The Role of Language in Shaping Individual Identities: A Case Study of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazirabad

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Language assumes main role in forming individual identities and in recognizing how one group is unique in relation to a different group. Though a gathering might separate itself by its ethnic and cultural types, the sort of dress its individuals wear, for their nourishment, the houses they manufacture or the gathering's, tattoos, symbols and explicit observes, the language divides individuals generally unequivocally. This paper investigated the power of language in building individual identities at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Benazirabad context with an attention on how individuals tend to prioritize languages other than their indigenous ones to shape their identity. A very fundamental territories of this investigation were the means by which language and various factors (social, employment, economic empowerment, Educational, global discourse, success in life) are answerable for making individual identities. Data were collected from a sample of 50 students using a mixed method, because of nature of the study, data were gathered through questionnaire and open ended questions from 8 respondents to get in-depth understanding about the individual identities. The findings of this study reveals that the manner in which individuals communicate in multi languages in various settings reveal their individual identity. This study was a comprehension of the power of language in developing and constructing identities. The findings indicated that individuals' use of multiple languages in various situations is a reflection of their unique personal identity. Consequently, this study has the potential to establish a basis for comprehending the significance of language in shaping individual identities. Moreover, findings suggest that even though they love their native languages but due to different reasons they gave preferences to English and Urdu which are dominant languages in Pakistan.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a method for transmission and communicating feelings, belief and sentiments. Language can connect individuals, language can separate individuals. It can in like manner

comprise techniques for validating one's character or one's peculiarity from others. A language might be the perfect means to articulate the stand-out identity of a get-together. Language is the advantaged moderate in which we 'comprehend' things, in which significance is created and traded. Identity is basically the person's idea of oneself, similarly as the one of a kind and unique person's interpretation of the social significance of oneself, inside his/her interior get-together and the greater society. Identity is a dynamic, amazing and advancing procedure. Norton (1997) characterizes the way of life as, how individuals comprehend their association to the external world, how that connection is developed crosswise over time and gap, and how people comprehend and recognize their potential for future (p.410). Moreover, the multi-faceted role of language in education, English proficiency is not just a skill but a gateway to a broader world of knowledge and opportunities. English, as a global language, holds immense importance in various academic and professional domains. In educational settings, a strong command of English opens up opportunities for students to access a wide range of resources, including academic literature, online courses, and research materials. It not only aids in understanding and engaging with global perspectives but also enhances one's ability to communicate and collaborate on an international level. Furthermore, the emphasis on English proficiency reflects the recognition of its role in modern communication, particularly in the digital age. English is often the language of instruction in higher education and is widely used in academic publications, conferences, and collaborations.

Pagel argues that language is an inherent aspect of our genetic makeup, shaping human development throughout history and driving the creation of new technologies. The diversity of identities in different domains is a result of language's influence. Despite its original purpose of facilitating communication, the challenge arises in multilingual communities, such as in Pakistan, where it not only hinders the smooth transfer of thoughts due to language differences but also contributes to the dominance of one language over others. This research aims to illustrate how multilingualism in the Pakistani context plays a role in shaping individual identities. The study identifies factors contributing to the elevation of one language over another and explores how users express identities associated with different languages. Language plays a crucial role in societal interactions, encompassing morning greetings, neighborhood chats, discussions, and fulfilling various communicative needs, thus constructing identities based on societal requirements. Drawing on Bourdieu's perspective, language's value in group relations and individual interactions is emphasized, highlighting its significance in reflecting the worth of those who speak it and contributing to the identity of the person uttering it.

Scope of the Study

This study delves into the intricate relationship between language and individual identity, particularly in the context of language choice for self-identity shaping. In Pakistan, where language is revered as a fundamental tool for communication, this research holds significant importance. It not only fosters sociolinguistic awareness among the researchers but also extends its impact to the broader society, enabling them to develop a deeper comprehension of their own language as both an active medium of expression and a potent indicator of their unique identity. Moreover, the research has the potential to spark meaningful conversations about linguistic diversity and inclusivity. In a country as diverse as Pakistan, where multiple languages coexist, the study may serve as a bridge, facilitating dialogue and understanding among different linguistic communities. By recognizing and respecting the role of language in shaping individual

identities, society can move towards a more inclusive and appreciative stance, acknowledging the richness that linguistic diversity brings.

Research objectives

- To comprehend the connection of individual identity with languages.

- To understand the reasons and intentions behind individuals placing less emphasis on indigenous languages and choosing a dominant language to shape their identity.

Research Questions

1. How do languages build individual identity?
2. What factors lead individuals to prioritize dominant languages over indigenous ones in forming their identities?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different examiners thought intently and regularly constitutive association between languages similarly as identities. Language isn't simply seen as the wellspring of identity development; anyway with its help appreciation of others identity is being created. As showed by specialists language is the place of identity more over identity is consequences of language, it is the principle field for its interest. (Crawshaw, Callen, and Tusting, 2001; Ros I Solé, 2004; Shi, 2006).

Dominant Languages Construct Identities in Pakistan:

Constructed Identities as historically

Concept of identity according to historically, numerous specialists believe and conclude that language is firmly associated with influence in Pakistan. Linguistically Pakistan is miscellaneous nation i.e Multilingualism. Kachru depicts multilingualism as "linguistic conduct relies upon using more than two languages as indicated by the situation." (Kachru 1986a: 159). Since British here official language is English; Urdu is national language as it is the primary language of Mohajirs. Pakistan have five languages as an indigenous included Sindhi Punjabi, Siraiki, Balochi, Pashto, and others. The most influential and dominant language in Multilingual setting of Pakistan are English and Urdu. Therefore English is the wellspring of receiving work or job and Urdu is considered symbol of national identity (Rahman 2000: 41-42), being a worker is accepted to be influential in current social cultures. It is seen in credible languages; users can get a larger number of achievements in lifespan as comparison to users of different languages. (Rahman 2002: 38-42).

Constructed Identities as politically

The language which is broadly spread in Pakistan is Urdu language it is used as a language. The speakers of Urdu believe more modern and stylish than the users of indigenous languages. On its highpoint, It's a symbol of construction a united together 'Pakistani' identity. The Mohajirs

endured predominant in urban zones as they didn't learn Sindhi, while Sindhi needed to learn Urdu. (Rahman 2002: Chapter 10). To put it plainly, languages which are indigenous are given not that much significance than Urdu. (Rahman 2002: 36). What occurs as Bourdieu additionally noticed; that dominant language those underneath individuals begin to build identities, this language turns into a 'social capital'. (1991: 230-231)

Constructed Identities in education

Identity construction alongside with different role and power of language is utilization in educational sector. Rahman (1996) argues, in Pakistan widespread urban and national language is Urdu which is the mode of instructing in public schools whereas English being authentic and global language is particularly educated in technology and science subjects at more significant levels particularly to the individuals who look to examine science and technology. There is the expanding significance of English in each area (Abbas, 1993). As per the review directed by Masroor (1993)investigates on the attitude towards languages on Punjabi learners' and concluded that they positioned English most elevated, second as Urdu and third different tongues, last is Punjabi language.

Constructed Identities as culturally

Languages works as vehicles they built cultural identities, stored, transmitted and accumulated; consequently language is a reflection of culture. Bourdieu (1977) argues, we need to acknowledge in society some specific things that turns into our habits those habits turns into our social encounters, we arrange those meetings with others and it is language that help us to facilitate our communication with others. As an individual is informed that his language is second rate, negative representation is given by one to disrespect for them. Subsequently individuals start to develop their cultural identities in incredible languages.

Constructed Identities as social class

Wolff assumed, "this social chain is regularly built by linguistic differences semantic". (2000: 306). Unexpectedly, in Pakistani setting, the individuals having poor caste system, less influential people live hopeless lives. The individuals that have inferior castes to acknowledge superior social status however they themselves think individuals lesser in social scale. That is the reason they starting left their unique identities and begin to create their identities in the educated status and influential individuals. In that manner various identities are built by rich and poor as indicated by their considerations. For clear aims this identify with language-disgrace being humiliated about one's language—and consequently to conceivable language demise.

Educationally Constructed Identities

Language serves a dual purpose in education, contributing not only to identity construction but also playing a crucial role in instructional mediums. In Pakistan, Urdu, a national and widely used urban language, serves as the primary medium of instruction in government schools. On the other hand, English, recognized as the official and international language, is particularly emphasized in science and technology subjects at higher education levels, catering to individuals pursuing studies in these fields (Rahman, 1996).

Within the Pakistani educational landscape, English holds a prestigious position, especially in comparison to Sindhi and Urdu, which lack similar educational significance. Consequently, there is a notable inclination among people to prioritize the learning of English over Urdu or Sindhi in educational institutions. English not only has a strong presence in education but also dominates the media, functioning as a primary medium of communication. This underscores the increasing importance of English across various domains (Abbas, 1993). The preference for English in educational contexts is further emphasized, a survey on Punjabi students' language attitudes. The results indicated a ranking with English at the top, followed by Urdu, and other languages in third place, with Punjabi receiving the lowest priority (Masroor, 1993). This highlights a prevailing trend where English is accorded higher value and preference among students in comparison to regional languages like Urdu, Sindhi, and Punjabi.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section describes procedure used to gather information. The aim of this investigation is to give relationship of language and individual identities. The information is gathered from 50 learners of English Department at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Shahed Benazirabad. Moreover, Data were collected from 50 students having different native language such as Sindhi, urdu, Siraki, Balochi, and Punjabi by using a Quantitative and Qualitative approach, because of nature of the study, data was gathered through questionnaire and open ended questionnaire to get in-depth understanding about the individual identities.

Instruments:

The instrument which utilized in present study was Cook's (1992) revised version. This questionnaire was based on both closed ended and open ended questions were used moreover, it is divided into two sections. Section one of the questionnaires was based on nine items, which was analyzed through likert scale v. 21 SPSS. This section focused on collecting data on how language developed individual identity. Section II of the questionnaire was open ended, data were collected from 8 students, this section was more focused on comprehended and to knew the intensity of any language upon individual identity. In this part learners drawn their perspectives more clearly, so it can be more beneficial in understanding their views and opinions regarding contracted individual identity.

Table 1: Selected Participants of the Study

S. No	Languages	Number of Students
1	Sindhi	10
2	Urdu	10
3	Siraki	10
4	Balochi	10
5	Punjabi	10

This table, defines the number and selected participants in this research study

DATA ANALYSIS

Part: 1

This part will help in understanding the languages which helps to construct individual identities? Languages which selected for this study were, 1. English, 2. Sindhi, 3.Siraki, 4.Balochi, 5.Punjabi, 6.Urdu, 7. Multiple languages/others.

Table: 2 *Participants' perceptions regarding the impact of different languages on securing employment."*

No:1	To get a job			
	Languages	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
	English	46	92.0	92.0	92.0
	Urdu	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In table 2, Q No: 1, reveals that 92% of learners prioritize English proficiency, recognizing it as crucial for securing employment. This underscores their concerted efforts towards mastering the English language, highlighting its pivotal role in their pursuit of career opportunities. Additionally, it sheds light on how language acquisition, particularly in English, plays a fundamental role in shaping their individual identities, despite the presence of diverse indigenous languages. In contrast, 8% of learners express a preference for proficiency in Urdu, demonstrating a distinct linguistic inclination among a subset of respondents.

Table: 3 Participants' perceptions regarding the impact of different languages on earning money.

No:2	To earn money			
	Languages	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
	English	24	48.0	48.0	48.0
	Sindhi	11	22.0	22.0	70.0
	Urdu	10	20.0	20.0	90.0
	Other/Multiple Languages	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In table 3, Q No: 2, in this statement, 48% learners prioritize English proficiency, underscoring their belief in its pivotal role for economic empowerment, given its status as the global lingua franca. Additionally, 11% express a preference for Sindhi, while 10% favor Urdu, and 5% indicate a preference for other languages. These responses highlight a consensus among respondents regarding the economic advantage conferred by proficiency in English, relative to other languages".

Table: 4 *Participants' perceptions regarding the impact of different languages on acquiring proficiency*

No:3	To become Intellectual				
	Languages	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
	English	21	42.0	42.0	42.0
	Sindhi	10	20.0	20.0	62.0
	Urdu	8	16.0	16.0	78.0
	Other/Multiple Languages	11	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In table 4, Q No:3, in this statement, analysis indicates that 42% of learners prioritize English language, while 20% focus on Sindhi, 8% on Urdu, and 11% express interest in multiple languages. This suggests that, according to learners, proficiency in English fosters intellectual growth by granting access to diverse cultures and their respective literary traditions. Furthermore, some respondents believe that multilingualism enhances intellectual capabilities, underscoring the perceived value of linguistic versatility in intellectual development.

Table: 5 *Participants' perceptions regarding the impact of different languages on making social connections*

No:4	To make friends				
	Languages	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
	English	13	26.0	26.0	26.0
	Sindhi	20	40.0	40.0	66.0
	Urdu	15	30.0	30.0	96.0
	Other/Multiple Languages	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In table 5, Q No: 4, 26% learners emphasize English language, while 40% prioritize Sindhi, and 30% favor Urdu. Only 4% express interest in other languages. According to their responses, learners believe that using their native language facilitates greater social connections. Furthermore, Urdu is considered the second most effective language for making friends, followed by Sindhi, and lastly, other languages. According to learners' responses, there is a notable belief that using their native language, particularly Sindhi and Urdu, facilitates stronger social connections. This highlights the cultural and social importance attached to these languages, as learners perceive them as effective tools for building and maintaining relationships within their communities. Interestingly, Urdu emerges as the second most effective language for making friends, indicating its widespread usage and acceptance within the learner community, followed by Sindhi. Other languages, according to the respondents, rank lower in terms of perceived effectiveness for social connections. This nuanced insight into language preferences

and their perceived social efficacy provides valuable context for understanding the complex interplay between language, identity, and social dynamics among learners.

Table: 6 Participants' perceptions regarding the impact of different languages on comprehending the global discourse.

No:5	To understand world			
	Languages	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
	English	36	72.0	72.0	72.0
	Sindhi	3	6.0	6.0	78.0
	Urdu	11	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In table 6, Q No: 5, among the learners, 72% prioritize English language, while 22% focus on Urdu, and 6% on Sindhi. Therefore, this emphasizes the fundamental belief that English is indispensable for comprehending the global discourse, given its status as the lingua franca. This linguistic preference aligns with the broader trend where proficiency in English is often associated with increased opportunities and access to global knowledge networks. Moreover, emphasis on English in this context not only highlights its practical utility but also highlights its perceived value in shaping individual identities within the broader global context. Proficiency in English is often associated with increased employability, educational prospects, and the ability to navigate diverse cultural and professional environments. The emphasis on English, therefore, is not merely a linguistic choice but a strategic decision driven by the awareness of its practical advantages.

Table: 7 Participants' perceptions regarding the impact of different languages on passing examination.

No:6	To pass exams			
	Languages	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
	English	26	52.0	52.0	52.0
	Sindhi	8	16.0	16.0	68.0
	Punjabi	3	6.0	6.0	74.0
	Urdu	10	20.0	20.0	94.0
	Other/Multiple Languages	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In table 7, Q No: 6, according to the responses, 52% of learners emphasize the significance of English language, followed by 16% for Sindhi. This consensus becomes particularly pronounced in the context of academic examinations, where English proficiency is evidently considered a key factor for success and effective communication. The dominance of English, as indicated by the majority preference, suggests that learners recognize the language's instrumental role in academic achievements. English proficiency is not only viewed as a means of effective

communication but also as an essential skill for excelling in examinations, reflecting its pervasive influence on educational outcomes.

Table: 8 Participants' perceptions regarding using different languages for communicating with teachers and peers

No:7	To talk to friends/ teachers in institutions				
	Languages	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
	English	27	54.0	54.0	54.0
	Sindhi	12	24.0	24.0	78.0
	Urdu	11	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In table 8, Q No: 7, in this statement: Analysis reveals that 54% of learners prioritize English proficiency, followed by 24% for Sindhi and 22% for Urdu. This underscores the crucial role of English in educational settings, facilitating effective communication with both teachers and peers. English proficiency is not merely a linguistic skill but a strategic asset for learners in educational settings. The preference for English suggests a pragmatic understanding of its global relevance, highlighting its role in effective communication, academic success, and broader participation in the interconnected world of education.

Table: 9 *Participants' perceptions regarding the most spoken language outside the Institutions.*

No:8	To talk to people outside of institutes				
	Languages	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
	English	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Sindhi	18	36.0	36.0	48.0
	Urdu	24	48.0	48.0	96.0
	Other/Multiple Languages	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In table 9, Q No: 8, in this statement, 36% emphasize English, while 48% prioritize Urdu. Additionally, 12% focus on English once again, and 45% express interest in other languages. This highlights the significance of learners' native languages as a crucial component of their identity, particularly outside the academic realm. Moreover, within native languages, Urdu holds the primary position, followed by Sindhi, which emerges as the second most widely spoken. This pattern is consistent with the prioritization of respective languages in other provinces across the country. Additionally, in a globalized world, where communication extends beyond borders, expressing interest in other languages signals an appreciation for the interconnectedness of human experiences. It is an acknowledgment that each language, whether widely spoken or spoken by a small community, contributes to the tapestry of human expression.

Table: 10 Participants' perceptions regarding the most used language which give success in life.

No: 9	To be successful in life				
	Languages	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
	English	39	78.0	78.0	78.0
	Sindhi	3	6.0	6.0	84.0
	Urdu	5	10.0	10.0	94.0
	Other/Multiple Languages	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In table 10, Q No: 9, in this statement, among the learners, 78% prioritize English proficiency, while 10% focus on Urdu, and 6% each for Sindhi and other languages. Learners likely perceive English as a key tool that opens doors to a multitude of opportunities, from accessing global information and resources to participating in an increasingly interconnected world. This collective emphasis on English underscores the widely held belief among learners that proficiency in the language is crucial for achieving success in life.

Quantitative Analysis Part-II:

This part is helped in understanding the influence of any language upon individual identities. Some respondent's showed biasness on some questions, and but some responses were neutral. Majority of students expressed a deep appreciation for the richness of various languages. One student eloquently articulated this sentiment, affirming that English serves as their professional medium, Urdu is cherished for its emotional resonance, and Sindhi holds a special place as a source of cultural pride and identity. This sentiment reflects a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted roles that languages play in their lives. Another response was as a prevailing sentiment among the majority of students were in a preference for watching television programs in multiple languages. A substantial number of them express a fondness for content in Urdu and Sindhi, appreciating the cultural depth and familiarity these languages bring. Additionally, a significant cohort also enjoys content in English, acknowledging its global reach and influence. Interestingly, one of student stood out, noting their enthusiasm for viewing programs in all available languages, showcasing a remarkable appreciation for linguistic diversity and a keen interest in diverse cultural perspectives. This diversity in viewing preferences reflects the students' broad appreciation for the various linguistic and cultural dimensions that television content can offer. Moreover other response was the issue of whether youngster should learn their native languages, including English, Sindhi, Urdu, and Siraki, has sparked a diverse range of responses within the respondents. On one hand, they argued that a solid foundation in one's native language is crucial for cultural preservation and identity. They contend that knowing and understanding one's mother tongue fosters a sense of belonging and pride in one's heritage. This sentiment resonates strongly with those who believe that cultural diversity is a cornerstone of a vibrant and inclusive society. Furthermore, the majority of learners argue that acquiring proficiency in the English language is paramount for securing employment, given its widespread

use across various sectors in today's globalized world. They emphasize that English proficiency opens doors to a wide array of job opportunities. On the other hand, two of students contend that proficiency in their native language can also lead to employment prospects. They highlight the increasing demand for translators, freelancers, and subject specialists in various fields. This perspective emphasizes the importance of preserving and valuing one's own linguistic heritage in the context of a diverse and interconnected world. Additionally, some students argue that using their native language in institutions is more beneficial, while others believe that a mix of all languages is the beauty of a country anywhere. Many students feel that using just one language, such as English, in institutions causes problems as they may not understand the material as effectively." Also, Sindhi speakers advocate for Sindhi to be designated as our national language, while Urdu speakers express contentment, citing that Urdu already holds the status of the national language, deeming it a commendable choice.

DISCUSSION

The scholarly literature collected was juxtaposed with the quantitative and qualitative results obtained in this Study. Based on the findings, it was found out that the way students express themselves in multiple languages across different contexts serves as a window into their personal identity. This research delved into the significant role of language in shaping and forming identities. The findings revealed that, despite a deep affection for their mother tongues, individuals often gravitated towards English and Urdu, the prevailing languages in Pakistan, for various reasons. These preferences were influenced by factors such as educational opportunities, career prospects, and cultural integration. Students who prioritize English proficiency are likely aware of the potential benefits it offers in terms of academic success, career opportunities, and participation in the global community. The analysis also sheds light on the regional context, with 24% of learners prioritizing Sindhi and 22% Urdu. This suggests the importance of regional languages in certain educational contexts, possibly tied to cultural identity and community connections. While English may be crucial for broader academic and professional pursuits, the prioritization of regional languages highlights the value placed on preserving and promoting linguistic diversity. English proficiency is not just a skill but a gateway to a broader world of knowledge and opportunities. However, the attention given to regional languages also emphasizes the cultural and community-specific aspects of education, acknowledging the diverse linguistic landscape in which learning takes place. Additionally, the study highlighted the intricate interplay between linguistic choices and one's sense of self. It underscored how proficiency and fluency in specific languages can impact social interactions, professional development, and the overall perception of an individual's identity within their community and society at large. This dynamic relationship between language and identity underscores the nuanced complexities that individuals navigate in their linguistic repertoire.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveals that the manner in which individuals communicate in multi languages in various settings reveal their individual identity. Therefore, all languages on the planet have equivalent significance and worth. From all above data analysis, it is found that even though they love their native languages but due to different reasons they give preferences to English and Urdu which are dominant languages in Pakistan. They signify as a respective group

all around the world, no language is better than other. Furthermore, social groups must be represented by their own native languages. In the world all languages ought to be regarded esteemed. An indigenous languages conveys the social and cultural heap of Pakistan and shows thousand years of history of Pakistan and also history of its regions. It is a major obligation of the nation and all residents of the nation to protect, esteem, and advance languages which are indigenous in the nation alongside national and foreign languages. With respect when we are talking about Urdu language, it must keep on understanding our national language. It is clear, Urdu is our identity and broadly communicated language of the nation, everybody could definitely communicate in Urdu as comparison to any other native, second or foreign language, Urdu is not difficult to learn due to its basic and simple rules, one can undoubtedly acquire Urdu, though, different languages such as Sindhi, Siraki, Punjabi, Pashto Arabic, are hard to learn.

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