



RESEARCH PAPER

Micro-Level Language Planning of Torwali Language in KPK: A Roadmap for Indigenous Languages and Digital Census-2023

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the case of an indigenous language in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province within the paradigm of language policy and planning (LPP) where the local linguists along with NGOs and community members are promoting Torwali Language. Language Planning and Policy is a state's doctrine about the languages to be used within the state and for international communication. Therefore, this study utilizes the three categories status, corpus, and acquisition of LPP as a theoretical model to examine Torwali's role in society and its impact on the digital census 2023 and indigenous languages. Hence, revitalization and promotion of Torwali language at micro-level put forwards a roadmap for language policy makers, local linguist, and state to follow these steps in promoting the indigenous languages in other provinces. This study presents the case of Torwali language with respect to the three categories, the same steps must be taken by the other indigenous speakers and state to promote their languages.

KEYWORDS Digital Census , Indigenous Torwali, Language Planning, Language Policy

Introduction

Language planning and policy involves complex understanding and standard procedures to be followed for distinguishing between the national, official, and provincial language of any country (Abbas & Biden, 2022). These procedures are defined as categories of languages planning which includes status planning, acquisition planning and corpus planning (Channa, 2015). Status planning deals with the allocation of languages to official, co-official and language's role in the society (Ferguson, 2006). While corpus planning deals with developing standard corpus within a given language for language development. As according to Ferguson (2006), this planning addresses "language form, the code itself, and seeks to engineer change in that code" (p. 20-21). However the acquisition planning includes the language teaching and learning about the language through its available literature and folktales and usage in media (Hornberger, 1994). Acquisition planning has been referred as planning done for teaching and learning a particular language (Channa, 2015). It is the strategy directed towards maintenance and increasing the number of users of a particular language. It aims to provide opportunities for increasing the literacy rate and professional opportunities; so that the language is transformed across generations.

Overall, the three categories of language planning are interconnected to each other and often co-relate with each other at the planning stage. This paper utilizing the three stages of language planning and policy overviews the revitalization of Torwali; an indigenous language which is spoken in the Kyber Pakhtunkhwa province (Veesrio, 2021) by provincial government, local linguist, NGOs and community members.

Language Policy of Pakistan

Pakistan is a multilingual country with 73 languages being spoken in different parts of the country (Siddiqui, 2019). Urdu is its official language while English is stated as the co-official language, while provincial languages include Sindhi, Punjabi, Balochi, Pashto and other indigenous languages in the respective provinces (Abbas & Biden, 2022 & Siddiqui, 2019). As Siddiqui (2021) narrates that the major issue in front of policy makers has been the choice of language and its central role in the process of learning. However, the new education policy 2009 have empowered the provinces to select the medium of instruction and introduce the teaching of regional languages at provincial level.

The case of KPK is unique as many indigenous languages are spoken within the region (Veesrio, 2021). Therefore, linguistic diversity needs to be addressed appropriately in the language policy of the province. As the KPK focused primarily on the promotion of four languages and established an authority for others in the province. It provided an opportunity to the NGOs and local linguist to promote other indigenous and regional languages in the province.

Therefore, for this paper, Torwali language has been selected which is spoken in Swat (Bahrian and Chial valleys) and which was one of the language introduced in pre-primary level through the efforts of local linguist and NGO's for promoting and revitalizing the Torwali language in the society and education for literacy in the local tongue. This paper aims to analyze the Torwali language as a case study model for other indigenous languages in the country. It focuses on the efforts taken by local linguist, NGOs and community members to promote Torwali through status, corpus and acquisition planning for introducing Torwali language in schools, social media and community centers and the challenges being faced by the micro-level policy makers in introducing Torwali language among the native speakers.

Literature Review

Language planning and policy is divided into three categories status, corpus, and acquisition (Ferugson, 2006 & Hornberger, 1994). This study seeks to overview the available literature in Torwali language and analyze the three categories of language planning to examine LPP with respect to role of Torwali language in the society. Previously, Channa (2015) had explored the role of English language which is the co-official language of Pakistan. However, this study offers a detailed discussion with respect to the status, acquisition, and planning stages of an indigenous Torwali language which can act as a role model and series of steps to be taken to promote minority, regional or indigenous language in underdeveloped areas of Pakistan.

Status Planning of Torwali Language

Torwali language is spoken by about 80,000 to 120,000 speakers in Swat (Lunsford, 2001 & Veesrio, 2021). Due to urbanization, approximately 30 to 35% of the Torwali community members have migrated to cities and shifted to Urdu, Pashto or Punjabi; language of wider communication (Torwali, 2016b & Torwali, 2022). It is an endangered

language and face threat from Pashto language in the region (Torwali, 2022). Torwali is a Dardic language and according to Grierson (1929) the Torwali speech community are called as Torwalik or Torwal.

As Kyber Pakhtunkhwa is one of the province of Pakistan. Therefore, it follows the official policy within the domains of power and institute. English is used in the bureaucracy, government offices and elite schools. Urdu is used as the common Lingua Franca and Pashto is the provincial official language (Veesrio, 2021)

Post Eighteenth amendment, the KPK government passed the Kyber Pakhtunkhwa Promotion of Regional Languages Authority Act (2012) for promotion of regional languages and formulated a body KPK Regional Languages Authority (Torwali, 2016a). Table 01 provides a glimpse of Medium of instruction in the KPK province since 2009. The authority also developed course books in all five languages (Torwali, 2023).

Table 1
MOI in KPK Province

Level of Education	Languages/MOI
Pre-Primary Classes	Pashto (Compulsory) and 4 Regional Languages (Hindko, Khowar, Seraiki and Indus-Kohistani)
Primary Level	Pashto
Secondary Level	Pashto
Higher Level	English

The government's initiative provided the multilingual mother tongue teaching solution for promotion of regional languages across the province and an authority which would be working for the promotion of all local languages across the province (Torwali, 2014). The KPK Regional Languages Authority focused on four languages Hindko, Khowar, Seraiki and Indus-Kohistani. However, it provide an opportunity to the local linguist to take steps to revitalize, preserve and maintain their heritage language. As a result, the local linguist started promoting their local languages with the support of local

NGOs. Hence, Torwali language was introduced following the multilingual mother tongue teaching model in KPK. Figure 1 shows Torwali language learning model to fit in the society. The local linguist focused on introducing Torwali in the early ages of a child and then gradually introducing the national and official language of the state of Pakistan.

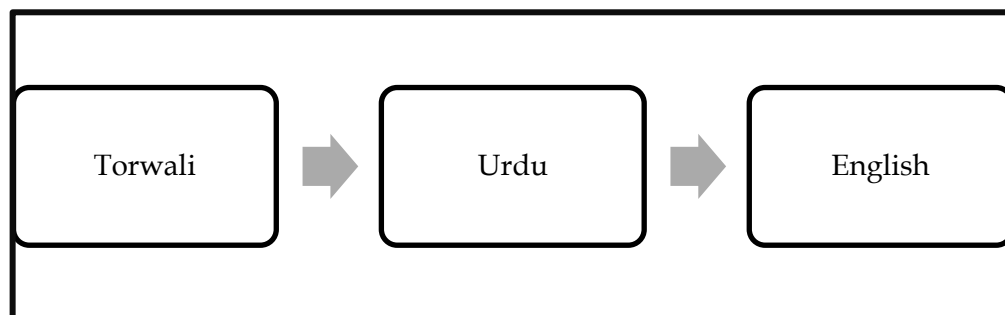


Figure 1 Torwali Mother Tongue Multilingual Teaching Model

Corpus Planning of Torwali Language

The establishment of KPK Regional Languages Authority (Torwali, 2016a) introduced an opportunity for local linguist to promote Torwali language. Local linguists along with native speakers and NGO started preliminary research on the Torwali language

from 2004-2005 for providing education in the native language. Research led to formation of orthography and alphabetic system, as Torwali wrote a Torwali alphabet book in 2008 based on Arabic script which has approximately 47 letters (Torwali, 2016b & Torwali, 2022).

With the support of Summer Institute of Linguistics-SIL International, IBT published

“the course books, in Torwali, which included graded reading stories, reading and writing primers, listening stories, big books, children’s rhymes, basic mathematical concepts, cultural and ethical studies, and counting books. A teacher’s guide in Torwali (translated from English which was developed by Susan Malone, UNESCO and SIL International consultant on literacy and education) was also developed” (Torwali, 2022 p.7)

In the same way, another local linguist Inam Ullah developed the local lexicon of Torwali language by compiling first ever Torwali-Urdu dictionary (Ullah, 2010). Due to relative success to promote the Torwali language; course books were translated from grade one to five in Torwali. Also, folktales poetry book Inaan (Rainbow) was published (Roy, 2011). In 2015 leading researchers in collaboration with Idara Baraye Taleem-o-Taraqi (IBT) published three books (Khaliq, 2013). For instance, Mujahid Torwali trilingual daily usage conversation book and Aftab Ahmed trilingual Torwali-English-Urdu dictionary. Simultaneously, Rahim Sabir’s compilation of fifteen folktales and publication with Urdu and English translations. Hence, the course books, short stories, folk poetry, folktales and dictionary provided the initial curriculum and content for language to be taught at the primary level. (Torwali, 2016b).

Acquisition Planning of Torwali Language

Consequently, schools were established where Torwali language was taught since 2008 to date in the two valleys during childhood in private schools with the support of Idara Baraye Taleem-o-Taraqi for educational facilities and development (Torwali, 2022). So far 08 such schools have been opened and more than 500 students have benefited from this initiative to gain early education in their mother tongue. Similarly, a mother tongue based bilingual literacy project for women 2013-14 was started which empowered the women to acquire literacy in Towali language (Khaliq, 2013). This project greatly changed the perceptions of women towards their language and gave them an opportunity to learn their native language along with Urdu through social-learning model. (Respondents, 2014).

The local speakers started taking interest in their mother tongue; thereafter the indigenous culture was celebrated in a festival in 2011. As languages cannot be taught in isolation and therefore introduction to culture is highly important and must be integrated with language acquisition planning and policy (Torwali, 2022). Hence, Idara Baraye Taleem-o-Taraqi (IBT), started holding culture festivals regularly, name Simam (meaning celebration and dignity in Torwali). Over 9,000 people participated in this festival and took part in their folk music, traditional games and dances. The festival revived the traditional games abandoned six decades ago. In the limelight of cities and popular cultures, languages often do not survive, therefore realizing this IBT undertook the task of promoting local folklore and melodies which was broadcasted on the television. As, languages are preserved and maintained with the support of its available classical literature and folklore. Therefore, Torwali music was documented in 2012 and a DVD of Torwali folksongs was made in 2015 named Manjoora (Torwali, 2022).

In modern era, the role of social media is equally important in promoting a language. Therefore, IBT has been effectively using Facebook page to promote Torwali

Literacy and revitalize indigenous music (Torwali & Malvido, 2022). Also during pandemic, Facebook page act as a messenger as it was used to spread awareness. Messages were recorded in the mother tongue to spread awareness among the masses and enable them to take precautionary measures. The development of android keyboard in Torwali language has been a landmark effort to promote the indigenous language among the community (Torwali & Malvido, 2022).

Overall, the compilation of dictionaries, course books, story books, literacy programs, folktales compilation, music recording, usage of social media for literacy in the local Torwali language has promoted Torwali language among the community people. The introduction of mother tongue education at primary level in schools and bilingual literacy project for women provided an opportunity to the locals and native population residing in Swat to get education in their mother tongue and promote their native language and uplift their social position in the society. However, challenges still exist, as Torwali language does not have the widely used script among the community members. However, it can serve as a role model for many indigenous languages within Pakistan.

Findings

Torwali's Functionary role in domains of Pakistan

Torwali mother tongue based language teaching adopted by leading linguist Zubair Torwali provides insight to language development during early childhood. By providing mother tongue education, it aims to strengthen the social position and social development of the Torwali speech community (Torwali, 2022). As one of the best way to reverse language shift of an indigenous language is to adopt the functional goal and provide basic education which can act as sole medium of instruction or as co-medium. The Torwali indigenous language model introduces the speech community to the different educational opportunities available in their native language.

At first, local linguist and NGO IBT got negative response from the children enrolled 08 schools which are knows as mother tongue based multilingual education. Therefore, to change the attitudes of parents. IBT started literacy sessions for reading and writing in their own language. The basic aim was to make them realize the importance of their mother tongue.

Therefore, Torwali community through the mother tongue education program and cultural promotion activities are trying to overcome the challenge of literacy in the local language which empowers them socially as they can transfer their language, preserve their unique mountainous culture and folktales to be narrated in Torwali language. Hence, the language planning program being implemented by Torwali community with the support of NGOs is making significant changes in making the language relevant to the community and pedagogical settings. (Torwali, 2016b).

Evaluating Torwali's Language Planning Approach

Language planning provides a detailed glimpse of the language learning and acquisition process. As it aims to strengthen the most neglected and marginalized communities within Pakistan. It introduces to the models of education and mother tongue language teaching which can be implemented in countries where linguistic diversity and multilingualism is a reality. Also, acquisition planning provides a holistic approach to language teaching, learning, maintenance and revitalization. Torwali language serves as an inspirational model for all the linguists, language policy makers, NGOs and

communities as it provides a detailed mother tongue based multilingual education framework which can be adopted in the other provinces as well. The model adopted for teaching of Torwali was Language Maintenance or Language Shelter Program (Skutnabb-Kangas 1999) which in the case of Torwali is defined as

“It is a multilingual education (MLE) approach in which children aged 4-7 (beginning in pre-school) are taught all subjects, cognitively high-demanding as well as less demanding, through Torwali as the medium of instruction in the first year. In the second year, oral Urdu and oral English are introduced as subjects, while the medium of instruction remains Torwali” (Torwali, 2022, p.11)

Torwali language planning by the local linguist and NGO provides a glimpse how endangered and indigenous languages can be promoted by the initiatives of local people. developing the orthography, alphabetic system, provide basic education in Torwali, Urdu and English, documenting Torwali music, literature and folklore and promoting the language on the social media are small initiatives that have provided the Torwali community a sense of group identity and recognition. They are now recognized and accepted by the other communities as equal members of the region and society. Earlier, Torwal speakers were afraid to disclose their identity but now they have a sense of pride and they share their identity with everyone. Hence, education have empowered them to be proud of their local identity. Hence, it has brought them prestige and empowerment as a community.

Challenges

Although the local linguist and IBT have relatively used all their resources to promote Torwali language. Yet, the writing script of Torwali is not widely used among its community members and most of them are not familiar with it. Yet, steps taken by local linguist and NGOs in collaboration with IBT, Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and Forum for Language Initiative (FLI) to increase the literacy rate among its community members and it is spreading at a faster pace because of literacy program for young kids and adults. (FLI, 2003). All this happened, as the local linguist and NGO developed the orthography and curriculum for the language which enabled the development and promotion of Torwali in the neighborhood (IBT, 2015).

Similarly, communities’ opposition of getting their children primary education or literacy in their mother tongue is a big hurdle. As they regard negative attitudes towards their language. This is often the case with marginalized communities in Pakistan. Although, due to globalization the attitudes of parents are changing yet Torwal speech community are a bit reluctant due to the fear from lingua franca Urdu, language of wider communication Pashto and colonial influence of English as the language of prestige. However, trends are changing in the contemporary era.

In the same manner, although the language has created a huge impact among the community members. Yet, it lacks governmental support and recognition. Hence, policy makers and leading Towali speech community linguist must push the local government and federal government to take appropriate steps to introduce Torwali and other regional languages as part of the four regional languages to be taught during primary level (International Crisis Group, 2014). In short, taking steps to introduce the language in state-owned schools. Also, the local politicians must take steps to introduce Torwali language in different neighborhoods by construction of libraries which includes Torwali language material, language centers and schools for formal education in the mother tongue. Beside all these issues, the political, social, technological and economic challenges are the most challenging problems that the community, local linguist and NGO is tackling. As it require

material and resource to document the language and provide the resources to the learners without any societal and governmental support. Yet, these challenges are being faced by the NGOs with the funding from different project which is a positive sign for many other indigenous languages as well.

Although social media helped in revitalizing the Torwali language (Torwali & Malvido, 2022). Torwali activist and IBT have been bullied, threatened and forced to stop working to promote the indigenous language. As a result the IBT has been reaching out to Towali community people via face-to-face contact and social media as well to promote the indigenous language.

Roadmap for Indigenous Languages and counting the “other” in Digital Census-23

The struggle of indigenous Torwali language shows that if the local linguist, NGOs and community members own their linguistic identity, language and culture; then the language can be promoted. Also, basic literacy is highly essential for the language to be promoted. The series of steps taken by the Torwali local linguist and NGOs as shown in Figure 2 can be adopted as a model by other linguists around the world as well. The case of Pakistan is unique, as there are many indigenous languages spoken in the country.

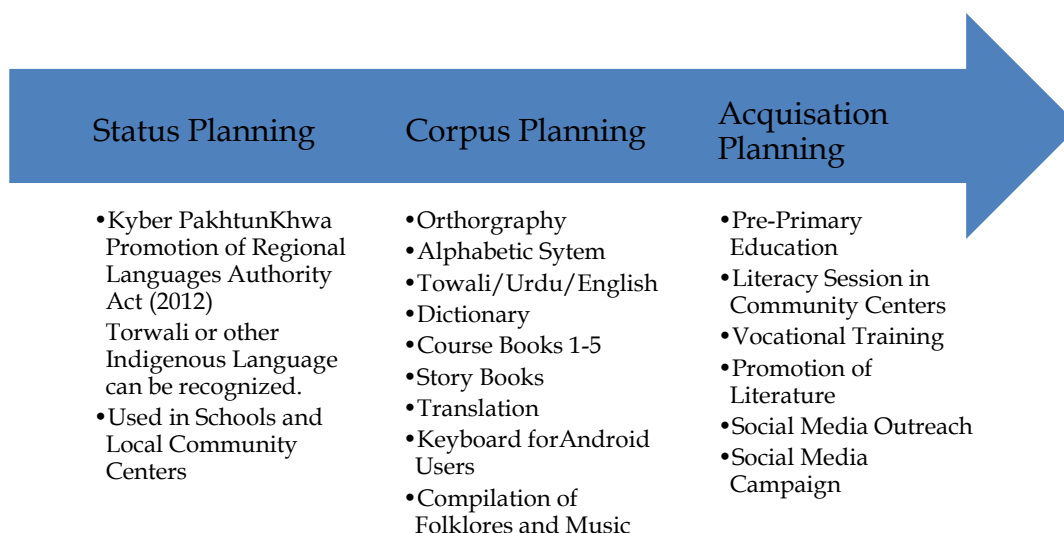


Figure 2 Torwali Language Planning and Policy Model

There are 73 languages spoken in Pakistan (Siddiqui, 2019). The 6th National Census (2017) held documented 9 languages; Urdu (national), four provincial languages Sindhi, Punjabi, Balochi and Pashto. While the remaining three includes Kashmiri, Saraiki, Hindko, Brahvi and the remaining 65 languages were included in ‘other’ languages category.

However, the 7th Digital-Census 2023 as per form 02 includes 14 languages (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Torwali (2023) reports that “these languages include “Urdu, Punjabi, Siindhi, Pashto, Balochi, Kashmiri, Saraiki, Hindko, Brahvi, Shina, Balti, Mewati, Kailash and Kohistani” (p.6) However, the other 60 languages have been largely ignored and placed under the “other language’ category in the form. If the government has conducted

a digital census, then it should have recorded all the languages and provide data for all the indigenous languages (Torwali, 2023). When the government can inquire about the nationality (Bengalis, Afghanis and Chinese), then it must include data for all the 73 languages. This will enable the federal government, provincial government and language policy makers to draft and effective language policy

The case of Torwali language planning as adopted by Torwali activists, linguists, NGOs and community members can act as a role model for the local and provincial governments. The Digital census would have certainly enabled the state to document the number of speakers of each indigenous language but the focus seems to be 14 dominant languages only. Hence, this documentation will lead to promotion of the indigenous languages. Government can revitalize, promote and preserve an indigenous language with the support of local linguist. The Digital Census-2023 appears to be the first stage in this case and the steps taken by Torwali linguists can act as facilitator for promotion of indigenous languages in Pakistan.

Conclusion

Language planning approach adopted in the case of Torwali language by leading linguist and NGOs reflect a model that can be adopted for introducing multilingual mother tongue based education. For any language to progress, availability of curriculum and content is the first significant step. Then after, teaching and learning in the mother tongue should take place during the early years. Similarly, language attitudes should be positive and can be promoted by effective awareness literacy sessions. So that the community members takes ownership. Torwali language has provided its speakers a sense of identity, ownership, social standing because of its promotion of education, folktales, poetry and lexicon through dictionaries. This model can be adopted on the same footings in other provinces as well; to introduce and give equal weightage to the indigenous languages along with the official and national languages. The Digital Cenus-2023 should provide data for all the 74 languages in its survey, this will enable the Government and indigenous people to own their language. Hence, the indigenous language can be promoted and Torwali's multilingual education model can be adopted for it.

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