



RESEARCH PAPER

Preserving Linguistic Diversity: Uncovering Teachers and Students' attitudes towards Local Languages in Muzaffarabad

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influential role of teachers' attitudes in shaping students' language preferences and uncovers the attitudes of teachers and students towards local languages, (Kashmiri and Hindko) revealing the complex dynamics driving language shift and endangerment. The accelerating pace of language shift poses a critical threat to the linguistic diversity in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The native languages of Muzaffarabad are confronted with a looming threat of endangerment amidst the dominant presence of Urdu and English in schools. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining questionnaires and interviews. Findings of the study reveal a significant shift in language use among younger generations. The research concludes that teachers' negative attitude towards local languages is a primary driver of language shift and highlights the factors that are threatening linguistic diversity. Language preservation efforts should be made to avoid extinction of these languages by creating awareness among the communities about the vulnerability of their languages.

KEYWORDS

Language Endangerment, Language Preservations, Language Shift, Linguistic Diversity, Student Attitudes, Teacher Attitudes

Introduction

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Pakistan administered Kashmir), is located in the north-east of Pakistan and north-west of India, Russia, China, and Afghanistan. The region maintains a rich tapestry of linguistic diversity, with a variety of languages spoken including Gojri, Kashmiri, Pahari, Pothwari, Hindko, Dogri, and Punjabi. However, in AJK Urdu, and English, are two privileged languages. Urdu is declared as the national language, whereas English functions as the language of authority, exerting influence across various domains, including governance, education, legal frameworks, corporate entities, scientific inquiry, and mass media. Both the languages get institutional support especially in the education domain, whereas, local languages, Kashmiri and Hindko are systematically marginalised and excluded from all spheres of influence, including education. Language endangerment is a pressing issue globally, and AJK is no exception. Local languages in the region are facing endangerment under the influence of dominant languages, particularly in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir. Situated at the confluence of the Neelum and Jhelum rivers, the city is a significant cultural, linguistic hub and home to a diverse range of languages, including Kashmiri and Hindko.

Kashmiri Language

The Kashmiri language is called ko:šur or k: širzaba:n by its native speakers. Primarily spoken in the Kashmir Valley, Kashmiri is also spoken by a small minority in various parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, including Muzaffarabad. Based on preliminary

data Grierson (1919) concluded that Kashmiri belongs to the Dardic branch of the Indo-Aryan language family. However, Morgenstierne (1929) later reclassified Kashmiri as part of the Northwestern Zone of the Indo-Aryan language family.

Kachru (1973) has categorised Kashmiri into area-defined dialects, which include:

- a) Mara:z is spoken by the speech community who live in the southern and south eastern region.
- b) Kamra:z is spoken by the speech community living in the northern and north western region.
- c) Yamra:z is spoken by the speech community who live in Srinagar and its surrounding areas).

Hindko Language

Hindko is a Northwestern Indo-Aryan language spoken primarily in the Hazara region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan, as well as in different parts of Azad Kashmir including Muzaffarabad. Hindko is predominantly spoken in the region (Haroon & Sohail, 2011). Grierson (1916) used the term Hindko to refer to language spoken by Hindus. Although the Hindko-speaking community constitutes the majority in Muzaffarabad, the number of speakers within this community is declining.

Literature Review

Language attitudes refer to the feelings and perceptions individuals hold towards their community's language or any other language (Crystal, 1992). These attitudes significantly influence language preservation or shift, and are learned behaviours that can change over time (Baker, 1988). Speakers with a positive attitude towards their language are more likely to maintain it (Fishman, 1991), transmit it to future generations (Kridalaksana, 2001), and resist language shift (Haugen, 1966). In contrast, speakers with a negative attitude are more likely to shift to a dominant language (Fishman, 1991), assimilate into the dominant language culture (Grosjean, 2010), and abandon their language (Kachru, 1992). Language attitude is a complex and dynamic concept that plays a crucial role in shaping speakers' relationships with languages (Kachru, 1992). Language attitude is shaped by various factors, including language status, prestige, and stereotypes (Haugen, 1966), and can change over time (Crystal, 1997). Teachers' attitudes and beliefs also significantly impact students' language attitudes and choices (Karsli, 2007; Hattie, 2009). Moreover, speakers' attitudes towards their first language (L1) can affect language attrition, with positive attitudes potentially reducing language loss (Schmid, 2013). According to Dragojevic (2017) language preferences are shaped early in life, with children initially preferring their own language variety. However, as they grow and interact with the dominant group, they often adopt the prevailing attitudes, favouring standard language varieties over nonstandard ones. He claims that the social status of a language in a given society shapes the attitudes of both speakers and non-speakers, influencing language choice. Education and teachers play a vital role in shaping students' language attitudes and choices (Karsli, 2007; OECD, 2005; Hattie, 2009; Pajares, 1992; Temel, 1988; Ataunal, 2003). Effective teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' language choices and perceptions, and their impact can either inspire and empower or hinder students' growth and potential (Ataunal, 2003). Education policies, lack of recognition or political representation, ban on the use of minority languages in public institutions, effects indigenous languages.

Local languages (Kashmiri and Hindko) in Muzaffarabad which is capital city of Pakistan-administered Kashmir are vulnerable to endangerment due to the hegemony of

English and Urdu. English and Urdu dominate the education system, marginalising local languages. Teachers' language preferences and biases reinforce this dominance that has influenced students' language choices that may cause decline of local languages.

This study explores the impacts of teachers' beliefs and practices on the decline of Kashmiri and Hindko languages in Muzaffarabad, as Teachers' attitudes and behaviours play a crucial role in shaping students' language choices and perceptions of their mother tongue, influencing the vitality of local language. No significant work has been carried out in this region with reference to Kashmiri and Hindko language endangerment. This research explores how far teachers' language attitudes influence students' language preferences and perceptions, and examines the role of these attitudes in contributing to language endangerment in the specific context of Muzaffarabad. By illuminating the significant impact that teachers have on students' language choices and perceptions, this research aims to enhance our understanding of the intricate factors that drive language decline and preservation, and to inform strategies that promote linguistic diversity and sustainability.

Material and Methods

Research Design

For this study a mixed method approach was used that included both quantitative and qualitative research design. Quantitative method helped in getting data from a larger sample using a questionnaire. The data collected through questionnaires is analysed, interpreted and presented numerically. Qualitative method is flexible, open and is helpful in getting details and in-depth understanding of human behaviour. In order to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon semi structured interviews were used. It provided an opportunity to get information which could not be gathered through questionnaire. Mixed method approach provides authenticity and validity to research (Creswell, 2009). Individual interviews were conducted out of total 390 respondents, thirty were interviewed. Interviews were both semi-structured and open-ended. With the help of principals and teachers, students, who were vocal and confident, were selected. The selection of teachers and parents was based on their willingness. Here is the information in a paragraph:

Target Population

Before taking any kind of research, the target population must be determined. The population of the study is Hindko and Kashmiri speaking communities who dwell in and around Muzaffarabad city. The target population for this study consisted of teachers, students from reputed public and private schools in and around Muzaffarabad city, and parents from both the Kashmiri and Hindko communities. To gain a comprehensive understanding of how teachers' attitudes impact students' perceptions of their mother tongue, the study purposefully included a larger sample of young participants, who are more likely to be influenced by their teachers' beliefs and behaviours.

Sampling

A stratified sampling approach was employed to select a representative sample of 390 respondents, comprising 90 teachers, who teach primary level 200 students from primary section, from 10 reputed public and 10 private schools in and around Muzaffarabad city. Total 100 parents were included, 38 from the Kashmiri community which lives in different pockets of the city, and 62 parents from the Hindko community were selected on the basis of their willingness. Additionally, 30 individuals, including

teachers, students, and parents, were selected for in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The selection of students was facilitated by Principals and teachers, who identified vocal and confident students, while teachers and parents were selected based on their willingness to participate. This sampling strategy ensured a diverse and informative sample, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon.

Research Tools

This study employed questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as research tools. The research tools used in this study were carefully selected to align with the research objectives. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions, whereas qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which provided rich qualitative insights. This dual approach enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon.

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through questionnaires from 390 respondents, which included 90 teachers, 200 students and 100 parents. The researcher herself distributed the questionnaire to the students and teachers in reputed public and private schools of the city after obtaining consent of the school Heads. Questionnaires were distributed in different areas of the city to the parents who showed willingness to take part in the research. After explaining each question one week was given to the respondents to return the questionnaires. Individual interviews were conducted. Out of 390 total respondents, thirty were interviewed. Interviews were both semi-structured and open-ended. With the help of Principals and teachers, only those students were selected who were vocal and confident? The selection of teachers and parents was based on their willingness.

Data analysis procedure

The quantitative data was systematically coded and entered into SPSS for analysis, enabling the researcher to organise and examine the data. The data was then analysed using percentages and graphs to visualise the results in a clear and concise manner, ensuring accuracy and authenticity. Each graph is accompanied by a brief discussion summarising the key findings and participant responses, providing a concise overview of the participants' answers. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis was conducted manually, with the researcher carefully considering each piece of data to ensure a deep understanding of the respondents' experiences, perspectives, and meanings. The resulting themes and sub-themes provided a rich and nuanced understanding of the research phenomenon, revealing the main trends and patterns that emerged from the data

Data was collected from 390 respondents. All the 390 respondents completed a questionnaire whereas 30 respondents were interviewed. Data was analysed by using SPSS software.

Proficiency of the Respondents in Mother tongue

The study investigated respondents' competence in their mother tongue, focusing on four fundamental skills: understanding, speaking, reading, and writing."

Respondents Proficiency in Understanding Mother Tongue

Below Table reveals the percentage of the respondents understanding proficiency in their mother tongue

Table 1
Proficiency in Understanding Mother Tongue

Language	Very Good	Good	Moderate	Very Little	Not at all
Kashmiri	0	14	21.25	16	49
Hindko	5	45	28	12.5	9

The data indicates that only 5% respondents out of 120 belonging to the Hindko community revealed that their understanding proficiency is very good whereas 45% claimed to be good in understanding Hindko language while 28% claimed to be moderate in understanding Hindko. However 16% revealed that their understanding proficiency was very little and 9% claimed that they were not at all proficient in understanding their mother tongue. Out of 80 Kashmiri respondents, no one respondent claimed to be very good in understanding their mother tongue. Only 14% claimed that they are good in understanding their mother tongue. 21.25% Kashmiri respondents claimed to have moderate understanding proficiency while a substantial majority 9% acknowledged that they were not at all proficient in understanding Kashmiri language.

The findings indicate a concerning trend of language proficiency decline among the younger generation of Hindko and Kashmiri communities. The low percentage of respondents who reported being proficient in their mother tongue suggests a significant language shift towards dominant languages like Urdu and English.

Proficiency in Speaking Mother tongue

Table 2
Proficiency in Speaking Mother tongue

Language	Very Good	Good	Moderate	Very Little	Not at all
Kashmiri	0	6.25	14	21	59
Hindko	3.33	22	44	14	17

The results reveal a stark contrast in language proficiency between Kashmiri and Hindko respondents. A mere 6.25% of Kashmiri respondents possess good speaking skills in their mother tongue, whereas 22% of Hindko respondents demonstrate good speaking proficiency. Moreover, 14% of Kashmiri, and 44% of Hindko respondents reported moderate speaking abilities. However, a worrying trend emerges as a majority 59% of Kashmiri respondents claim to have no speaking proficiency in their mother tongue, compared to 17% of Hindko respondents who reported the same.

A significant disparity in language preservation between the two communities is revealed from the figure above. The low percentage of Kashmiri respondents with strong speaking skills in their mother tongue indicates a concerning trend of language shift. In contrast, the relatively higher percentage of Hindko respondents with strong speaking skills suggests a stronger language preservation effort within the community, but it is also concerning that this percentage is not satisfactory, indicating that even among Hindko speakers, language proficiency is not as vigorous as it could be. The majority of Kashmiri and Hindko respondents with no speaking proficiency in their mother tongue are a cause for concern.

Proficiency in Reading Mother Tongue

Table 3
Proficiency in Reading Mother Tongue

Language	Very Good	Good	Moderate	Very Little	Not at all
Kashmiri	0	0	21.25	10	87
Hindko	0	0	3	37	70

The data in the above table reveals a concerning trend regarding the reading proficiency of Kashmiri and Hindko languages of the respondents. A staggering 87% Kashmiri respondents claimed to have no proficiency in reading Kashmiri, while 10% claimed to have very little proficiency. None of the Kashmiri respondents reported having good or very good reading proficiency. Similarly, 70% of Hindko respondents claimed to have no proficiency in reading Hindko, 37% claimed to have very little proficiency, and only a mere 3% of the total respondents claimed to have moderate reading proficiency.

The finding reveals that a significant majority of both the language communities have an alarming absence of good or very good reading proficiency. The decline in reading skills can be attributed to the dominance of other languages in education and media as these languages are not taught in schools and a very little literature is available in these languages.

Proficiency in Writing Mother tongue

Table 4
Proficiency in Writing Mother tongue

Language	Very Good	Good	Moderate	Very Little	Not at all
Kashmiri	0	0	0	4	96
Hindko	0	0	1.25	32	67.5

It is noteworthy that an overwhelming majority 96% of the Kashmiri respondents reported having no proficiency in writing the Kashmiri language. In contrast, a small minority 4% claimed to have moderate writing proficiency, while none of the respondents reported having good or very good writing proficiency. On the other hand an overwhelming majority 67.5% from Hindko community respondents claimed that they were not at all good in writing while a small number claimed to have very little writing proficiency. Only 32% claimed that their proficiency in writing Hindko was very little.

The data analysis revealed that an overwhelming majority of respondents lacking writing proficiency in their mother tongue indicates that indigenous languages are completely ignored in education. Teachers' negative attitudes towards indigenous languages and prioritization of dominant languages in schools are significant factors contributing to language loss. By ignoring these languages, educational institutions perpetuate language endangerment and cultural erosion. Students are discouraged from speaking and writing in their native languages, leading to a decline in language skills and language usage in different domains

Language Use Patterns in Different Domains

The questionnaire investigated language use patterns across various aspects of life, revealing a complex landscape of language preferences. Respondents reported using Kashmiri, Hindko, Urdu, English, or a combination of these languages in different contexts, such as home, work, education, media, and social interactions. This data provides valuable insights into whether there is a shift away from the local languages, Kashmiri and Hindko, in favour of more dominant languages like Urdu and English, across different domains.

Language Use in Family Domain

Family domain is crucial for language maintenance and intergenerational language transmission. Respondents were asked about the language they use with family members which include grandparents, parents, and siblings. Table 5 below reveals Kashmiri language usage in family domain Kashmiri community whereas table 6 reveals Hindko languages usage in Hindko community family domain.

Table 5
Use of Kashmiri in Family Domain

Language use	NA	Hindko	Kashmiri	Urdu	English - Urdu
Grandparents to your parents	0	6.3	53.7	40	0
Grandparents to grandchildren	0	2.5	6.3	91.3	0
Grandchildren to grandparents	0	0	2.5	97.5	0
Parents among themselves	0	10	9	82	0
Father to children	0	0	3.8	90	6.3
Mother to children	0	0	3.8	92.5	3.8
Children to parents	0	0	0	97.5	2.5
Children among themselves	0	0	0	97.5	2.5

As is revealed in the table above local languages in Muzaffarabad are confined to Parents and grandparents generation. As far as Kashmiri language is concerned, 53% of the respondents claim that their grandparents use Kashmiri with their parents. A number of respondents 40% claim that grandparents use Urdu, with their parents while a small fraction, 6.3% claim that Hindko language is used between their parents and grandparents. Responding to the statement regarding the language grandparents' use while communicating with grandchildren 2.5% respondents claim that their parents use Hindko language whereas 6.3% claim that Kashmiri language is used while a great majority 91.3% claims that their grandparents use Urdu language with their grandchildren. Responding to the statement regarding grandchildren's use of language with grandparents out of total 80 respondents, 2.5% claim that Kashmiri is used whereas majority 97.5% of the respondents claim that they communicate in Urdu with their Grandparents. Responding to the statement language used by Parents among themselves 10% respondents claim that their parents communicate among themselves in Hindko 9% in Kashmiri whereas an overwhelming majority 82% communicates in Urdu language. As for as father to children language use is concerned 90% respondents claim that their fathers communicate with them in Urdu, 3.8% in Kashmiri language whereas 6.3% claim that their fathers use English and Urdu both the language while communicating with them. Out of a total 80 respondents, 92.5% respondents claim that their mothers communicate in Urdu and 3.8% in English and Urdu while 3.8% claim that their mothers communicate in Kashmiri with them. In Response to the statement language children use with parents 97.5% claimed that they use Urdu language while communicating with parents while 2.5% claim to Use English-Urdu both the languages. As for as children language among themselves 97.5% claim that they use Urdu language while 2.5% use Urdu and English both the language among themselves

Table 6
Use of Hindko in Family Domain

Language use in family	NA	Hindko	Kashmiri	Urdu	English -Urdu
Grandparents to your parents	16	62	0	22	0
Grandparents to grandchildren	16	17.5	0	66.5	0
Grandchildren to grandparents	16	10	0	74	0
Parents among themselves	0	46.7	0	53.3	0
Father to children	0	10	0	85.8	4.2
Mother to children	0	5	0	94.2	.8
Children to parents	0	2.5	0	95.8	1.7
Children among themselves	0	2.5	0	95.8	1.7

The data in table above indicates language use in family domain of in the Hindko community respondents, as compared to Kashmiri community a great majority 62% of the respondents claimed that their grandparents use Hindko language with their parents a considerable number 22% claimed that grandparents use Urdu with their parents while a small fraction 16% claim it was not applicable to them. Responding to the statement

regarding the language grandparents' use while communicating with grandchildren 17.5% respondents claim that their grandparents use Hindko language whereas 66.5% claim that Urdu language is used while 16% answered that it was not applicable to them. Responding to the statement regarding grandchildren's use of language with grandparents 10% respondents claimed to use Hindko, 0% Kashmiri whereas majority 74% of the respondents claimed that they communicate in Urdu with their Grandparents. Responding to the statement language used by Parents among themselves 47.7% respondents claim that their parents communicate with themselves in Hindko while a great majority 53% communicates in Urdu language. As for Father to children language use is concerned 85.8% respondents' claim that their fathers communicate with them in Urdu language whereas 10% claim that their fathers use Hindko while 4.2% use English and Urdu both the language while communicating with them. Out of 120 respondents, 5% of respondents claim that their mothers communicate in Hindko, while .8% claimed that their mothers communicate in English and Urdu both the languages, while a great number 94% of respondents claimed that their mothers communicate in Urdu. In Response to the statement language children use with parents 95.8% claimed that they use Urdu language while communicating with parents while 1.7% claim to Use English-Urdu both the languages. Only a small fraction claim to use the Hindko language. As far as children language among themselves is concerned 95.8% claim that they use Urdu language while 1.7% use Urdu and English both the language among themselves. Whereas, 2.5% of respondents claim that they communicate in the Hindko language.

The findings indicate that the home domain, which is typically a strong hold for indigenous languages, is being replaced by other languages like Urdu and English. This is noteworthy because the home domain is where languages are typically passed down from one generation to the next. The findings indicate that grandparents and parents are the primary custodians of indigenous languages, while children and grandchildren are increasingly using Urdu as their primary language of communication. This language shift is more pronounced in the Kashmiri community, where the use of Kashmiri language is limited to a small fraction of respondents. The replacement of indigenous languages by dominant languages like Urdu and English in the home domain indicates that that Language shift is occurring within the family domain.

Language Use in School Domain

Respondents were asked about the medium of instruction in school. English is the dominant medium of instruction in most of the schools. A staggering 100% majority, respondents from private school and public school reported that English is the Medium of instruction in their schools.

Teacher's Attitude towards Local Languages

In order to get information about teachers' attitude towards local languages, respondents were asked whether teachers allow the use of local languages in school.

Table 7
Teachers' attitude

Teachers Attitude	Percentage
Ignore	8
Discourage	90
Encourage	2

The table highlights a concerning trend in both private and public schools, where 90 % teachers discourage students from using local languages. Rather than fostering an

inclusive learning environment, teachers tend to dissuade students from speaking in their native languages. Most alarming, however, is that no respondent reported that their teachers actively promote or local language use in class. The data suggests that teachers' positive attitude towards English and Urdu has a significant impact on shaping students' attitudes towards these languages. However, this enthusiasm comes at a cost, as teachers' negative attitudes towards local languages are instilling a sense of shame in students, making them feel embarrassed to speak in their mother tongues. This is detrimental to local languages.

Students' Attitude towards Local Languages

Table 8
Students Attitude towards Local Language

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1. Kashmiri and Hindko enjoy high status in Azad Kashmir	0	0	44.3	55.2	0
2. Kashmiri/ Hindko should be taught as subject	0	9.5	20.9	69.2	0
3. Parents should transmit their mother tongue to their children.	4.5	23	0	70	0
4. Teachers should communicate in Hindko/Kashmiri with students.	0	8.5	6.0	85.1	0
5. I feel embarrassed in using my mother tongue in school.	0	81.6	11.4	6.5	0
6. If I study in English I will be Successful in life.	23.4	59	14	1.5	0
7. Students should be allowed to use their mother tongue in class.	0	4.5	24	70.1	0
8. If I study in Hindko/Kashmiri I will be Successful in life.	0	1.5	5.5	91.5	0

Data was elicited to assess students' attitude towards their mother tongue by using likert scale options as 5.strongly agree 4.Agree. 3. Neutral, 2. Disagree 1.Strongly disagree.

The results in the above Table show a significant majority 55.2% of respondents do not consider Kashmiri and Hindko to be prestigious languages in Muzaffarabad. Additionally, 69.2 % of respondents disagreed with the statement that Kashmiri/Hindko should be taught as a subject in schools whereas only 9.5% showed agreement. Majority of the respondents 70% believed that parents should not pass on their mother tongue to their children. Furthermore, a considerable majority 85.1% of the respondents did not agree with the statement that in schools teachers should communicate in Kashmiri/Hindko with students. Only a small number 8.5% agreed with the statement whereas 6% remained undecided. An overwhelming majority 81.6% of the respondents agreed that they feel embarrassed in using their mother tongue in school whereas a small number remained neutral. Only 6.5% disagreed with the statement. An overwhelming majority 59% agreed with the statement that learning English will bring success in life.while 14.9% of respondents remained neutral. Only an insignificant number of respondents 1.5% disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, most respondents 70.1% opposed the idea of allowing students to use their mother tongue in class, with 24% remaining neutral and only 4.5% in agreement. A considerable number 91.5% of respondents disagreed with the statement that by studying Hindko/Kashmiri they will be Successful in life. On the other hand 5.5% remained neutral, only a negligible number 1.5% agreed.

Language, Students prefer for Communication in Class

Table 9
Language, Students Prefer for Communication in Class

Preferred language for communication	Percentage
Hindko	0
Kashmiri	0
Urdu	9.5
English	2.1
Urdu -English	89.1

The table above shows that none of the respondents showed fondness for the local language (Hindko/Kashmiri). A clear majority of respondents 90% prefer to communicate in both Urdu and English in class, with a small minority preferring to use only Urdu 9.5% or only English 2.1%. However, it is striking that none of the respondents 0% prefer to use their mother tongue (Kashmiri or Hindko) for communication in class, indicating a complete lack of interest in using their native language for communication and a significant disconnect from their linguistic heritage. The data indicates that teachers' positive attitude towards dominant languages has changed students' perception and they have internalised the hegemony of Urdu and English, resulting in a pronounced rejection of local languages, Kashmiri and Hindko, within educational contexts. Stigmatisation of native languages in schools has fostered linguistic insecurity. The prioritized dominant languages are erasing linguistic diversity in the area. As the students have come to perceive their native languages as inferior or unsuitable for academic use

Parents 'Medium of Instruction Preference

Data was elicited from parents, to get information about their preference of medium of instruction (MOI) at primary level for their children.

Table 10
Parents 'Medium of Instruction Preference

Parents preferred MOI	Percentage of Respondents
Kashmiri	7
Hindko	6
Urdu	34
English	53

The table above reveals a striking and concerning trend in the preferences of parents from both the communities regarding the medium of instruction for their children. Majority of the respondents (53%) were in favour of English language as medium of instruction a significant proportion (34%) preferred Urdu. However, the support for indigenous languages like Kashmiri and Hindko is alarmingly low, with only 7% and 6% of parents, respectively, advocating for their use as the medium of instruction at the primary level.

Ratio of Intergenerational Transmission of Local Languages

In order to assess intergenerational transmission ratio of local languages, data was elicited from parents. The below figure, presents the prevailing situation in the area.

Table 11
Ratio of Intergenerational Transmission of Local Languages

Response	percentage
Yes	13
No	87

The table above presents an alarming trend, where an overwhelming majority of parents over 83% have not transmitted their mother tongue to their children, while a negligible minority 17% have done so. This stark disparity underscores a significant failure in intergenerational language transmission, which is mainly attributed to the teachers' attitude towards dominant languages. The devaluation of indigenous languages in educational settings has likely contributed to a diminished sense of linguistic pride and priority among parents, leading to a decline in language transmission.

This breakdown in language transmission has profound implications for language preservation, cultural heritage, and identity. The discontinuity in language transmission

threatens the very survival of local languages, such as Kashmiri and Hindko, which are essential components of the region's cultural fabric.

Mother Tongue Knowledge of the Students

In order to assess the students' knowledge and proficiency in their mother tongue, a visual aid approach was used. This involved showing pictures of various objects, such as: names of Vegetables (e.g., potato, carrot, spinach), Fruits, (e.g., apple, banana, mango) and Colours (e.g., red, blue, green).

Table 13
Mother Tongue Knowledge of the Students

Name	Hindko	Kashmiri	Urdu	English	English -Urdu
Vegetables	3.5	0.5	14.5	48.3	31.8
Colours	3.5	0	9.5	53.2	32.3
Fruits	3.5	0	12.9	39.8	42.3

The data presented in the figure reveals a striking trend, indicating a significant knowledge gap among participants regarding the names of everyday objects in their mother tongue. A staggering majority (over 53.2%) demonstrated familiarity only with the English names of various colours, while a substantial proportion (32.5%) showed proficiency in both Urdu and English. Notably, a small minority (less than 5%) could identify objects by their Hindko names, whereas none of the respondents were able to provide the corresponding names in Kashmiri. This finding raises concerns about the erosion of linguistic heritage.

The results regarding vegetable name elicitation indicate a significant trend, with a majority (48.30%) of respondents only familiar with English names, while a substantial proportion (32%) demonstrated knowledge of both Urdu and English names. A smaller group (14.40%) knew only Urdu names, and a tiny fraction from the Hindko community (less than 5%) could identify names in Hindko. Alarmingly, only 0.50% of respondents could provide Kashmiri names, indicating a severe knowledge gap. Similarly, the data on fruit names reveals a concerning trend, with 42.3% of respondents only knowing English names, while 40% demonstrated proficiency in both English and Urdu. A smaller proportion (12.9%) knew only Urdu names, and a small minority (3.5%) could identify names in Hindko. Notably, none of the respondents (0%) could provide Kashmiri names.

The data analysis shows a concerning trend of language shift among the Hindko and Kashmiri communities. The findings indicate a significant knowledge gap among respondents regarding the names of everyday objects in their mother tongue, with a majority only familiar with English names and a small minority able to identify objects by their Hindko or Kashmiri names.

A thorough examination of the data reveals that English and Urdu have become the dominant languages in schools in Muzaffarabad, marginalizing Kashmiri and Hindko, which are essential to the cultural identity of the region. The lack of value placed on these indigenous languages in the education sector is alarming, as it leads to a generational shift towards Urdu and English among the younger population. Both public and private schools enforce a language policy prioritizing English as the medium of instruction, resulting in teachers discouraging students from speaking local languages in school premises and classrooms. Teachers discourage students from speaking local languages, associating them with shame. As a result, students are adopting English or Urdu as their preferred language, leading to a decline in the use of Kashmiri and Hindko, and potentially threatening their survival. This linguistic suppression leads to feelings of shame among students, causing

them to prefer English or Urdu over their mother tongue. Consequently, younger generations are becoming increasingly disconnected from their linguistic heritage, adopting English or Urdu as their primary language of communication.

Finding and Discussion of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected through interviews in order to get in-depth understanding and also to establish validity of data, 30 respondents were interviewed. The interview questions were carefully crafted to meet the research objectives, aiming to gather comprehensive information. A mix of direct and indirect questions was used to obtain a detailed understanding. The primary goal was to gain a clear and concise insight. While the questions for teachers and school heads were identical, those for students were tailored to their specific needs and participation. Similarly, the questions for parents were distinct but aligned with the overall theme. Open-ended questions were used to solicit their opinions providing valuable insights into their beliefs and attitudes. The qualitative analysis followed a 6-step process for examining qualitative data, based on the method described by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process started with getting familiar with the data, followed by identifying early patterns. Next, themes were discovered, refined, and named. Finally, the final report was written. This structured approach helped to systematically analyse the data and draw meaningful conclusions.

Use of Local Languages in Schools

The findings of interviews indicate that teachers in the classroom often discourage the use of students' mother tongues, with a significant number of teachers, particularly female teachers in urban areas, rarely using local languages. One of the student from private elite school while responding to a question whether their teachers encourage them to use their mother tongue told "ager hum Urdu mein bhi koi baat kerna ki koshish karein to teacher humari baat nahin sunti jab tak hum English na bolain, local language to door ki baat he". Another student from public school told "ager humari class mein koi Hindko bolay to teach us ko manah kerti hein or kehti hein class mein Koi bacha apni mother tongue nahin bolega". Majority of the students said that their teachers discourage use of local languages in class. Only one student said that their teacher does not discourage the use of their mother tongue in class. Majority of the students reveal that their teachers dislike use of local languages during class. One teacher replying to the question regarding local language use in school premises said School heads prioritize the use of English or Urdu languages in school settings, and teachers are required to enforce this policy by monitoring student language use and discouraging the use of local languages. One of the school heads was of the opinion that It is beneficial to teach English at the primary level for optimal results. Adding multiple languages to the curriculum can be burdensome and confusing for young learners. As mother tongue can be learnt at home and It is parents discretion which language they teach their children at home. It's redundant to teach it in school as well.

Out of ten teachers who were interviewed all said that they discourage students if they speak the local language in class, because of school policies. Teachers in private schools strictly enforce the English-only policy in classrooms, prohibiting students from speaking their native languages. This stance is reinforced by parental expectations also, as many parents believe that only those schools are superior, where it is mandatory for students to communicate only in English. On the other hand, public school teachers also prioritize English language learning, and discourage local language use due to the competitive dynamics between public and private schools, because proficiency in English is viewed as the hallmark of success.

Teachers' attitude

Attitude towards English and Urdu

It has become evident from interview data that most of the teachers hold a positive attitude towards English and Urdu, suggesting a preference for these languages. This prioritization of dominant languages contributes to the decline and marginalization of local languages, leading to language shift and language loss. Teachers encourage students to speak Urdu and English. Responding to a question whether teachers use local language to explain lessons, majority of the students replied that they use Urdu for explanation but never use local languages. Responding to a question regarding the use of a student's mother tongue in class, a teacher expressed his opinion that students' mother tongue should be kept away if we want students to be fluent in English. "School policies and parents requirements compel us to discourage use of mother tongue in school premises" expressed one female teacher.

Attitude towards Local Languages

A thorough examination of the interview data reveals a disturbing trend, wherein a significant majority of teachers exhibit negative attitudes towards local languages. This prevalent negativity is characterized by dismissive views, such as perceptions of local languages as inferior, lacking utility, or being antithetical to modernity. One teacher responded that there is no need to use local language in school premises as local language has no practical usage. Many teachers believed that the promotion of local languages might hinder students' opportunities to learn dominant languages and access broader job markets. One of the parents said that teachers' attitude toward local languages is negative; they think those students who speak Hindko or Kashmiri come from illiterate and backward backgrounds. Moreover in Good schools at the time of admission interviews are held in English in Private schools and in Urdu in Public schools so parents are left with no choice so they have to abandon their mother tongue and teach children Urdu and English from early age. Out of ten students only one student from a boys' school said that they speak the local language in class and teachers do not take notice. One of the students said that whenever they feel difficulty in comprehending any lesson, the teachers use Urdu but never use Hindko or Kashmiri to explain. Responding to a question, about teachers' reaction regarding local languages in class. Majority of student respondents were of the opinion that teachers get offended by the use of local language in class.

One teacher said that they have to encourage students to speak English as per school policy and parents demand. He further added that Many parents have complained to the school authorities about teachers who used local language by saying '*hum ney bachey english seakhney ke lye iss school mein admit kerwai hein teacher se bolein in ke sath english mein bola karein*'. (We have got our children admitted in this school to learn English tell your teachers to communicate with them in English) Competitive environment has motivated parents to neglect their language and teach their children prestigious languages like Urdu and English that is the reason that we discourage local a language in school premises in order to meet parents demands told one teacher while responding to a question. responding to a question regarding negative attitude of teachers towards local languages one

Students Perceptions and attitude towards Local Languages

School policies and teachers' attitudes have greatly influenced students' attitude about local languages. Responding to a question regarding teaching of local languages

(Hindko/Kashmiri) as a subject a number of the students replied that they do not like to learn Hindko or Kashmiri as a subject. One student was of the opinion that local languages are spoken by poor and less privileged people so she doesn't like to speak local languages. Responding to a question about what should be the medium of instruction, almost all students were in favour of English. The respondents' preference for English as the medium of instruction serves as a stark indicator of their negative attitude towards local languages. By prioritizing English, teachers implicitly diminish the status of local languages, suggesting that they are not worthy of inclusion in the school curriculum. This attitude has a profound effect on students, leading them to regard local languages as irrelevant and unfit for formal educational contexts. When asked about local language usage in class, three respondents disclosed that their schools prohibit speaking Hindko or Kashmiri, with teachers issuing warning letters to non-compliant students. As a result, these students prefer to focus on achieving fluency in English rather than learning local languages. Furthermore, one respondent confessed feeling embarrassed when her mother communicates with teachers in Hindko during parent-teacher meetings, highlighting the stigma associated with local language usage in formal educational settings.

Lack of intergenerational Transmission

Responding to the question regarding factors behind lack of intergenerational transmission of local languages, one respondent highlighted a disturbing reason for the lack of intergenerational transmission of local languages, revealing that teachers often hold a negative attitude towards languages like Hindko and Kashmiri. These teachers wrongly assume that students who speak these languages come from illiterate families, perpetuating a harmful stereotype that associates local languages with lower social status. As a result, parents feel pressured to teach their children Urdu instead of their mother tongue, hoping to improve their social standing and educational prospects. A Kashmiri respondent shared a personal experience while responding to the same question that illustrates the profound impact of teachers' attitudes on language transmission. As a student, she was reprimanded by her teachers for speaking Kashmiri in class, a punishment that discouraged her from using her mother tongue. This negative reinforcement ultimately led her to abandon Kashmiri in favor of Urdu, a language her teachers seemingly valued more. Her story poignantly highlights how teachers' biases can erode linguistic diversity and cultural heritage, as students internalize the message that their mother tongue is inferior or undesirable. This experience had a lasting impact, influencing her decision not to teach her children Kashmiri, in order to spare them the same difficulties and embarrassment she faced in school. Her story highlights how teachers' biases can erode linguistic diversity and cultural heritage, as students internalize the message that their mother tongue is inferior or undesirable, perpetuating a cycle of language loss and cultural suppression. Responding to the same question two respondents were in favour of teaching English to children, due to its significance in today's competitive environment. One respondent emphasized that English is a global language and, given the prevailing competition, it's essential to teach children English from a young age to enable them to express themselves confidently. Building on this point, another parent added that, in today's digital age, students are often assigned school tasks that require internet research, making proficiency in English crucial for completing these tasks successfully.

Parents' interview data has indicated that the primary factor contributing to the lack of intergenerational language transmission is the devaluation of local languages in educational settings. This has resulted in a decline in language transmission, as parents, motivated by aspirations for social mobility, increasingly prioritize the acquisition of prestigious languages like Urdu and English over the transmission of their native

languages. Consequently, this has led to a decline in linguistic pride and a diminished sense of cultural identity.

It is revealed from the above discussion that in Muzaffarabad and surrounding areas, private and public schools prioritize English and Urdu, marginalizing local languages. Teachers' positive attitudes towards dominant languages contribute to this marginalization, shaping students' linguistic preferences and attitudes. Students and parents associate success with non-native languages, leading to a decline in local language transmission. The emphasis on dominant languages in schools has caused parents to devalue their native languages, prioritizing Urdu and English for their children's future success. This has resulted in a decline in linguistic pride, cultural identity, and intergenerational language transmission, with local languages being spoken with shame and restricted to older generations. The dominance of non-native languages has led to a decline in the use of local languages, pushing them to the brink of extinction. The negative attitude of teachers towards local languages has profoundly impacted young parents who prioritize teaching an amalgam of Urdu and English as the first language to their children to avoid embarrassment in school, where teachers primarily teach in Urdu and English. This has resulted in a decrease in intergenerational transmission of local languages, limiting their use to the grandparent generation. Parents showed indifference towards the potential harm of not transmitting their mother tongue to their children, prioritizing English education for better employment opportunities instead. Many young parents are not proficient in their mother tongue and opt to teach their children a mix of Urdu and English, further eroding the use of local languages.

The study has further revealed the role played by teachers in shaping the linguistic preferences and attitudes of younger generations. By perpetuating the notion that local languages lack relevance in modern sciences and sophisticated domains, teachers inadvertently contributed to the marginalization of these languages. Students' perceptions about local languages are changed as they are reluctant to communicate in these languages due to the stigma attached to them. Majority of the students prioritize the acquisition of English and Urdu language skills, largely influenced by their teachers' preferences and biases. Furthermore, students express a pervasive fear that education in local languages would hinder their personal and professional development, leading to a perceived backwardness. Moreover, the absence of language policies and inadequate teacher training on language preservation and promotion has further accelerated this decline, threatening the very survival of local languages.

Conclusion

The implementation of the 2009 education policy in Pakistan-administered Kashmir has led to a significant transformation in the education sector, resulting in the dominance of English and Urdu as the mediums of instruction. This shift has marginalized local languages, such as Kashmiri and Hindko, imperilling the region's linguistic diversity and threatening the survival of indigenous languages. The study reveals that the pedagogical culture perpetuated by the dominance of Urdu and English has stigmatized local languages, leading to a decline in linguistic pride and cultural identity among students.

The study also reveals that teacher's positive attitude towards dominant languages has profoundly impacted the younger generation, leading to a shift in their perception of local languages. Children from a very early age develop a negative attitude towards these languages. The results indicate that the younger generation's tilted attitude towards Urdu and English has resulted in the marginalization and proscription of local languages. Moreover, teacher's attitude towards indigenous languages in Muzaffarabad has exerted a

profound influence on the linguistic preferences of the younger generation, precipitating a decline in the usage and transmission of native languages. This trend is very concerning as it has paved the path for endangerment of local language in the area. A language revolution is underway, with the younger generation increasingly abandoning local languages in favour of dominant languages. This shift poses a significant threat to the survival of local languages, potentially leading to language decay and extinction. It is crucial that policymakers acknowledge the importance of linguistic diversity and implement measures to promote and preserve local languages.

Recommendations

- Local languages should be integrated in school curricula.
- Awareness should be created among teachers about the importance of local language preservation
- Teachers should be equipped with strategies to promote local languages.
- Students should be encouraged to express themselves in their mother tongue.
- Local language use should be promoted on social and other media platforms.

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