EXPLORING LANGUAGE ATTITUDES THROUGH MATCHED GUISE TECHNIQUE: A CASE OF YOUNG KASHMIRIS OF AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR

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Abstract

This study seeks to determine the language attitudes of young bilinguals towards Kashmiri and Urdu, as well as their potential implications. Using the matched-guise technique, 34 Kashmiri- and Urdu-speaking students from the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) were surveyed. Audio clips of each language were provided to assess the participants' attitudes towards Kashmiri and Urdu. On a Likert scale, participants evaluated a variety of personality traits of Kashmiri and Urdu audio speakers. The mean response scores were calculated and compared using SPSS and an independent t-test. The results indicate speakers have a more negative opinion of Kashmiri than Urdu. It suggests that the Kashmiri community has developed a negative attitude towards their mother tongue, which may eventually result in a community-wide language shift.

 Keywords: *Language Attitude, Matched Guise Technique, Language Shift.*

Introduction

Kashmiri, also called *Koshur* (/kəːʃur/), is the language of the Jammu and Kashmir region. The Kashmiri language belongs to an Indo-Aryan subgroup of dardiac languages, spoken by a 6.8 million population, the majority residing in Indian-administered Kashmir (Mohsin, 2021). Kashmiri is spoken by 5 percent of the AJK population (Bukhari, 2020). According to Census Pakistan (2017), the Kashmiri language is the mother tongue of 350,000 people. Native

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Kashmiri speakers live in scattered pockets of Azad Kashmir, mainly in Muzaffarabad and Neelum Valley (Kachru, 2002). The other principal languages spoken in AJK are Hindko, Pahari-Potohari, Dogri, Pushto, and Gujri (Rahman& Baart, 2002).

Established as a result of a war in 1947, AJK is a self-governing state, with Muzaffarabad serving as the capital. Line of Control (LOC) is a military division between Indian and Pakistani Kashmir. This region has been a contention between India and Pakistan since 1947. AJK shares its borders with Punjab in the south and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the west. It covers approximately an area of 650 square miles. The population of AJ&K is 4.05 million. It is home to ethnic groups like Gujjar, Sudhans, Rajput, Mughal, and Kashmiri. It is pertinent to mention that Kashmiri, in an ethnolinguistic context, refers to Kashmir's native people with Kashmiri as their mother tongue (Snedden, 2015). The fear of atrocities and extended family links in AJK resulted in many Kashmiri migrants from Indian Kashmir in the 80s and 90s (Robinson, 2013). Over decades, these migrants settled in dozens of villages of Neelum Valley and Muzaffarabad. The other ethnic population of AJK is culturally distant from Kashmir Valley but closer to the Jammu region.

Although AJK state is being run on a parliamentary government system, with its president, prime minister, courts, and flag; however, there is much administrative and economic dependence on the Government of Pakistan. AJK comprises ten districts and three main divisions: Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, and Poonch. This area is full of scenic beauty, with green mountains covered with pine trees, valleys, plains, noisy rivers, and clear streams (Sendden,2017).

Following the language policy of Pakistan, Urdu is regarded as the official language of AJK. The education structure is the same as in Pakistan. However, contrary to KPK and Sindh provinces, the indigenous languages of AJK are not medium of instruction at the primary level. Urdu and English are the media of instruction from the primary to university level. Compared to local languages, Urdu enjoys the status of a prestigious language. Urdu acts as a lingua franca throughout Pakistan and AJK. It is given the status of a national language and a unifying link throughout the country (Saxena,

2006). English is also learned as a second language in schools and used in power domains.

It is undeniable that language plays a crucial role in retaining the indigenous culture and history of the communities (Brezinger & De Graff, 2003). Fishman (1996) states that most culture lies in the language. It is expressed in the language" and "no language but the one that has been most historically and intimately associated with a given culture is as well able to express the artifacts and the concerns of that culture." Researchers argue that a language is at risk with few speakers (Krauss, 1992; Lewis et al., 2013). However, many studies have concluded that no matter how many speakers a language has, it may face language shift or endangerment at the hands of its speakers (Errington,1998; Kurniasih, 2006; Poedjosoedarmo, 2006; Smith-Hefne, 2009; Setiawan, 2012). The importance of the language attitudes of speakers and the intergenerational transfer of language attitudes is undeniable (Fishman, 1991, 2001).

The Kashmiri community commonly observes language shift in AJK (Saxena& Borin, 2006; Kiyani et al., 2020; Nisar, 2021). Kashmiri speakers are shifting to other dominant languages like Urdu, Pahari, and Mirpuri (Rahman,1996) due to the neglect at community and official levels.   Naqash (2022) apprehends that the time is close when no Kashmiri speaker is found in AJK. Kashmiris need official patronage to feel clear about their identity amidst the turbulent history, failing to define their parameters to preserve their identity and culture (Ali, 2012).**Language Shift to Prestige Language**

At the turn of the 21st century, David Crystal's book Vanishing Voices (2000) brought language endangerment and death to attention. This book stresses that languages have been dying rapidly in recent times. The reasons include the death of the speakers and voluntary shift to other languages, which are higher in prestige and power. The attitude of the speakers of a language is vital for the maintenance and vitality of a language (Rodriguez et al., 2012). A positive attitude is critical, especially for minority languages. If a minority language is related to low socioeconomic status, the speakers tend to shift toward the language of power and prestige (Saxena & Borin, 2006).

Each local, regional language in Pakistan falls after English and Urdu in the linguistic hierarchy. Rahman (1999) opines that Sindhi and Pashto enjoy a better position in the linguistic hierarchy than Pakistan's local or regional languages. This linguistic hierarchy is also observed in AJK. Urdu is the language of media and the medium of instruction and communication in educational institutions (Kianai et al., 2020). The Kashmiri language needs more patronage at the community and national levels. Some efforts were made in the past to promote the Kashmiri language, but these efforts proved to be insufficient and ineffective. Consequently, Urdu has become an identity marker for Kashmiris rather than Kashmiri (Rahman, 1996). This study attempts to sensitize the Kashmiri community about the situation of the Kashmiri language in the region regarding the attitudes of young Kashmiris. While talking to the researchers, one of the young Kashmiris expressed the concern about their language in these words, "The children are discouraged and scolded at using Kashmiri for communication. Urdu is considered a language of sophistication and a sign of modernism. This negative attitude has stigmatized the Kashmiri language."

Significance of the study

The Kashmiri language is facing a shift in its speakers. The objective of this study is to find out the nature of positive or negative language attitudes of the Kashmiri youth towards their mother tongue and Urdu and bring into the limelight the altering status of this language which will contribute to the efforts to the vitality of this language on the community and national levels. Surprisingly, there are few studies on Kashmiri language attitudes undertaken in AJK. The researchers could not find any substantial study on the attitudes of the Kashmiris towards their mother tongue and other languages spoken in that area using a precise technique such as Lambert's matched guise one. The researchers of the current study aimed to determine if the earlier referred language attitudes of the Kashmiris are correct, as they lacked proper validation. Moreover, this research would also shed light on the probable shift in language among the Kashmiri youth.

Another factor that makes this study stand out from the previous studies is the technique of matched guise to collect the data. No study was conducted to investigate the language attitudes of the Kashmiri community living in AJK.

Research Question

What is the attitude Kashmiri young people toward Kashmiri as compared to Urdu?

Hypothesis

Kashmiri young people show a negative attitude toward the Kashmir language.

Language Attitude

In simplest terms, attitude represents peoples' reactions to things which could mean preference or dislike for something; people generally tend to show their approval or distastes whenever they see something around them (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2018).

Language attitudes are people's reactions to a particular variety of languages. People feel inclined towards a specific variety of a language and tend to categorize them socially or stereotypically. This evaluative could be towards any language or languages the speakers deem socially unacceptable, a hindrance to their progress, and inappropriate expression of their affairs (Dragojevic, 2017).

Fishbein & Ajzen (1977) believe that attitudes reflect speakers' beliefs about an attitude object, which could be based on the assumption that if something is good, it could be beneficial. Again, these assumptions could be based on pragmatics and vary from culture to culture. This could be extended to the usefulness and instrumentality of a language too. If a language means rising above the others and sounds soft and gentle, it is considered sweet, positive, and easy to learn, and vice versa. Linguists hold similar views when they talk about language attitudes that these language attitudes are evaluative beliefs that shape a person's outlook on language. People judge language for solidarity and status. Status is often linked to a person's social and economic status, whereas solidarity is associated with friendliness. A person at a socially high status and enjoying a

better financial status could appear polite, correct, or even authoritative based on the reactionary evaluation. In the same way, if speakers' mother tongue appears to hinder their progress or labels them as having socially low status, they will have a negative or poor evaluation of their mother tongue. People's willingness to learn a language, their reactions when they hear and use it, and how they link themselves to a language accumulate to form behavior that reflects one's attitude towards that language (Cargile & Giles, 1997).

Attitudes are broadly divided into cognitive, affective, and conative components. The first component, the cognitive one, refers to a person's belief about a particular object. The affective component discusses the issues a specific object makes a person feel. In contrast, the last component of an attitude talks about a person's actions in the presence of an object (Jain, 2014). Linguists share similar opinions about language. A speaker's upbringing and social, psychological, economic, and political domains shape their attitude toward languages they have acquired or learned. Some people use a language not spoken by many as a means to connect with the members of their class. It is not inherited but becomes a collective behavior that manifests as an attitude. This phenomenon is readily observable in the case of bilingual speakers, especially in multilingual communities. Sometimes people consider their mother tongue inferior while giving much prestige to the language learned later and vice versa. Baker has discussed these issues, which are directly related to language planning. Baker has further elaborated on the factors that make linguists study language attitudes. He opines that these attitudes reflect the general thought patterns that exist in society about the vitality of language besides being a window for the legislatures to implement their policies successfully. (Baker 1988:112- 115).

School et al. (2013) have studied these language attitudes, and they opine that the structure of a language, whether it can be learned quickly or not, the value of the language, and the sounds associated with it determine peoples' attitudes towards it. A *language* is an instrument through which speakers improve their socioeconomic status and try to appear friendly and pleasant or authoritative and distant. It could also serve as a means to develop and build rapport

among members of the same class or to distinguish oneself from the rest of the community members.

Walkers (1991) has divided the social forces that shape these language attitudes into two distinct streams. He believes that outside forces breed negative attitude that results in language shift which could ultimately result in language loss or death. In contrast, inside forces inculcate a positive attitude and bring vitality to a language.

Ryan (1983) differentiates language attitudes from attitudes toward speakers. He believes that in some cases, these reactions towards a language and its speakers could be the same, but sometimes they could be different. Bougie, Wright &Taylor (2003) have discussed various other factors directly manifestations of language attitudes. In the United States of America, speakers felt a significant loss at losing heritage languages as they were a bridge between the elderly of their society and the young ones, a window of opportunity to maintain and exhibit their culture, and a catalyst for job opportunities and diplomacy.

Political influence does shape a person's attitude towards a particular variety of languages. Baker (2011) opines that using Canadian French in Quebec, Canada is an apt example of where people started shifting towards a particular variety of languages owing to socioeconomic reasons. The same could be quoted regarding English at the time of the British colonizing the Subcontinent and Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan's efforts in overcoming and shaping the language attitudes of the Muslims (Jalbani et al., 2021).

Linguists and psychologists have been aware of this phenomenon. There are references as early as 1930 where people claim to judge someone's personality, social group and standing, and job, but this was deemed somewhat wiser (Allport & Cantril, 1934; Pear, 1931 quoted in Snow 1967). This phenomenon enjoyed some status, but soon linguists came up with other ways to evaluate language attitudes. Earlier, linguists tried to explore a person's reactions to language alone. However, with the spectacular rise in cross-disciplinary approaches, the study of language attitudes now

entails peoples' behavior and the approaches of safeguarding a language, shifting to another move toward language death (Fasold, 1984, p. 148).

Different factors shape people's attitudes toward a language, especially in a bilingual community. Ellis (2004) discusses instrumental and integrative motives as ways to gain prestige and success in a community.

Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, quoted in Mousa (2015), have shed light on a different aspect of language attitude. Language attitude is not a fixed phenomenon; it changes as the factors governing and shaping an attitude change. Language attitudes are a dynamic and constantly changing phenomenon in this new light.

Matched Guise Technique

In order to analyze language attitudes, methods in use can be categorized into direct and indirect methods. Direct methods include questionnaire-based studies or conducting interviews, questioning the language opinions of the participants directly. On the other hand, indirect methods investigate language attitudes by collecting the participants' opinions without their conscious knowledge. Matched Guise Technique is one of the famous indirect methods developed by Lambert (1960; 1967). This indirect method is inspired by the mentalist theory, which argues that language attitudes are mental and neural characteristics and cannot be investigated directly (Allport, 1967).

Giles & Watson (2013) consider the matched guise technique (Lambert, 1960) of determining language attitudes as one of the most favored techniques to elicit language attitudes. This technique has triggered a lot many researches in this domain. He and his co-researchers demand a speaker fluent in two different languages or two different dialects of a language. It is pertinent to mention here that this technique demands the speaker to have native-like fluency in both the languages and different dialects, for he/she is responsible for

recording the stimuli used in the study—the French guises. When the listeners rated the speakers in the guises, they expressed their attitude to that particular language or dialect.

For the present study, an indirect approach was adopted, using Matched Guise Technique to investigate the attitudes of respondents who listened to the audio recorded by the same speaker. However, this fact is unknown to the listeners. The listeners listened to the audio and were asked to rate the speakers of different guises. Lambert (1960) study produced results as the respondents affirmed the presence of certain attitudes ascribed to the speakers. The respondents judged English guises better on several traits than Urdu Kashmiri bilinguals towards these two languages. For accessible data collection and analysis, the study participants were given a sheet to evaluate the speaker's attitude toward language.

Research Methodology

The subjects for the study comprised 34 university students from the University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Muzaffarabad. There were 10 females and 24 males. The researchers found it more difficult to recruit female participants than male participants. All participants reported that their mother tongue was Kashmiri, and they also learned Urdu from their homes and schools. The ages of the subjects ranged from 17 to 35.

The researchers deem it apt to share that data collection posed many difficulties. The rationale for the small sample size is that it took time to convince young people to participate in this study. Being residents of a conflicted and war-stricken region, people showed reluctance to be a part of this study. Moreover, after listening to the matched-guise audio clips, many respondents still needed to complete the sheet to evaluate the speaker. Many young men and women without research or academic exposure refused to participate in the research process.

The choice of young, educated people paved the way for purposive sampling. The respondents were undergraduate, Master, and Ph.D. students of the University of Muzaffarabad. It was easier

for educated respondents to understand the nature of the study. Being in academia, they had a reasonable understanding of the research process. They knew how to fill in a questionnaire which was made simple after the results of the pilot testing. The participants had an excellent proficiency in both languages, which the young people devoid of education lacked.

The stimulus consisted of two speech recordings. One was recorded in Kashmiri, and the other was in Urdu. There was filler audio in between the two clips. The respondents were asked to rate the speakers after listening to the clips. They were unaware that the speaker was the same person in both audios.

Born and raised in Muzaffarabad, the stimulus speaker is 25 years old boy, a proficient speaker of Kashmiri and Urdu. He is a BS IT student at the University of Muzaffarabad. He learned both languages at home simultaneously. His grandparents speak Kashmiri, and his parents communicate with him in Urdu. The speaker was asked to record his speeches in Urdu and Kashmiri of equal length, 50 seconds each. It was the same joke in both languages, keeping the voice quality almost the same. It took almost 50 seconds to record each audio clip.

The respondents first listened to the Urdu, then filler audio of Urdu for distraction, and finally, a Kashmiri audio. An attributes rating sheet (Table 1), adapted from Rodriguez et al.'s rating sheet, was provided to the respondents.

Table1 Grouping of Attributes for Traits

Traits	Attributes
Personal Appeals	Amusing
	Attractive
Social Correctness	Polite
	Nice
	Caring
	Kind
Solidarity	Trustworthy
	Reliable
Capability	Intelligent
	Efficient

Social	Wealthy
Status	Educated
Negative	Annoying
Attributes	
	Conservative

There were 15 personality traits upon which they were asked to rate the audio speaker. They had to record their response on a 5-point Likert scale, where not at all and extremely intelligent were kept at 1 and 5, respectively. For instance, 1= Not intelligent-2=little, intelligent-3= intelligent 4=very intelligent, 5= extremely intelligent. The respondents provided their ratings unaware that the speaker in Urdu and Kashmiri was the same person. Figure 1 and Table 1 illustrate the gender-wise and location-wise distribution of the participants. The count of 10 females and 24 males participated in the study. Furthermore, 19 participants were from a rural background, and 15 were from an urban background. In order to compare the responses of both rating sheets for Kashmiri and Urdu guises, an Independent Samples T-test was conducted on SPSS.
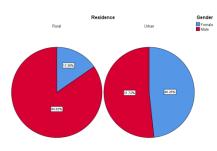
Figure1 Participants by location and gender

Table1 Distribution of Participants by Location

	Residence				
	Rural			Urban	
	Count	Row N %		Count	Row N %
Gender	Female	4	40.0%	6	60.0%
	Male	15	62.5%	9	37.5%

Results

The two sets of data based on two guises were compared for the mean scores by running *Independent Samples Test* to obtain a *t* value of significance.

Table 2. Results of Independent Samples Test

	Mean		Standard Deviation		Sig.2 tailed
	Urdu	Kashmiri	Urdu	Kashmiri	
Personal appeals	3.4	2.6	.96554	.9517	.002
Social Correctness	3.2	3.1	.76986	.76593	.714
Solidarity	3.1	2.9	1.06265	1.10349	.469
Capability	3.7	2.6	2.6	.83658	.000
Social Status	3.6	2.3	.68136	.54397	.000
Negative Attributes	1.7	2.9	2.9	.55210	.000

Personal Appeals

Table 2 compares the mean scores of the responses to the attributes rating sheet. The trait of personal appeal included a*ttributes of being attractive* and *amusing*. The respondents found Kashmiri speakers more appealing for the personality mentioned above features. The mean score for the Kashmiri guise is 2.6, while the mean score for the Urdu guise is 3.4, and the t value (.002) is significant. It indicates that Kashmiri young respondents highly regard Urdu speakers on personal appeals.

Social Correctness

Social correctness includes *being polite*, *caring, nice,* and *kind*. The mean score calculated for the Urdu guise is 3.2, higher than the Kashmiri score of 3.1. It depicts that the listeners perceived the Urdu guise speaker as more socially correct than the Kashmiri guise speaker.

Solidarity

The category of solidarity included attributes of *trustworthiness* and *reliability*. The mean score for the Urdu guise is 3.7, while the Kashmiri guise's score is 2.9, and the t value (.469) is insignificant. The listeners showed no difference in solidarity with the

Urdu and Kashmiri speakers.

Capability

The category of capability includes attributes of *intelligence* and *efficiency*. The mean score for the Urdu guise speaker is 3.7, the score for the Urdu guise speaker is 2.6, and the t value (.000) is significant. The listeners regarded the Urdu guise speaker as more capable than the Kashmiri guise speaker.

Social Status

The category of social status included attributes of *educated* and *wealth*. The mean score for the Urdu guise is 3.6, whereas the mean score for Kashmiri is 2.3. The t value (.000) shows a significant difference between the mean scores of Urdu and Kashmiri guises. The listeners perceived the Urdu guise speaker as having higher social status than the Kashmiri speaker.

Negative attributes

The respondents rated Kashmiri and Urdu guises for negative attributes, including annoying and conservative. The mean score for the Kashmiri speaker is 2.9, which is higher than the Urdu speaker's mean score of 1.7, and the t value for this category is .000, exhibiting a significant difference. It shows that respondents found Kashmiri speakers more annoying and conservative than Urdu speakers.

Discussion

Like other studies based on matched guise (Rodriguez et al., 2013; Chen&Cao, 2013; Abbas et al., 2020), our study also delineates the language attitudes of the respondents implicitly. The ratings for different attributes of the particular guise speaker were their perceptions of the respective language. Given that Urdu rests on a prestigious position offering socioeconomic benefits (Kiani et al., 2020; Rahman, 1996), the respondents consider Urdu speakers higher in status, more capable, and more attractive than Kashmiri speakers. Furthermore, young Kashmiri respondents associate negative attributes of Kashmiri speakers relative to Urdu speakers. However, we conclude from the results that young Kashmiri people feel almost the same solidarity with Kashmiri speakers and Urdu speakers.

Similarly, they regard Urdu and Kashmiri speakers as equally polite, nice, and caring. It implies that despite their awareness of the market value of Urdu, Kashmiri young people cherish being a member of the Kashmiri community.

Against the backdrop of the functional value of Urdu in education and the job market, the Kashmiri language has lost its importance for its speakers; Urdu provides them with better economic opportunities in society. The Kashmiris consider Kashmiri one of their identity markers (Rahman,1996). In sum, although Kashmiri young people are impressed by Urdu, they equally want to be grouped with Urdu speakers and Kashmiri speakers.

Overall, young Kashmiri University students are impressed by the Urdu language and have a more positive attitude towards Urdu than Kashmiri. The results verify our hypothesis formulated at the beginning of the study.

Conclusion

This study was based on an implicit method to investigate the language attitudes of Kashmiri youth. The Matched Guise technique was used to serve the purpose. The study's findings show that young Kashmiri people have more positive evaluations of Urdu than Kashmiri due to its official status and educational value. We may infer from the results that, in the long run, this negative attitude toward their mother tongue, despite having 350,000 native speakers, might lead to a complete language shift in the Kashmiri community. As Ranvindarnath & Cohn (2014) concluded in their research, 'size alone cannot predict whether the robust intergenerational transmission is occurring. Rather a clearer understanding of the demographic, sociolinguistic, and attitudinal factors that lead to individual and community decisions about intergenerational transmission is essential for assessing the risk of endangerment.'

The sample size of this study was small. For more generalizable results, further studies should include more respondents. In addition, a gender-based, age-based, and location-based study would be helpful to understand the broader picture of the language attitude situation in the Kashmiri community.

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