

The Social Influence on Language Development: The Case of the Pahari Language

Wajid Riaz*, Tallat Jabeen, Sadaf Afreen, Abdul Shakoor Abbasi

Department of English Language and Literature, the University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus

Email *: wijisami@gmail.com

Abstract

This research paper attempts to highlight the issue of language change. It tells us about Pahari language spoken in Manshara region of KPK. As those people who are uneducated and living in mountaineers and hilly areas, have a different perception about English language and their use is also different. This research is done to bring those elements which bring changes in a language. The words which have different pronunciation in English, have also different pronunciation in Pahari language. It brings out the factors like, culture, vernacular and society which are the sources of language change. Further, this paper discusses partial changes in phonology, observed in the language of uneducated people. The researchers selected William Labov's model who gave the idea of variationist sociolinguistics. The data were collected from 9 persons who were drivers, Pedlars and confectioners. All the changes which were found, are due to the diversity in culture and the differences in organs of speech. It tells us about different organs of speech which are the source of phonological change. The influence of mother tongue brings sound, change. It also tells that uneducated people bring more changes in languages as compared to educated people. Those people hear and produce the words in keeping their mother tongue and society in mind. The findings of the research as show that vocal cords are the most important organ of speech Social and psychological problems bring change in language. Illiterate people use code switching or mixing most of the time and their pronunciation depends on physical or psychological factors.

Keywords: Language Change, Vernacular, Culture, Pahari Language, Mansahra, Kpk

INTRODUCTION

As human beings, we have feelings, ideas and thoughts. Each and every human being wants to share his/her feelings, ideas and thoughts with others. That is why language and human beings cannot be separated, as language is a main tool for the interaction and communication among them. Many languages are spoken by the people for their interaction and communication. Many people in the world are bi-lingual. It means that many people of the world have the capacity to speak two languages. Some people in the world are multi-lingual. It means that some people in the world speak more than two languages. They do not master their mother tongue and first language only. It is his inner urge that forces him to share the said things. Each and every day, and in every social interaction we share our feelings, ideas and thoughts with others. These things are shared by using a language as without using any language we cannot share these things with others. Due to the dependence of people on one

* Corresponding Author: wijisami@gmail.com

another, interaction and communication has taken an important place in our daily lives (Salmona, 2014). Brown (2007) explains that exchange of thoughts, feelings and ideas between two or more people collaboratively is known as interaction.

The current research is based on a study conducted to evaluate the intuition of Pahari speaking learners of English regarding the perception and production of English speech. It was noted that Pahari speaking English learners make phonological alterations in terms of stress and syllable patterns in the creation of English speech. The present analysis intends to investigate the phonological knowledge of English stress and syllable patterns among Pahari speakers who are learning English as Second Language, by eliciting judgments regarding the number of syllables.

There is a pretty substantial variance in stress systems of English and Pahari languages because both are written and spoken with distinct orthography, and with various phonetic and phonological principles. Both languages also contain varied number of sounds i.e., vowels and consonants. Pahari features phonemic writing system wherein the spelling of the word transparently represents its sound, but “English is non-phonetic language therefore English spellings may be misleading” as stated by Ladefoged (2004) that English is an international language of business and communication, which is widely spoken in distinct accents known as World Englishes. English is primarily pronounced with different accents by speakers of different languages (different mother tongues) in Pakistan i.e. Urdu-accented, Sindhi-accented in Sindh and Punjabi-accented in Punjab and Pashto-accented in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In Pahari-accented English, the lexical stress is transferred in accordance with Pahari stress pattern relating to their lexical items, and the lexical rhythm is relatively more altered rather than other features of English speech as hypothesized in this research. Languages have diverse sound systems with various rules of pronunciations and the intonation of speech. Stress is the emphasis on a sound or syllable by pronouncing it more loudly than other syllables in the same word string conversely, intonation is the rising or lowering pitch of voice when uttering a word or speech as stated by Ali (2009).

Language is a living phenomenon. Those languages which remain still and stagnant die soon. Change is the only defence for them. Nothing in this universe is permanent except change. Different languages are spoken in Pakistan like Urdu, English, Pashto, Gojri, Hindko, Sariaki and Pahari. All these languages have some similarities regarding words, pronunciation and sentence structures. The role of society is very important in this concern.

Sociolinguistics is the branch of linguistics which deals with the study of language in its cultural and social context. The condition of language in the part of Mansehra region of hilly area is different as compared to Pakistan. The people of the region have got different cultural and social values. Their social and cultural environment has influenced their language at a great deal. Different dialects are spoken in the region. The dialect spoken in Balakot region is different than that of Naran and Kaghan. The dialect spoken in Garhi Habibullah may have slight difference than that of Khaki, Batal and Shinkhari. Same is the case with the dialect spoken in hilly areas of Abbotabat. All this is because of the different social systems. All persons have different values and literacy rate is also a main dilemma in this concern.

The use of English Language is very much there. People use code switching and code mixing a lot. They are fond of using English words in their daily conversation. In this regard, mother tongue affects their usage of English language. They follow the rules of their mother tongue and also some words. Some words of their mother tongue resemble English language words. Pronunciation of certain words also highlights the effect of their mother tongue. They not only use certain vowel sounds in their speech but also bring new phonological changes.

Illiterate people bring more changes in this concern. They hear certain words and start pronouncing them in their own accent. This pronunciation is so common that it is accepted everywhere in Mansehra and people follow this. It has also affected educated people. The words which are used by persons of different professions like, drivers, Hawkers, Shopkeepers and Confectioners have become a part of that language. Their speech organs are arranged in such a way that they cannot help it. These persons bring phonological, changes.

HYPOTHESIS

Illiterate people bring more phonological changes in language as compared to literate people

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To show phonological differences in uneducated people of District Mansehra.
2. To show commonalities in English language among the people at phonological level in hilly areas of Mansehra.
3. To show the impacts of phonological aspects of English language on uneducated people of hilly areas of Mansehra.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What phonological differences are found in uneducated people's Language at District Mansehra?
2. What are the commonalities among the people at phonological level in hilly areas of Mansehra?
3. What are the impacts of phonological aspects of English language on uneducated people of hilly areas of Mansehra.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH PAPER

Language is the medium of communication, whereas different speakers of multiple community when interact with one other, great impacts. The certainly share different vocabulary and sounds which leave a major impact on the native, particularly, while the changes in the languages become inevitable. The current research in the regard presents the same as the uneducated people of District Mansehra, living in mountaineers area use different words of English language and the variation at phonological level are observed. The current research helps to understand such cases in any area of Pakistan to be dealt from the same perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of culture is very important in learning a new language. It is the culture, or society which promotes a language. Without the help of society, a language is dead, and it is the society that makes a language "mode of communication". Changes in languages are the results of social and cultural differences. Bell (1984) noted that we mould our speech, or conversation accordance with our society or social context. Surely we use a language according to the culture or society in which we are living. Brooks (1964: 45) states: "When we turn to a new language, we shift our focus toward the people who use that language." Culture and language are intertwined. It would not be possible to learn a language without a culture. According to Pinker (1994) Linguists have agreed upon this that language is an innate faculty with human race. Both Brooks (1964) and Pinker (1994) focused attention to sociological aspects of language which are consisted to William Labov's variationist sociolinguistics. Similarly, Strange (1995) used the term "perceptual foreign accent" to refer to the "significantly difficulty" which adults have "perceiving most (but not all) phonetic contrasts that are not functional in their native language" (Krashen 1992). Literacy developed in the home language which will transfer

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* Corresponding Author: wijisami@gmail.com

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to the second language. Strange (1995) and Krashen (1992) have the same approaches and methodologies for their researches which are applicable to the current research due to implications to Labov's variationist sociolinguistics.

Further, Ali (2009) gives a thorough attention to Pakistani graduates, who do not have adequate opportunities to engage in a thorough study of English speech-sounds. Therefore, they are unable to recognise them accurately. Instead of the said, they try by attempting to match them with Urdu speech-sounds, which ultimately results in their English pronunciation, becoming distorted. According to him, Pakistani students pronounce the majority of English words with an Urdu accentuated style, which detracts from their perception about speaking in front of a group of people, or when conversing with someone from outside the country.

Similarly, approaching to other languages, Nyayar (2000-2001) states that Urdu is described as having ten syllable patterns, and likely other languages, Urdu only has one stress in a word. Multiple stressors, on the other hand, have been documented in several locations. Heavy, medium, and light syllables are the three categories of syllables. The greater the weight of a syllable, the greater the likelihood of primary stress occurring at the lexical level of the sentence. According to Nyayar, in terms of phonetics and phonology, a great deal of research has been done on Urdu which resulted largely the similar findings.

Consistent to Ali (2009) and Nyayar (2000-2001) researches Hussain (2010) also suggested the similar findings. Using Urdu as an example as Hussain (2010) argues that lexical stress modifies the phonetic qualities of both vowels and consonants in the language. As far as we know, this was the first acoustic study of lexical stress in Urdu. Other studies on the phonology of Urdu have included the Phonemic Inventory, Urdu templates, and the Urdu sound system, all of which were carried out by Hussain (2010).

Further, Acoustic analysis of Urdu stress was carried out by Hussain (2010). He used recordings of Urdu native speakers on the basis of his assessment which allowed him to determine the lexical stress in Urdu. He used acoustic realisations of vowel duration, fundamental frequency, relative intensity, and the first two formant frequencies of six long and three short vowels in Urdu, as well as the first two formant frequencies of the first two formant frequencies. Urdu, according to Hussain, features lexical stress, which is commonly indicated by a last stressed syllable in the sentence. The extrametricality of the final heavy stressed syllable, on the other hand, means that it does not contribute to the weight of the final syllable. Urdu is a fixed stress language, meaning that the major emphasis in a word is determined by the syllable weight of the words. The results of the phonetic study demonstrate that stress not only has an effect on the quality of vowels, but it also has an effect on the phonetic qualities of stop closures. In this regard, Masica (1991) considers Urdu and Hindi to be the same languages, however Hussain (2010) finds that the vowel quality of Urdu differs from that of Hindi when examined in terms of vowel quality.

Class Aspiration

According to this concept, social aspiration influences our speech pattern. In this process people who walk with a high class would like to behave and talk like them. As these persons are of different identity they bring new changes by committing errors. The similar class aspiration has been employed in the current research when uneducated class has been opted in contrast, or comparison to educated class.

Prestige

It is believed that non-standard language is a low prestige language. So according to Labov prestige also brings language change. The persons of non-standard language try to learn the standard language and they bring new changes. Uneducated class has been selected for the current research under this stage of the Labov's theory.

Phonetic And Phonological Changes

Sound change is related to both phonetic and phonology. William Labov observed the changes in pronunciation, and said that all such changes occur because of the social tensions and anxieties. Prestige is one of the reasons of sound change in a society. Vocal cords are of great importance in his regard. Pronunciation mostly depends on physical characteristics and on psychological factors which are continually changing in the individuals, groups of people and nations, can never be stationary.

METHODOLOGY

The method is quantitative as well as qualitative. The tools like interviews, telephone recordings and references are used. 9 uneducated persons were selected for the current research who belong to different professions.

DATA COLLECTION

Mansehra, KPK was selected as a place for this study. People of different ages were selected. The study is confined only to district Mansehra. Areas like Gari HabibUllah, Balakot, and Ghanoor are selected for research. Sampling was random. Persons of different professions participated like drivers, Pedlars and confectioners. These people were the native speakers of Pahari language.

The data is analyzed with the application of sociolinguistic theory of William Labov. It is noticed in this data that the influence of society and mother tongue is very prominent in using a second language. Mostly the pronunciation is made on the basis of the words of the mother tongue. Labov's two aspects such as class aspiration and prestigious are complicit, and prominent, show the greater number of changes at phonological level.

DISCUSSION AND USE OF /Æ/ SOUND INSTEAD OF /Aɪ/

Uneducated people use the vowel /æ/ commonly in their speech as most of the words in their mother tongue are pronounced with the inclusion of this sound. So, we can notice this difference complicity. It is a sound which is common in their mother tongue. When those people call someone they usually use this sound. We can judge the quality of vowel sounds with the help of vocal tract. Lips and different parts of the tongue play an important role in the production of vowel sounds. The vocal tract of Pahari people are arranged in such a way that they can not help it. Therefore it is difficult for a person to move from a short vowel /æ/ to a diphthong /aɪ/.e.g pipe /paɪp/ and pronounced as /pæp/. Largely, illiterate people talk loudly and without hesitation and their vocal cord vibrate more than educated people. So, it can be referred as a psychological problem, or social anxiety, which compels them to do this. Their mother tongue is the major source of this change in, and impacted on language. When Drivers and conductors are doing their duty, they use a loud voice to call their passengers. Their vocal cords vibrate, while women of Mansehra have the same attitude as reported by the male members to researcher. Whether they are doing their household duties or working in farms. Pedlars, confectioners have the same use of their vocal cords. Labov's theory presents the same aspects and can be applicable here.

Prestige

Labov's selected theory pays more attention to prestige as mostly people, who are illiterate, speak for others and don not use language for their own purpose. They want to be noticed and respected as literate people, therefore, they use language in a strange way. It is noticed that drivers and conductors in Mansehra who are illiterate bring more phonological changes as reported. They want to impress other people, and try to use English words to impress them. So we can say that William Labov's point prestige is also an important element in language change. Largely, the Balakot, Naran and the adjacent are the tourist points where tourists come from all regions of the country, who are educated, and when these people conversant the usage of different English words are complicit.

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The major finding in all findings is vocal cords, which are the most important organ of speech. Social and psychological problems bring change in language. Illiterate people use code switching or mixing most of the time. Pronunciation depends on physical or psychological factors, and therefore, the changes occur as suggested by Labov. Further, the research can be generalized with findings of Ali (2009) and Nayyar (2000-2001) who researched the phonological level of Urdu language. Urdu and Pahari have slight differences and the speakers can be observed with phonological variation in their language.

CONCLUSION

Language change is a universal phenomenon. We can find in history about sound change or about accent change. The role of society is very important in bringing new sounds and leaving the old ones. Different techniques whether consciously or unconsciously used like assimilation and elision are also cause changes in language. Great vowels shift is more likely to take place in such situation. In a district, like Mansehra, vowels are given more importance. The use of vowel sound /æ/ is very common as it is a very common sound in the mother tongue of Pahari people. Mother tongue influence is of great importance in this regard. So we can say that: Society makes a language and phonological changes are the results of diverse culture and low literacy rate in Mountaineers and hilly areas of Mansehra.

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* Corresponding Author: wijisami@gmail.com

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