

Perceptions of Siraiki Ethnolinguistic Community regarding Ethnolinguistic Vitality of Siraiki Language in Comparison with Dominant Languages in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The current study aims at investigating the perceptions of Siraiki ethnolinguistic community regarding the ethnolinguistic vitality of Siraiki language in comparison with dominant languages like Urdu and Punjabi in Pakistan. Ethnolinguistic vitality has emerged as a prominent area of research in sociolinguistics and scholars cite the effect of globalization and trending mobilities as major reasons for its popularity. The model of ethnolinguistic vitality was presented by Bourhis, Giles and Taylor (1981) to study the ethnolinguistic vitality of ethnic minority languages. The current research is quantitative in nature in which questionnaire adapted from Bourhis, Giles and Taylor (1981) has been used as a research instrument to collect data. The data has been collected from a sample of 392 Siraiki native speakers to explore the ethnolinguistic vitality of Siraiki language. The findings revealed that the ethnolinguistic vitality of Urdu language was higher on the dimension of status, support, general vitality and one aspect of demographic strength, however, on the other aspect of demographic strength, the ethnolinguistic vitality of Punjabi language was found higher. Thus, it could be concluded that the Siraiki ethnolinguistic community perceived that the ethnolinguistic vitality of Siraiki was low and there was need to take radical steps to improve the scenario of Siraiki ethnolinguistic community.

Key Words: Ethnolinguistic Vitality, Status, Support, Dominant language

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INTRODUCTION

The survival of a language depends on the extent to which the members of that linguistic community use that language or what they think about the language (O'Rourke, 2005). There is a general trend that the language whose speakers are politically and socially influential, their language spreads while the language of underprivileged and deprived people start to fail as the speakers start shifting the language. Language shift is a process that automatically leads the non-dominant or under privileged languages to the point of extinction. Crystal (2003) observes that two languages die every month and the total number of languages in the world is estimated to be 7000 so the situation is quite alarming. In this perspective, Tsunoda (2017) identified the factors that result in language shift which are the socio-economic condition of the speakers, their education, religious of other affiliations, the marriage practices and the settlement patterns.

With reference to Pakistan, it is a multilingual country with a rich linguistic landscape of 73 languages operative in the country. The national language Urdu has occupied the central power (Rahman, 2011) with the provincial languages i.e. Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashto and Balochi used majorly in the respective provinces and other indigenous languages finding limited use in the country. Besides Punjabi, Pashto and Sindhi, Siraiki is amongst the four languages of the country with more than 10 percent native speakers (Division of Statistics, 2001). The critics argue that the country has not provided a conducive environment for the development of indigenous languages (Rahman, 2011). The language policies at the national level have patronized Urdu and English at the cost of indigenous languages. This has resulted in three layered formation of language attitude; highly positive attitude towards English, positive attitude towards Urdu and negative attitude towards indigenous languages (Abbas & Iqbal, 2018) and the similar consequent ethnolinguistic vitality.

With regards to Siraiki ethnolinguistic, there is dearth of studies that focus on the linguistic conditions of this community and the language. It was once considered even a dialect of Punjabi language (Shackle, 1976), spoken widely in the south Punjab province and in some of the northern parts of the Sindh province. The period of 1970s is considered the renaissance for Siraiki language and the time when it was recognized as a language (Mughal, 2004; Jumani et al, 2011). During this time, the Siraiki community started working on their language after its recognition as an independent language in Pakistan, (Roofi & Alqama, 2013). The Census of 1981 for the first time included Siraiki language as a separate entry and the statistics showed that the Siraiki native community constituted 9.83% of the total population of the country and this percentage went up to 10.53% in the 1998 Census. In the Census of 2017 / 2018, it is reported to have increased even more though the census report has not been published yet. The speakers of Siraiki language have been demanding a separate province out of political, economic and linguistic sense of deprivation (Asif, 2005; Roofi & Alqama, 2013).

In such a situation where the population is on increase while theoretically, it is also hypothesized that under pressing conditions, the speakers of a language may undergo language shift, it will be interesting to explore the ethnolinguistic vitality of Siraiki language in comparison with dominant languages of the region as perceived by Siraiki native speakers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to explore the linguistic vitality of any language, the sociolinguistic theory of ethnolinguistic vitality seems to be an appropriate solution. The research in the area of ethnolinguistic vitality in the recent years has grown at a rapid pace and has informed enormously the language contact situations. Yagmur and Ehala (2011) emphasize that the rate of publications about ethnolinguistic vitality has been growing rapidly from past fifteen years (20 in 1995 to 144 in 2009) and ever since then. One of the major reasons of its popularity is the effect of globalization on ethnicity and linguistic communities. The trending mobility for better life opportunities has caused many unprotected ethnolinguistic groups to be under the attack of dominant culture and language.

The concept of ethnolinguistic vitality was first introduced by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) who define that ethnolinguistic vitality is something that makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations. They also presented the model to study about vitality of ethnic minority language which has now been expanded and made more inclusive in order to investigate the input of socio-cultural factors in second language learning, language shift or death and cross cultural communication. Yagmur and Ehala (2011) describe that this concept also relates to transmission of linguistic and cultural practices from one generation to the next and is considered an inter disciplinarily approach drawing on the disciplines of sociolinguistics, psychology, sociology as well as political science.

A multitude of research available in the area (Kasatkina, 2011; Wang & Ching, 2011; Hudyma, 2012) makes it a comprehensive framework in order to understand the issues of language shift (Yagmur & Ehala, 2011). According to this concept, every ethnolinguistic group possesses a certain level of language vitality. There are linguistic groups that have high vitality and there are groups that have low vitality. There are two possibilities for the groups with low ethnolinguistic vitality; either to undergo linguistic isolation or assimilation (Yagmur, 1997). The groups with high vitality have the capacity to secure their interest by taking collective action while the groups with low vitality go through the process of assimilation (Yagmur & Ehala, 2011). The low vitality groups cease their existence as collective groups and are prone to assimilate with high vitality groups. It is often seen that the groups with low ethnolinguistic vitality are minority language groups in most cases (Yagmur, 1997, Ehala, 2010).

The problem is that the minority language communities are not satisfied with their position in the community and their social identity. As a result, they try to gain positive social identity by trying to change their condition (Yagmur, 1997). This process leads to the process of assimilation either imposed by a majority group or self-attributed. There is also a possibility that a minority ethnolinguistic group finds some strategy to assert their survival but only if the members have strong interconnection within the group. Even in such a case, the dominant group plays a decisive role as they have the potential to manipulate the information (Yagmur, 1997). The most important components in the maintenance of ethnolinguistic vitality is the institutional support which may come from education sector, culture and religion or the media as the pillar of the society (McCombs, 2018).

The original model of ethnolinguistic vitality propounded by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) presents ethnolinguistic vitality in terms of status, demographics and institutional support. Later on in 1981, they added the concept of subjective ethnolinguistic vitality to make the model more comprehensive. Thus, the refined model of ethnolinguistic vitality comprised objective ethnolinguistic vitality and subjective ethnolinguistic vitality. The objective ethnolinguistic vitality consisted of primarily three components; the first is status (economic status, social status, socio-historical status and language status) the second is demographic (sheer number of group members and their distribution throughout territory) and the third is institutional support (the extent to which a language group receives formal and informal representation in various activities such as mass media, education, government services, industry, religion and culture). This is complemented with the beliefs on ethnolinguistic vitality which is called subjective ethnolinguistic vitality. Yagmur and Ehala (2011) also describe that the concept of ethno-linguistic vitality is composed of objective and subjective vitality. The objective vitality is comprised of factors like demographics, institutional support and status while the subjective vitality is represented in the subjective perceptions of the groups regarding the objective vitality. Based on the concept of subjective ethnolinguistic vitality in relation to objective vitality, Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal (1981) also developed subjective vitality questionnaire (SVQ). The purpose of the questionnaire was to evaluate how ethnolinguistic group members perceived their group in a comparison with other groups (Yagmur, 1997).

There is a seven-set criterion for survival of minority language complementary to ones highlighted within the theory of ethnolinguistic vitality in order to make a language sustain in the society as cited in Tsunoda (2017). The first one says that objective demographic prerequisite should be in the fixed place i.e. the number of people who are using that language must be large just for supply of media to get evolved. Secondly, demographic base should be in such a form that it acts like huge support for the media in the language that is considered as a minority language. Thirdly, the institutional support factors must be proper and enough in which the regional power with the relation of government plays a vital role. In addition, the institutional conditions should be fulfilled and for that purpose, the political culture plays role. Moreover, some factors like ‘international trends’ also have an impact so minority language is put to practice for political purposes at national or even international level. Lastly, some other subjective factors like ‘symbolic status of minority language’ are also very important as explained by ethnolinguistic theory.

The theory of ethnolinguistic vitality has been applied in many scenarios across the globe; Yagmur (2009) used the theory ethnolinguistic vitality to conduct research on Dutch speakers and the Turkish immigrants in Netherlands. Both the groups agreed that vitality of Dutch language is more than Turkish language because the later language lacks institutional structures. Kasatkina (2011) also conducted a study on language maintenance and the shift with reference to the theory of ethnolinguistic vitality. The participants were Russian immigrants from former Soviet Union. She examined the role of external factors that affect ‘language-based choice’ that was made by members within a family of those Russian immigrants. The findings of the research suggested that the strongest effects are related to linguistic isolation and the number of generations living within the same household, both of which tend to be positively associated with multilingualism. In Malaysian context, Wang and Ching (2011) explored hierarchical order of the factors that are responsible for language shift and language vitality. This research showed ongoing process regarding language shift among numerous dialect groups that are part of community of Malaysian

–Chinese. Similarly Hudyma (2012) conducted a study on the language shift and maintenance as case study of Ukrainian in Saskatchewan. This showed some of the certain socio-cultural factors in correlation with frequency of Ukrainian language usage and the proficiency and other patterns involved in the use of language in Ukrainian family. Ethnic group members also play their role in decreasing or increasing vitality of own groups or the other groups in a setting.

There have been two studies conducted on Pakistani languages by using the theoretical framework of ethnolinguistic vitality (David, Ali, & Baloch, 2017; Zaidi, 2016). The study on the Sindhi language (David, Ali, & Baloch, 2017) reveals that the Sindhi ethnolinguistic community has maintained its language in a convincing way as they see sentimental affiliation between language and cultural identity. This study by David, Ali and Baloch (2017) assert that the Sindhi ethnolinguistic group has more ethnolinguistic vitality than any other ethnolinguistic group. The study on ethnolinguistic vitality of Punjabi language was conducted by Zaidi (2016). Using census and descriptive data, the study revealed that the Punjabi language has low ethnolinguistic vitality. It has little institutional support and is also not implemented in educational sector. The research also concludes that despite being the language most spoken in the country, Punjabi is losing its ethnolinguistic vitality because its speakers do not hold positive attitude towards their language.

The current research will be using this theory to establish the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Siraiki ethnolinguistic vitality. This theory explains how an ethnolinguistic group evaluates their satisfaction with the current position of their group as an ethnic as well as linguistic group. The use of ethnolinguistic vitality theory strengthens the impact of the current research as it focuses on the ability of a group to maintain and protect its existence as a collective entity with a distinct identity and language.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is quantitative in nature and the sample has been selected from Siraiki ethnolinguistic community with the inclusion criteria of having Siraiki as native language. In order to explore the ethnolinguistic vitality, the questionnaire was adapted from Bourhis, Giles and Taylor (1981) as it has been widely used across the globe. The questionnaire comprised of 22 items focused on the dimensions of demographic strength inverse (3 statements), demographic strength direct (2 statements), support (6 statements), status (7 statements) and general vitality (4 statements). The questionnaire was validated by using expert opinion and pilot testing. The experts commented on the content and format of the questionnaire which led to minor changes in the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire through the pilot study was assessed before conducting the main study and was found to be strong (0.877). For the main study, the data has been collected from a sample of 392 Siraiki native speakers enrolled in four universities in order to explore the ethnolinguistic vitality of Siraiki language. The profile of the respondents has been presented in table 1 given below:

Table 1:

Profile of the Respondents

Gender	Male N(%)		Female N(%)					
	222 (56.6)		170 (43.4)					
University	*ISP N(%)	Comsats Vehari N(%)		**IUB N(%)		***BZU N(%)		
	78 (19.90)	132 (33.67)		128 (32.65)		54 (13.78)		
Department	*Ling N(%)	Mass Media N(%)	English N(%)	**Pol Sciences N(%)	***IT N(%)	Engineering N(%)	****Business Mgt N(%)	Siraiki N(%)
	47(12.0)	36(9.2)	57(14.5)	53(13.5)	64(16.3)	42(10.7)	61(15.6)	32(8.2)

University: *Institute of South Punjab, **Islamia University Bahawalpur, *** Baha ud Din Zakariya University

Department: *Linguistics, **Political Sciences, ***Information Technology, **** Business Management

The table shows that majority of the Siraiki native speakers who participated in the current study were male with 56.6 percent (222 out of 392) representation while 43.4 percent (170 out of 392) respondents were female respondents. The data was collected from four universities and a total number of 8 departments were involved in the process of data collection. The details of the respondents' profile in terms of their university and the degree program of their enrolment are presented in table 1 given above. In order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach alpha value for the questionnaire on each language separately as well as overall was calculated. The reliability of the questionnaire is presented in the table 2 below:

Table 2:

Reliability of the Questionnaire

Language	Siraiki	Urdu	Punjabi	Overall
Alpha Value	0.859	0.753	0.832	0.829
Items	22	22	22	

The reliability of the ethnolinguistic vitality was calculated by using Cronbach alpha. Table 2 shows that the overall alpha value was found to be 0.829 for the whole questionnaire while the alpha value for responses on each language was also within strong range of 0.753 and 0.859. The data collected for the current study has been analyzed by calculating mean score and applying paired sample t test. The mean score helped to identify which language possessed higher ethnolinguistic vitality while paired sample statistics revealed if there were any significant differences in the perceptions of Siraiki native speakers across three languages involved in the study.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The data for the current study was collected from a sample of 392 native speakers of Siraiki enrolled in four universities and Siraiki was their native language. Since the current study aims at exploring the perceptions of Siraiki native speakers regarding the ethnolinguistic vitality of Siraiki language in comparison with dominant languages like Urdu and Punjabi, the responses to each statement were required on all three languages. So, the respondents were advised to fill in their responses for each language separately on each statement in the questionnaire. The combination of descriptive and inferential statistics was applied to explain the scenario of ethnolinguistic vitality of Siraiki language as perceived by representative of Siraiki ethnolinguistic community.

The first dimension of the theoretical model of ethnolinguistic vitality was demographic strength and under this dimension, there were two aspects; the demographic strength inverse and the demographic strength direct. There were three statements included in the dimension of demographic strength (Inverse) which were inversely related to ethnolinguistic vitality. This meant that the higher the mean score on this dimension, the lower the ethnolinguistic vitality would be. There were two statements included in the dimension of demographic strength (Direct) which were directly related to the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality. Thus, the higher responses meant that the ethnolinguistic vitality was high for that language while lower responses on a language meant that the ethnolinguistic vitality of that language was low. The mean score on the items of all five statements related to the dimension of demographic strength, both inverse and direct, have been given in table 3 below:

Table 3:

Mean Score of the Statements on Demographic Strength

No	Statement	Siraiki	Punjabi	Urdu
9	How much of the following groups immigrate from their home town to big cities each year?	3.94	3.83	3.46
10	To what extent do the following marry only within their own groups?	4.24	3.80	3.42
13	How much of the following groups emigrate to other countries each year?	3.73	3.74	3.38
Demographic Strength (Inverse) Overall score		3.97	3.79	3.42
21	Estimate birth rates of the descent of the following groups in the region.	4.11	3.99	3.86
22	In all parts of Punjab Province, to what extent are they in the majority or minority?	3.95	4.34	3.68
Demographic Strength (Direct) Overall score		4.03	4.16	3.77

On the dimension of demographic strength for inverse statements, the overall mean score for the responses on Siraiki language were 3.97; the mean score for the responses on Punjabi language was 3.79 while the mean score for the responses on Urdu language was 3.42. With reference to all the statements individually as well, the pattern was similar with Siraiki as highest ranked, Punjabi second in the sequence while the minimum mean score was recorded for Urdu. Since these were inverse statements, so Urdu language possessed highest ethnolinguistic vitality while Siraiki possessed least ethnolinguistic vitality. On the statements directly related to demographic strength, the overall mean score was the highest for Punjabi, Siraiki was second while Urdu was ranked as third in terms of high mean score. With reference to individual items, the maximum mean score was recorded for Punjabi for one statement; for the other statement, the respondents favoured Siraiki language while Urdu was ranked as third in both the cases. Since these were direct statements, so Punjabi language possessed highest ethnolinguistic vitality; Siraiki was ranked second in terms of ethnolinguistic vitality while Urdu possessed least ethnolinguistic vitality on the aspect of the direct demographic strength.

Institutional support has been considered very important dimension of ethnolinguistic vitality by the researchers. There were six statements included in the dimension of institutional support and these aimed at assessing the support for each language ranging from its use in government services, mass media, schools, places of worships, cultural festivals to the political power held by each language group. The mean score for each statement as well as overall has been presented in table 4 below:

Table 4:

Mean Score of the Statements on Support

No	Statement	Siraiki	Punjabi	Urdu
3	How often are the following languages used in the government services (e.g., health clinics, social welfare, etc.)	2.95	3.02	4.49
6	How well represented are the following languages in the region mass media (e.g., TV, radio, newspapers)?	2.82	2.91	4.57
8	How much are the following languages taught in schools?	2.01	2.19	4.54
11	How much political power do the following groups have in the region?	3.82	3.63	3.92
15	How frequently are the following languages used in places of religious worship for communication?	3.16	3.19	4.48
16	How well represented are the following groups in the cultural life of the region (e.g., festivals, concerts, art exhibitions)?	3.58	3.41	4.28
Support Overall score		3.06	3.06	4.38

The mean score for the responses on Siraiki language on the dimension of support was 3.06; the mean score for the responses on Punjabi language was 3.06 while the mean score for the responses on Urdu language was 4.38. The statement wise analysis shows that on 5 out of 6 statements, the mean score for the responses on Urdu language was higher than 4.00 and on all 6 statements, the responses for Urdu language were ranked the highest. The overall mean score for responses on Siraiki and Punjabi was same though there were some statements which were reported to have comparatively higher mean score for Punjabi while others reported similar for Siraiki language.

The status was the third important dimension in the theoretical model of ethnolinguistic vitality and this dimension comprised of seven statements. These statements required the respondents to express their opinion on the value of languages locally as well as internationally, the economic and business control, value of these language groups, their representation in business institutions and lastly the feelings of pride held in the cultural history and achievements by each language group. The statement wise mean score as well as overall mean score for the dimension of status is presented in table 5:

Table 5:

Mean Score of the Statements on Status

No	Statement	Siraiki	Punjabi	Urdu
1	How highly valued are the following languages locally?	4.23	3.50	3.81
2	How highly valued are the following languages internationally!	2.35	2.55	4.26
4	How much control do the following groups have over economic matters in the region?	3.38	3.35	4.29
5	How much control do the following groups have over business matters in the region?	3.35	3.34	4.29
7	How highly valued are the following groups in region?	3.53	3.41	4.22
12	How well-represented are the following languages in the regional business institutions?	3.32	3.39	4.33
14	How proud of their cultural history and achievements are the following groups in the region?	3.71	3.64	4.19
Status Overall score		3.41	3.31	4.20

The results on the dimension of status elaborate that the highest mean score was recorded for Urdu language with overall mean score of 4.20 while Siraiki showed the mean score of 3.41 and Punjabi language had the mean score of 3.31. There was just one statement related to the value of language locally for which the mean score for responses on Siraiki language was found to be 4.23 i.e. the mean score was above 4.00 while all other statements recorded less than 4.00 mean score for both the responses on Siraiki and Punjabi. On the other hand, all these statements reported Urdu to have the mean score of above 4.00 while the highest mean score was recorded for the statements related to control over business matters and control over economic matters in the region and the mean score for both these statements was 4.29 for Urdu language.

The last dimension of the ethnolinguistic vitality was the general vitality of the languages involved in the current study. There were four statements included in this dimension and these were related to wealthiness of the language community, present and future strength and activeness of the language communities and the extent of contact between the descent of these languages. Overall as well as statement wise mean score for responses towards each language is presented in table 6 below:

Table 6:

Mean Score of the Statements on General Vitality

No	Statement	Siraiki	Punjabi	Urdu
17	How strong and active do you feel the following groups are in the region?	3.86	3.55	4.07
18	How wealthy do you feel the following groups are in the region?	3.87	3.72	4.15
19	How strong and active do you feel the following groups will be 20 to 30 years from now?	3.80	3.69	4.13
20	In general, how much contact is there between people of the descent from these three languages i.e. Urdu, Siraiki and Punjabi?	3.91	3.74	4.16
General Vitality Overall score		3.86	3.68	4.13

On the statements related to general ethnolinguistic vitality, the mean score for Urdu was 4.13 and was the highest; Siraiki language was second in high responses and the mean score for responses on Siraiki language was 3.86 while the mean score for the responses on Punjabi language was 3.68 and this was the lowest mean score. This pattern was recorded overall as well as for all the individual statements.

The dimension wise mean score as well as statement wise analysis were given in the tables 3 to 6 given above. Furthermore, the paired sample t test was applied to see if there were any significant differences in the perceptions of Siraiki native speakers across three languages involved in the study. The paired sample statistics have been given in table 7 below:

Table 7:

Paired Sample Statistics on Ethnolinguistic Vitality Questionnaire

Domain	Siraiki to Punjabi		Siraiki to Urdu		Punjabi to Urdu	
	T value	Sig value	T value	Sig value	T value	Sig value
DS (Inverse)*	4.499	0.000	11.157	0.000	7.163	0.000
DS (Direct)**	-3.525	0.000	5.819	0.000	9.296	0.000

Support	-.092	0.927	-32.894	0.000	-36.794	0.000
Status	2.703	0.007	-19.257	0.000	-23.074	0.000
Gen Vitality***	3.904	0.000	-5.368	0.000	-10.104	0.000

DS (Inverse)* = Demographic strength (Inverse) means those statements which are inversely related to ethnolinguistic vitality, DS (Direct)* = Demographic strength (Direct) means those statements which are directly related to ethnolinguistic vitality, Gen Vitality*** = General statement related to ethnolinguistic vitality

Table 7 describes the inferential statistics obtained by applying paired sample t test on the dimension wise mean score of the responses towards languages involved in the current study. The interpretation starts with the analysis of the results from the dimension of demographic strength (both inverse statements as well as direct statements), followed by analysis of the responses on the dimension of support and status and the concludes with the analysis of the dimension of general vitality.

Demographic Strength: The results of the inferential statistics for demographic strength (Inverse) show that the t value for the comparison of responses on Siraiki and Punjabi language was 4.499 and the p value was 0.000; the t value for the comparison of responses on Siraiki and Urdu language was 11.157 and the p value was 0.000 while the t value for the comparison of responses on Punjabi and Urdu language was 7.163 and the p value was 0.000. Since the p value was lesser than 0.05, there existed significant differences for all three comparisons. Since this dimension of demographic strength (inverse) shows inverse relation, thus the lower mean score on Urdu meant that the respondents expressed higher ethnolinguistic vitality of Urdu language; since the Punjabi language was having high mean score, this reflected low ethnolinguistic vitality towards Punjabi as well while the ethnolinguistic vitality of Siraiki language was also low since the mean score on Siraiki language was the highest. There were two statements related to demographic strength (Direct) and the statistics showed that the t value for the comparison of responses on Siraiki and Punjabi language was -3.525; the t value for the comparison of responses on Siraiki and Urdu was 5.819 while the t value for the comparison of responses on Punjabi and Urdu language was found to be 9.296. The value of significance for all three comparisons was found to be 0.000 which being less than 0.05 showed significant differences for all three comparisons. Since this mean score was directly related to ethnolinguistic vitality, highest mean score on Punjabi language meant that Punjabi language possessed highest ethnolinguistic vitality while Siraiki language was second strong in terms of higher ethnolinguistic vitality while Urdu was recorded to possess lower ethnolinguistic vitality on the dimension of demographic strength (Direct).

Support: The results of paired sample statistics on support dimension reveal that the t value for the comparison of responses on Siraiki and Punjabi language was -0.927 while the p value was found to be 0.927. Since this p value was above 0.05, there existed no significant differences between the perceptions of respondents towards Siraiki and Punjabi language on the dimension of support. The comparison of responses on Siraiki and Urdu language produced the t value -32.894 while the comparison of responses on Punjabi and Urdu language produced -36.794 while both these comparisons produced p value 0.000 which was less than 0.05. Thus, there existed significant

differences among the perceptions of respondents for these two comparisons. The higher mean score on Urdu shows that the respondents reported that Urdu enjoyed high support while the support of Punjabi and Siraiki was lower. It infers that the ethnolinguistic vitality of Urdu language was higher as reflected in higher mean score while the ethnolinguistic vitality of Siraiki and Punjabi languages was lower on the dimension of support.

Status: The results of inferential statistics on status dimension reveal that there existed significant differences across all three comparisons. The t value for the comparison of response on Siraiki and Punjabi language was 2.703; the t value for the comparison of responses on Siraiki and Urdu language was -19.257 while the t value for the comparison of responses on Punjabi and Urdu language was -23.074 while the p value for all three comparison was found to be less than 0.05 thus reflected significant differences. As reflected in the mean score on the dimension of status, the respondents reported highest status for Urdu language while the status of Punjabi and Siraiki was reported to be lower in comparison with Urdu. This shows that ethnolinguistic vitality of Urdu was higher while Siraiki and Punjabi possessed low ethnolinguistic vitality on the dimension of support.

General: The results of inferential statistics on the dimension of general vitality show that the t value for the comparison of responses towards Siraiki and Punjabi language was 3.904; the t value for the comparison of responses towards Siraiki and Urdu language was -5.368 while the t value for the comparison of responses towards Punjabi and Urdu language was found to be -10.104. The value of significance for all three comparisons was found to be 0.000 and since this value of significance was less than 0.05, there existed significant differences across all these comparisons. The respondents reported that Urdu language possessed high ethnolinguistic vitality as inferred from high mean score while the ethnolinguistic vitality of Punjabi and Siraiki was low on the dimension of general vitality in the questionnaire.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results have shown that the ethnolinguistic vitality of Urdu language is the highest while Punjabi and Siraiki languages possess low ethnolinguistic vitality. There are only two items from twenty-two items in the questionnaire on which the respondents reported high ethnolinguistic vitality for Siraiki language while there is one item on which Punjabi language was reported to have high ethnolinguistic vitality. All these items are related to demographic strength which shows that the only positive indicator for the ethno linguistic vitality of Siraiki and Punjabi is the demographic strength. Although demographic is an important factor related to concept of ethnolinguistic vitality (Bourhis, Giles & Taylor, 1981), it is prone to change. The most important component of ethnolinguistic vitality is cited to be institutional support (Tsunoda, 2005) which in the current study is reported have been lower for Siraiki language. On all the items related to the support dimension, Urdu was reported to have glaringly high ethnolinguistic vitality and Punjabi and Siraiki languages were far behind. Similar findings have been reported by Yagmur (2009) who reported that in Netherland, Dutch language is ethno-linguistically more vital than Turkish language because of the institutional structures supporting that language. There was just one statement in the dimension of status on which the respondent reported that the Siraiki language possessed high ethnic vitality while the responses on the remaining six statements supported Urdu languages.

According to Tsunoda (2017) the socio-economic conditions as an integral part of status dimension are the main factors of language shift. Hudyma (2012) also cited that sociocultural factors correlate with the language use. Thus, the similar findings have been reported in the current study that the ethnolinguistic vitality related to the status dimension is low for Siraiki language. In the dimension of general vitality, Urdu was again reported to have strong ethno linguistic vitality in comparison with Siraiki and Punjabi. The healthiness and activism which is symbolic status of minority languages was also found to be low for Siraiki. It can be implicated from the current study that the situation is not optimistic for the Siraiki ethnolinguistic community. They must strive for improving the ethnolinguistic vitality of their language as according to Hudyma (2012), group members of any ethnic group play an important role in increasing and decreasing the value of their languages. In situations where minority languages possess low ethnolinguistic vitality (Ehala, 2010), there are two possibilities as mentioned in literature review. Yagmur (1997) argues that the groups with low ethnolinguistic vitality either undergo linguistic isolation or assimilation. Keeping in view the findings of the current research, it can be inferred that if the Siraiki ethnolinguistic community does not show commitment to their language, the future of Siraiki language may stand jeopardized.

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