Chitral's Endangered Vernaculars in the Shadow of Language Policy: A Linguistic Exploration of Kalasha Language

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Khowar's dominance in communities and schools on the health of the Kalasha in Chitral. There are serious concerns over the sustainability of the region's great linguistic diversity and the future of its endangered languages when the Khowar is taught as a subject in Chitral schools, since many of the students come from diverse linguistic origins. This study was carried out to investigate the impact of language policy on the Kalasha in District Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Focusing on the dominance of the Khowar and its impact on the endangered minority language. Using a survey, the research gathered quantitative data. The quantitative data were collected through written questionnaires from 120 participants (Grades 6 to 10), using random sampling from students. Using SPSS software, the quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed with descriptive statistics. The study results showed that while Khowar makes it easier to communicate across borders, the Kalasha is seriously threatened by its widespread use in the educational system, which causes language shift and cultural loss. Due to Khowar's dominance in Chitral's educational system, kids from different linguistic origins struggle academically and participate in school and the community. The results also showed that Khowar's dominance in school has influenced the frequency of using minority languages in their community and slowed the growth of the Kalasha in the community.

Keywords: language policy, endangered languages, Chitral, Kalasha, Khowar

Introduction

The term Language policy refers to decisions and rules set by governments regarding the use of languages in a particular place (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018). These policies have the power to specify which languages are taught in schools and which are utilized in official documents, court proceedings, and instruction. Various minority languages are promoted or preserved with the help of material and financial resources. Language policies that favor one language over another for official purposes, education, or the media may cause that language to become more widely used while marginalizing other languages. The number of speakers or users of these marginalized

minority languages may decrease as a result of their domination (Grenoble & Hornberger, 2008). Language policies and practices are greatly influenced by linguistic belief systems, which are frequently unspoken, unchallenged, and widely accepted. Schiffman (1996) argues that political, historical, and cultural factors have a significant influence on linguistic views. They can direct language policies and decisions, affect or influence attitudes towards various languages, and promote some languages over others. We can better comprehend the social and political aspects of language policy and its effects on how individuals use language to establish their identities by comprehending the function of these ideas.

The nation of Pakistan is multilingual. Despite being extensively spoken in the nation's cities, Urdu, the country's official language, is only the mother tongue of 7.57% of the population. Pakistan's complex language policies are a result of its history, politics, and globalization. Urdu was selected as the national language in order to bring its many communities together after independence (Rahman, 2002). Despite its best efforts to be equitable and reflect Islamic principles, this ruling ignored linguistic diversity, particularly in areas like Sindh, Balochistan, and northern native languages that had cultural significance. Pakistan's national language, Urdu, is used in the government, media, and educational system and represents unity (Rahman, 2011). However, Sindhi speakers who prefer their native or regional language have resisted its use as the main language of teaching in schools, particularly in areas like Sindh (Rahman, 2002). Language and ethnic problems have resulted from this, with calls for regional languages to be recognized. For non-Urdu speakers, using Urdu in the classroom may be a challenge. According to research, especially in the early years, children learn best in their mother tongue. The prevalence of Urdu in government institutions can hinder the learning and cognitive development of pupils who do not speak the language (Mahboob, 2017). Urdu seeks to bring Pakistan together, but this must be balanced with consideration for regional linguistic uniqueness.

Northern Pakistan, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral, has many endangered languages like Shina, Kalasha, and Dameli, which are under pressure from Urdu, English and other regional languages (Rahman, 2011). Students benefit from programs like Mother-Language Education in Chitral and Swat, but they mostly rely on outside assistance rather than government support (Rehman & Zaman, 2011). These minor languages could become extinct if they don't receive a lot of support (Rahman, 2016). Teaching children in Urdu, English, and their mother tongue is crucial to preserving all languages because relying just on large languages can diminish the significance of smaller ones (Rahman, 2016). To ensure that everyone feels included and that regional languages continue to thrive, Pakistan must provide equal support for all of its languages.

Chitral's ethnically diversified population is reflected in its remarkable linguistic diversity. The majority of people in a sizable portion of Chitral speak Khowar, an Indo-Iranian language (Rahman, 2016). The main language of the Chitral District is Khowar, which stretches north to the Torkhow, Mulkhow, Laspur, and Yarkhun Valleys and west to Garam Chashma in the Lutkuh Valley. The Chitral and Drosh Tehsils of Pakistan's Chitral District are home to the majority of the Kalasha population. They are found in numerous valleys on the west side of the Chitral River, south of Chitral town, including the Rumbur, Bumburet, Birir, and Ursoon Valleys. There are still some older Kalasha speakers in Suwir village and the Jinjeret Koh Valley. Kalkatak, on the east bank of the Chitral River, south of Drosh, is another place where some Kalasha speakers reside. Although some people of Kalasha descent reside outside of these regions, they no longer identify as Kalasha and speak the Kalasha. Leitner (1877) provided the oldest documented description of the Kalasha, naming it Bashgali. According to the most recent census, there are approximately

6,500 Kalasha speakers, although the number is declining annually (Akhunzada, 2023). The Khowar is being adopted by many Kalasha people. It has long been taught as a written language in Bumburet's community schools (Akhundzada, 2023).

Several languages are in decline in Pakistan. And Kalasha is one. The Kalasha people, who reside in the Chitral valleys and practice an old religion, are in danger of losing their language. Since the majority of its speakers are switching to the Chitral Khowar, Kalasha, the language spoken by the inhabitants of Chitral, is at risk of dying. It's unclear exactly how many people speak Kalasha. 3,198 Kalasha are thought to reside in the Birir, Rumbur, and Bumburet valleys. According to Bashir (2003), this figure is less than 5000, and it does not include the Kalasha speakers in Ursun and Jinjiret or those who have converted to other religions in these regions. Thus, it is unknown how many people speak Kalasha.

A variety of factors are contributing to the Kalasha's daily decline. These include the use of other languages in daily conversation and business, the dominance of the Khowar, the shift in religion, and Kalasha as a linguistic minatory. In other words, the Kalasha speakers only operate a small number of stores in the Kalash valley. Shopkeepers who speak Khowar operate the great majority of stores. As a result, when shopping and conducting business, Kalasha residents must use the Khowar.

Problem statement

Chitral is home to many different languages, like Khowar, Kalasha, Palula, Dameli, Gawarbati, Yidgha, Dangariwar, Sheikhwar, Gujari, Wakhi, Shina, and Pashto. This linguistic diversity is a big part of the area's culture and history. Although Khowar is widely spoken throughout the region, and has been included in the school curriculum and taught in all government schools since 2011. The language is taught from KG to grade 8 to all children, including non-Khowar Speakers, like Kalasha speakers. Teaching Khowar to the children of Kalasha has impacted their mother tongue and changed their language from a minority language to a dominant language. It also decreases the number of speakers of the minority languages and affects a cultural shift. This research paper seeks to investigate the impact of language policy on the Kalasha in Chitral. We specifically examine how Khowar, as the dominant language, interacts with the Kalasha in Chitral, particularly within the educational system and its broader impact on the community.

Literature review

The choices, methods, and regulations that governments or other organizations employ to control the status and usage of languages in a given area are referred to as language policies (Spolsky, 2004). A key framework for comprehending how societal decisions regarding language use are formed and carried out is Ricento's (2000) Language Policy and Planning (LPP) theory. This includes both overt government regulations and covert social norms that affect linguistic preferences and usage. The adoption of Urdu as the national language in educational institutions marginalizes regional languages and causes their use to decline, according to a study conducted in Pakistan by Rahman (2002).

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan has also taken action by creating textbooks in four languages for students in Grade 7 and implementing them in schools. In various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, seven of the languages spoken there are taught as foundational courses in the school system. Pashto, Hindko, Saraiki, and Khowar are among the languages taught from kindergarten to seventh grade. Future curriculum additions are required for Gojri, Shina Kohistani, and Indus Kohistani, which are now in development (Akhunzada, 2023).

Implementing restoration initiatives to revive endangered languages is an additional strategy for language policy. Language engagement classes, updated curricula, community-based language projects, and awareness campaigns are a few examples of these activities (Fishman, 2001).

Language ecology holds that languages are interdependent components of a dynamic system that interacts and influences one another (Fishman, 1991). This viewpoint highlights how crucial it is to preserve equilibrium in the linguistic environment in order to guarantee the survival of all languages. The state of the Brahui language in Balochistan, Pakistan, offers an intriguing case study for Shah (2012)'s work on language endangerment in Pakistan. Balochi, Pashto, Urdu, and other regional languages coexist with Brahui, a Dravidian language. However, Brahui struggles to remain vibrant because of things like a lack of institutional support and Urdu's dominance in official and educational settings. Brahui's intergenerational transmission has decreased as a result of Balochistan's linguistic ecosystem being unbalanced due to the steady transition towards Urdu and other major languages. By offering resources and assistance, governments can boost competence, promote favorable views towards indigenous languages, and guarantee their continued use across generations (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). To promote indigenous language study and improve fluency, the Canadian government funds language initiatives such as the Aboriginal Languages Initiative (Hinton, 2001).

Impact of Dominant Tongues on Endangered Vernaculars

Wilson (2024) looks into how New Zealand's indigenous languages are impacted by language policies. The study emphasises how crucial resources, community support, and robust policies are to preserving endangered languages. According to the study, language policies have greater success when communities embrace them. Official recognition of indigenous languages, cultural materials, and bilingual schools are essential. The report suggests that policies safeguard the rights of indigenous languages and that educational institutions use both dominant and indigenous languages.

Mensah (2014) examines how Windhoek International School (WIS) manages its multilingual environment. The school has teachers and students who speak many different languages at home. However, the school's official language policy mainly uses English for teaching and communication with parents, even though local Namibian languages are spoken outside the classroom. The study recommends that the school revise its language policy to promote bilingualism and include local languages in teaching, which could help students learn better in other subjects.

The opinions of twelve ethnic minority teachers in southwest China regarding the function of minority languages in the classroom are examined by Liu (2024). According to the study, teachers think that these languages may make it more difficult for children to acquire Chinese and achieve academic success, even while they acknowledge how important they are for communicating with students and their families. Remarkably, teachers did not think that their ethnic origin had any bearing on how well they taught. Rather, they believed it was more crucial to speak the same language as their students.

Smith (2024) looks at how minority languages are affected by language policy. According to the study, minority languages can thrive with the support of sound language policies. For this, community support and bilingual programs are crucial, but they require strong legislation, sufficient financing, and qualified teachers. Involving communities in the development of language policies is crucial. The study suggests enhancing bilingual education, ensuring minority languages are protected by regulations, and utilising technology to preserve languages.

Analysing Pakistan's language policy, Abbas & Bidin (2022) suggest that dominant languages such as English and Urdu should not be imposed at the cost of minority languages. Moreover, the highlighted the implicit continuation of colonial linguistics policy and its traces in the current language policy of the state. Jamshaid and Naqvi (2021) examine how Pakistan's top schools adhere to the country's language policy. They reported that schools in Gujrat prefer English over

indigenous language, undermining the later. Furthermore, Manan, David, and Dumanig (2017) investigate how Pakistani indigenous languages are affected by government language-in-education policy. They discovered that only Urdu out of Pakistan's more than 70 indigenous languages are formally taught in schools.

Investigating the impact of language policy on Sindh, Pathan et al (2018) contend that indigenous and regional languages have been marginalised by the national language policy. Minority languages have been forced out of the literacy and education sectors due to Urdu's official status and English's political influence. The academics call on the government to uphold linguistic human rights and respect all languages equally.

Pakistan's linguistic variety is emphasised by Mesti (2020), who also attacks government policies that have disregarded regional languages. The study proposes a multilingual strategy and looks at how these policies affect language instruction. Urdu will be used for national communication, English for usage abroad, and local languages for instruction. While acknowledging the challenges of putting such a strategy into action, the study highlights how crucial it is to comprehending Pakistan's linguistic condition and enhancing education.

The effect of language regulations on indigenous minority languages in the US is examined by Reyhner & Lockard (2019). The study demonstrates that it is challenging to maintain these languages due to a lack of funding and lax federal regulations. According to the report, further funding and improved federal regulations are required. For regional languages to survive, decision-making must involve indigenous groups.

Research Methodology

Research Setting

This study was carried out in Chitral, a stunning region of Pakistan that is home to a variety of languages and cultures, particularly Khowar over Kalasha. We are concentrating on the impact of language policy on the Kalasha. We are interested in the opinions of students regarding the policy of the Khowar taught as a subject in schools. We hope to have a clear understanding of how language functions in this multicultural setting by selecting Chitral Kalasha students. It's similar to looking at an artwork depicting the linguistic preferences of young people. This enables us to observe how regional languages in Chitral are impacted due to the various policies.

Research Design

A quantitative study methodology was chosen to determine how Kalasha students view Khowar in relation to the Kalasha (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The decision was made to use printed questionnaires to collect information on this. Numerous factors, including Creswell's (2013) assertion regarding research design, influenced the investigation. Given the study's constraints, questionnaires were selected above other methods of gathering data due to their practicality, efficacy, and ability to provide a large sample size. Merriam and Grenier (2019) also emphasise the usefulness of questionnaires for gathering structured data, particularly when participants might feel more comfortable expressing their thoughts in writing. Given the logistical challenges and financial constraints, questionnaires were determined to be the most feasible and cost-effective alternative.

As a result, 29 written Likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree) questionnaires were selected as the main technique of gathering data for this study, making it possible to effectively gather information from a substantial sample of one hundred sixty students in Chitral. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: the first asked about the impact of the Khowar on the Kalasha within schools and communities, and the second asked about their opinions of how Khowar is currently used in the educational system in Chitral and its impact on Kalasha students. And the last is how the dominance of Khowar as the medium of

instruction in primary schools affects the frequency of use and overall preservation and growth of the Kalasha in Chitral communities. There were ten, nine, and ten statements in each section. 140 participants completed the questionnaire that was distributed to 160 people. One hundred and twenty responses were deemed comprehensive in every way and served as the basis for the analysis. In order to simplify the data presentation, the replies were later reduced to three categories: agree, neutral, and disagree. The responses were originally gathered on a five-point Likert scale, which ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Validity and reliability

In terms of reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used, with a score of 0.763 indicating acceptable internal consistency. By requesting two subject-matter experts to evaluate the instrument and recommend changes, the survey's validity was guaranteed. Additionally, the instrument was prepared in light of the body of knowledge regarding the concept of perception. To make sure the statements were readable and understood, the questionnaire was piloted with fifteen students.

Participants

According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), random sampling assures representativeness and reduces bias by selecting participants from the population sample, giving each member an equal chance of being selected. The study's sample comprised 120 students from Grades 6 to 10 from several schools in the Kalash valleys (Berir, Rumbour, Bumburat) in Chitral, Pakistan. We have used the random sample technique for this investigation. We made sure that people from various backgrounds and geographical areas were represented. This is because we want to include a variety of perspectives from various parts of the Kalasha valleys, considering their cultural and geographical diversity. This helps in obtaining a representative sample and minimizes bias.

Results

Khowar vs. Kalasha within Schools and Communities.

The data (Table 1) indicates a strong agreement that Khowar is commonly used in schools alongside other minority languages, with a significant 97% of respondents agreeing with this statement. Only a small fraction disagreed (1%), while 2% remained neutral. This suggests that Khowar has a prominent presence in the school environment where multiple languages are present.

Responses to the statement about learning Khowar in school helped me understand other minority languages better, showing a more divided opinion. While 51% of respondents agreed that learning Khowar facilitated their understanding of other minority languages, a notable 20% disagreed. A substantial 29% remained neutral on this matter. This suggests that the perceived benefit of Khowar in understanding other local languages is not universally shared.

Over half of the respondents (58%) indicated a preference for speaking Khowar over their native language in both school and community settings. In contrast, 30% expressed a preference for their native language, while 12% remained neutral. This highlights a potential shift in language preference towards Khowar in key social domains.

Table 1 Kalasha in Schools and Communities

No	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
SQ1	Khowar is frequently used in my school alongside other minority languages	97%	2%	1%
SQ2	Learning Khowar in school helped me understand other minority languages better.	51%	29%	20%
SQ3	I prefer speaking Khowar over my native language in school and community settings.	58%	12%	30%

SQ4	Using Khowar in school helps me learn more about its culture and traditions.	76%	13%	11%
SQ5	Using Khowar in school helps me communicate better with others.	81%	9%	10%
SQ6	Using Khowar in communities helps me communicate better with others.	29%	16%	55%
SQ7	I feel pressured to use Khowar more than my native language in school.	26%	21%	53%
SQ8	Using Khowar in school has influenced the way I speak my native language.	64%	21%	15%
SQ9	Speaking Khowar makes me feel connected to a larger community.	40%	10%	50%
SQ10	The use of Khowar in schools is affecting the preservation of my native language.	65%	15%	20%

A significant majority (76%) agreed that using Khowar in school enhances their understanding of Khowar culture and traditions. Only 11% disagreed, and 13% were neutral. This underscores the role of the school environment in transmitting Khowar cultural knowledge.

An even larger majority (81%) agreed that using Khowar in school improves their communication with others. Only 10% disagreed, and 9% were neutral. This strongly suggests that Khowar is perceived as a valuable tool for effective communication within the school setting.

In contrast to the school setting, the agreement on Khowar's benefit for communication in communities is considerably lower at 29%. A substantial 55% disagreed with this statement, and 16% were neutral. This suggests that while Khowar may be useful in schools, its role in broader community communication is less dominant or less universally perceived as beneficial.

Only a quarter of respondents (26%) reported feeling pressured to use Khowar more than their native language in school. A larger proportion (53%) disagreed with this feeling of pressure, while 21% remained neutral. This indicates that while Khowar is prevalent, a majority do not necessarily feel forced to use it over their mother tongue in the school environment.

A significant 64% of respondents agreed that using Khowar in school has influenced the way they speak their native language. Only 15% disagreed, and 21% were neutral. This suggests a notable linguistic impact of Khowar on the speakers' native languages.

A moderate 40% of respondents agreed that speaking Khowar fosters a sense of connection to a larger community. However, a significant 50% disagreed, and 10% were neutral. This indicates that while Khowar might serve as a regional lingua franca, it does not universally translate to a feeling of broader community belonging.

A substantial 65% of respondents agreed that the use of Khowar in schools is impacting the preservation of their native language. Only 20% disagreed, and 15% were neutral. This highlights a significant concern among respondents regarding the potential negative consequences of Khowar's prominence on the maintenance of minority languages within the educational system.

Khowar is Currently Used in the Educational System in Chitral and its Impact On Kalasha Students Table 2 below suggests the presence of Khowar in educational settings. A large majority (82%) of respondents agreed that Khowar is frequently used as the medium of instruction in their school. Only a small percentage disagreed (5%), while 13% remained neutral. This clearly indicates the dominant role of Khowar in the educational instruction within the surveyed schools.

Less than half of the respondents (45%) found it easier to understand lessons when taught in Khowar. A notable proportion disagreed (36%), and 19% remained neutral. This suggests that while Khowar is the medium of instruction, its ease of understanding is not universally experienced by the students.

A significant majority (69%) agreed that using Khowar in school helps them connect with the local culture. Only 15% disagreed, and 16% were neutral. This highlights the perceived role of Khowar in cultural integration within the school setting.

Over half of the respondents (58%) agreed that students who do not speak Khowar face difficulties in learning at school. A smaller proportion disagreed (20%), while 22% remained neutral. This points to potential challenges faced by students from non-Khowar linguistic backgrounds in the Khowar-dominant educational environment.

Table 2 Impact of Khowar on Kalasha Students

No	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
SQ11	Khowar is frequently used as the medium of instruction in my school.	82%	13%	5%
SQ12	I find it easier to understand lessons when they are taught in Khowar.	45%	19%	36%
SQ13	Using Khowar in school helps me connect with the local culture.	69%	16%	15%
SQ14	Students who do not speak Khowar face difficulties in learning at school.	58%	22%	20%
SQ15	Khowar is given more priority than other local languages in the school system.	70%	18%	12%
SQ16	Using Khowar helps me communicate better with my classmates.	82%	6%	12%
SQ17	Students from non-Khowar backgrounds learn Khowar easily in the school environment.	71%	7%	22%
SQ18	The use of Khowar in school positively affects students' academic performance.	28%	29%	43%
SQ19	The emphasis on Khowar in school affects students' ability to maintain their native languages.	56%	24%	20%

A substantial majority (70%) believed that Khowar is given more priority than other local languages in the school system. Only 12% disagreed, and 18% were neutral. This perception underscores a potential imbalance in the linguistic emphasis within the educational framework.

A large majority (82%) agreed that using Khowar helps them communicate better with their classmates. Only 12% disagreed, and 6% were neutral. This reinforces the role of Khowar as a key language for peer interaction within the school.

A significant majority (71%) agreed that students from non-Khowar backgrounds learn Khowar easily in the school environment. A notable proportion (22%) disagreed, while 7% remained neutral. While a majority perceive ease of learning, a considerable minority suggests potential difficulties for non-native speakers.

Less than a third of respondents (28%) believed that the use of Khowar in school positively affects students' academic performance. A larger proportion disagreed (43%), and 29% remained

neutral. This indicates a lack of strong consensus on the academic benefits of Khowar as the medium of instruction.

Over half of the respondents (56%) agreed that the emphasis on Khowar in school affects students' ability to maintain their native languages. A smaller proportion disagreed (20%), while 24% were neutral. This highlights a concern about the potential negative impact of Khowar's dominance on the preservation of students' mother tongues.

Khowar Dominance Affects the Preservation and Growth of Kalasha

Table 3 suggests that the overall responses regarding the dominance of Khowar as the medium of instruction in schools affect the frequency of use and overall preservation and growth of the Kalasha in Chitral communities.

Table 3 Overall Analysis

No	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
SQ20	Khowar is the primary language used in classrooms at my school.	79%	5%	16%
SQ21	I use my native language less frequently because of the focus on Khowar in school.	64%	12%	24%
SQ22	Teachers encourage the use of minority languages alongside Khowar during school activities.	55%	16%	29%
SQ23	Students prefer speaking Khowar over their native languages in school.	50%	15%	35%
SQ24	Using Khowar as the medium of instruction strengthens my connection to the local culture but weakens my native language identity.	62%	21%	17%
SQ25	Students who do not speak Khowar at home face difficulties adapting to school.	67%	15%	18%
SQ26	The use of Khowar as the dominant language in schools has slowed the growth of other minority languages in my community.	71%	15%	14%
SQ27	Focusing on Khowar in school makes it harder to preserve minority languages in Chitral.	71%	12%	17%
SQ28	The dominance of Khowar in school has influenced the frequency of using minority languages in my family.	63%	14%	23%
SQ29	The dominance of Khowar in school has influenced the frequency of using minority languages in my community.	76%	12%	12%

A significant majority (79%) agreed that Khowar is the primary language used in classrooms, while 16% disagreed and 5% were neutral, indicating Khowar's dominant linguistic role in the educational setting.

A substantial majority (64%) reported using their native language less due to the school's emphasis on Khowar, while 24% disagreed and 12% were neutral, suggesting a perceived negative impact of Khowar's focus on native language usage.

A slight majority (55%) agreed that teachers encourage minority language use alongside Khowar, while 29% disagreed and 16% were neutral, indicating that while some encouragement exists, it is not a universally perceived practice.

Just over half of the respondents (50%) agreed that students prefer speaking Khowar over their native languages in school, while 35% disagreed and 15% were neutral, suggesting a potential shift in linguistic preference among students within the school environment.

A majority (62%) agreed that Khowar strengthens their connection to local culture but weakens their native language identity, while 17% disagreed and 21% were neutral, highlighting a perceived trade-off between cultural integration and native language preservation.

A significant majority (67%) agreed that non-Khowar speaking students face difficulties adapting to school, while 18% disagreed and 15% were neutral, underscoring the challenges for students from different linguistic backgrounds in a Khowar-dominant educational system.

A strong majority (71%) agreed that Khowar's dominance in schools has slowed the growth of other minority languages in their community, while 14% disagreed and 15% were neutral, indicating a perceived negative impact of the educational language policy on the broader linguistic landscape.

A strong majority (71%) agreed that focusing on Khowar in school makes it harder to preserve minority languages in Chitral, while 17% disagreed and 12% were neutral, highlighting a significant concern about the long-term consequences of the current educational language emphasis on linguistic diversity.

A majority (63%) agreed that Khowar's dominance in school has influenced the frequency of using minority languages in their family, while 23% disagreed and 14% were neutral, suggesting that the school's linguistic environment has repercussions on language use within the home.

A significant majority (76%) agreed that Khowar's dominance in school has influenced the frequency of using minority languages in their community, while 12% disagreed and 12% were neutral, indicating a widespread perception of the school's language policy impacting the broader community's linguistic practices.

Discussion

The practical use of Language Policy and Planning (LPP) is exemplified by the adoption of language policies in Chitral, especially the focus on Khowar. With 76% of respondents saying that Khowar is regularly used in their school with other minority languages and 20% agreeing that other minority languages (Kalasha) are also used, the quantitative data, gathered from 120 questionnaires, shows a significant consensus among students (SQ1). In areas like Zimbabwe, where one language dominates and devalues other languages, this is comparable to what other studies have discovered. Gotosa (2020) investigates the impact of Zimbabwe's primary Bantu languages on the Tshwao language. Likewise, a lot of people in our situation claimed that Khowar is being used more in schools, which is causing minority languages to be utilised less. Fifty-seven percent of respondents agreed that "the use of Khowar in schools is affecting the preservation of my native language" (SQ10), according to quantitative data.

Rahman's (2002) study in Pakistan, which observed how the adoption of a national language in education can result in the marginalization of regional languages, is consistent with the overwhelming agreement (97% overall, 98% male, 95% female) that Khowar is commonly used in schools alongside other minority languages. Although Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's current strategy seeks to promote regional languages, participants' reports of the sheer volume of Khowar usage point to a de facto dominance that may eclipse the goal of linguistic diversity promotion.

In contrast to the possible advantages of multilingualism frequently mentioned in the literature, there is a divided perspective on whether studying Khowar aids in understanding other minority

languages (51% agreement overall) (May, 2012). Although some participants see a facilitative influence, a sizable percentage (20% disagreed overall) do not, indicating that there may not be a strong or widely held perception of the relationship between Khowar and other local languages in terms of mutual intelligibility or linguistic transfer.

This concern is echoed in Shah's (2012) study of the Brahui language, where the dominance of major languages like Urdu affected the vitality of the minority language. The preference for speaking Khowar over native languages in school and community settings (58% overall, with a notable gender difference of 44% male vs. 66% female) suggests a possible language shift. It's possible that the greater preference among female responders reflects different social pressures or linguistic contexts for each gender.

According to Mackey & Marsden (2019), in the context of the Maori Language Act, the high percentage of respondents (76% overall) who think that Khowar use in schools' aids in learning its culture and traditions highlights the role of education in cultural transmission. However, there may be a trade-off for minority language speakers due to this cultural integration through Khowar, as evidenced by the consensus that it improves ties to local culture but diminishes native language identity (62% overall, 58% male vs. 64% female). This issue is important for preserving linguistic diversity but is not specifically addressed in the reviewed literature.

The strong consensus (81% overall) that Khowar has increased communication in the classroom points to its use as a lingua franca in the classroom. In contrast to the intended effects of official language recognition discussed by May (2012), the significantly lower agreement on its benefit for community communication (29% overall) suggests that Khowar's dominance may be context-specific and not necessarily translate to broader social domains, potentially limiting its unifying function outside of school.

Given how frequently Khowar is used, it may seem surprising that just 25% of respondents felt forced to use it more in class (26% overall). Instead of overt pressure, it can imply a normalisation of Khowar's presence. However, the strong consensus that Khowar use in the classroom affects the way native languages are spoken (64% overall, 56% male vs. 70% female) suggests a subtle yet widespread linguistic influence, which is consistent with Fishman's (1991) theory of language ecology, which holds that dominant languages can affect the usage and structure of weaker ones. This research's main concern is strongly supported by the substantial agreement that Khowar use in schools has an impact on the preservation of native languages (65% overall, 68% male vs. 63% female). It also aligns with the endangerment factors discussed in the literature regarding Kalasha (Akhunzada, 2023; Bashir, 2011) and other minority languages that are influenced by dominant languages (Shah, 2012). The perceived difficulty of adjusting to school for non-Khowar speakers (67% overall, 61% male vs. 71% female) highlights the difficulties that linguistic minorities face in a Khowar-centric educational system. This is a crucial implication of language policy and a potential barrier to equitable access to education that is not specifically discussed in the reviewed literature.

The widespread belief that Khowar is given preference in the educational system (70% overall, 78% male vs. 65% female) points to a possible imbalance in the way language policies are being implemented, where the de facto dominance of Khowar may overshadow the intended inclusion of regional languages. This is consistent with Wright's (2004) research on bilingual education, which found that policy implementation might have unforeseen effects on language use.

Last but not least, there is broad consensus that Khowar's influence in schools has hindered the development of other minority languages in the community (71% overall, 73% male vs. 69% female) and made it more difficult to preserve them (71% overall, 63% male vs. 76% female). It also has an impact on language use in families (63% overall, 51% male vs. 70% female) and the

community at large (76% overall, 66% male vs. 82% female). All of these factors combined create a worrying picture for the future of linguistic diversity in Chitral, especially for vulnerable languages like Kalasha. According to Fishman (2001) and Grenoble & Whaley (2006), these results highlight the urgent need to reevaluate language policy and put into practice successful revitalization initiatives in order to combat the homogenizing effects of a dominant language in the educational setting. Women may be more acutely aware of or experiencing these changes, as seen by the higher agreement among female respondents regarding the impact of Khowar on native language use in families and communities.

To sum up, the results of this study offer empirical support for the intricate relationship that exists between educational practices, language policy, and minority language viability in a multilingual setting. The evidence indicates a substantial influence on the use and perceived preservation of other local languages, especially Kalasha, despite the potential benefits of including Khowar in the curriculum. This echoes larger worries about language endangerment in the face of hegemonic languages. The study emphasises that in order to guarantee the survival and prosperity of Chitral's rich linguistic legacy, policy implementation must carefully take into account the ecological balance of languages (Fishman, 1991).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine how the unique Kalasha spoken in Chitral is impacted by the extensive usage of Khowar in local communities and schools. It examined how pupils who do not speak Khowar are impacted in the classroom and whether the dominance of Khowar is causing minority languages to be less used. In order to obtain a comprehensive picture of language use and the effects of language policies, information was obtained from 120 kids via questionnaires in several valleys. The primary objective was to determine whether the emphasis on Khowar is beneficial or detrimental to the other languages and how this affects linguistic and cultural evolution. Finding strategies to preserve all of Chitral's languages depends on this study. According to the study, Khowar is in fact widely spoken in communities and schools, and many individuals believe that this is causing their native languages to be used less frequently. Pupils who do not speak Khowar find it difficult to communicate and comprehend courses in school, and they believe that their languages are not respected there. In order to preserve Chitral's cultural legacy, the results clearly indicate that language policies that promote all of the region's different languages are necessary, as is cooperation between educational institutions, community leaders, and legislators to strike a balance between the usage of Khowar and the preservation of minority languages.

This study concludes that other minority languages are significantly impacted by Khowar's strong presence in Chitral. Because Khowar is regarded as prestigious, it is contributing to a decrease in the use of other languages, even though it is helpful for communication and is seen as crucial for future prospects. Learning is impacted by the difficulties faced by students who do not speak Khowar in the classroom. Policies that encourage multilingual education and community language preservation initiatives are necessary to remedy this. It is essential to promote the usage of all languages in communities, homes, and schools. By cooperating, we can guarantee the survival of every language in Chitral.

Recommendation

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of our study. First off, our sample may not fully reflect the opinions of other demographic groups, such as professionals or older people, because it was limited to Kalasha students (Gades 6 to 10). Consequently, an Further research could be done to fully examine the phenomenon. Furthermore, since language policy and attitudes were the primary focus of our study, future research may delve deeper into

the actual language use patterns and proficiency levels of the Chitral population. Additionally, studies that compare different age groups and socioeconomic origins might provide a deeper understanding of the local language dynamics. Furthermore, studying the effects of media and digital tools on language attitudes and learning settings may yield useful data for developing inclusive, culturally appropriate language education curricula in Chitral.

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