical analysis of the language policies of Pakistan also provides some evidence that the policies were intermingled with some covert political goals (Sikandar, 2017; Tsui & Tollefson, 2017). The language policies ignored the fundamental problems of regionalism and tended to support the unification of all sections of society by a single language. This situation requires the need to conduct research to analyze the language attitude of these communities to investigate the ground realities by collecting empirical data. The theorists and researchers have contended that the situation must be critically and empirically investigated to help devise policies to include these deprived linguistic groups in mainstream life (Gulzar & Qadir, 2010). There is a need to promote their languages; otherwise, the situation may worsen, as it had happened in the East and West Pakistan language controversy. Pakistan lost the East Part within 25 years of its creation as Bengalis parted their way and became independent. The separation of the East wing of Pakistan is attributed to the non-inclusion and deprivation of Bengali speakers as their language was not given proper importance. The unrealistic language policies and lack of acknowledgment of the rights of the indigenous ethnolinguistic communities resulted in the separation of Bangladesh (Hamid, 2011; Jabeen, Chandio, & Qasim, 2020; Jan, 2016; Johnson, 2013) and if the situation remains to be the same, the history may be repeated.

The critics Manan, David, and Dumanig (2016); Tsui and Tollefson (2017) argue that the language policies of Pakistan have served to over-patronize Urdu at the expense of other languages, considering it a cohesive national symbol. The role of provincial and other indigenous languages has been underplayed and that is why the speakers of indigenous languages have raised ethnic voices to preserve their ethnolinguistic rights (Adeney, 2016; BalDauf Jr, 2006; Kamwendo, 2005). Pakistan still needs an effective language policy and its sustainable implementation.

Conclusion

The language planning and policy in different government tenures in Pakistan have not produced fruitful results. The unproductive language planning has resulted in the language being used as a marker of ethnic identity and manipulates the sentiments of aggrieved ethnolinguistic communities. Pakistan is prone to ethnic politics rooted deeply in language, which can be seen across the country. It can be concluded that language planning and policy impacted Pakistani society in two ways; firstly, the policy contributed to society's social stratification and, secondly, resulted in a decline of the status of regional languages. The commitment of the Pakistani state to using Urdu as the medium of instruction in government schools and its ambition to widen access to English language teaching has created barriers to adequate education, limiting economic mobility and undermining social cohesion. Similarly, it has also led to a gradual decline in regional languages such as Balochi, Hindko, Siraiki, Pashto, Punjabi and Sindi. These languages seem to be neglected even though the constitution of Pakistan and various commissions on language policy have provisions for their preservation and promotion. Moreover, the speakers of the regional vernaculars are developing negative attitudes towards their languages, which leads to a language shift away from indigenous languages. The present study implicates a dire need to create a sense of solidarity among all the languages, acknowledge them and provide growth opportunities. Critics argue that if the situation persists and the deep sense of deprivation suffered by local ethnolinguistic groups is not alleviated, it may lead to tragic consequences such as linguistic riots.

In conclusion, it is recommended that all languages must be given institutional promotion and legal protection through language policies. Furthermore, while devising language planning and policy (LPP), the policymakers must consider all elements related to the local society members and the needs of regional languages by promoting both nationalism and nation-ism simultaneously. This article calls for a paradigm change, considering linguistic diversity as a resource for strengthening national unity and not as a problem and considering linguistic diversity. Keeping in view the importance of education in language development. the present study suggests making a dynamic bilingual education policy. The scrutiny of secondary data reveals that dynamic, bilingual education can improve students' socio-cognition as well as provide social equality and justice to the other local languages. Moreover, it also has the potential to resolve Pakistan's language problems as it has worked out for the language problems of other countries. Even though there are various challenges to dynamic bilingual education, some prospects also ensure the positive results of the enforcement of the bilingual instruction policy in Pakistan. The present study also contributes to the field of bilingual education and policy planning on

the new emerging model in bilingual education. This research paper is essential as it will facilitate policymakers and policy planners to recognize the advantages of Pakistan's dynamic bilingual education policy. Likewise, this research will also set the way for applied linguists to do more investigation in the field of bilingual education through diverse research designs.

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