



Linguistic Competencies of School Boys Living in Railway Colony, Dera Ghazi Khan: a Case Study in Sociolinguistics

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Abstract

Sociolinguistic competence is an essential part of communicative competence due of course to its inclusion in learning a new language. It also tells while living in a society, how we understand and learn a language correctly and properly. It is maintained that most of the learners are unable to develop socio-linguistic as well as grammatical knowledge of the language that they learn in daily life. The current study was set to explore and find the development of sociolinguistic competencies. It is also an admitted fact that teenagers learn language faster as compared with those in advanced age. In this study, the targeted language is Sindhi, and the area selected is Railway Colony D. G. Khan where a variety of inhabitants living in this colony come from diverse places of Pakistan. The research tried to explore how a language works if it exists all around in a mixed cultural society, even if it is not obligatory. Enquiring the fact that a few languages are mutually unintelligible when commonly spoken, and a dialect may be standardized if it is used by the upper class, political leaders, and in literature, especially during informal chatting, the study explored how a dominant language influences the lexical choices of a speech community. The Sindhi language being spoken by a dominating number of populations in a city of the Punjab has been viewed in the given perspective. This study aimed at gauging the influences and inter-textual connections of the Sindhi language on non-native speakers of the Sindhi language since they have been growing up together and learning this language effortlessly due to great exposure to this language. So, the situation with reference to multilingualism creates a special case of study, a situation where a regional language plays a vital role in daily communication without state patronage. Employing an ethnographic research approach, the study concludes that a language having vaster socio-economic influence becomes the choice of people where a language of power is spoken.

Introduction

The role and impact of a mixed cultural territory at Dera Ghazi Khan has been observed and described in this article. Dera Ghazi Khan is a city of the province of Punjab, (Pakistan). The study is a real-life situation of public-school students studying in various schools, living in the same area. A very common factor of the population is that all are railway employees and their children studying and playing together throughout the day. Eventually, the majority of population there belongs to Sindh and frequently speaks the Sindhi language, and the target population is enjoying neighborhood and has frequent exposure to the Sindhi language all the time effortlessly due to frequent exposure of the language both at school and outside.

Change is a Color of life

Change is a color of life; It is true because everybody needs a change in whatever he is doing in daily routine. All the humans want changes in life. Monotonous life just makes us feel bored. It is good to listen to new words and a change for fun or educational purposes. So, it is not necessary that we should go for big changes in our daily life language every day. We may go for little changes that should be pretty affordable. Whatever the population do to have a change but one thing is important that these changes have put a few changes in the language of children, in any way

if neighbors have been communicating and exchanging lingua franca, cultural dresses and their pride dishes. In this way, house hold development in a new mixture of varieties of foods, spices, recipes, dress, etc. in the area under discussion. The respondents gradually started calling Sindhi names of the accessories at their homes i.e. koonda, durrie, maani etc. which they listened from Sindhi neighbors.

Continuous Transformation of Society

It is an admitted fact that the living societies have a quality of transformation and change/changes in the daily life and behavior of the livings. Now the question is, how language shaped a mixed cultural society, especially in this railway colony.

Language and culture are two factors that inextricably develop and grow through each other. So their relationship with each other is unavoidable. In the same line, the current study has been fixed ‘a sociolinguistic study of linguistic competencies of learners living in the same area’. Their mutual relationship in a strong belief was closely woven but this culture uses these norms as a source of enjoyment, so the element of learning has been a continuous journey in that socio-linguistics environment. Although, all the relations and contacts are temporary in nature as the inhabitants shifting from one city to other is on regular basis in the railway colony but leave a deep effect on others especially at the teenagers. Moreover, it was also observed that the effect of the Sindhi words learnt by the Punjabi learners was long lasting.

During this study, it was also noticed that the area under discussion was responding to the challenges of environment, natural and tailor-made living style of living hood. The population was found influenced of this great transformation in progress. The old system of classification and stratification of society as a whole was also changing gradually and slowly but undeniably.

The Objectives.

The study seeks:

1. To explore the impact of linguistic competencies of school boys living in the same area i.e. Railway Colony at Dera Ghazi Khan.
2. To analyze the ratio of learning Sindhi language of non-Sindhi respondents.
3. To measure the speed of learning new Sindhi words which are easy to pronounce and understand.

Research Questions

The study seeks to explore the answers to the following questions:

1. How does mixed cultural society play a significant role in developing the linguistic competence of non-native speakers?
2. To what extent does a mixed cultural society help learners learn a non-native language rapidly and effortlessly from continual exposure?
3. How can such a situation be employed in teaching other non-native languages in classroom settings in our country?

Literature Review

A lot of research and work on the issue ‘a sociolinguistic study of linguistic competency namely ‘speaking’, of School Boys Living in Same Area’ has been done by linguists. Therefore, a few of them have been reviewed below.

This brings us to an interesting position raised by Emmitt and Pollock (1997), who argue that even though people are raised under the same behavioral background or cultural situation but speak various languages, their world view may be very dissimilar. As Sapir-Whorf (2019) argues, different thoughts are brought about by the use of different forms of language. Hantrais (1989) first proposes that culture is the beliefs and practices governing the life of a society for which a particular language is the vehicle of expression.

However, a person is constrained by the language they use to communicate their thoughts. People who speak different languages and belong to the same culture will thus have diverse perspectives on the world since different languages will impose distinct limits. Nevertheless, language has a strong cultural foundation and transmits culture from one generation to the next through mirroring it (Emmitt & Pollock 1997). This illustrates how learning a new language also entails learning a new culture. Instructors of a language are therefore also instructors of culture.

This section examines the writings of several authors on languages and cultures. It is possible to identify important characteristics in the interaction between language and culture that can facilitate comprehension and provide clues about how this comprehension might be realized and encouraged in the setting of a foreign language classroom. Therefore, it is obvious that understanding the culture that produced and to which language refers is necessary for understanding language, given that language occurs within and is a part of a cultural context and that the lexical items and cognitive structures informing those items are all culturally bound (Cain, 2000, p. 5). It is evident that knowledge of the culture that gave rise to the language and to which it eludes is necessary for comprehension.

According to Zolyan (2011), "the language through culture and culture through the language" offer fresh perspectives on contemporary social processes, the significance of universal ideals in human civilization, and the diversity of national and local cultures. "The value of culture and language in education cannot be understated. We have always been able to understand diverse civilizations through language (Louie, 1998, p. 8). For a considerable time, linguists and anthropologists have acknowledged that the usage and structures of a particular language mirror the cultural principles of the community in which it is spoken. According to Krasner (1999, p. 13), linguistic proficiency is insufficient for language learners to be considered competent in that language.

Liddicoat (2020) supports the above description: Learning a second language requires an understanding of the nature of the interaction between language and culture. It is untrue to say that meaning is conveyed solely by linguistic forms in everyday communication. Meaning is created and interpreted within a cultural framework; meaning is created by language in its cultural context. Language learners must interact with the ways that context influences what and how is communicated in the classroom. (Page 18 of Liddicoat, 2009).

Research Methodology

The current study is a case study that creates a situation where a regional language is playing a very important role in daily communication without any hold up of a language teacher. The main research tool is observation and informal interviews which were recorded and analyzed through the perspectives of cultural context. The survey about the cultural context of this case study was done about the population living in the Railway Colony, D. G. Khan and the data has been analyzed at the level of time and requirement.

Although, the issue is complex one yet of interest as these people have various attitudes, expressions, feelings and beliefs which are more visible on various special occasions. For a holistic view of the entire process, this research included observation and interviews with ten respondents to identify the direct and indirect impacts of change in the learning new Sindhi words. Linguistic competencies.....

In this study, ten (10) children were selected randomly, having different context of region, language and society. These respondents have been listening Sindhi language from their neighborhood. After some time, it was observed that respondents have learnt a few Sindhi words effortlessly and also speaking frequently. When the data was collected, it was noticed that within a week time the respondents learnt 20 Sindhi words and these 20 words may be extended to 2000 words with time which is not possible while writing current article.

Participants

- The entire sample was made from mixed cultural society.
- The data of this case study was collected from 10 respondents, randomly selected from nearby schools and populace of the railway colony.
- The age group of the respondents was 11-17 years. (n=10).
- The population giving them the new language i.e. Sindhi native Sindhi speakers (n=17).
- Only male participants were included to enhance the generalization of study results on particular male population.

Procedure

Researchers approached the different sitting areas of streets and playgrounds of railway colony DGK for data collection with an M Phil Scholar for help.

Evidence-Based Data Collection

During this study, the researcher stayed neutral and let his respondents share their narratives frequently. This strategy resulted a reliable data, resulted more conventional and useful.

Purpose for the Inclusion of a Research Partner

While morning and evening walk, the researcher collected data therefore, as per requirement, a research partner was included to observe and note down all the contents during discussion and interviews. This strategy was given a true picture gallery of the socio lingual situation of the population. Moreover, it also benefitted the article to compose the actual utterances and statements of the participants.

Double-up Strategy

For the rapid data collection, the researcher worked with one additional research partner while conducting and analyzing qualitative data as it is more beneficial and functional while conducting this focused group who worked as a silent observer in this group. Whereas the researcher was taking notes and comments, he saved it in sequence. This research partner was also focused on the conversations and navigated the interviews. While capturing participants' response, he started establishing themes in real-time, and got clear expectations prior to the interview recording and in writing.

Use of Demographic Information Sheet

A self-developed data sheet is the Demographic Information Sheet. It is made up of the participants' age, aptitude, family structure, education, status, and income. It is created by the researchers in accordance with the specifications of this study.

No	Name	Age	Education Level	Aptitude	Health	Educational Background	Family Structure	Social Status
1.	Riaz	12	7 th class	Average student	Good	Urdu Medium	Middle class	Normal
2.	Ali	15	9 th class	Exceptional student	Normal	Urdu Medium	Labor class	Poor
3.	Zia	11	6 th class	Below Average	Good	Urdu Medium	Middle class	Normal
4.	Zahid	15	9 th class	Average student	Good	English Medium	Rich class	Excellent
5.	Irtaza	13	8 th class	Average student	Good	Urdu Medium	Middle class	Normal
6.	Altaf	11	6 th class	Below Average	Good	English Medium	Middle class	Normal
7.	Faiz	14	8 th class	Average student	Good	English Medium	Poor class	Normal
8.	Abdul	12	7 th class	Average student	Excellent	Urdu Medium	Middle class	Normal
9.	Arif	16	9 th class	Average student	Good	Urdu Medium	Middle class	Normal
10.	Naeem	13	8 th class	Exceptional Student	Good	English Medium	Middle class	Normal

Sindhi word utterances frequently listened to and understood by the respondents:

1. Excuse me Sirmafi gurjay
2. MamaAmma/maa
3. Elder brother.....adda
4. Sister bhirrr/addi
5. Khala/Aunty etc.....maasi /Bouwaa
6. One.....Hikkroo
7. Ten.....daah
8. Hello..... aray
9. Mad.....churoo aahin
10. I'm alright.....maan tat aain han & maan theek aain han.

Listening Element

While sitting jointly and informally in pensive or vacant mood, these relations were seen losing their purity and uniqueness due to the opened flood gate of jointly woven society. Formalities were far away from these young folks, no body younger or elder, joking, kidding each other and learning new words unconsciously and effortlessly. Each and every one was directly or indirectly involved in these activities. No doubt, the parental control was always found enjoying playfully. As the researcher deeply observed respondents, being a part of this socio-linguistic society to know how to count up latest Sindhi words taken up by the learners. In this regard, a tailor made survey was applied during this research for a valid and reliable result.

Findings and Discussion

The researcher initiated discourse on general topic with the target population and the following sentences were found to be the common feature of their communicative competence. Interestingly, when the participants were made to realize the fact that certain lexical choices made by them were from the Sindhi language they did not feel any embarrassment rather maintained that they communicate through these lexical choices with a lot of ease and have no

communicative barriers while being in that locality. Some of the commonly used sentences have been provided as follows:-

1. **Mafi gurjay (excuse me Sir)**, When the children were asked about this word. They used it in different sentences and even explained the sindhi word without any effort.
2. **Mama, (Amma/maa)** it already very common and all using it all the time.
3. **Elder brother (adda)**. This word is easy to pronounce so all were using it and enjoying its pronunciation effortlessly.
4. **(Sister,bhirnrr/addi)**. The participants claimed that they use it and all family members understand and started calling elder sister 'addi'.
5. **(Khala/Aunty etc. maasi /Bouwaa)**. All the participants said that they are already familiar with this word and using it with ease.
6. **(One, Hikkroo)** this word was noticed in the playground by all the participants.
7. **Ten, daah**. This word was noticed in the playground by all the participants.
8. **Hello, aray**. This word was noticed in use by all the participants.
9. **Mad, churoo aahin**. When the children were asked about this word. They used it in different sentences and even explained the sindhi word without any effort.

10. **I'm alright, maan tat aain han & maan theek aain han**. they used this word in different sentences and even explained the sindhi word without any effort.

- a) The Sindhi language proficiency of respondents of this study has been observed and found to be growing gradually.
- b) It was also observed that Sindhi language proficiency got too much attention in the streets and playgrounds of Railway Colony D.G. Khan whenever all the communities were found together.
- c) The main rationale of this case study was observed that high-rank members of this society were Sindhi people and in majority.
- d) Learners put more effort in listening Sindhi words which they felt interesting and easy to pronounce.

It is understandable that a language is not just a combination of sentence structure, grammar, phonemes and morphemes. It is not to be learnt within a specific time period but gradually and with the pace of time. It is through language that culture transmits. It was also concluded that we cannot teach a language without teaching its culture and the situation all around.

Furthermore, it was also noticed and concluded that:

- No one can teach a language but the situation all around.
- Linguistic competencies of School Boys Living in the same area cannot be taken 100% from the classroom.
- We cannot manage a successful stage for the learning a language formally.
- This type of learning process may help the respondents to speak and understand but without a proper teacher or guide one can not learn correct grammar and civilized language.
- As both the languages have been knotted with each other it is concluded that Language is an essential component of each given civilization, reflecting its ideals and principles. Thus, it is impossible to teach and learn a language without also understanding about culture and spending time with the people of any target language.
- The predictive validity of this research is that the listening is the best way and more important is the situation around the respondents, the informal way of listening, in a free frame of mind and environment.
- It is an outstanding initiative to integrate cultural awareness into language learning while living together. But we can't apply this to each and every place of this type. Moreover, this is a case of an individual's observation and solo school of thought.
- The situation in other areas may be different from the area under reference but children learn fast and gradually understand another regional language. However, the encouraging thing is, mostly learners from underdeveloped places and remote areas learn a lot of positive things from the people of higher rank and spending most of the time together which may resulted as:
 - i. A positive competition developed among the students to learn more words of other regional language.
 - ii. Change in speaking style is also observed in the learners while Sociolinguistic Study of Linguistic Competencies of ESL Learners at Primary Level.
 - iii. Those living near were learning Sindhi language more rapidly as compared to the people living a bit away.
 - iv. Accent has been copied due to the situation all around.

- v. An urge for the understanding Sindhi language has been observed rapidly in the lower age.
- vi. National brotherhood nourishes if these types Of situations have been developed by the higher authorities.
- vii. Strong relationship and marriages also develop due to living together.

Conclusion

It is concluded that a language is learnt by listening and situation all around along with a dominating population. It looks much better to bifurcate the conclusion with the following points.

- What can be done?
- Speaking and learning a language is linked with higher expectations.

Speaking and learning languages is linked with opportunity and situation all around. The researcher suggests that overall; respondents living in a mixed cultural society have more chances to learn a variety of languages around them as compared with those monolingual and living in the same language territory. In addition, learners who are learning at least one new language at school have higher career and educational expectations than students who are not living in this type of situation. These prototype livings are maintained even after their educational career and the socio-linguistics and socio-economic characteristics that are known to most affect the development of expectations. Based on the data mentioned above, it is not feasible to categorize them into groups. Now the question is does speaking and learning new and especially foreign languages lead to opportunity and a higher level of learning? Or is it that ambitious students with higher expectations tend to learn more languages? The data collected from the interviews suggests it works in both ways.

If foreign languages are in demand, learning will be rapid. According to the information gathered from the interviews, students who plan to work or study abroad perceive foreign languages as necessary abilities and believe they can present them with better long-term chances. However, students don't usually think of languages as being beneficial for their studies and careers, especially if they plan to work in their nation or industry. Studies indicate that educational institutions have the power to influence students' expectations (Archer, DeWitt, and Wong, 2014[13]; Fisher, 2018[14]).

However, it appears from the interviews that parents, not teachers, are the primary educators regarding the value of foreign languages for pupils. Schools should be doing more to assist students in realizing the importance of foreign languages in both the domestic and global labor markets and why they are valuable skills to have. This is especially important for underprivileged kids, whose parents might not have the means to provide them with advice.

Teenager learners have been observed to learn rapidly if they have been helped at their schools. Even if they are not fluent in the language, students who understand the value of learning a foreign language for employment can still pursue jobs that demand language proficiency. Motivated 15-year-old pupils who recognize the significance of foreign languages can make use of the chances available to them by learning foreign languages, as most educational systems allow students to study them. However, if children learn the value of foreign languages later in life, they may encounter greater obstacles when trying to access chances to advance their language proficiency and will have less time to acquire these abilities before entering the workforce.. According to information gleaned from the interviews, students who consider learning a foreign language as a valuable advantage for their future careers may put in more effort to hone their abilities and pick up new languages, actively pursuing their academic and professional objectives. A number of the students who participated in the interview expressed interest in developing their foreign language proficiency outside of English, which they currently study and perceive as a fundamental ability. When there are possibilities outside of school, they seek them out or make the most of the ones that are provided to them. In order to ensure that foreign language proficiency and the opportunities it can provide for future work and study are not constrained by the resources of either the students or the schools, educational systems should offer equal opportunities for all students to learn foreign languages, both inside and outside of the national curriculum.

It is an admitted fact that learning a new language is related to more if learnt at school with proper guidance. It is unclear whether studying a language encourages children to set higher goals for themselves or if students who want to pursue certain careers or finish secondary school also take foreign language courses in school. It may be worthwhile to look into the possible advantages of learning a foreign language, how these advantages differ for kids from diverse backgrounds, and the role that schools can play in this area, even though further research is necessary. Addressing the vicious cycle of students' backgrounds, attitudes, behaviors, and expectations as well as the rate at which they pick up new words and short phrases that are simple to say, pronounce, and comprehend, could address the issue of equity. It was also observed that the development of sociolinguistic rules can guide learners in the same environment.

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