

PAHARI: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF LANGUAGE DECLINE

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my father Muhammad Mushtaq Abbasi (Late).

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APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

This thesis titled “**Pahari: A Sociolinguistic Study of Language Decline**” done by Muhammad Gulfraz Abbasi under my supervision is hereby approved for submission to the Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, Pakistan, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of degree of PhD in English.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my independent investigation except where I have indicated my indebtedness to other sources. It has not been accepted in substance or in part for any degree and is not being submitted concurrently in candidature for any other degree.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MGA', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

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Scholar

Prof. Dr. Saiqa Imtiaz Asif

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1:	List of Pahari Consonants	40
Table 2.2:	List of Pahari Vowels	42
Table 2.3:	List of Pahari Diphthongs	44
Table 5.1.1:	Profile of Rural Family 1R	118
Table 5.1.2:	Profile of Rural Family 2R	119
Table 5.1.3:	Profile of Rural Family 3R	120
Table 5.1.4:	Profile of Rural Family 4R	121
Table 5.1.5:	Profile of Urban Family 1U	122
Table 5.1.6:	Profile of Urban Family 2U	122
Table 5.1.7:	Profile of Urban Family 3U	123
Table 5.1.8:	Profile of Urban Family 4U	124
Table 5.3.2:	Basic Descriptive Statistics of the Speakers	128
Table 5.4.1:	Occurrence of Four Languages, With Proportion Against Total Number of Utterances	130
Table 5.4.2.1:	Occurrence of Language Use by Area/Location	132
Table 5.4.2.2:	Occurrence of Language Use by Speaker's Generation	133
Table 5.4.2.3:	Occurrence of Language Use by Gender	133
Table 5.4.2.4:	Occurrence of Language Use by Education	134
Table 5.4.2.5:	Occurrence of Language Use by Interlocutor's Generation	135
Table 5.4.2.6:	Occurrence of Language Use by Family Income	135
Table 5.4.2.7:	Occurrence of Language Use by Mood	136
Table 5.4.2.8:	Occurrence of Language Use by Function of Utterance	136
Table 5.4.2.9:	Total Occurrence of Language Use	137
Table 5.5.2:	Analysis of Deviance for Language maintenance /shift Data	139
Table 5.5.3.1:	Statistical Test on the Levels of the Predictors in the Model of Logistic Regression	141
Table 5.5.3.2:	Statistical Test on the Levels of the Predictors in the Model of Logistic Regression	142
Table 5.5.4.1:	Language Use: Interlocutor's Generation	150

Table 5.5.4.2: Language Use: Interlocutor's Generation + Family Income	150
Table 6.1: The Detail of Persons Interviewed	164
Table 6.2.1: Language Learnt in the Early Age	165
Table 6.2.2: Language Spoken to as Interlocutors	167
Table 6.2.3: Favorite Language in the Childhood	169
Table 6.2.4: First Language vs. Language of Choice in the Childhood	170
Table 6.2.5: Pahari as a First Language	172
Table 6.2.6: Use of Language to Different Interlocutors	176
Table 6.2.7: Pahari Language Transmission	178
Table 6.2.8: Learning of Pahari from Family	182
Table 6.3.1: Language of <i>Waaz</i> (Sermons)	184
Table 6.3.2: Preferred Language for <i>Waaz</i> (Sermons)	187
Table 6.3.3: Language of Prayers	188
Table 6.3.4: Language of the Teachers of Quran	190
Table 6.4.1: Language Spoken to the Employer	192
Table 6.4.2: Language Used by the Employer	193
Table 6.4.3: Language of Colleagues	195
Table 6.4.4: Use of Language with Colleagues in Response	196
Table 6.4.5: Communication with Clients	196
Table 6.5.1: The Most Comfortable Language	198
Table 6.5.2: Language Preference	199
Table 6.5.4: Best Language for Expression	203
Table 6.5.6: Personality of Pahari Speaker	205
Table 6.5.7: Pahari-Accented Urdu or English	207
Table 6.5.8: Pahari Usage Other Than the Home Domain	208
Table 6.5.9: Teaching Pahari in Schools	211
Table 6.5.10: Interest or Otherwise in Studying Pahari Subject	212
Table 6.5.11: Pahari Programs in Electronic Media	214
Table 6.5.12: Children's Incompetence in Pahari	215
Table 6.5.13: Feelings on the Extinction of Pahari	216
Table 6.5.14: Culture and Identity Maintenance without Pahari	217

Table 6.5.15 (a): Importance of Pahari Maintenance	218
Table 6.5.15 (b): Maintenance of Pahari Difficult or Easy	219
Table 6.5.16: Opinion about Urdu Usage by Pahari Speakers	220
Table 6.5.17: Code Mixing in Pahari	222
Table 6.5.18: Pahari Speech in the Foreign Accent	223
Table 6.6.1: Language of Reading	224
Table 6.6.2: Preferred Language of Reading	226
Table 6.6.3: Frequency of Reading in Pahari	227
Table 6.6.4: Writing in Pahari	228
Table 6.6.5: Language Used for Counting	229
Table 6.7.1: Fluency in Pahari and its Advantages	231
Table 6.7.2: Self-Grading on Pahari Proficiency	232
Table 7.1: Details of Teachers Interviewed	242

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 5.1: Distribution of the Age of the Speakers Separated for Three Generations	128
Figure 5.2: Frequency of Four Languages, As Function of the Region	131
Figure 5.3: Number of Utterances (Languages Not Shown) by Speakers' Generation And Final Education	147
Figure 5.4: Number of Utterance (Language Not Shown) by Speakers' Generation And by Interlocutors' Generation and Income (Right Panel)	148
Figure 5.5: Occurrence of the Languages, as a Function of Income Level Of the Families and Generation of the Interlocutor within each Income Level	149
Figure 5.6: Frequency of Language Use by Speaker and Interlocutor	154
Figure 5.7: Frequency of Language Use by Area, Speaker's Generation and Interlocutor's Generation	156
Figure 5.8: The Process of Language Shift within Three Generations	158
Figure 6.1: Social Depiction of a Pahari Speaker	178
Figure 6.2: Factors Influencing Pahari Transmission	179
Figure 6.3: Motivation for Urdu Transmission	181
Figure 6.4: Existing Ways of Pahari Transmission	183

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1:	Range of Pahari Languages	15
Map 2:	Location of Pahari of Murree and Surrounding Areas	16
Map 3:	Pahari Language among Other Punjabi Languages/Dialects	16

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	xvii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	xi
<u>Chapter One: Introduction</u>	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 What is language?	2
1.2 Importance and Scope of Sociolinguistics	3
1.2.1 Language Shift	4
1.2.2 Language Maintenance	5
1.2.3 Language Decline and Language Death	7
1.2.4 Language Change	9
1.3 Pahari: Language Family	10
1.4 Beginning and Development	12
1.5 Pahari: The Name	13
1.6 Pahari 'Dhundi-Kairali'—Location and Environment	14
1.7 Relationship with other Varieties	17
1.8 Rationale	18
1.9 The Scope of the Study	21
1.10 Research Questions	22
1.11 Operational Definitions of Terms	23
1.12 Outline of the Remaining Chapters	25
1.13 Summary of the Present Chapter	26
<u>Chapter Two: An Overview of Pahari Community and Language</u>	27
2.0 Introduction	27
2.1 Geographical and Historical Account of Murree and Galyat	27
2.1.1 Population	28
2.2 Prominent Tribes	29
2.3 Education and Literacy	31

2.4	Custom and Traditions	31
2.4.1	Wedding Ceremonies	31
2.4.2	Funerals	32
2.4.3	<i>Urses</i> (Anniversaries of the Saints)	33
2.4.4	Agricultural Traditions	33
2.4.5	<i>Jirga</i> (Local Reconciliatory Body)	34
2.4.6	Family System	34
2.4.7	Religion	34
2.4.8.	Occupation	35
2.4.9.	Living Style	35
2.4.10.	Climate	36
2.5	Key Features of Language	37
2.5.1.	Orthography	37
2.5.2	Pahari Sound System	38
2.5.2.1	Pahari Consonants	39
2.5.2.2	Pahari Diphthongs	44
2.6	Literature in Pahari	45
2.6.1	Folk Literature in Poetry	46
2.6.2	Folk Literature in Prose	47
2.7	Conclusion	48
<u>Chapter Three: Language Maintenance and Language Shift:</u>		
<u>Theoretical Dimensions and Literature Review</u>		49
3.0.	Introduction.	49
3.1.	Bilingualism	49
3.2.	The Macro-Societal Approach	51
3.2.1.	Diglossia	51
3.2.2.	Language Compartmentalization	53
3.2.3.	Domain Analysis	53
3.2.4.	Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS)	55
3.2.5.	Language Conflict	56
3.3.	Micro-Interactional Approach and Code-Switching	56

3.4.	Ethno-linguistic Vitality	59
3.5.	Language and Dialect Controversy	60
3.6.	Language Transmission	66
3.7.	Language Death	68
	3.7.1. Literature on Language Death in Pakistan	71
3.8.	Language shift	73
3.9.	Language Maintenance and Revitalization	82
3.10.	Linguistic Colonialism	87
3.11.	Attitude toward Languages	89
3.12.	Language Policy in Pakistan	91
3.13.	Medium of Instruction and the Status of Indigenous Languages	93
3.14.	Conclusion	94
	<u>Chapter Four: Research Methodology</u>	95
4.0.	Introduction	95
4.1.	Triangulation Strategy	95
4.2.	Types of Data and their Relationship with the Research Questions	98
4.3.	Justification of the Research Setting	99
4.4.	Ethnographic Fieldwork	100
	4.4.1. Participant Observation	101
	4.4.2. Gaining Access to the Research Site	102
	4.4.3. Unexpected Reactions	103
	4.4.4. Field Relationship	104
4.5.	Types of Data and their Justification	104
	4.5.1. Field Notes	105
	4.5.2. Published Material and the Web Sources	106
	4.5.3. Speech in the Home Domain	106
	4.5.4. Interviews with Family Members and School Teachers	107
	4.5.4.1. Interviews with Family Members	108
	4.5.4.2. Interview Questions from School Teachers	112
	4.5.4.3. Interviews with the Leading Pahari Figures	112
4.6.	Data Analysis	114

4.7.	Conclusion	115
	<u>Chapter Five: Language Usage in the Home Domain</u>	117
5.0.	Introduction	117
5.1.	Profiles of the Families from Rural and Urban Areas	118
	5.1.1. Rural Area Family 1R (Income up to PKR.6000)	118
	5.1.2. Rural Area Family 2R (Income up to PKR.6001 to 12000)	119
	5.1.3. Rural Area Family 3R (Income PKR.12001 to18000)	120
	5.1.4. Rural Area Family 4R (Income PKR.18001 or more than that)	121
	5.1.5. Urban Family 1U (Income Up to PKR.15000)	121
	5.1.6. Urban Family 2U (Income from PKR.15001 to PKR.25000)	122
	5.1.7. Urban Family 3U (From PKR.25001 to PKR.35000)	123
	5.1.8. Urban Family 4U (From PKR.35001 and Above)	123
5.2.	Significance of Home Domain in Language Shift or Maintenance	124
	5.2.1. Pahari in the Home	125
5.3.	Recorded Data Management	126
	5.3.1. Nature of Fieldwork and its Incorporation into Analysis	126
	5.3.2. Coding	127
5.4.	Frequency of Language Use	130
5.5.	Relative Influence of Social and Pragmatic Predictors	137
	5.5.1. Design of Analysis: Binary Logistic Regression	138
	5.5.2. General Fit of Log-Linear Model	139
	5.5.3. Contrasts between Groups in the Factors (Levels of the Predictors)	141
	5.5.4. Tendency Latent in Raw Percentage	145
5.6.	Discussion and Summary of Findings	151
	5.6.1. Location and Language	151
	5.6.2. Income and Language	152
	5.6.3. Intergenerational Language Transmission	153
	5.6.4. Gender and Language	158
	5.6.5. Education and Language	159
	5.6.6. Pragmatic and Affective Factors and Language	160
5.7.	Conclusion	160

<u>Chapter Six: Linguistic Behavior and Self Reports Regarding Language Usage</u>	162
6.0. Introduction	162
6.1. Nature and Distribution of Interviewees	163
6.2. Intra-Families Language Usage and Transmission Practices	164
6.3. Language of Religious Practices and Teaching	184
6.4. Language at Workplace	191
6.5. Attitude toward Language	197
6.6. Literacy Practices in Pahari Language	224
6.7. Second and Foreign Language Proficiency and its Advantage	230
6.8. General Discussion	233
6.9. Conclusion	237
<u>Chapter Seven: Language Subjugation in Schools</u>	239
7.0. Introduction	239
7.1. Role of Schools in Language Decline	239
7.2. Pattern of Interviews and Participants' Particulars	241
7.3. Compulsory Urdu Usage in the Classrooms	242
7.4. Language Policy for Students	244
7.5. Students' Language Inside and Outside the Classroom	245
7.6. Teachers' Language at School	247
7.7. The Case of Language Maintenance	247
7.8. Conclusion	248
<u>Chapter Eight: Conclusion and Recommendations</u>	250
8.0. Introduction	250
8.1. Brief Review of the Study	250
8.2. General Findings	251
8.3. Discussion on Research Questions	254
8.3.1. Research Question No. 1	254
8.3.2. Research Question No. 2	256
8.3.3. Research Question No. 3	258
8.3.4. Research Question No. 4	259
8.4. Status of Pahari and Factors Influencing its Usage	259

8.4.1. Cultural Change	260
8.4.2. Prestige Consciousness	260
8.4.3. Futuristic Approach	261
8.4.4. Language Shame	262
8.4.5. Gender Factor	263
8.4.6. Economic Factor	263
8.4.7. Social Networks	264
8.5. Recommendations	265
8.6. Final Remarks	266

ABSTRACT

Language shift/language maintenance (LSLM) is a very hot topic nowadays in the bilingual societies as well as elsewhere due to the continuous erosion of the world languages. In this connection, the term language choice has gained immense importance. As the community chooses a prestigious language for communication instead of its native language, a phenomenon, often called language shift, emerges which ultimately leads to language death or language extinction. This dissertation is primarily a sociolinguistic study of Pahari language spoken in Murree and its adjoining areas in Pakistan in the socio-cultural scenario in which Urdu and English are the languages of power and prestige. The study looks at the language choice patterns of the Pahari community to ascertain the degree of language shift and maintenance. The study also explores the very inner situation of the community through participant observation to comprehend what psycho and socio-cultural changes are bringing about the decline in Pahari. Triangulation of data and method was employed to authenticate the use of language according to different social, pragmatic and affective variables. In depth interviews with the participating members of families, school teachers and experts of Pahari language were conducted besides, recording of the natural conversations and observations in the home domain. The study concludes that language shift is in process in all the domains, particularly in the home domain. The shift in Pahari is observed as the change in the area, economic status, education, age, gender, and generation occurs. Moreover, transmission of Pahari to the child generation has been affected to an extent that some families have only Pahari speaking grandparents and some have only Urdu speaking grandchildren, while the parent generation is bilingual in Urdu and Pahari. Given the situation of decline in Pahari, it is imperative to describe and document Pahari language and enhance its social status in order to protect this cultural asset.