Gender Variation of Language Use in Family: A Study of an Endangered Language Spoken in North Pakistan

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Abstract

Gender is a key factor in language vitality and shift. This paper aims at describing gendered variation of Mankiyali language inside the families of Tarawara community. Mankiyali is lesser acknowledged language spoken in north Pakistan with 500 speakers. The present study involved 189 men and 114 women of the community. The data were collected from all forty-two households of the village. This paper deals with cross sectional data and hypothesis testing. An independent sample t-test shows statistically meaningful mean values of language use patterns in the families of Mankiyali participants. The results establish the significantly higher Mankiyali language usage of the male participants.

Keywords: gender variation, family language use, language vitality and shift

1. Introduction

Unequal distribution of resources and power in a group of people affects vitality of a language; similarly, a language community also echoes the same tendencies. Gender is also connected to this social split and it is a key factor of vitality and eventual loss of a language (Hoffman, 2006). Patriarchy is associated with female subservience all through human history (Rosaldo, 1974). According to Walby (1990:1), "the concept of patriarchy is indispensable for an analysis of gender inequality as it captures the depth, pervasiveness and interconnectedness of different aspects of women's subordination within the household, family and society". The present study, quantitative in nature, focuses on gendered variation of Mankiyali[1] within the households of Tarawara community.

1.1 Background of the study

The focus of this investigation is a linguistic setting related to this language on a far-flung hilltop village, Dana. Tarawara community living in this village speaks Mankiyali. Dana is positioned in union council Bandi Shungli. It is a part of Tehsil Oghi, which is a sub unit of district Mansehra in the federating unit, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, of Pakistan. It is positioned in north-west end of Hazara (Paget, 1907). According to the preliminary investigation in September 2012, the total population inhabitants of Dana was 411. Mankiyaliis not understandable neighboring communities live in this region. Hindko, Gujari and Pashto are the major languages of the region. Mankiyaliis are not registered in any existing literature on languages spoken in Pakistan and Ethnologue which is a world-wide web resource of indigenous languages (Lewis et al., 2014). Minority languages in Pakistan have been severely threatened (Baart, 2003). There have been several studies on lesser-acknowledged languages and cultures; however, gender has hardly been examined (O'leary, 1992; Lothers & Lothers, 2010; Rehman, 2011). Mankiyali seems to lose its speakers as it shows

[1]Mankiyali language is spoken in north Pakistan.

indicators of impending language shift. Gender has been an essential demographic and sociolinguistic variable (Anjum, & Rehman, 2015; Anjum, 2016). Data from the current study revealed that following is the statistics of the proficiency of different languages in the village. (Pashto 67.0 %, Urdu 59.7 % English 8 %, Hindko100 %). This shows a vibrant linguistic repertoire of the community.Mankiyali seems to negotiate a contesting position with Hindko language in all the domains of language use of Tarawara community living in Dana village. Mankiyali is still spoken and transferred to the next generation in these families. This trend was found consistent with existing literature (Antonini, 2003; Anjum, 2007; Anjum et al., 2013).

2. Literature Review

During last few years, considerable research has been carried out on language shift and gender (Gal, 1989; Nunan, 1992; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1999; Kulick, 1998; Cavanaugh, 2006; Hoffman, 2006; Fader, 2007; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2008). Women endure huge pressures in Pakistani gendered and patriarchal context. Generally, in this context, women are reported socially less responsible and mentally inferior to men. Literature, textbooks, music, religion, proverbs and advertisements have been employed for promoting gendered and cultural stereotyping to strengthen patriarchal assumptions of the society (Rahman, 1996; Khan et al. 2014; Siddiqui, 2014). This context emphasizes an unbalanced power relationship where women have low literacy rate, narrowly allocated social roles, and restricted decision-making opportunities for education, occupation and marriage (Moghadam, 1992; Hussain, 1999; Qureshi, 2004; Lloyd et al., 2005; Roomi & Parrott, 2008; Rehman & Roomi, 2012). Thus, literacy rate of male and female participants clearly exhibits disproportion. Literacy rate in the community according to our initial survey was 65% in men and 15% in women.

Cavanaugh (2006) examined a gendered disparity in Bergamo[2]. This study was carried out in the context of language use and gendered ideology. The gendered disparity predisposed the community to shift from their ethnic language Bergamasco. The survey indicated that local men preferred indigenous variety. On the other hand, women exhibited their preference for the national language Italian. This research clearly asserts gender as an important factor of language shift and it clearly divides the labour in Bergamo.

The results of another study showed that unlike men, women displayed negative sentiments for the maintenance of Bergamasco. Likewise, imbalanced distribution of resources and power in a social group often affects a particular language adversely. This gendered disproportion often indirectly affects the language situation and stimulates the process of revitalization of language loss. The results of this study showed a significant attitudinal variation across gender of two ethnic groups of Tashelhit Berber of southwest Moroccans. This study observed the same gendered variation across these mountain dwellers that ultimately affected vitality of their ethnic language (Hoffman, 2006).

Gender is a significant factor of language shift. According to Williamson and Eerde (1980), men are more prone to stick to their minority languages because they mostly live in their native land. On the other hand, women have to live on their ancestral land (p. 62). As opposite to this,

[2] Bergamo is a town in northern Italy.

Williamson and Van Eerde (1980) note women are influenced by the majority language instructions of their children.

There is a substantial literature presenting female population as 'culture broker.' They accept the norms prestigious forms of languages (Gal, 1978, 1979, 1999; Hoffman, 2006). In contrast, females have been also projected as protector of home language and culture for a range of causes, including controlled mobility or submitting to norms of cultural forces (Dabène & Moore, 1995; Pavlenko, 2001). These scenarios do not necessarily present two different ways of exploring gendered language shift. In fact, this is a continuation and response to the discursive practice of this scenario. These discriminatory gendered settings predispose females to develop low self-esteem about them and for the group they belonged to (Fischer & Holz, 2007). They first comply with the implicit forces of their own group and they show the same complacency in case of integrating to the mainstream culture. This trend has been shown in the reported higher negative attitude of female population for their own language especially the attitude of the third generation. The study has been in line with a rich collection of studies presenting gender as a major cause of language vitality and shift (Grenier, 1984; Williamson & Van Eerde, 1980; Pendakur, 1990).

3. Methods

This study shows gender related language use variation within Mankiyal families of Tarawara community. It included three generations: a) paternal and maternal grandparents, b) parents and c) brothers and sisters. The present study included 189 men and 114 women. The data were collected from all forty-two households of the village. It included all men and women over the age of nine years who live in the village of Dana. The participants were given a questionnaire to fill in. The questionnaire was also made easy for all illiterate women and men. For this, Urdu version of questionnaire was read out, explained to them in Hindko, and filled in by the researcher. It also included participants who have traveled and lived to other cities and remote locations for work. For data collection, the whole village was divided into three zones.

3.1 Hypothesis

The assumption of the study attempts to see the language use variation across men and women as the literature indicates (Gal, 1978, 1979, 1999; Hoffman, 2006) women have been indicated as one of the agents of cultural change. Moreover, the qualitative data collected from the native speaker of Mankiyali language also shown the gendered variation (Anjum, 2016). Basing upon these the following hypothesis has been formed.

There is a significant difference across gender in language use with grandparents, parents and siblings.

3.2 Operational Definition of the Variable

Burhanudeen (2003); Antonini (2003) and Anjum (2007, 2013) used this scale. Anjum (2007) has translated this scale in Urdu. However, the items of the questionnaire have been expanded for the present study in the light of the focus groups, observations and pilot study. The previous version was inadequate in this particular context because of the shifting trends of exogamous marriages and gender variations. Similarly, items related to siblings also remained inadequate as language use varies across generations, genders and interlocutors (Hohenthal, 2003). The questionnaire comprises of 15 items. In this study, some items of this part were separated for the better understanding of language use and intergenerational transmission of the language. Previously, Burhanudeen (2003); Antonini (2003); Anjum (2007) and Anjum (2013) used combined items on

parents, grandparent, and children. In this research, these additional items, which were related to paternal grandparents, maternal grandparents, mother, father, brothers, sisters, son and daughter, were added. This subscale has fifteen items and it scales different patterns of family language use and intergenerational transmission. Like other scales, it was a four-point Likert scale, which assessed language use and intergenerational transmission. On all 15 items, 4 is the highest score and 1 is the lowest score.

4. Results

A t-test compares if two groups have dissimilar average scores (Field, 2013). This study tried to understand whether men and women have dissimilar average usage of Mankiyali language in family domain. The following table shows the results of an independent sample *t*-test and it calculated the mean values of language use patterns in the families of Mankiyali participants. The first item, the language use of parents to grandparents , computed mean values of language use across the male participants (*M =, 3.89, SD =.43, n =150*) which were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =3.47, SD =1.07, n =147*) *t (294) = 4.78, p = .00*. As there been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.51*).

The results of the second item reveal computed mean values of language use of maternal grandparents to parents across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =, 3.67, SD =.85, n =150*) were significantly higher than mean values of female participants (*M =3.28, SD =1.25, n =147*) *t (294) = 3.23, p = .00*. As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.36*).

Table 4.1: **Results of the Independent-Samples *t*-test**

	Male (n = 150)		Female (n = 147)				95% CI		
Scale	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t (*	*P*	LL	UL	Cohen's d
1. PGP	3.89	.43	3.47	1.07	4.78	.00	.25	.59	0.51
2. MGP	3.67	.85	3.28	1.25	3.23	.00	.15	.63	0.36
3 PAT	3.86	.55	3.65	.87	2.50	.01	.04	.36	0.28
4. PGC	3.84	.51	3.50	1.01	3.77	.00	.16	.51	0.42
5. MGC	3.59	.95	3.29	1.22	2.34	.02	.04	.55	0.27
6. CPG	3.88	.48	3.50	1.06	4.15	.00	.19	.55	0.45
7. CMG	3.67	.85	3.25	1.25	3.44	.00	.18	.66	0.39
8. FC	3.91	.44	3.65	.90	3.25	.00	.10	.40	0.36
9. M C	3.80	.69	3.45	1.09	3.36	.00	.14	.54	0.38
10. CP	3.88	.48	3.44	1.09	4.76	.00	.25	.62	0.52
11. SM	3.73	.75	3.53	1.03	1.94	.05	.00	.40	0.22
12. DM	3.77	.69	3.47	1.08	2.95	.00	.10	.50	0.32
13. SF	3.89	.45	3.57	.99	3.79	.00	.15	.48	0.41
14. DF	3.88	.49	3.56	1.00	3.61	.00	.14	.48	0.40
15. CAT	3.90	.42	3.64	.87	3.48	.00	.11	.41	0.37

The results of the third item revealed computed mean values of parental language use across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =,* 3.86*, SD =*.55*, n =150*) were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =*3.65*, SD =*.87*, n =147*), *t (294)* = 2.50*, p = .04*. As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.28*).

The results of fourth item reveal computed mean values of language use of paternal grandparents to children across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =, 3.84, SD =.51, n =150*) were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =3.50, SD =1.01, n =147), t (294) = 3.77, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.42).*

The results of fifth item reveal computed mean values of language use of maternal grandparents to children across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =, 3.59, SD =.95, n =150*) were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =3.29, SD =1.22, n =147) t (294) = 2.34, p = .02.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown *(d = 0.27).*

The results of the sixth item reveal computed mean values of language use of children to paternal grandparents across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =, 3.88, SD =.48, n =150)* were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =3.50, SD =1.06, n =147*) *t (294) = 4.15, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.45).*

The results of seventh item revealed computed mean values of language use of children to maternal grandparents across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =,* 3.67*, SD =.85, n =150)* were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =*3.25*, SD =1.25, n =147*), *t (294)* = 3.44*, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.39).*

The results of eighth item revealed computed mean values of language use of father to children across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =, 3.91, SD =.44, n =150)* were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =*3.65*, SD =*.90*, n =147*), *t (294)* = 3.25*, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.36).*

The results of ninth item reveal computed mean values of language use of mother to children across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =, 3.80, SD =.69, n =150)* were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =3.45, SD =1.09, n =147*), *t (294) = 3.36, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d* = 0.38*).*

The results of tenth item reveal computed mean values of language use of children to parents across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =,* 3.88*, SD =.48, n =150)* were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =*3.44*, SD =*1.09*,*

n =147), *t (294) = 4.76, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d* = 0.52*).*

The results of eleventh item reveal computed mean values of language use of son to mother across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =, 3.73, SD =.75, n =150)* were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =3.53, SD =1.03, n =147), t (294) = 1.94, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.22).*

The results of twelfth item reveal computed mean values of language use of daughter to mother across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =, 3.77, SD =.69, n =150)* were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =3.47, SD* =1.08*, n =147*), *t (294) = 2.95, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.32).*

The results of thirteenth item reveal computed mean values of language use of son to father across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =, 3.89, SD =.45, n =150)* were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =3.57, SD =*.99*, n =147*), *t (294)* = 3.79*, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d* = 0.41*).*

The results of fourteenth item reveal computed mean values of language use of daughter to father across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =,* 3.88*, SD =.49, n =150)* were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M =3.56, SD =1.00, n =147), t (294) = 3.61, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.40).*

The results of fifteenth item reveal computed mean values of language use of siblings across male and female participants. The mean values of male participants (*M =,* 3.90*, SD =.42, n =150)* were significantly higher than the mean values of female participants (*M* =3.64*, SD =*.87*, n =147*), *t (294)* = 3.48*, p = .00.* As there has been significant variation across male and female participants, the size of this effect is shown (*d = 0.37).*

5. Conclusion

This study established this divide statistically. It shows meaningful difference across gender of language use with grandparents, parents and siblings. Overall, these results were consistent with the previous studies (Romaine, 1999; Milroy 1992; Holmes, 2001; Cavanaugh, 2006; Hoffman, 2006).

In-depth analysis of the results of the table demonstrated the male participants scored significantly higher on all the items of the scales. Starting from the mean value of the first item which computed responses of family interaction of parents and grandparent showed male participant higher (*M =, 3.89*) as compared to female participants (*M =3.47).* Similarly, the last item computing the mean values of siblings also revealed the patterned responses. The mean value of male participants (*M = 3.90*), remained significantly higher than female participants (*M =3.64*). This systematic variation in Table 4.1 showed male participants consistently higher on the

language use of Mankiyali across all the family members. According to Holmes (2001), such variation of a minority language speeds up language shift. These results have been found in line with Cavanaugh (2006) who reported a gendered difference in town of Bergamo in the north of Italy. Results of the study also revealed that Bergamasco men favored a local language while the women displayed their preference for Italian language, dominant national language of the country. Moreover, these finding have not been found in line with the literature, which projected females as protectors of mother tongue and culture (Dabène & Moore 1995; Pavlenko & Piller, 2001).

Imbalanced dissemination of resources and power in a group of people influences vitality of a language; likewise, a language community also reiterates the same predispositions. Gender is also linked to this societal divergence and it is a significant aspect of vitality and ultimate demise of a language (Hoffman, 2006). Qualitative data of the main study exposed compromised place position and role of Tarawara women inside and outside the families and their participation to work for improving the status of the family. It has also revealed different practices of this marginalized community to keep women twice marginalized. It includes the patterns of their low participation in education, less frequent mobility outside the village and insignificant role in decision making in the family Although laboring in the fields and with livestock, most of the women of the village showed low evaluation of their own contribution in their households. Thus their efforts went unrecognized all the more so by themselves (Anjum, 2016, pp 126-201).It is connected to inferior position and roles assigned to the women of overall Pakistani social context. Majority of Pakistani females meet biases, discriminations, inequalities at home, and society at large (Isran, 2012; Weiss, 1986; Moghadam, 1992).

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Appendix-A

Questionnaire

How do you use Mankiyali in your family? Please tick the appropriate number from 1 to 4.

	Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Always 4
1. Parents among themselves				
2. Father to children				
3. Children to parents				
4. Children among themselves				
5. Paternal grandparents to parent				
6. Maternal grandparents to parents				
7. Paternal grandparents to children				
8. Maternal grandparents to children				
9. Children to paternal grandparents				
10. Children to maternal grandparents				
11. Son to mother				
12. Daughter to mother				
13. Son to father				