

## The Role of Lingo-Cultural Identity in Nation Building: A Case Study of Sindhi Language

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### Abstract

*Language and culture are allied and interrelated with each other as language carries culture with it while culture depends upon language. The mother language is also one of the most striking elements of any individual's life. At the same time, it also works as an integral tool in the uplift of any nation's future generations. Native language (L1) not only plays the main role in the communication process but also establishes an identity to an individual's entity as well as personality building, a certain class of the masses, and a nation at large. Mother language is a powerful element that engineers the psychological system or structure of an individual to secure the values, norms, history, and trends of a nation. This study has been carried out to focus and discuss the four significant grounds which include the development of a psychological hierarchy of a person with the help of mother tongue, nexuses of culture with mother language, the significance of mother tongue in primary education, and prevailing issues and their relevant solutions. Lastly, it is extracted that the first three elements establish basics and enclose the entire life of a person whereas; the last one nurtures as well as develops one's character, disposition, role, and part to ensure the progress of any nation through the mother tongue.*

**Keywords:** Language, psychological hierarchy, primary education, personality building

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### Introduction

This study covers the lingo-cultural identity of people in the context of Sindh, Pakistan. It is rightly said that language and culture are unified and interconnected with each other and these both give birth to the identity of an individual, group of people, and a

nation at large. Without a language, it had not been possible for a man to lead a successful life. As Nelson Mandela has rightly quoted, "If you talk to someone in a language he understands, that goes to the person's head but if you talk to somebody in his language that goes to the heart". This adage clarifies that the mother tongue is a crucial driving force

that inculcates the message which touches the emotional element of an individual while the foreign language only works on the surface. One can feel the importance of mother language through this maxim. The mother tongue refers to the language which is associated with one's mother. On the contrary, foreign language is always a new trend to be assimilated into one's personality. This envisages that mother tongue is the only solution for any person to get rid of new problems occurring in one's life on cultural and linguistic grounds. Keeping the significance of mother languages in view, the main search engine on the internet "Google" company compelled to revisit its policy and facilitate the users of different nations with their native languages. This shows the influx of masses towards the use of new technology. Google has been going behind the mother tongues of different nations as a tool to attract several users. The terms like mother tongue, mother language, first language (L1), and native language are used in English for the language which one learns soon after one's birth. A child when starts feeling the outer environment in his/her mother's abdomen, he/she starts learning the language from this very age. Soon after when he takes birth, he again gets a new environment in the world for learning his/her mother tongue. UNESCO in its report has unearthed that as many as six thousand languages are spoken in the world this time but out of those 6 thousand languages, half of the lingoes are said to be in the danger zone as the speakers of these languages are not exceeding than

10 thousand in total. The survey of UNESCO further unfolded that if one language has fewer speakers, then it could not fight and win the war for survival on contrast if few people of common language warriors can easily win a huge number of opponents then they can win the war. The report also revealed that as many as 10 languages are vanishing and fading away from the map of the world every year. This is because of the fewer speakers of the languages whose narrators are lesser than one hundred thousand. This is an alarming situation for the languages that are dying only because these lingoes are not being spoken or they have very fewer numbers of speakers. Currently, a big campaign is being launched at a high scale to protect the languages from eradication worldwide. Realizing the significance of mother languages, UNESCO had decided to celebrate "International Day of Mother Languages" on February 21, 1999, and it has been marking the day regularly every year on February 21 across the world including Pakistan. On this day, several programs and seminars are organized to create awareness among the masses regarding the values and significance of native lingoes and highlight the importance, suggest the ways leading towards development as well as protection of mother tongues throughout the globe including Sindh, Pakistan. Here a question arises that do the mother tongues have any importance and can the mother languages play any pivotal role in the development of nations or not? The answer would be 'yes off course'. The value and significance of mother

languages cannot be ignored or denied in any case because the native lingoes are not only the identity of an individual, some group of people and nation which preserve and safeguard the history, culture, religious principles, ethics, morals and values of the nations but these languages are also a key source of mutual contact and a foundation of wisdom, contemplation, and perspicacity of a nation and human civilization. Let's assume what if there is no entity of a language? Its reply is very simple that the humans/ people will not only be resorted to throttling and suffocating after losing their expression and modus operandi of their contemplation and consideration but they will be defeated from every aspect after losing their especial individual and joint identity along with history, civilization, moral, values, and cultural heritage as well as legacy. In simple words, if there had not been language, there would have been a long question mark on the entity, social group, background, and identity of human beings. It is said that language brings life under its sage and influences it directly or indirectly. The first-ever relationship of human beings establishes with the language unconsciously when a kid is still in the abdomen of the mother where he/ she feels the different voices around him/ her. After the birth of the kid, the mother starts connecting the psychology of the infant with the native language through different voices, stimulation, sensation, and actions. The father of linguistics Noam Chomsky named this phase of life 'cognitive psychology'. Chomsky (2002) said, "A language is a natural

object, a component of the human mind, physically represented in the brain and part of the biological endowment of the species". He further says, "Many of the properties of language are innate to be found in deep structures of language to which behaviorism has turned a blind eye". So the Sindhi language is the most powerful tool for the people of Sindh to keep their culture alive and ensure their identity having 5 thousand years old civilization.

### **Background of the Study/Literature Review**

Language is a natural phenomenon that is a key element of the human brain and it plays a role of natural abilities and skills in the life process (Hauser, M. D., Chomsky, N., & Fitch, W. T. 2002). Consequently, the mother language is an integral part of the human brain routinely, which the humans do not need to learn as they learn other languages of the world in mature age (Newport, E. L. 1990). Therefore the kid after taking birth learns the dialect automatically from the environment he/ she gets. Barman, Binoy, (2012), quoted Noam Choasmky as saying that "It is feasible for a human kid to learn a language for the linguistic faculty which the child is born with and that the use of language for an adult is mostly a mental exercise". Levine, P. A. (2010) said "The seed of mother language is available in his or her gens which begin to take place from the environment of his/ her home and intimacy of mother". Therefore, there is a pivotal role of a

mother in shaping the personality of a kid. When a child screams, the mother takes him or her in arms, hugs, and loves the toddler, and makes him or her sleep by offering lullabies. It is the mother who understands the difference between the hunger and pain of her kid. This action of a mother gives a sense of protection to her adolescent who feels him/ herself safe and sound and is no more scared or frightened. Love, deep affection, and care bring self-confidence, the importance of entity, patience, steadfastness, solace, and a sigh of relief within a child. Although a newborn cannot speak at this phase of his life, yet the mother and her tot succeed in establishing a bond between each other through the language which results in psychological adhesion of a kid with his or her mother. So, psychologists have termed it as "personality, character, emotional and mental growth" of a kid at this level.

### **The Relationship Of Mother Language And Culture**

There is an unfathomable relationship between the mother language and culture between them rather these both terms are concomitant and accompaniment for each other. Language is therefore defined as "Language is not only an expression or a means of communication but it is also a component of a culture that makes it unique and specific". Whereas culture can be elaborated as "Culture is something influenced and impacted by the language whereas lingo is formed by the culture of a society. As a result of it, the values and speech shape the

personality and identity of an individual, a group of people, or a nation". A child when grows up, he along with his mother tongue develops a rapport with his family, relatives, neighbors, and experiences the external environment, ways of communication and learns the customs, religious beliefs and moral values in the society from where he gets associated and connected with his cultural heritage, environment, and history with the help of language. Thus the language and culture turn to be an imperative element of an individual's entity and identity in the shadow of which a person can ameliorate his personality and consolidate the various phases of his life. The identity crisis is the biggest problem of human beings but if they have their mother tongue, then there is no chance of losing their identity. A child can pave ways towards development and progress confidently in his life if he has his mother tongue and culture that shape his life.

Bohio (2008)said, "Languages are the part of cultures of the nations and the languages are a particular source of expression and the internal relationship of all the people among them in the society. Thus, languages are simultaneously the performative element and the central system of the cultures". Therefore, the mother tongue not only connects an individual with his particular, separate, and unique culture but it also becomes the most powerful and effective means of protecting and shifting the cultural heritage in new generations.

## **Mother Tongue and Education**

The mother tongues have been given very much importance in context with children education globally for many decades as the educationists across the world have realized the value and substance of basic education in the native languages. When a child is enrolled in school for seeking education, he should be provided an opportunity to learn in his mother tongue which is Sindhi in the province of Sindh rather than imparting education to him in Urdu and English languages, because the educationists believe that a child should be given education in his semi-consciousness language for better results. It means the language in which he dreams or the lingo which comes out through his tongue unexpectedly and unpredictably because it does not affect or put an impact on the psychological power of the kid in speaking and understanding the language. Such kids are in search of getting knowledge, awareness, and understanding the things and they can comprehend and get everything well if they are taught in their native language. The research has proved that if a child does speak and understand the non-native language (L2) well and he is given the education in that language; this child can be a 'parrot' but he can become genius and wise coupled with creative abilities and innovative ideas. Such a child after growing up cannot even play a constructive role in the completion of national and social interests. According to Fernald, L. C., Gertler, P. J., & Neufeld, L. M. (2008),

"Early childhood education is very essential in a child's life hence the recent focus on it is given across the globe. It provides for children whose age bracket is from a month to 8 years". Sameroff, A. J. (1975) said, "It is a period extremely crucial to an individual's intellectual, emotional, social and physical development. It is a stratum which the mother tongue will make a significant impression in the life of the young ones."

It shows that an individual has a closer bond with his mother language and he can never part ways from his language. This language brings him closer to all phases of his life including birth to touching the age of consciousness. An individual having a background of mother tongue when becomes a part of society, he can play a vital role in the development, progress, and advancement of any nation. Consequently, the mother languages can become an important tool in the development of individuals, society, and nations. It is the truth that cannot be ignored and denied. In rural areas of Sindh, the primary education at public sector schools is given in the Sindhi language to some extent but there is a dire need to provide education to the kids totally in their mother language.

## **Objectives of the Study**

Following are the main four objectives of the study which have been tried to find out in this research.

1. To identify the establishment and development of the

- psychological hierarchy of a person through his mother tongue.
2. To investigate for finding the nexuses of culture with mother language.
  3. To elaborate on the significance of mother tongue in primary education.
  4. To find the prevailing issues and their relevant solutions when it comes to the role of lingo-cultural identity in nation-building.

### **Research Questions**

Following are the research questions for this current study:

1. How can the establishment and development of the psychological hierarchy of a person through his mother tongue be identified?
2. What are the nexuses of culture with the mother language?
3. What is the significance of mother tongue in primary education in any nation?
4. What are the prevailing issues and their relevant solutions when it comes to the role of lingo-cultural identity in anation building?

### **The Current Scenario of Sindhi Language**

Sindhi is the official language of Sindh besides that of English and Urdu. Being the second-largest province of Pakistan from a population

point of view, over 3 billion people in the province are Sindhi speaking. Today's kid speaks his mother tongue which is Sindhi at home in the province but his market and external language in urban areas or cities is Urdu due to commercialization. For instance, when he buys biscuits or toffees, Urdu language is written on its packing. When a kid watches television, Urdu or English languages are spoken from cartoons to other programs, commercials, and songs whereas he seeks education in another language which is English. This vividly describes that our kid thinks in one language, uses another language for entertainment, and seeks education vehemently in the third language which is a tragedy. Keeping these tragedies of our system in view, the educationists need to mull over how to revamp education policy in the province. The governments in the country have always ignored different mother languages in the country due to the Islamic State and the influence of national language i.e. Urdu. A nation consisting of people speaking different mother languages cannot play a role in the development of society and the country being away from speaking its language. Such political governments need to think that if the mother tongues are not being propagated, proliferated, or multiplied and given due status, it means the rulers are shaping the generation that is blind, deaf, and dumb. It is itself a big predicament or dilemma. It is a pity that the governments in Pakistan neither took the measures and initiatives for progress, protection, and shield of the



mother languages nor did they remain able to devise a suitable language policy. This time, there is a stern need to sincerely address the issue and redress the grievances of the masses in Sindh in this regard. Another big challenge for the survival of native languages is that the world has transformed into a global village. The means and sources of media, social media, and the internet have rapidly developed resulting in digitalization. The world is hastily moving towards the age of digitalization. Under these circumstances, the mother languages have to remain careful to ensure their survival on the planet. It is also a problem that the most modern sources are available and the same are being used also but they are also creating many contortions and scowl in the languages for which the meanings,

dialect, and constructions of language are changing. The Sindhi TV channels have also fouled up and marred the Sindhi language, its accent, and culture to a great extent. The electronic media is jeopardizing the mother language (Sindhi) in Sindh. Those youths who are settled in urban areas like Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Mirpurkhas, and other cities, influence the Urdu language upon their accent and when they speak Sindhi, the code-mixing of Urdu can be heard. In morning TV programs, the female hosts/ anchorpersons can be seen doing code-mixing of Urdu in the Sindhi language. Many words of Urdu are being spoken by them. Consequently, both the male and female youths perform Urdu style nouns, singular & plural, and masculine and feminine genders while speaking the Sindhi language, especially on electronic media.

For instance, the following table # 1 is given:

Nouns/ Masculine & feminine used in Urdu style	Correct sentences in Sindhi
(1) هي ڏسو، وڏو ٽرڪ اسڪول جي اندر اچي ويو آهي	(1) هي ڏسو، وڏي ٽرڪ اسڪول اندر اچي وئي آهي
(2) منهنجو دل زور سان ٽڙڪي رهيو آهي	(2) منهنجي دل زور سان ٽڙڪي رهي آهي
(3) ايڏي وڏي ضد ڇو ٿا ڪريو	(3) ايڏو وڏو ضد ڇو ٿا ڪريو
(4) سنڌ ڏاڍو پيارو ۽ سرسبز آهي	(4) سنڌ ڏاڍي پياري ۽ سرسبز آهي
(5) اسانجي اسڪول تمام گهڻي وڏي آهي	(5) اسانجو اسڪول تمام گهڻو وڏو آهي
(6) هي منهنجي ڪتاب آهي	(6) هي منهنجو ڪتاب آهي
(7) منهنجي لکيل ڪتاب جي مهورت ٿي گذري	(7) منهنجي لکيل ڪتاب جو مهورت ٿي گذريو
(8) ڄامشوري ۾ وڏيون هوٽلون ڪلي ويون آهن	(8) ڄامشوري ۾ وڏا هوٽل ڪلي ويا آهن
(9) توهان جي آواز ڏاڍي پياري آهي.	(9) توهان جو آواز ڏاڍو پيارو آهي.

In table # 1, it is clearly shown that the nouns of Sindhi have been used in the Sindhi language in Urdu style. Truck, heart, and Sindh are feminine words in Sindhi but the same are used as masculine words in Urdu while the words like Zid, School, book, hotels, and malware are used as masculine in Sindhi but the same are brought in use in Urdu in the feminine. So the Karachi-Hyderabad and other urban areas TV anchorpersons especially females speak Sindhi with the proper touch of Urdu language and its grammar.

Ordinarily, it is said that the language can only develop and nurture when it embraces the code-mixing and accept the words of other languages

easily. The words of this language may be acceptable for other languages and it borrows the terms from other emerging languages. For example, Sindhi is one of the oldest languages of the world and it is a well-off language even today for two reasons which include (a) its speakers are available in Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, India, and other parts of the worlds in billions and (b) it has been accepting the code-mixing of Arabic and the Persian in past and is accepting and borrowing the code-mixing of English and Urdu in this contemporary era. Those languages have been/ are dying from the map of the world which do not accept or borrow code-mixing of powerful languages. Following are some of the dead languages:

Table # 2 Dead languages

<b>List of the dead languages of the worlds</b>
<b>Old English, Latin, Aramaic, Sanskrit, Ancient Greek, Coptic, Old Norse, Iberian, Etruscan and proto-Indo-European</b>

In Table # 2, the dead languages of the world have been listed to know that those languages which have less number of speakers than at least ten thousand die in due course of time. The same case persisted with Hebrew which was also declared as a dead language but later, the Jews started speaking this language and it has again emerged as an alive language on the map of the globe. According to Gamkrelidze, T. V., & Ivanov, V. V. (2010), "A dead language is a language that no longer

has any native speakers, although it may still be studied by a few or used in certain contexts". The researchers further explained that "If there are only a few remaining elderly speakers of a language and it is no longer used for communication, then that language is effectively considered dead even before its last native speaker has passed away." Some researchers said that "The death of a language is rarely a sudden event, but usually takes place gradually as a language is marginalized or slowly replaced by other languages".



So those languages which borrow the words and absorb the same are not at stake and these are getting enriched and augmented. But despite one of the richest languages of the country, the Sindhi language is begging grammar and its impact which is alarming. This happens due to the unavailability of language policy in the country. The influence of Urdu grammar on the Sindhi language cannot only be felt on electronic and print media but also social media at a high scale. This has put the Sindhi language at risk and laid it on the line. The Sindhi linguists need to highlight this burning issue to halt the use of Urdu grammar in the Sindhi language. The act of borrowing Urdu words does not make any difference and it can cause enrichment of the Sindhi language but applying Urdu grammar in the Sindhi language is a burning issue that needs to be addressed.

### **Conclusions**

It is concluded that the Sindhi language is facing several challenges this time due to the unavailability of the language policy which is a must for stability and unwavering of any language in the world. Therefore, it requires the hour that all the indigenous languages spoken in Sindh including Sindhi should be given the official status at the provincial level. Sindhi language should be declared the means of education and medium of instruction in all the institutions working in the province including in schools, colleges, and universities. Sindhi language ought to be given preference and priority in

the market during shopping even in the urban areas. A regular campaign needs to be launched to control and halt the spoils of the Sindhi language which are created by print, electronic and social media. The cheaper and common source today is the internet; therefore, all the local languages of Sindh including Sindhi need to be digitalized to ascertain their survival in the centuries to come. The research addressed that the Sindhi language should get rid of the challenges and crisis like usage of Urdu grammar in it and it must get a language policy that should jointly be devised by the government of Sindh, media organizations, linguistic experts, and educationists, then this lingo will be able to survive for long at large.

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