

# **Emergence of Triglossia in Urban Pakistani Punjab**



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## **Abstract**

This sociolinguistic study synchronically describes the linguistic picture existing in an urban city of Pakistani Punjab by exploring the relationship of three different varieties used for communication. The three varieties namely English, Urdu and Punjabi perform different functions and are used in different domains. The varying and overlapping interaction of these three varieties reflects the emergence of a triglossia situation: first the indigenous language Punjabi, the variety used at home; then Urdu the National language of Pakistan, which acts as the Lingua Franca; and thirdly English, the official language of the country and the global language that is used for professional, academic and commercial purposes.

The research studies the triglossia situation by describing the relationship between English and Urdu; and between Urdu and Punjabi while taking into account the historical, social and economic factors affecting the choice of code. Moreover, it describes the status, prestige and utilitarian value of each of the three languages under study.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Emergence of Triglossia in Urban Punjab**

Pakistani Punjab is a multilingual society, where people belonging to different geographical areas have associations with their indigenous language—various varieties of Punjabi. The other two dominant languages used in Punjab are Urdu and English. Urdu enjoys the status of being the ‘Lingua Franca’ of not only Punjabi speakers but also of almost all Pakistanis. English on the other hand, being the legacy of the British remains the language of power and high social status in Pakistan. It serves to facilitate the entry of the rich and the powerful into elitist positions, while filtering out those who are educated in Urdu. It is used as the official language and is considered to have utilitarian value because English as an international language is seen as useful in all spheres of life especially in professional life. Almost all materials for higher education are in English and in an age where global interaction has become the norm, English serves as a language of global communication. This sociolinguistic study describes the relationship that exists between these three varieties by exploring the triglossia situation in urban Pakistani Punjab and highlighting the function and domain of each of the three languages. Furthermore, it highlights the status, prestige and role of each variety in a multilingual urban setting, where socioeconomic factors affect the choice of code of the people living here.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

- The purpose of this sociolinguistic study is to identify and explore the emergence of triglossia in Pakistani Punjab by analyzing the status, role, use and the prestige attached to the three dominant languages of Punjab, namely, Punjabi, Urdu and English.
- The relationship existing among these three varieties will also be explored, through which the High 'H' varieties and the Low 'L' variety will be determined,
- Another purpose of the study is to find out which of the three languages is suited for certain functions and used in specific domains. Furthermore, the study seeks to find the relationship between the functions and domains of the three languages and the choice of code.

## 1.3 Rationale of the Study

- The sociolinguistic study focuses on finding out if a triglossia situation exists in Pakistani Punjab. It is believed that emergence and then development of triaglossia situation involving English and Urdu as the H varieties and Punjabi as the L variety is evident in Pakistani Punjab since socio-economic factors, urbanization and modernization have led to English being superimposed on Urdu, which in turn has been superimposed on Punjabi due to factors involving nationalism and religion.
- The sociolinguistic study explores the linguistic and sociological situation of the metropolitan of Punjab, Lahore, in relation with the multicultural aspects by primarily finding out the relationship that exists between language function and domain, and language choice, keeping the assumption in mind that the social and economic

background, educational level, needs and motivation of the participants influence their perception and use of the three widely used languages of Punjab. Thus the study accurately reflects the present day realities behind the use of English, Urdu, and the regional language of Punjab- Punjabi.

- In order to reflect on the issue of the ideal medium of instruction, the study provides important guide lines for language planners as it shows the use and choice of the three languages under study, in different domains.
- The study will also be helpful in resolving the critical language issue regarding the role of languages in education as the controversy surrounding a uniform language policy especially one that can be homogeneously adopted can be resolved by looking at the results of the study.
- Ever since its independence, Pakistan has been faced with issues related to language policy and planning and it is hoped that the results of this study provide useful insight into understanding the complex linguistic picture of a multilingual society such as that of Pakistani Punjab.

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

- The study aims to take into account the relationship of the three languages, Punjabi, Urdu and English with each other and highlight the linguistic situation that exists in Pakistani Punjab thus finding out whether a triglossia situation is emerging in Punjab or not.

## 1.5 Aims and Objectives

- The study looks at the various factors involved in using Urdu, English and Punjabi the mother tongue of most of the population of Punjab. It will highlight the H variety and the L variety and the functions of these languages/varieties based on their use.
- The study also aims at finding out the extent to which each of the languages fulfills the domestic and personal needs of the people of Punjab, along with fulfilling their socioeconomic and professional needs.
- Further, it aims to bring forth the factors that determine the use of these three languages in a multilingual society like that of Pakistani Punjab in an age where global interaction has become the norm.

## 1.6 Hypotheses

H1: The domain of use determines the choice of a particular code.

H2: A particular language is used to perform specific functions.

H3: There is a difference in the prestige of English, Urdu and Punjabi.

H4: There is significant difference in the utilitarian value of English, Urdu and Punjabi.

H5: There is a difference in the literacy level of English, Urdu and Punjabi.

H6: There is a significant difference in the status of English, Urdu and Punjabi.

H7: There is an emergence of Triglоссия in Pakistani Punjab.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 The Sociolinguistic Perspective**

Pakistan is a multilingual society, where various languages co-exist and hold their own importance depending on their use and function. The languages used can be divided into three broad categories based on their function and domains of use. The indigenous languages, which are also the mother tongue of a majority of people; the National language, Urdu, which though has only about 7% native speakers (Lewis, 2009) but is a strong marker of Pakistani, Muslim identity and is used as the Lingua Franca; and English, which along with being an international language, is also a legacy, left by the British. The complex linguistic picture of Pakistan is balanced by the relationship that the three types of languages have with each other. In order to explore the relationship of the different languages, this study focuses on the linguistic situation existing in one of the urban centres of the province of Punjab, namely, Lahore.

The three dominant languages used in Punjab are Punjabi, the mother tongue of most of the residents of Lahore; Urdu and English. The coexistence of these three languages can be said to present a 'triglоссия' situation, where each language has distinct functions based on language use and domains of use. This study looks at the status and relationship of the three languages with each other. In order to determine this, it is important to take into account the research done earlier in this field and map out the exact linguistic picture of the metropolitan city of Lahore.

Language users in not only Lahore but also in other urban centres of Punjab choose their codes based on particular functions, there is a 'socially based and culturally valued functional

differentiation' (Fishman *et al.*, 1968) between the three codes present in this multilingual society. There is a general consensus that one code or variety has a 'high' status and the other a 'low' status. Generally in such situations there is a functional partitioning between the codes; the H being reserved for 'formal' public use, often legally recognized as the Official Language of the state, where the formal linguistic features are more complex and more conservative than those of the L variety, used in a respected and perhaps ancient literature in contrast with the 'unofficial' status, 'hearth and home' use of the L with its variable and frequently 'reduced' structure, limited to the spoken channels of communication. Such a linguistic situation is said to be a 'diglossia' situation.

## **2.2 The Language Context in Lahore and Punjab**

The national language of Pakistan is Urdu. English enjoys the status of official language in the country. Punjabi is the indigenous language of Punjab with nearly 61 million speakers, which comprise of 38% of the population of Pakistan (Coleman 2010, p. 12). In addition to these three languages, there are believed to be 70 more living languages with four major indigenous languages spoken in Pakistan. In order to understand the complex linguistic situation in Lahore it is important to take into account the overall linguistic context of the country. The table below gives an over view of the linguistic picture of Pakistan.

Table 2.1. Pakistani languages with over 1,000,000 first language speakers in Pakistan

No	Language Name	Speakers (Millions)	Percentage of Population
1	Punjabi	60.6	38.3
2	Pushto	18.9	12
3	Sindhi	18.5	11.7
4	Saraiki	13.8	8.7
5	Urdu	10.7	6.8
6	Balochi	5.7	3.6
7	Other languages	29.9	18.9
	Total	158.1	100.0

The data presented in this table are extracted from Lewis 2009 and republished in Coleman 2010.

The table(2.1) depicting the major languages spoken in Pakistan presents an interesting picture: the language of Punjab has the most number of speakers, yet it is considered an indigenous language and the national language of Pakistan comes in fifth place among the major languages with fewer than 7% of the population that uses it as their first language. English, the official language of Pakistan is the first language of a tiny elite in Pakistan (Coleman 2010, p. 23), yet it enjoys the most prestige and power out of all the languages used in Pakistan. Lahore, being the metropolitan of Punjab, has become an amalgamation of people belonging to the rural areas of Punjab. Many of them work in Lahore, others have settled in Lahore after the Partition of India. Such people have strong linguistic ties with their mother tongue but in order to survive in the metropolitan they have to use Urdu and English for communication. These two languages are considered prestigious in their own right and their utilitarian value cannot be denied.

The current scenario in Lahore is that Punjabi is the mother tongue of the native people and thus is commonly used within intimate and social circles. Urdu, the national language, enjoys the status of the Lingua Franca, helping speakers with diverse linguistic backgrounds to communicate and co-exist with the larger population, native or non-native. English, the legacy of the British Empire and the language of status, bureaucracy and elite is used for official communication. Majority of the people learn and use English for instrumental rather than integrative reasons. The constitution of Pakistan recognizes the status of Urdu as the National

Language. The language policies as highlighted in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan are as follows:

- a) The National language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day.
- b) Subject to clause (a) the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.
- c) Without prejudice to the status of the National language, a Provincial Assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language (Article 251).

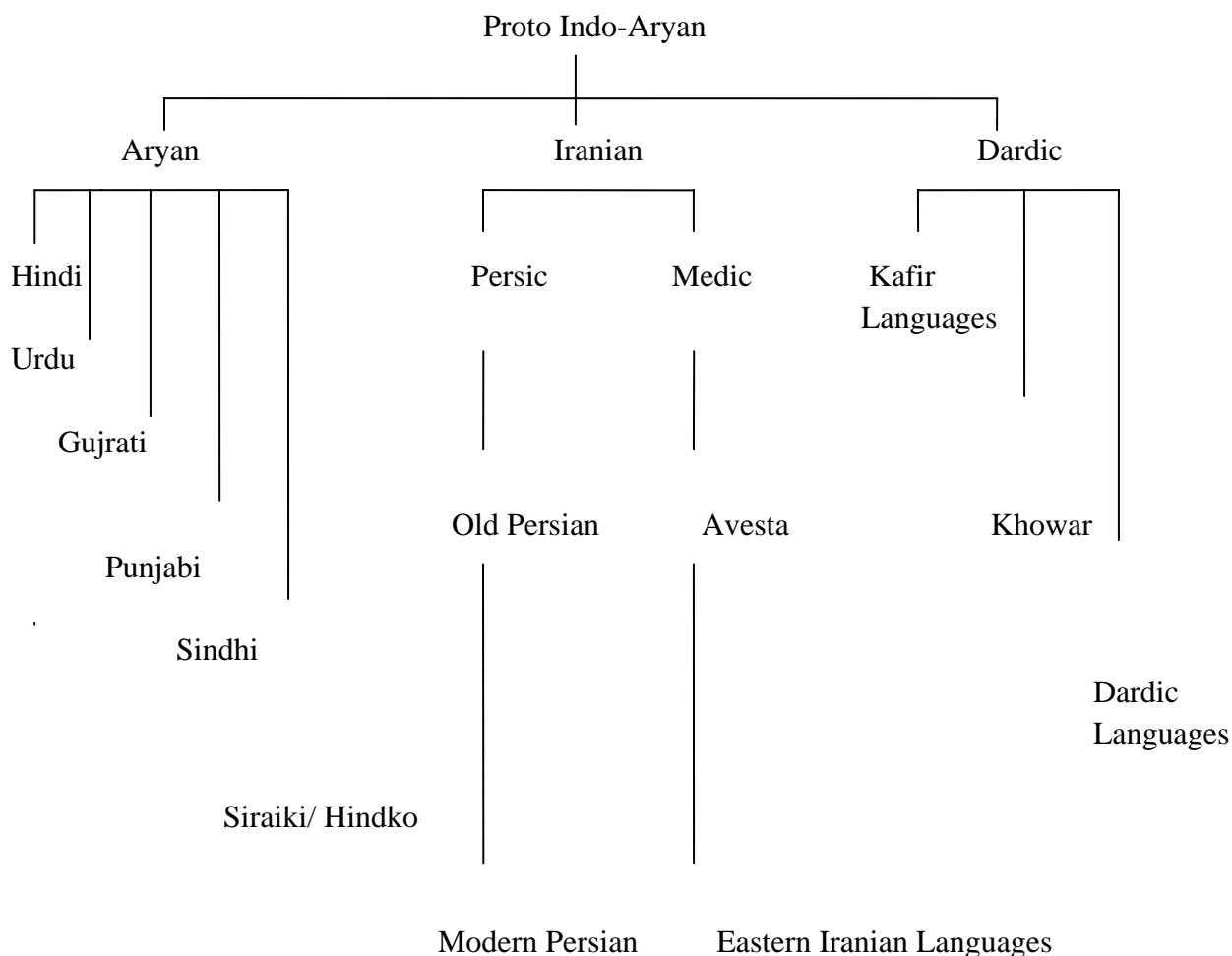
However, the actual linguistic picture evident in the country is quite different, where, even after thirty seven years, English still enjoys a higher prestige than Urdu and Urdu enjoys a higher status than Punjabi, the indigenous language of Punjab, thus presenting the unique development of a 'triglossia' situation.

### **2.3 The Linguistic Perspective of Punjab**

Ever since the independence of Pakistan, the controversy surrounding the adoption of a uniform language/s in Pakistan has not been resolved. It is important to take an overview of the linguistic situation of Pakistan in general and Punjab in particular, in relation with the multicultural aspects. Since 'diglossia' is a language situation that take centuries to develop, the linguistic scenario prevalent in the Sub-continent, especially in Punjab, before the partition of India helps in giving a better picture of the situation in Lahore today.

## 2.4 Punjabi—Origin and Background

The various languages spoken in Punjab are grouped under the Proto Indo-Aryan languages. George Grierson carried out a research on the origin of the various languages spoken in the Sub-continent in the earlier part of the twentieth century. In Grierson's view, the dominant language spoken in Punjab and in Lahore—Punjabi is the descendant of the Takka Apabhramasa of the North Central Punjab and the Upanagara Apabhramasa of the Southern Punjab (Grierson 1927, p. 126). Interestingly, this language was known by its current name, Punjabi, only after the Muslim conquest of India. According to Rehman (2000) the very term Punjab is from Persian (*Punj*= five and *ab*=water or river). Since the five rivers flow through this region, Persian chroniclers called it Punjab. This name took the place of the earlier names of the region. Rehman (2000) also points out that along with this, Amir Khusrau, writing in 1317, calls the language of Lahore not Punjabi but Lahori. When the locals of Punjab converted to Islam, they not only adopted the Islamic way of life but the Arabic and Persian words became a part of their Islamic identity, even today, words that denote the Islamic way of life cannot be separated from Punjabi. Rehman (2000) has highlighted an interesting situation where linguistically Pakistan, and in this case Punjabi faces two directions: India—since its roots are Dravidian as well as Indo-Aryan; and the Middle East—since its script and vocabulary owe much to Arabic and Persian. The figure below best explains the origin and relationship of the major languages spoken in Punjab:



*Fig 2.1: The Proto Indo-Aryan Languages*

Note: This chart is abstracted from Grieson 1927, p. 120 and Rehman 2006, p. 40.

The languages showing relationship with Punjabi have been shown only.

## **2.5 Colonial education policies regarding Punjabi before Partition**

Punjab, the land of the five rivers became a British territory in 1849. At the time when the British took control of this area by defeating the Sikhs, the official language was Persian, though religious schools taught Punjabi in the Gurmukhi script (Adm Rep-P 1853, p. 98). The need for a language policy in Punjab was evident to facilitate correspondence between officers using vernaculars and their superiors in Delhi. It was proposed that Urdu should be used as the official