

Language Use and Language Attitudes of Pahari Speakers towards Punjabi language: A Sociolinguistic Study of District Bhimber

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Abstract

In this study, language attitudes of the Pahari speakers towards Punjabi language in district Bhimber were investigated. District Bhimber is a city of multidimensional civilizations. Here two groups of people namely Pahari people and Punjabi people are inhabitants. Pahari people have been living among Punjabi people for more than 65 years now, but they still hold a distinct identity. However, this identity appears to be in danger because of the changing socio-linguistic scenario of the area. Questionnaires were the research methods employed to collect the data. The sample comprised of Six families of Pahari people from Bhimber city. Descriptive as well as inferential analyses were carried out to measure the attitudes of the population of this study. The language attitudes were examined through four domains: family, friendship, transaction and religion. The results from the analysis demonstrate that Pahari people have positive attitudes towards Punjabi language and a process of language shift is taking place in the Bhimber city.

Keywords: Language Use, Language Attitudes, Language Shift, Sociolinguistic Analysis, Punjabi, Pahari

INTRODUCTION

In order to be able to investigate the language attitudes, let's begin with the definition of the term, attitude. There are many definitions of the term. To Brown (2001:61), attitude is characterized by a large proportion of emotional involvement such as feelings, self, relationships in community. Kirimsoy (1997) emphasizes "the power of culture thereby shaping our life and feeling" and therefore our attitudes towards external world."

Appel and Muysken (1987) state that there "Generally, two theoretical approaches are distinguished to the study of language attitudes. The first one is the behaviorist view, according to which attitudes must be studied by observing the responses to certain languages, i.e. their use in actual interactions. The mentalist view considers attitudes as an internal, mental state, which may give rise to certain forms of behavior". Williams sums up differing environmental attitudes to the survival and spread of minority languages.

First, the evolutionist will tend to follow Darwin's idea of the survival of the fittest. Strong languages will survive while the weaker languages will either adapt themselves to their environment, or die.

Biography of Pahari and Punjabi speakers living in Bhimber

The documentation of Kashmiri people is exceptionally primitive and painful as well. Courageous, heroic and esteemed people started their fight against the Dogras's malicious and cruel period to conquer independence. Unfortunately, the people of Kashmir had to pass through the verdict period of brutal rulers. In fact, the cruel history of Kashmir started from 1846, from this period the ruling parties started their ruling on Muslims. During the phase from 1846 to 1947, Muslims remained under the control of Dogra forces. At the separation on 1947, Muslim majority strongly willed to appraise with Pakistan started to move towards Pakistan and Azad Kashmir.

The migrants were of caste named, Rajput, Mughal, Jaat, Gujar and Chip. Mostly Rajput and Chip of Pouch established in Bhimber. They developed unusual identities. Some tribes are of very imperative nature due to their history, tradition, and customs. They verbalize Pahari language. Migrants of Nosharha valley also converse Pahari language. However, the migrants of Rajori address Gojjri language, in this way their cultural identities seemed different. Their accent is furthermore different. Migrants of Rajori they suffered very critical period, because of their Gojjri language. A few tribes started their livelihood by having animals like goat and buffaloes. Their language is entirely different. However, with the rally round of natives, they started to mingle their identities in the midst of the natives and developed a miscellaneous culture and assorted Languages of Pahari and Punjabi.

The primary language is Punjabi and on the minor domains, Pahari is spoken. The villages of Bhimber that are apart from city and recognized as villages of permanent natives and their language is Punjabi. According to Lothers and Lothers (2003), "the Punjabi dialect chain in the Indo-Aryan language family includes millions of speakers in Northern Pakistan".

Pahari and Punjabi languages

Colin (1991) says, "Punjabi is an Indo-Aryan language spoken by inhabitants of the historical Punjab region, North Western India and in North Eastern Pakistan. Punjabi is the most spoken language, it can be subdivided into two varieties, known as Eastern Punjabi and Western Punjabi. The Majhi dialect of Punjabi is prestige dialect and spoken in the heart of Punjab where most of the Punjabi population lives. Potwari and Hindo are also important dialects.

Pahari means hill languages referring to a string of divergent dialects, some of which may be separate languages. It is a language of the Indo-Aryan family of language, it derives its name from Pahar meaning 'hills and mountains' for it is spoken over a very large area starting from Nepal and running throughout the foothills of the Himalayas.

Pahari means mountainous language spoken in the hilly areas. According to Colin (1991), "He sometimes labels this dialect as Dhundi-Kairali, coming from the name of a prominent tribe. However, the people themselves call this dialect Pahari". Pahari and Punjabi are two different languages. The speaker of these languages have different accent but their lexical items are quite similar which help them to understand each other.

Objectives of the study

According to Hoffman (1991:186), "when a community does not maintain its language, but gradually adopts another one, we talk about language shift, while language maintenance refers to a situation where members of a community try to keep the language they have always used". Hoffman also observed that under certain cultural, social and political conditions, community might opt to change one set of linguistic tools for other. This phenomenon is acute in the case of migrated communities. One of the important factors that influence shift and maintenance of

language is attitude (Gardner, 1985, Holmes & Harlow, 1991). Attitude refers to “a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behavior” (Baker, 1992:10). So, it represents internal thoughts, feelings and tendencies in behavior across a variety of context. The main objective of this study is to investigate that whether the migrant (Pahari people) have positive attitude towards Punjabi language, if they have positive attitude then to what extent they have shifted from Pahari to Punjabi language.

Research questions

The research question of this study is as the follows:

1. What are the attitudes of Pahari speaker towards the Punjabi language?
2. Why do Pahari speakers shift towards Punjabi language?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bhimber city is comprised of different groups of people having different language proficiency. The dominant group is Punjabi. Migrants from Kashmir have to stay between these groups. So its requirement of these people to speak and use the Punjabi language in order to live among them.

Zhang (1988) published an article entitled Bilinguals' language attitudes and their influence in which he discussed language attitudes with case studies from different minority groups in China. He listed nine social factors that correlate with language attitudes: social development, cultural background, population, age, gender, occupation, group identity, education and rural and urban differences.

Jhuang (1990) discusses language attitudes in theory and practice. It is defined as people's evaluation of the value of a language including its function, social status and development. Compared with other attitudes, language attitudes have three features: stability, flexibility and sociability. Attitudes towards a certain language correlate with the function of the language, ethnic identity of the speaker, economic status of the speaker of the language, orthography, population, geography, inter-ethnic relation.

Edwards (1994) also discussed language attitudes. He raised two points that need to be taken into consideration in attitude studies. The first is that inconsistencies often exist between assessed attitudes and actions presumably related to them. The classic study of attitudes-behavior inconsistency of a Chinese's couple touring the United States in the early 1930s is given as an example. Secondly that there is sometimes confusion between belief and attitudes: that is particularly so in the domain of language attitudes.

Baker (1992) discusses Language attitude theory and research from different perspectives focusing on the Welsh. He points out that language attitude is an umbrella term, under which resides a variety of specific attitudes. He suggested that there is a possible correlation between language attitudes and the subjects, age, gender, school, Language ability, language background and cultural background. Khamsakul (1998) investigates the attitudes of the so ethnic group in Thailand towards their language and the use of the language with data obtained from self-evaluation questionnaire. The result of the study shows that the attitudes of the people towards their own language and linguistic group are neutral. However, there is a significant difference in the languages use and age. The younger generation uses less in their communication compared with the older generation.

Wang (1983:5) does research on the role that the language policies play in the minority policy of China. He pointed out that “different minority groups have different attitudes towards the orthography of their languages depending on the function of the orthography, but they all have positive attitudes towards their spoken languages which are their heart languages. Dai and Zhang (1990) does research on language attitudes of the Mulam people in Guangxi province. The Mulam people have very positive attitude towards the spoken language. They believe that the language is passed down to them by their ancestors, and it is an important symbol to distinguish them from other groups who live in the same areas sharing the same dressing style and life style. However, they don't see the need to have a Mulam writing system for the following reasons: long history of using Chinese, high level education in Chinese and belief that their ancestor's writing system was Chinese.

Srinarawat (1994) studies the language use of Chinese in Bangkok. The results show that education is an important factor in determining language use pattern and language attitudes. People with higher education in Thai tend to use more Thai in communication and have more positive attitudes towards Thai language. Parasher (1980) investigates language use in seven domains from two Indian cities. The mother tongue was used in the family domain while English is dominant language in friendship, neighbor and employment domains.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Several methods were used in this research in order to obtain data to answer the research questions. A questionnaire was the main instrument employed as instruments. These questionnaires were distributed among 31 participants. The questionnaire was consisted of four parts. Each part has its own focus.

The part 1 was to establish the background information of the subjects such as age, gender, education, marital status, occupation, family income.

The part II was to determine Pahari people's use of languages in their domains, such as family, friendship, transaction and religion. It was consisted of 20 questions.

The part III was to find out Pahari people's attitudes towards the Punjabi language. It was consisted of 20 questions.

The part IV was to find out Pahari people's attitudes towards their own language that is Puhari language and it consisted of 20 questions.

The data collected through these questionnaires were inserted into SPSS in order to find out answers for the research questions.

DATA ANALYSIS

SPSS 17 for windows was used to analyze data. Each question in the part III and IV were about the language attitudes. These questions were of the likert scale. This scale was coded as 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. The part II of the questionnaire was about the language use in the domains and its coded value is as 1 for Pahari, 2 for Punjabi and 0 for any other. After data entry, correlation analysis was carried out through SPSS. With the help of this correlation analysis, researchers interpret the attitudes of Pahari people towards Punjabi language. The whole sheet of correlations is given below.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis of Different Variables for Language Attitudes

	Age	FI	E	PA	PhA	FD	FrD	RD	TD
Age	1								
FI	.07	1							
E	.17	.38*	1						
PA	-.16	-.09	.03	1					
PhA	.09	-.23	.17	-.32	1				
FD	.06	.22	-.03	.47**	-.58**	1			
FrD	.13	.32	.10	.41**	-.44**	.62**	1		
RD	.11	.07	-.10	.39*	-.51**	.79**	.72**	1	
TD	.23	.06	-.03	.33	-.36**	.59**	.74**	.79**	1

Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$ level

Family Income= FI; Locality=L; Education=E; Punjabi Attitude=PA; Pahari Attitude=PhA; Family Domain=FD; Friendship Domain=FrD; Religious Domain=RD; Transaction Domain=TD

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 clearly demonstrates that there is remarkable positive correlation between different domains and attitudes of Punjabi language. The interpretation of each correlation is being discussed one by one.

Pahari people's positive attitudes towards Punjabi language

The focus of this study was to investigate the language attitudes of Pahari people towards Punjabi language. As the above results show that Pahari people show positive attitudes towards Punjabi language in different domains.

Language attitudes and use in family domain

The result shows in this domain that there is a strong positive correlation between Punjabi language and family. The value of this strong positive correlation is .472. This strong correlation shows that Pahari people have positive attitudes towards Punjabi. It means that they use mostly Punjabi language in their family. This attitude of Pahari people is determined through sample items like this:

- ❖ I discuss with family members about family issues at dinner using _____ language.
- (a)Pahari (b) Punjabi (c) any other

Language attitudes and use of language in friends' domain

In friends' domain, the result shows that there is a positive correlation between Punjabi language and friends. The value of this positive correlation is .411. This means that they use mostly Punjabi with their friends. Sample items to measure this relationship include:

- ❖ I discuss general topics with friends using _____ language.
- (a)Pahari (b) Punjabi (c) any other

Language attitudes and its use in religious domain

In religious domain, the result shows that there is a positive correlation between Punjabi and religion. The value of this positive correlation is .389.. It means that they use mostly Punjabi in

their matters of religion. Items like given below were used to understand the attitudes of the participants:

❖ At mosque I use _____ language.

(a)Pahari (b) Punjabi (c) any other

Pahari people's negative attitudes towards Pahari language

As mentioned above that the focus of this study is to investigate the language attitudes of Pahari people towards Punjabi language. As the above result, demonstrate that Pahari people have positive attitudes towards Punjabi language in different domains. However, this study also depicts another dimension that the Pahari people are continuously shifting to Punjabi language and their negative attitude towards their own language. It means within the time being they prefer to learn and speak Punjabi language in their different domains. Data sheet also mentioned the negative correlation among Pahari language attitudes and domains. The values of negative correlation can be shown in following table.

Table 2: Negative attitudes of Pahari people towards Pahari language

Domain	Negative correlations
Family	-.58**
Religion	-.51**
Friends	-.44**
Transactions	-.36**

Table 2 clearly illustrates the negative correlations of Pahari people about Pahari language in different domains of life. These correlations highlight that Pahari people have developed negative attitudes towards the Pahari language and its use in their daily life. Researchers have observed that majority of people living in Bhimber city have shifted to Punjabi language in most domains of their lives. The Pahari people are in minority and for their survival, they have to learn and speak Punjabi language. That's why the Pahari people have shifted towards Punjabi language. Table 2 demonstrates that there is a strong negative correlation of Pahari people towards Pahari language in family domain and religion domain. The remaining two domains show slightly negative attitudes. It means the Pahari people have strong positive attitude towards Punjabi language and they use Punjabi language in family and religion domains, on the other hand they don't like to speak Pahari language in family and religion domains. This appears to be the main reason that they show negative attitudes towards Pahari language.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Language attitudes of Pahari people were investigated from the wider sense including attitudes towards Punjabi language and their use in domains. Results showed in the data sheet clearly that Pahari people have positive attitude to Punjabi language. Most of the Pahari people like to speak Punjabi language in family, friends and religion domains.

The correlations between Punjabi attitudes and domains clearly show that their attitudes are positive. Responses from the questions show Pahari people's positive attitudes to Punjabi but they have negative attitudes towards Pahari language. The reason for this negative attitude towards Pahari language can be the language shift, Pahari people are forced to shift from Pahari to Punjabi. They do not consider loss of language a danger to the culture or the destruction of Pahari language. Although they have shifted towards Punjabi and developed a negative attitude towards their own language, they have, still in some ways, avoided the death of their language.

The results demonstrate that attitude of Pahari people towards Punjabi language differ from situation to situation, the results show that in some domains they have positive attitude and in other domains they have strongly positive attitudes towards Punjabi language.

It has been observed that Pahari people have very strong contact with television. It is observed through questionnaire and through researcher observation. Majority of the Pahari people have positive attitude and like to watch programs in Punjabi language. This study also reveals that the parents have positive attitudes towards sending their children to learn Punjabi language and literature. Regarding the attitudes towards the use of Punjabi language, the Pahari people are generally aware of the importance and use of Punjabi language in order to understand the Punjabi culture while living in the city Bhimber.

To sum up based on findings of this research, we can safely conclude that Pahari people are now depicting negative attitude towards their own language in different domains of their lives. These people have also developed positive attitude towards Punjabi language and they are shifting towards Punjabi language because of its importance in daily lives of changing society.

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