

The Diachronic Sociolinguistic Situation in Sindh (Before and after the emergence of Pakistan)

*M. Qasim Bughio**

Abstract

Nel presente articolo l'autore presenta un'analisi diacronica della situazione sociolinguistica del Sindh, dalla prima civilizzazione Indu all'età contemporanea.

1. The early period until the arrival of the Arabs in 712 A.D.

From the present day Sindh can retrace its historical foot prints back to early Indus Civilization, during which time-span it has undergone a series of complex linguistic transitions, each of which was to leave its mark on the existing Sindhi language.

Between 3500 and 1000 B.C. Sindh was inherited with Neolithic and Chalcolithic cultures. Tribes from these cultures spoke a type of 'Proto-Indo-European' language which mingled with the Dravidian languages of the native Sindhis. Interfusion of these languages produced a variety of linguistic groupings, amongst which Proto-Sindhi finds its place.¹

About 1000 B.C. Rig-Vedic Aryans settled in Sindh. Evidence suggests that their language was closely related to Proto-Indo-European languages and although this language was originally confined to a small area, it had important influences on the Indus Valley Civilization whose people had stopped using their script 650 years prior to Aryan settlement. A Hebrew based script, Brahmi, was developed by the Aryans, which resulted in a sizable Sanskritic influence on the Sindhi language.² Brahminism, which came about as a result of syncretism of the Indus and Rig-Vedic religions, gave rise to the monopolization of literacy and the adoption of Sanskrit as the official language. The impact of Sanskrit continued until the Arabs came in 712 A.D.

2. The arrival of the Arabs (712) until 1843

The sociolinguistic situation in Sindh was dynamically altered with the Arab arrival. The Arabic language and Islamic culture which accompanied the Arabs were to make a permanent mark on the country. The influence of the Arabic language was quickly felt in official and religious circles and gradually Sindhi, already a firmly established language, took on a new form as many Arabic words and phrases were incorporated into it. As a result of this influence, the Arabic script was later adopted for the writing of Sindhi, with the addition of some dots for purposes of Sindhi pronunciation. In spite of this Islamic influence, there were those who retained affiliations with the older religions, which meant that the languages encoded in their prac-

* "University of Sindh Jamshoro".

¹ Panhwar 1988.

² Panhwar 1988.

tices (Sanskrit in Hinduism, Pali in Buddhism) still remained.

Although religious education in Arabic had prevailed, the time arrived when it was felt that the mode of instruction should be in Sindhi. Thus in the ninth century the 'Quran' was translated into Sindhi and in the eleventh century another important work, the 'Ramayan' was translated.

From the 14th to the 16th century Arabic remained as the educational mode whilst Persian held official status, having established itself not only in Persia but also central Asia, Afghanistan and most of the subcontinent besides. By this means multilingualism reached some sections of Sindhi society.

Sindhi's sphere of influence continued to grow: not only did its vernacular use spread south-eastwards to Kucch and Gujarat, but also northwards to Bahawalpur and Multan and to Baluchistan in the west. During its expansion Sindhi was to have quite a lot of linguistic contact. In Bahawalpur and Multan it came into contact with Siraiki, which resulted in Sindhi-Siraiki dialect; contact in Kucch and Gujarat meant that the Kucchi dialect of Sindhi emerged and Kohlrabi or the Lasi dialect was formed with the arrival of Sindhi in Baluchistan. Countering this there were migratory movements of many Siraiki, Kucchi, Panjabi and Baluchi speaking tribes into various areas of Sindh. These settlers retained their own languages at home, speaking Sindhi outside the home domain for the purpose of daily life.

The presence of Persian speaking Arghoons, Turkhans and Moghuls resulted in the increase of the use of Persian, as it gradually trickled throughout the domains of business, education, official correspondence, literature and poetry. By this means there was some merging of the two languages as Sindhi adopted some Persian words and phrases, and vice versa. Additionally, contact with Hindi, Rajasthani, Siraiki and Panjabi resulted in some words from these languages being incorporated into Sindhi, which vastly enriched the poetry of the day. Furthermore, amongst the ever increasing written literature of the day there was an increase in popular religious books in Sindhi and also classical literature broadened its repertoire. Until the second half of the 19th century Persian remained the language of literature and official business and was adopted by members of both the Hindu and Muslim communities who wished to enter into government services. As yet Sindhi remained without an official standard alphabet but rather had several different scripts and dialects. "It was the everyday language of all",³ from the Hindu traders to the Muslim 'haree' (farmers).

3. The British period (1843-1947)

The next linguistic phase took on a completely new form when the British arrived in

³ Aitken 1907, p. 472.

Sindh. The British saw that if their rule in Sindh was to be successful, then it was essential that appropriate communicative schemes should be installed. They saw that the best and most obvious means of accomplishing this was through the common ground of language.

British policy adopted in Sindh was totally against the Macaulay's Minutes on English Education in India made public during the same time wherein he had recommended that English ought to be the medium of education in India so as "to form a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in test, in opinions, in morals and in intellect".⁴

Thus from the very beginning attention was drawn to the question of making Sindhi the official language. Clerk⁵ in his memorandum to the House of Commons on the administration of Sindh, broaches this issue, giving counsel as to the practicability of using the Sindhi vernacular for administrative purposes:

«We should introduce the language of the country (namely Sindhee) as the medium of official intercourse. I do not see in what way our revenue and judicial officers (however their offices and courts may be constituted) can work effectively through a foreign medium of communication, such as Persian or English [...]».

Others were of the view that Hindustani⁶ should be adopted as the official language, since they saw its universality in India and believed if used in Sindh it would champion the cause of British hegemony by becoming 'the language of the governing power'.⁷ Although Stack⁸ saw that this was the case, he did not entertain this idea in the case of Sindh as he affirmed that Hindustani was not understood in Sindh and was only practised in the judiciary realm and even here only by those magistrates who had no knowledge of Sindhi and Persian.

Early into the period of British rule a committee was established which was to tackle the language question in Sindh by coming up with one script which would clear up the confusion which had resulted from several other scripts being in use. On one side of the bench there were those who favoured the implementation of a Devanagari script; opposing them were those who maintained that a Sindhi-Arabic script should be used. After much dissension it was decided that Sindhi-Arabic should become the new script. In due course the Sindhi script and orthography were modified to accord with Sindhi phonetics.

⁴ Fatehpuri 1987, p.6.

⁵ Clerk 1848.

⁶ Hindustani is primarily the language of the northern Doab, which grew up as a lingua franca in the polyglot bazaar attached to Delhi Court and was carried everywhere in India by the lieutenants of the Moghul empire. Since then it has been secure (Grierson, [1919] 1968, vol. VIII part II & vol. IX).

⁷ Khuhro 1965, p. 345.

⁸ Stack 1848, p. 7.

Like its several scripts Sindhi also possessed many regional dialects, dispersed throughout Sindh. The six main dialects Siroli, Vicholi, Lari, Thari, Lasi and Kuchchi, and their areal distribution is shown in the map given below. Amongst these diverse dialects, Vicholi, the dialect spoken in the central area, was adopted as the standard language for official and educational purposes. After Sindhi was given official status a policy was introduced, the objective of which was for all officials to proficiently acquaint themselves with written and spoken Sindhi within the space of eighteen months.⁹ Once introduced, this plan would be made binding after six months and after one year Sindhi was to be made the general language of business, the exception being in the case of liaison with foreign states in which case Persian would still be used.¹⁰



1. Dialectal map of Sindhi (by Grierson 1968).

During the years following this decision much work was done on the Sindhi language. Work commenced on grammar books, histories, text books, dictionaries and manuals. Major works from other languages such as Hindi, Sanskrit, Bengali, Urdu, Persian and English were translated, periodicals were mass produced and a host of literary societies were founded to celebrate and promote the Sindhi language. Meanwhile English was slowly being introduced. Its popularity, however, was not secured overnight. Although the Hindus readily embraced the British

⁹ Clerk 1854.

¹⁰ Khuhro 1965, p. 349.

system of education in that they saw it as a stepping stone for entering into government service, the Muslims displayed more reluctance until Hasan Ali Effendi took the necessary steps which eventually led to the creation of the 'Sindh Madarsa' a reputable institution which was to produce a number of outstanding scholars and writers of English.¹¹

Sindh's annexation to the Bombay Presidency resulted in its having increased dealings with India and by this means Sindhi came into contact with some Hindustani and English spoken by those British who had taken up office. Hindustani and English influence was minimal, however, since those Sindhis who knew it were only those who had contact with the English and those from the educated classes. This bilingualism occurred only within the bounds of some urban areas - the rest of the people remained monolingual and isolated from power. This situation followed a similar pattern until Sindh's separation from the Bombay Presidency in 1936. With the departure of Indian influence, language contact with Hindi was reduced.

4. The emergence of Pakistan (1947 onward)

The crucial role which language plays in the political framework of any society can not be emphasised enough. General preservation and maintenance of stability within society demands a proper communication system and it is language which is the integral component where this is concerned. It follows then that language will have a bearing on the overall result of a society's political integration.

The freedom movement of India for the most part received the staunch support and participation of its people. It was particularly strong and active in those areas where Hindus constituted the majority. Although its initial aim was to obtain freedom from the British, it dealt with many other issues. The language question in particular was a strong issue - it was hoped that with their freedom the people would also be free to replace English with Hindi as the official language.

In those areas where Hindi speaking people were in the majority (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar), the Urdu speaking population of these areas weakened their case as they were not prepared to accept the claim that Hindi should be made the national and official language of India but instead projected their demands for Urdu.¹² Their demands were supported by the All India Muslim League (the political party working for the rights of Muslims in united India) passing resolutions in favour of Urdu; for example:

«As the Urdu language was originally an Indian language and was the result of interaction of Hindu

¹¹ Khamisani 1973, p. 16.

¹² Cf. Fatehpuri 1987.

and Muslim culture and it was spoken by a great part of the people of this country, it was best suited to develop a united nationality and the attempt to replace it by [sic] Hindi might upset the structural basis of Urdu otherwise known as Hindustani and adversely affect the growth of comradeship between the Hindu and Muslim sections, the All India Muslim League calls upon the Urdu speaking people of India to make every possible endeavour to safeguard the interest of their language [...] its unhampered use and development should be upheld and where it was not the predominant language adequate arrangement should be made for teaching it as an optional subject [...].¹³

Gandhi, after entering into the freedom movement, surveyed the situation and came up with what he saw as the solution by suggesting that Hindustani be made the official language.¹⁴ In the course of carrying out his plan he succeeded in passing a resolution of the Indian National Congress in 1925 which states:

«The proceedings of congress should be conducted as far as possible in Hindustani, the English language or any provincial language may be used if the speaker is unable to speak Hindustani or whenever necessary [...]».¹⁵

In response to this situation widespread disapproval came from the native speakers of the other Indian languages who were not willing to drop their own languages and adopt Hindustani. Because of this it was not possible to offer one language as the national language of India. After independence, in order to solve the complexity which such linguistic diversity fostered it was eventually declared in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in 1954 that fourteen Indian ethnic languages should be made national/regional and Hindi would occupy the position of national official language. Later in 1967 Sindhi was added as a fifteenth national language. English was not mentioned in the constitution, but was in fact used as a government language at the federal level and in some states.¹⁶

With the creation of Pakistan there was an overall desire in the country for the implementation of a national language in order to secure the new country's integrity. Amongst Pakistan's ruling elite and within the intellectual circles there were long debates concerning the question of which language(s) should be made national and official for Pakistan.

At this time the Urdu speaking immigrants voiced their demands for Urdu to be implemented as the national language, arguing that Urdu had been the lingua franca during the freedom movement of India and the language of the Muslims of India.¹⁷

Various other views concerning the language question were put forward: There were those such as the Agha Khan and others who desired Arabic as the national language,

¹³ Pakistan movement: Historical documents 1976, pp. 164-165.

¹⁴ Gupta 1969.

¹⁵ Quoted in Desai 1957.

¹⁶ Fasold 1984, p. 20.

¹⁷ Cf. Fatehpuri 1987.

arguing that this was not only the language of the 'Quran' and 'Ahadith' but that all Muslims were familiar with it through their religious practices. Adoption of Arabic would assist in promoting good relations between the Muslims of the Arabic world by this means as opposed to Urdu which was associated with the period of the downfall of the Muslim state. Arabic as a universal language of the Muslim world would unite, Urdu would divide and isolate.¹⁸

Others were of the view that the majority language i.e. Bengali whose speakers comprised of 56% of the total population should be introduced as the national language. Some conscientious native political leaders believed that all five indigenous languages should be made national languages and for government purposes English should be maintained until an indigenous language was enabled to take the position of English as the official language through conscious language planning.

Some held the view that in the eastern part of Pakistan Bengali should be adopted as the national language, while in the west Urdu should be introduced. Here Panjabi, a language lacking a proper developed script¹⁹ and literature, was spoken by the majority of the people who, by-passing their native language, had adopted Urdu into their education system during the British period. Contrary to this, many believed that Pakistan as a new nation, would weaken its integrity if it was to adopt various different languages as national languages. The adoption of only Urdu, it was argued, in a multinational/ multilingual country, would contribute to the emergence of a sense of nationhood. However, because Urdu was not immediately capable of fulfilling the criteria for being a national language - it did not have a fully developed body of literature and people generally were un-familiar with it - English would be adopted as the official language until Urdu had time to take root and efficiently meet the demands for government correspondence.

After a long debate concerning the language question, during the period of early non-elected governments, Urdu was declared the sole national language by the order of Mohammed Ali Jinnah.²⁰ In addition to Urdu being implemented as the sole national language of Pakistan, English was made the language of official correspondence.

It must be stressed that among all the five provinces of Pakistan Urdu was not the language of any of the ethnic nationalities. According to the 1951 census conducted soon after independence, Urdu was the mother tongue of only 2.37% and was spoken as second language by 4.2% of the total population of Pakistan whilst Bengali was the mother tongue of 56.40%, Panjabi 28.55%, Sindhi 8.47%, Pashtu 3.48% Baluchi 1.29%. English was the mother tongue of only 0.02% and was spoken

¹⁸ Agha Khan 1957.

¹⁹ This refers only to the Panjabi spoken in Pakistan which now is written in the Urdu-Persian script.

²⁰ Kazi 1987, p. 47.

as an additional language by only 1.1% of the total population.

This can be observed from Fig. 2 which illustrates languages spoken as mother tongue and second language in 1951 and 1961.

By the adoption of Urdu and English Pakistan was made an exoglossic country:

«We may call a country exoglossic when the national official language has been brought in from abroad, and its few native speakers do not form the majority of the inhabitants in any district or major locality.»²¹

At this stage there was a drain of English and Urdu educated people from Sindh owing to the large scale migration of Sindhi Hindus to India - very few Sindhi Muslims at this time were educated in English. This gap was filled by immigrants from India and other Pakistani provinces. Meanwhile the prestige status of English grew from strength

LANGUAGE	1951		1961	
	L 1	L 2	L 1	L 2
Baluchi	1.29	—	1.09	—
Bengali	56.40	0.17	55.48	0.32
English	0.02	1.87	0.02	1.38
Panjabi	28.55	0.84	29.02	0.52
Pashtu	3.48	0.41	3.70	0.21
Sindhi	8.47	0.80	8.51	0.89
Urdu	2.37	4.03	2.65	3.59

2. Mother tongue Languages (L 1) and second languages (L 2) in Pakistan by the percentage of total population.

to strength. Many schools opened within the private sector (in urban areas) to which access was only given to those privileged enough to be able to afford the high costs involved in English tuition. A successful education in English soon came to encompass all those things through which power and social standing were to be attained and by this means English became the language of the ruling class.

The decision about language choice documented above illustrates the general disregard of public sentiment. Obviously the choice of Urdu as a national language was not based on problem solving or the representation of the whole population; because emphasis was placed on attaining proficiency in non-indigenous languages - not an easy task - education suffered a setback as it not being provided in the mother tongue at all levels.

The introduction of Urdu as the national language caused a whole series of major problems which could not be easily solved. Firstly it created grievances amongst the native speakers of Bengali, Sindhi, and Pashtu who vociferously raised their voices in demanding proper rights for their own languages. In East Bengal when the struggle for the status of Bengali gained momentum and the growing protest from Bengalis

²¹ Kloss 1968, p. 71.

to make their native language national and official resulted in widespread agitation, with hundreds of lives being lost in the process.²² Under pressure from such resilient demands, the constitution proceeded to grant official status to the Bengali language in 1956. It stated:

«The official languages of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shall be Urdu and Bengali: provided that for a period of twenty years from the Constitution Day, English shall continue to be used for all official purposes for which it was used in Pakistan immediately before the Constitution Day, but Parliament by law provide for the use of English, after the expiry of the said period of twenty years, for such purposes as may be specified in that law.»

In the western part of Pakistan the official status of Bengali was not so palatable and likewise with Urdu in the eastern part. The controversy which emanated from this language situation continued to grow. Politically the Bengalis had been misrepresented, and that economically they suffered a decline and this resulted in their demands for equal social and political rights which finally came to a head in 1970 when after a civil war East Bengal became an independent country, Bangladesh.

The introduction of Urdu in the rest of the provinces met with varying degrees of tolerance. Since the Baluchis did not have a script and any developed literature as such they accepted Urdu. Similarly with the Panjabis: even though they had a rich supply of literature, they did not possess a script and they had already adopted Urdu - a language with many similarities to their own - into their education system during the British period. Besides this, they were to benefit politically, economically and otherwise by accepting Urdu.²³ Unlike their aforementioned neighbours, the Pashtoons (Pathans) on the other hand were reluctant to accept Urdu becoming the official language.²⁴

As regards Sindh, a linguistic case of a different nature emerges. During the British period (1843-1947) Sindhi existed as the official language of Sindh province with all levels of education conducted in it. However, post-independence saw the implementation of Urdu as the official language. Sindhi and Urdu both belong to the Indo-Aryan family of world languages. Geographically Urdu can be distinguished as central and Sindhi as a north western member of this group. Linguistically, they differ from each other in many respects:

The Sindhi alphabet has 52 letters while Urdu has 44. Within its alphabet Sindhi incorporates all phonemes of Urdu. However this is not the case for Urdu as a number of sounds have developed in Sindhi which are not found in this language. Most noticeable among these are the implosive b, j, g, d and the nasals n, n and j.

²² Saeed 1967, p. 186.

²³ Cf. Kazi 1987.

²⁴ Gupta 1969.

The Sindhi language acquired its own peculiar features from Prakrit languages whereas Urdu developed as a *lingua franca* in the polyglot environment of central India. Seen from this perspective, in Urdu not a single sentence can be quoted which does not include forms derived from two or more languages, especially from Arabic, Persian, or Sanskrit or one of the several languages of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent such as Balouchi, Punjabi, and Pushto.

Finally, it is a Sindhi peculiarity that all words must end in a vowel - short, long or nasalised; no word can be found which ends in a consonant. Urdu does not share this peculiarity and indeed many words have consonantal endings.

When the Sindhis, who had treated the immigrants with hospitality, saw that they had to adopt a foreign language which the immigrants brought, this upset the equilibrium of their society. The adoption of Urdu as the official language in place of the indigenous language would result; it was feared, in the Urdu speaking immigrants gaining the same advantages in industry, politics and the Civil Service as English brought to Englishmen or the English educated.

Looking towards the consequences which such a decision would lead to, and seeing how this would limit their overall opportunities, the Sindhis now became conscious of the validity of their own language. Intellectuals, writers, teachers, students and politicians through their books, pamphlets, and the medium of the Sindhi press began to air their views for the rightful status of the Sindhi language. Urdu speaking immigrants, however, through the Urdu press and some sections of the bureaucracy countered such demands and in this way the gap between the indigenous people and immigrants, instead of being bridged by the process of assimilation which had happened in the case of previous foreigners (the Aryans, Arabs, Pathans, Mirzas, Moghuls, Panjabis and the Baluchis), was widened.

In the case of Sindhi speakers who migrated to India we can observe that in the absence of a Sindhi speaking region in the country all Sindhi immigrants had to settle in areas where other Indian languages were spoken as regional languages. Following this the Sindhi immigrants were faced with the new linguistic context of having to acquire a language other than their own. They soon discovered that their own language could not serve their needs in the new socio-economic context. Over the past forty five years the language has become highly acculturated to other languages and narrow in its function having lost its acceptability as a norm for group identity.²⁵

The consequences of this mean that today although Sindhi is the mother tongue of about 2.5 million people it is not spoken in any single geographical region of India. Indian Sindhi gives us an instance of a fully developed language decaying as a result

²⁵ Daswani 1989.

of the competitive pressures of the economically more dominant languages. Nonviability has determined its decay and disuse.²⁶

With the creation of Pakistan, the capital of Sindh, Karachi, was named as the capital city and because of its key position and the mass of employment opportunities which it offered, huge number of people from other areas of Pakistan, all with different languages, moved there. These migrants used Urdu for their business and spoke their native languages at home whilst the Sindhis still retained their mother tongue. A similar situation developed in Hyderabad although on a lower level. The rest of the area remained monolingual.

Prior to the 'One Unit' period it was decided that from standard three (up to the age of eight years) children would study Urdu as a compulsory subject whilst Urdu speaking pupils would study Sindhi as well as their mother tongue. Thus a decision was never implemented, however, and after the imposition of the 'One Unit' (1955) Sindhi departed from the curriculum and Sindhi students were forced to study Urdu. One year after martial law was imposed in 1958 a national education commission was established for the general advancement of the education system and to consider the medium of education.

It suggested:

«The experience of other countries shows that where there are many languages, the best results could not be obtained. When the education in the mother tongue will be given up to fifth standard [...] but after standard five (up to the age of ten years) the national language would be adopted as the medium of teaching and the mother tongue will stop forthwith. We strongly recommend the above formula».²⁷

These recommendations were very much at odds with those put forward by UNESCO in 1951:

«[...] for these reasons it is important that every effort should be made to provide education in the mother tongue [...] On education grounds we recommend that the use of the mother tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible».²⁸

Under the 'One Unit' period efforts had been made to unite the society as a nation - unification, it was thought, would be achieved through the elevation to national status of a single language and a homogenous culture. But these attempts were at the vast expense of those other cultures existing in the various provinces of Pakistan. It has been argued that language and culture share a symbolic relationship: preservation of language is integral to the preservation of culture. That is why linguistic and cultural homogeneity, instead of creating an overall united society, seems to have the

²⁶ For fuller discussion on this matter refer to Khubchandani 1963; Daswani 1989 and Bughio 1991.

²⁷ National Education Commission's Report 1959.

²⁸ Quoted in Fishman 1968.

reverse effect. Crocombe²⁹ encapsulates this view:

«[...] cultural uniformity is not likely to bring peace; it is much more likely to bring totalitarianism. A unitary system is easier for a privileged few to dominate. Cultural diversity is one of the world's potential sources of both sanity and fulfilment.»

Many Sindhis were of this view, that linguistic and cultural uniformity helped to cushion the path of “alien politicians and advertisers to penetrate other societies”³⁰ and thus add cement to the establishment of an elitist group. These effects were felt to be transparently evident, especially in Sindh, and particularly when it was seen how the efforts taken to introduce Urdu as a national language of Pakistan were oriented towards the formation of a political elite. For example Shah³¹ writes:

«Power went to those who had still not developed affinity to its soil and its people and were in the utter seriousness and hurry to establish their sociopolitical and economic hegemony.»

Das Gupta³² also exposed what he saw as the inadequacies of the government language policies. He discerned that during the phase leading up to Pakistan's inception the leaders' distinctions between the groupings of 'common', 'national' and 'official' language were lacking. Instead, as Gupta remarked, they were inclined to use these as interchangeable categories, and did not exercise the necessary caution in using them. An 'official' language indicates an acceptable language of administration and means of communication between the governing and governed body. A broader interpretation should be given to the idea of a 'common' language which should rank as an overall intelligible code throughout the nation - and a national language should not necessarily be a common language, indeed more than one national language may exist side by side in a multilingual society (Switzerland, for example, has three national languages). The distinctive stamp of a 'national' language lies in its existence as the natural speech of a key linguistic group whose individual members regard the language with deep rooted affection. These distinctions granted, it is possible to imagine a society where the official language may not be a common language just as several national languages can arise and be permitted without the need to make all these national languages official languages.

For the duration of the 'One Unit' (1955-69) and 'Martial Law' period (1958-70) the situation was seen to deteriorate. Urdu continued being promoted and enjoyed high status through its various outlets, presenting for all those who adopted it the chance to gain prosperity. Meanwhile Sindhis continued to campaign for their language. In 1969 the 'One Unit' period came to an end with all the provinces of Pakistan getting

²⁹ Crocombe 1983.

³⁰ Trudgill 1991.

³¹ Shah 1978.

³² Gupta 1969.

recognition in their own right.

A few months after this in 1970 a resolution was passed by the Syndicate of the University of Sindh making Sindhi the official language of Sindh University, a course soon followed by the secondary and intermediate board of education in Hyderabad. Following this several other autonomous and semi governmental departments made Sindhi their language of correspondence. In reaction to this the Urdu speaking immigrants indulged in mass protest and through the Urdu media continued with their campaign.

In the Constitution of 1973, Urdu was made the sole national language of Pakistan while English held official status until measures were taken to replace it by Urdu:

«The National language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day».³³

Subject to clause (1), the English language may be used for official purposes until Urdu (article 251, clause 2). Make arrangements for its replacement.

Additionally, the provincial assemblies were authorised to implement measures for the teaching and promotion of provincial languages besides the national language:

«Without prejudice to the status of the national language, a Provincial Assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language».³⁴

Following this, the Sindh Provincial Assembly, looking at Sindhi's history and modern educational importance and being pressurized by the majority of Sindhis' demands that Sindhi be given the proper recognition it deserved, passed a bill with an overwhelming majority making Sindhi an official language of Sindh province. The bill was strongly opposed by the Urdu speaking population and matters soon got out of hand when agitation escalated into full scale riots. The authorities found it increasingly difficult to quell the riots and in an attempt to alleviate the violence, the central government called intellectuals from both sides to discuss the matter and to find some solution which would be acceptable to both groups. The issue was finally shelved and was not resolved to the satisfaction of either Sindhi speakers or the immigrants.³⁵ The Sindhis were unhappy but because orders came from the elected government there was little they could do to resist except by publicizing their antagonism through the Sindhi newspapers and magazines.

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³³ Constitution 1973, article 251, clause 1.

³⁴ Article 251, clause 3.

³⁵ La Porte 1975, p. 112.

the Sindhi newspapers and magazines.

Sindhi classes began for non-Sindhi speaking children whilst the Sindhi children continued to learn Urdu with the result that almost all educated people and those from urban areas became bi-lingual. This education system

created a friendly environment between the Sindhis and the Urdu speaking population. A mass production of progressive Sindhi literary magazines was begun promoting Sindh's culture and enriching its language. This promotion of Sindhi language and culture did not tally with the conservative views of some sectors of the Urdu press which alleged that such magazines were projecting anti-social behaviour. As a consequence, on 7th May 1975 the then Chief Minister of Sindh placed a ban on eleven magazines and their past publications.

Many Sindhis believe that the medium of education in the major urban areas of Sindh during the Martial Law period (1977-1988) and the present day has not been given sufficient attention. The closure of Sindhi medium schools in urban areas has continued. Not much has been done to promote the Sindhi language in accord with its status as a provincial language and the amount of radio and television coverage is not fully representative of the language considering that 53% of the population of Sindh speak the language as their mother tongue.

To get education as a right in their mother tongue children have arranged organizations and sizeable demonstrations, and in order to get the attention of the government authorities writers, teachers, students and educationists have produced numerous booklets, leaflets, pamphlets, press statements, seminars and conferences. Overlooking the diachronic sociolinguistic situations in Sindh we have seen that under different social conditions and norms concerning the use of language in society can in fact undergo drastic change.

We have seen the impact which the Arab conquest had on the Sindhi language. The British period in Sindh had further major implications for the organization of the Sindhi speech communities, not least because English now entered into it.

Finally, the most recent and major social transitional event, the inception of Pakistan, is seen to have had the most fundamental impact on the linguistic behaviour of the Sindhi speech community. In considering this social change we will confine our attention primarily to language contact, a major topic of institutional linguistics playing

LANGUAGE	1941	1951	1981
Sindhi	82%	73.8%	52.40%
Urdu	--	9.7%	22.54%
Others	18%	16.5%	24.96%

3. Languages spoken as mother tongue by the percentage of total population in Sindh.

and active role in linguistic situation of Sindh.

As Barbour and Stevenson³⁶ note:

«The effect on a linguistic community of a change in its ethnic/linguistic composition whether through the arrival of speakers of another language in a multilingual community or the departure of a substantial proportion of a bilingual one is often direct and observable».

Although the Sindhi speech community was primarily homogenous when its ethnic and linguistic community was shuffled about at the time of partition, the effects were no less 'direct' and 'observable'. The 1941 Census of India records about 82% of the total population of Sindh speaking Sindhi as their mother tongue. Thirty four years after the emergence of Pakistan in 1981 the Census of Pakistan records 52% of the total population of Sindh speaking Sindhi in their household.³⁷

In a language contact situation that which migration brings we would normally assume that most social pressure would come from the host community on to the immigrants, forcing them to adopt to a new linguistic situation. Such, however, was not the case in the language contact situation between Sindhi and Urdu which emerged as a result of partition. In fact, quite the reverse is the case. As we have seen, the Urdu speakers from India came under no pressure to learn the language of their host community since it was decided that their own language would be implemented as the sole national language of the new country where their host communities resided. So this meant that the Sindhi speech community had to learn Urdu, a categorical imperative for them if they wished to enter into wider social relations with the community.

During the course of years since Urdu was adopted as the sole national language of Pakistan the extent and degree of bilingualism has increased rapidly in Sindh, with exposure to Urdu involving most sections of the speech community. Suffice it to say, today in the urban areas of Sindh, virtually every one has a command of Urdu. Linguistic usage in Sindh reflects this process. In urban areas which have had the most contact with other speech communities there is the greatest use of Urdu. In the more rural areas, which historically have had little contact with Urdu, Sindhi is the language most generally used. Here there is not such compartmentalization or complementation in the language use which may characterize various domains in urban areas where Sindhi can be restricted to the family circle and peer groups with Urdu being used in the public domain. However, increasing contact with Urdu in rural areas may be altering this.

During this discussion we have seen that over the centuries Sindhi has absorbed words, words terms and ideas from many people as a result of the social changes

³⁶ Barbour, Stevenson 1990, p. 222.

³⁷ In this census it was decided not to ask questions about mother tongue. Cf. CRSP 1981.

which have taken place. Nowadays among the important changes are urbanization and increased educational and social opportunities for segments of the population who had previously been denied such access. Also, the spread of technology and the electronic media in English and Urdu in addition to increased geographical mobility has meant that certain kinds of changes in speech communities – urban and rural – and hence in patterns of sociolinguistic variation are most likely to emerge.

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