

LANGUAGE SHIFT AMONG THE BIHARI COMMUNITY IN DHAKA

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Brac Institute of Languages in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in TESOL

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Abstract

This study examined the linguistic dynamics of the Bihari population in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Using a qualitative method, it focused on the variables affecting language shift and the community's response to linguistic changes. Results show the Bihari population's complicated linguistic context where they have been compelled adapt to language changes for social and economic survival. The study also explored the linguistic patterns between generations, the difficulties people encounter outside of the camps, and community-based educational possibilities.

Keywords:

Bihari Community, Language Shift, Diglossia

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and faculty members. I would not be able to progress this far without the assistance of Allah as well as my mother, Mahmuda Akter and my father, Md Jahangir Alam Khondaker.

Whenever I felt lost and was not being able to believe in my capabilities, my mother did and she has supported me throughout my life. I am immensely grateful to my Boro Mama (Md Golam Mostafa) and Choto Mama (Md Mortuza Khondaker) for being there as a shadow.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter Overview

The dissertation begins with an introduction that provides background information on the topic of language shift in the Dhaka Bihari community. It gives background information, explains the study's importance, and aims to put the language dynamics of this particular community in context. The study questions and objectives are established in the introduction, which also provides a framework for the ensuing chapters.

1.2 Background and Context

The process by which a community or population eventually stops using its traditional or native language in favor of another language is known as “language shift.” This phenomenon, which results in a loss in the native language’s intergenerational transmission, is frequently caused by social, economic, political, or cultural circumstances. Language shift can be caused by a number of factors, including government initiatives to support a dominant language or colonization, globalization, urbanization, migration, and so on. When speakers of a language adopt a new language for communication in a variety of contexts, the old language may become endangered or extinct within a community or region. Bangladesh is an independent country and the Bihari community has been living in Bangladesh. Muslims of India, including the Biharis, think that Bangladesh is also their home. This partition happened when Bangladesh joined Pakistan as a federal state. The communal riot was the main reason why the Bihari community was expelled from their homeland (Rahaman et al., 2020). People of different ages and professions exist in this community and they are a part of Bangladesh. Their ancestors existed in Bangladesh and they are residing here since then. The current scenario is such that despite being a de facto Bangla

speaking community, they do not enjoy the facilities as Bangladeshi citizens. So, they are facing an identity crisis that has been leading to numerous problems in their lives. A prime problem that they have to deal with is adjustment with language shift. They shift from one language to another so that they can survive, earn their livelihood, and communicate with out of Bihari communities when it is necessary. It is a common scenario for them. Unfortunately, they are stuck between two cultures outside their home (Rahaman et al., 2020). Though they were given citizenship by the Government of Bangladesh, they are still considered as the 'other'. As a result, language shift holds an important role where this Bihari community is shifting their language to survive in this country as a minor community despite having citizenship like the Bangladeshis. There are many issues that are connected with this language shift in the Bihari community where they are victims of many unfortunate incidents just because they are Bihari.

1.3 Language Shift and the Bihari Community

Language shift studies face challenges in the diaspora communities in maintaining their ancestral languages (Krishnan & Sharmini, 2022). Language shift happens due to many factors, and colonialism is one of them. Since 1947, when India was divided, the Biharis, an Urdu-speaking ethnic group, have existed in Bangladesh. Farzana (2008) states that there exist over 300,000 Biharis with no defined identity. In addition, they had migrated to the then East Pakistan which later on turned to Bangladesh. They are Bihari Muslims, an ethnic minority. Moreover, they had failed to resonate with the Bengali Muslim society due to their gap in language. The reason was that Bangladeshi people were Bengali language-speaking community due to their nationalism. So, it was challenging for the Biharis to assimilate into the Bengali Muslim society (Alam, 2011). So, a language gap exists between these two communities. It deprives minorities of basic civics rights like education and health care. It is

also a fact that most of them are usually engaged in demeaning jobs. This community is still surviving in Bangladesh and they are also using their language. The main purpose of this study was to discover the key factors that influence language shift among the Bihari community in Dhaka, as well as the current scenario of language shift in this community. The study focused on the strategies that Biharis follow to maintain their languages and the key factors that influence language shift within their community.

1.4 Research Questions

This study was based on the following two questions:

1. What are the key factors that influence language shift among the Bihari community in Dhaka?
2. What is the scenario of their current condition of language shift?

1.5 Research Objectives

Objectives of the study

1. To discover the key factors that influence language shift among the Bihari community in Dhaka.
2. To review the current condition of language shift among the Bihari community.

1.6 Significance of the study

The Bihari community was forced to migrate from different regions of India in 1947 (Rahaman et al., 2020). After that, they had to face obstacles as they started living in Bangladesh even if they got their identity as citizens of Bangladesh. So, they have existed

here for a long time and they are speaking Bangla and Urdu, and Hindi and keep on shifting their language in their regular life. It is essential to address this issue of language shift among the Bihari community in Dhaka so that we understand the scenario of the current condition as well as the key factors that influence their language shift. They are assigned different livelihood options where they switch between languages as mentioned above. In addition, they were unable to get admission at school years back; even if they wanted to. So, this study will contribute to the existing literature. It will also discuss whether the Bihari community is comfortable with this language `shift or not. So, this research aims to make contributions toward the discussion of the language shift among the Bihari community in Dhaka. It also will clarify the current scenario of the language shift among the Bihari community. Moreover, this study will also help the readers to understand the situation and some obstacles that they face due to their identity as Bihari which is connected with language shift. Lastly, the ending of this research will lead the readers towards unveiling the actual language shift scenario in the existing literature.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

A thorough literature review that explores the theoretical tenets that guide the investigation is provided in the second chapter. Language transition, the history of the Bihari community, diglossia, and attitudes about language are all covered in the conversation. The objective of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework for comprehending the intricacies of language dynamics in the context of Bihari language. So, this chapter discusses about some theoretical approaches which resonates with this study. Firstly, it addresses the idea of language shift. Then it addresses the language shift in Bihari community. In addition, it focuses on diglossia and attitude towards language.

2.2 Language Dynamics and Social Identity

Language use is a form of social interaction that happens in many different contexts. The speech communities use a variety of language patterns, abilities, and behaviors (Brenzinger, 2017). The activity that will maintain social interaction will be conversing with people who use different languages. It will be more successful if the discussion activity is backed by extra factors, such as attitude and context (Jabeen, 2011).

Language is a socially useful tool for expressing one's self-identity. Language has occasionally been seen to represent preexisting social divisions and social norms, according to Mesthrie et al. (2000). It may imply that people talk the way they do due to social determinism. The Biharis are the Urdu-speaking residents of Bangladesh who moved to erstwhile East Pakistan during India's partition in the 1940s in an effort to prevent intergroup

conflict, preserve their Muslim identities, and create better futures. 2 Because most Biharis opposed the creation of Bangladesh and sided with the Pakistani government during the Bangladesh Liberation War, they were shunned and rejected after Bangladesh's independence in 1971. They are merely stateless people at this point. 3 They are qualified for citizenship under Bangladeshi law.

2.3 Bihari Community

In Bangladeshi use, the term "Biharis" refers to the Muslim immigrants from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar who spoke Urdu and had moved to the former East Pakistan. Bangladesh has a linguistic minority that differs from the others in a number of ways: the Bihari people. Because of the disagreement inside the community in Bihar between 1946 and 1947, this community sought refuge in Bangladesh. It was unclear in the early years of Pakistan whether these people belonged in the categories of refugees, voluntarily migrated persons, political or stateless people. Since 1951, when they were granted Pakistani citizenship, they have had advantages in both the social and economic realms. The Bihari ethnic group in Bangladesh is a manufactured minority as a result of its social, political, and historical background. Even though they are similar to the majority of Bengalis in that they worship the same religion, Islam, and have learned to speak the same language, Bangla, Biharis are treated differently in Bangladesh in terms of identity, nationality, and social, economic, and political standing. The problem is the result of political apathy and deliberate procrastination on the sides of Pakistan and Bangladesh. Yet, when it comes to solving the problem that the Bihari population is experiencing, neither Pakistan nor Bangladesh have made any headway.

2.4 The complex History and Discrimination Faced by Bihari Community

Biharis who speak Urdu have a very unique reputation in Bangladesh. Their identity does not fit the criteria for being an ethnic minority, a refugee, a diaspora member, etc. They were known to as “stranded Pakistanis” because, despite being citizens of Pakistan (the post-partition ideological home of Muslims), their country had abandoned them. Pakistan was reluctant to take the migrants in, thus they were left with no choice but to stay in Bangladesh with an unknown future. Pakistan’s current political and economic situation made it difficult for them to welcome those people into their nation. Due to two competing nationalist currents that were stoked by the 1971 independence war, they were victimized (Hashmi, 1998). By passing the Indian Independence Act in 1947, the British government chose to postpone the independence of the Indian subcontinent. Religion was supposed to be the key difference between India and Pakistan according to the two-nation ideology, which encouraged this division and stoked nationalist feelings in both countries. Muslims in East and West Pakistan cheered the separation of religion and Hindus for this reason. Religion, however, was unable to maintain this relationship for very long. Nonetheless, other experts disagreed with the notion of two nations. The establishment of Bangladesh in 1971 disproved and rendered absurd the two-nation theory put out by some academics. But, since so many nations have tried in the past and failed, it will be challenging for a nation to keep politics and religion separate.

Religion is the social glue that binds people together and promotes stability (Turner, 2006). In addition, during the partition, a violent uprising occurred, especially among Hindus and Muslims, which drove 10-12 million people from their homes (Talbot & Singh, 2009; cited in Nair, 2010). As a result, there was a significant refugee issue. A victim of this division was the modern Bihari population, which originated in several provinces of India. Since they were

afraid of being killed by ferocious Hindu nationalist organizations in India, Biharis fled to East and West Pakistan. Both sides referred to them as Muhajir and congratulated them for it.

The disruption of India's and Pakistan's independence on August 14 and 15, 1947 had a direct bearing on the entrance of Biharis in Bangladesh. They are non-Bengalis who are Muslims and who formerly lived in a number of British Indian provinces, the bulk of which were close to Bengal. A million Muslims were compelled to flee to East Pakistan, which later became Bangladesh in 1971, as a result of the violence and pogroms that occurred before and after the 1947 partition, particularly the "Great Calcutta Killings" of 16–20 August 1946 (see Farzana, 2009: 234, n. 6; Malik, 2000: 13–4) and communal violence in the Indian state of Bihar. (Hamid, 1967: 238; Weiner, 1996: 20; Azad, 1988: 20). These people came to East Pakistan in part because their leaders convinced them that doing so was the only way to leave Hindu-dominated India and its never-ending suffering. Less wealthy sectors flocked to East Pakistan's dense population since it was closer to Bihar and so easier to penetrate, whereas wealthy businesses relocated further out in West Pakistan, notably among Bihari migrants (Huque, 1990: 276). The poor and less educated Bihari refugees were enticed there by job opportunities in addition to being close to East Pakistan's industrial and urban hubs.

Farzana(2009)states that there are strong evidences that suggests that some Biharis actively assisted and collaborated with the Pakistani Army during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, which is directly tied to the discriminatory designation of Biharis in Bangladesh. In addition, this exposed the entire community to the Bengalis' fury which immediately set off a response that led to the murder of several men and the rape of numerous women. Moreover, Kelly(2010) discusses that within months of Bangladesh's creation, between 70,000 and 100,000 Urdu-speaking Biharis were slaughtered, and both their goods and homes were taken.

2.5 Language Shift

Language shift refers to the transition from one language to another that has more mechanisms and economic facilities over the time. Fishman (1991) uses the term language shift or LS. He refers to this situation where particular speakers or communities decide to choose their favorable language. This is imagined as a context where various linguistic groups come in touch with one another. One such scenario is one in which multiple linguistic groups interact, exhibit distinctive behaviors toward the languages used (such as attitudes, switching, planning, etc.), modify their habitual language practices over time (such as varying degrees of bilingualism), and as a result exhibit diverse proficiencies and frequencies of use in different contexts (Fishman,1964).As a result, language shift exists in this community and many other aspects are closely connected with the livelihood of the inhabitants of this community.

Furthermore, when “a community completely abandons one language in favor of another,” linguistic shift occurs (Fasold 1984:213). In a study on the shift away from indigenous. It is conceivable for one language to “partially or totally” give way to another during this transition from Australian languages to English. The working definition chosen by the NWT Literacy Council (1999:3, 10) describes language shift as a process of evolution through generations: If grandparents do not speak the same language as their elders, a language shift has occurred. The transfer of Scottish people to Nova Scotia in the 18th and 19th centuries or of Indians to South Africa in the late 19th century are two examples of historical spatial migration that are connected to studies on language change.

But there are other examples of language change in the past where other social factors were more important. Take into account factors like the status and influence of the colonizer language (as with Australian Aborigines) or embarrassment at being associated with the

community of origin (as with German communities in the USA during and after World War II) that led to a shift towards English in each situation. I believe, language shift also occurs due to the proficiency level of the speakers. As a result, they can shift and they do it for their survival.

2.6 Diglossia

Yet, the basis for this stability with bilingualism is the concept of diglossia. There are two distinct dialects of the same language spoken in the neighborhood, each with a distinct function (Ferguson, 1959: 325). Low (L) and high (H) varieties are the two options (L). According to Ferguson's well-known idea of diglossia, the H variety is used in formal contexts like written literature and education, and the L variety is used in social situations. Furthermore, this unique functional distribution suggests that there are situations in which only H or L, but not both, is appropriate, despite the fact that they are complementary. The definition of diglossia to include non-genetic language relationships in multilingual contexts (Fishman, 1967).

2.7 Attitude towards Language

In general, attitudes can be divided into behavioral and psychological categories. Because there are so many different areas, attitudes have been studied and their nature has been characterized in a variety of ways in various disciplines (such as social science, cognitive psychology, and social studies) (Santello, 2013).

The population of Urdu-speaking people in Bangladesh first emerged after the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. The majority of Urdu speakers in Bangladesh are refugees from various parts of India. They came from a totally different background than other groups who had previously inhabited the area. Those residing in the camps are also referred to as

“Biharis” (people from the Indian state of Bihar), which connotes a sense of “alienation” from the neighborhood residents. The Arabic word “Mohajir,” which means “refugees,” is used to describe this group. The absence of any ties to Bangladesh is a crucial component of these people’s “otherness.”

Similar to this, the idea of a group of people who live together and speak a single language is closely related to the camps and the people who inhabit there. The bulk of the camp’s young people are Bengali speakers, yet most people think Urdu is a different language. The Urdu-speaking community in Bangladesh struggled to integrate with the Bengali majority because of the disparity in language and culture during the period of an unified Pakistan. These individuals discovered themselves in a “foreign” nation where the only East Pakistanis present were those who shared their philosophical viewpoints.

Due to their year-long exile, the Bengali-speaking population tended to favor the West Pakistani government. Before the liberation struggle, their anti-Bangladeshi acts were well known (the motivations underlying their conduct vary according to different researchers). For instance, this society was inclined to adopt Urdu as the national tongue during the Language Revolution in 1952 in Bangladesh, which was not well received by the Bengali-speaking populace. A portion of the Urdu-speaking population supported the West Pakistani government during the mass movement in 1969. It was discovered that a section of this population was undoubtedly involved in anti-liberation war activities in Bangladesh as a result of these incidences. When people are classified according to their “legal status” in terms of the law, statelessness can be a component of social identity. The camp-based Urdu speakers turned down the chance to choose between Pakistani or Bangladeshi citizenship in 1972, as was already mentioned. Due to the absence of formal recognition from both countries, the repatriation process was halted and this group was left “stateless.”

Moreover, the location and socio-economic situation of the Bihari camp created a negative attitude towards these Urdu speakers. So, there is a social stigma that these places are dirty including the people staying in those colonies. The indigenous people of the newly formed East Pakistan, however, integrated Bengali-speaking Muslims from West Bengal with considerable ease. Several people had ties to East Bengal in the past through their families and sociolinguistic communities. There is no evidence that Bengalis thought about integrating or being accepted in a new nation. Since West Pakistan offered better chances for individuals with connections and social capital in terms of the economy and society, the majority of the educated upper and middle classes who spoke Urdu and had fled to East Pakistan at the same time relocated there. Most Muslims who remained in East Pakistan who were not Bengalis were refugees with little formal education and much fewer resources and relationships. The availability of urban/industrial jobs and closeness to the Indian border both have an impact on patterns of (Urdu-speaking) refugee movement in East Pakistan.] Most of the railroad employees who were refugees, including technicians, foremen, and clerks, relocated to northern areas west of the Jamuna river. The industrial and railroad townships, particularly those in Dinajpur and Rangpur, offered employment and housing options not available elsewhere. Among the other refugees who were drawn to Dhaka and Chittagong, the two largest cities in the country, were farmers, artists, and small-time traders. With the exception of a few wealthy families, the majority of Biharis in Dhaka lived in colonies; Mirpur and Mohammadpur were known as the Bihari enclaves.

In addition, those who speak Urdu, as opposed to Bengali migrants, who, although having a strong sense of sacrifice and a right to belong in (East) Pakistan, found themselves there, found themselves in a highly ambiguous national situation. The majority of Bengalis thought that those who spoke Urdu were one society that had split off into many ethnic groups to proclaim and replicate their purported superiority and cultural segregation from the rest of the

population. Urdu speakers' structural and linguistic difficulties were reframed as a racially motivated aversion to socializing with the "locals," masking their actual struggles. This point of view was made feasible, in part, by the Pakistani government's favorable treatment of those non-Bengalis who spoke Urdu, notably industrialists, which eventually came to signify a generalized position of privilege for all "Biharis."

Since Bangladesh's secession from Pakistan in 1971, the Urdu-speaking Biharis of Bangladesh have encountered challenges in exercising their full citizenship rights. Even though they are legally considered citizens, this group, which is still predominantly housed in camps and lives on the periphery of Bangladeshi society, faces discrimination when seeking for passports and other kinds of identification. This report pinpoints the key factors that influence the language shift among the Bihari community in Dhaka and the current condition of language shift within this community. This supports the idea that the Bihari people of Bangladesh are still in essence stateless. And there are some theoretical as well as conceptual aspects attached to this research so that the basis of this study is clarified to the readers.

Chapter 3

Research Design

3.1 Chapter Overview

The methodological section of this chapter encompasses the research design, sample, respondents, data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations. This segment justifies the qualitative study design and elucidates the sampling process for the Dhaka Bihari population. Additionally, ethical issues concerning consent and privacy are addressed.

3.2 Research Method

This study aimed to uncover the key factors influencing language shift among the Bihari Community in Dhaka and assess the current condition of language shift among them. Employing a qualitative approach, the study focused on investigating the major variables causing language change within the Dhaka-based Bihari community. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain nuanced insights into participants' experiences and viewpoints. A purposive sample of thirteen participants was selected from the Geneva Camp/Bihari Camp in Mohammadpur, Dhaka, ensuring diversity in age and gender to capture a range of perspectives. The interviews were recorded with consent and later transcribed for analysis using thematic methods.

3.3 Sampling

Thirteen residents from Geneva Camp/Bihari Camp in Mohammadpur, Dhaka, participated in the interviews. The participants, comprising both men and women, represented various age groups and professions within the Bihari community. The selection process aimed to provide

a comprehensive understanding of language dynamics and transitions within the community.

Respondent details, including age ,gender and occupation, are presented in the table below:

| Respondents | Age | Gender | Occupation |
|--------------------|------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| A | 34 | Male | Tailor |
| B | 32 | Male | Shopkeeper(Grocery Shop) |
| C | 19 | Male | Student, Shopkeeper at Grocery Shop |
| D | 22 | Male | Driver |
| E | 38 | Male | Shopkeeper(Grocery Shop) |
| F | 32 | Female | Maid and Home Maker |
| G | 20 | Female | Housewife |
| H | 32 | Male | Tailor (Karchupi Worker) |
| I | 26 | Female | Housewife |
| J | 26 | Female | Housewife |
| K | 60 | Female | Maid |
| L | 60 | Female | Street Food Seller |
| M | 30 | Female | Housewife |

The selection process aimed to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences within the Bihari community.

3.4 Research Tools

Preparation of interview questions was a crucial step in ensuring the effectiveness of data collection. The questions were designed to explore participants’ experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding language shift within the Bihari community. These questions were formulated based on existing literature, expert opinions, and preliminary observations to ensure relevance and depth in exploring the research objectives.

3.5 Data Collection

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the thirteen selected participants at Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur, Dhaka. Open-ended questions were utilized to encourage participants to share their experiences and perspectives freely. Interview transcripts were analyzed thematically to identify recurrent patterns and themes related to language shift dynamics.

3.6 Data Analysis and Ethical Consideration

The interviews were recorded with participants' consent and transcribed for data analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key themes and patterns in participants' responses. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the study, with measures taken to ensure participants' privacy and confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used, and interview data were not shared with third parties.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Chapter Overview

The primary conclusions from thirteen participants who were interviewed while living in the Bihari Camp are presented in the fourth chapter. It looks at the variables influencing language shifts, the state of language adaptation across generations, and factors influencing linguistic transitions. Discussions are held regarding the difficulties the Bihari community faces outside of the camp, their educational options, and the findings' larger ramifications.

4.2 Key Factors Shaping Linguistic Transitions

The difficulties and prejudices that the Bihari group faces go beyond the walls of their camps and provide insight into the intricacies of their existence in larger society. Respondent B emphasized how difficult it is to find lodging outside of the Bihari camp. He made the point that renting a dwelling elsewhere depends on homeowners' decisions, which puts the Bihari people looking for homes in a vulnerable position. Additionally, he emphasized a common circumstance in which a tenant may be approved but only after fulfilling certain requirements, indicating a kind of discrimination and adding to the difficulties placed on the community.

Respondent C, on the other hand, offered an alternative viewpoint, claiming that he had not personally faced difficulties outside of the camp. The diversity of experiences among the Bihari community highlights the complex dynamics of their relationships outside of their immediate residential setting. It is evident from the diversity of experiences shaped by

location, personal circumstances, and cultural attitudes that encounters with discrimination and problems are not universal.

These varied experiences demonstrate the complex nature of the Bihari community's interactions and reception outside of their camps. It becomes clear how difficult and complex it is for them to navigate social settings outside of their immediate residential zones, which throws light on the complex dynamics of their integration into society at large. Respondent G emphasizes the difficulties encountered outside and the tendency of many community members to restrict their interactions with the outside world by stating that he would rather remain inside the camp.

In conclusion, the difficulties and prejudices that the Bihari population experiences outside of their camps are evident in the complexities involved in finding accommodation and managing social relationships. Individual differences in these experiences highlight the importance of a complex grasp of the dynamics of the community within the larger social context.

4.3 Current Language Shift Scenario

All the respondents specifically stated that language shift happens in their daily life and they do it in order to sustain in this Bihari community. Respondent F said, "I need to speak in Bangla to communicate to people who lives outside the Bihari community and my family members do the same. My mother sells vegetables and she speaks Bangla to sell. We know that we need to speak in Bangla and I do not know to speak fluently as I didn't receive any academic knowledge. So I struggled to speak. But now I can speak better in Bangla". In addition, I asked about their daily life scenario and exposure to the language when they go outside of the camp and Respondent responded in the following:

“It is necessary to speak in Bangla when we go out and we speak in Bangla among ourselves whenever we go out as people who speak in Bangla do not understand our language which is Urdu”.

Here, he also stated that he can write as well as speak in Bangla. He studied in the school which is situated in the camp. In addition, he also added that he tries not to speak in Urdu when he is outside of the camp for better communication.

4.4 Factors behind Language Shift

Language shift happens due to socio political and economic factors. Respondent C stated that he needs to shift his language from Urdu to Bangla because he needs to communicate with stakeholders whose nationality is Bangladeshi and mother tongue is Bangla. In addition, respondent I stated that she needs to shift from her mother tongue to Bangla and it is really important to shift the language. Moreover, she expressed that she is happy with this language shift as she needs to go out of the camp and needs to speak in Bangla so she considers this as an advantage to be able to shift the language.

4.5 Survival in the Economy and Linguistic Adaptability

Respondent A said that this language shift is necessary to survive economically and they have adapted to Bangla language starting from their childhood. He can speak and write in Bangla. Respondent C stated that he feels the necessity of language shift for surviving economically. In addition, respondent G stated that she shifts language for earning her livelihood. She feels that it is necessary to speak Bangla at times.

4.6 Generational Language Shift Patterns among Bihari Community in Dhaka

Respondent A highlights that language adaptation is a shared practice within his family when investigating generational language shift within the Bihari community in Dhaka. He mentions that other members of his family also switch between languages, highlighting the group's understanding of its importance in generating income. Respondent C, whose parents have also lived in the camp since birth, exhibits a comparable linguistic pattern. Even when they use Urdu at home, they always change their vocabulary, which is consistent with the generational language adaptation that has been noted in the community. These revelations provide light on the shared perception of language as a useful instrument for socioeconomic survival and the generational continuity of language practices. Respondent G said, "It is the same for my family members and they shift language in the same pattern like I do. My mother got married and she came here and since then she is a part of Bihari camp".

4.7 Challenges and Discriminations Faced Beyond Camp

The difficulties and prejudices that the Bihari group faces go beyond the walls of their camps and provide insight into the intricacies of their existence in larger society. Respondent B emphasized how difficult it is to find lodging outside of the Bihari camp. He made the point that renting a dwelling elsewhere depends on homeowners' decisions, which puts the Bihari people looking for homes in a vulnerable position. Additionally, he emphasized a common circumstance in which a tenant may be approved but only after fulfilling certain requirements, indicating a kind of discrimination and adding to the difficulties placed on the community.

Respondent C, on the other hand, offered an alternative viewpoint, claiming that he had not personally faced difficulties outside of the camp. The diversity of experiences among the Bihari community highlights the complex dynamics of their relationships outside of their immediate residential setting. It is evident from the diversity of experiences shaped by location, personal circumstances, and cultural attitudes that encounters with discrimination and problems are not universal.

These varied experiences demonstrate the complex nature of the Bihari community's interactions and reception outside of their camps. It becomes clear how difficult and complex it is for them to navigate social settings outside of their immediate residential zones, which throws light on the complex dynamics of their integration into society at large. Respondent G emphasizes this point further by saying that she would rather remain in the camp.

In conclusion, the difficulties and prejudices that the Bihari population experiences outside of their camps are evident in the complexities involved in finding accommodation and managing social relationships. Individual differences in these experiences highlight the importance of a complex grasp of the dynamics of the community within the larger social context.

4.8 Educational Opportunities

The respondents' educational experiences provide insight into the function of schools in the Dhaka Bihari community. Respondent A stressed that since there was a school inside the camp when he was a child, he never had any trouble getting accepted to school. This not only made it easier for him to get an education, but it also shows that the community has an infrastructure for education.

Respondent G further emphasized how being accepted into a school inside the camp gave her access to scholastic resources and allowed her to learn Bangla. The camp's emphasis on

education highlights the importance of schools as settings for the development of literacy and linguistic skills among the Bihari community.

Respondent J, who has been living in Bangladesh since birth, revealed that she was exposed to Bangla language during her education up till the fifth grade. This testimony demonstrates how important schools are for students' language learning and competency. The camp's educational system serves as the main resource for acquiring Bangla, the major language that is necessary for efficient communication with those outside the settlement.

Respondent H stated that he could read and write in Bangla and attributed this ability to his schooling, having completed class 5 at a school located within the camp. This underlines the necessity of language learning for socioeconomic survival and supports the idea that the camp's schools play a significant role in imparting language skills.

Furthermore, Respondent D highlighted receiving a full language education in the camp's educational institutions by mentioning that she learned to write and speak Bangla in school. In a similar vein, Respondent C affirmed that he attended school as a child and so developed his speech, reading, and writing skills in Bangla.

In conclusion, the educational narratives provided by the respondents emphasize the vital role that schools play in the language acquisition and literacy development of the Bihari community in Dhaka, greatly assisting in their linguistic adaptation and integration into the larger linguistic and educational landscape of Bangladesh.

4.9 Discussions

The findings of the study provide valuable insights into the language dynamics within the Bihari community in Dhaka, shedding light on the factors influencing language shift and the community's adaptation to linguistic changes. The theoretical framework presented in the

literature review, encompassing concepts such as language shift, diglossia, and attitudes towards language, offers a foundation for understanding the complexities of language dynamics in the Bihari context.

Language shift, as discussed by Fishman (1991), involves the transition from one language to another, often influenced by economic considerations. The study participants' acknowledgment of the necessity to speak Bangla in their regular lives reflects this aspect of language shift. The socio-economic factors influencing language shift are consistent with Fishman's framework, highlighting the role of language in economic survival and integration within the larger Bangladeshi society. According to Fishman's approach, the socioeconomic forces promoting language shift underscore the importance of language for both economic survival and social integration within Bangladeshi culture. The participants' descriptions of speaking Urdu in the camp and switching to Bangla while engaging with people outside the Bihari community illustrate Ferguson's (1959) concept of diglossia. Ferguson's theory that high (H) and low (L) varieties serve different tasks is supported by this functional distribution of languages, which highlights the complimentary nature of these linguistic forms. The Bihari community, whose mother tongue is Urdu, has adapted to speak Bangla, displaying a practical mindset shaped by the need for effective communication and social integration.

Understanding the historical background of the Bihari group is necessary to understand their linguistic dynamics, and the literature study provides this information. The complex geopolitical background that influences language preferences and adaptations is further shaped by the community's migration during India's split in the 1940s and their opposition to Bangladesh's creation in 1971.

The study identifies patterns in language shift between generations, which is consistent with references in the literature to generational transmission of language habits. The cyclical

pattern of language change within families highlights how historical events have had a lasting effect on the linguistic identity of the Bihari group.

The difficulties the Bihari minority faces outside of the camps—discrimination in housing arrangements, for example—draw attention to the intersections between language, identity, and social integration. This is consistent with the literature’s focus on the socioeconomic and political elements that contribute to the difficulties the Bihari population in Bangladesh faces. The study’s exploration of the educational opportunities available to the Bihari population advances our knowledge of language dynamics. Educational access is supported by the camp’s schools, which highlight the relationships between language, education, and communal life.

The theoretical insights presented in the literature review are therefore reinforced and expanded upon by the study’s conclusions. The political, social, and historical contexts are deeply woven into the linguistic dynamics of the Bihari society, exhibiting a dynamic response to changing circumstances. The study contributes to a more thorough knowledge of language transition within a specific community by highlighting the relationship between language, identity, and survival strategies.

In conclusion, the results emphasize the complex process of language shift among the Bihari population in Dhaka, which is motivated by practical concerns for their ability to communicate effectively, survive economically, and assimilate into Bangladeshi culture as a whole. The study highlights the dynamic aspect of the Bihari community’s linguistic practices and offers insightful information about their lived experiences.

In summary, the study reveals that the linguistic environment of the Bihari community in Dhaka is complex and diversified. The need to convert from Urdu to Bangla in daily interactions is something that the participants consistently emphasize, demonstrating a

practical response to environmental and socioeconomic factors. One commercial endeavor that demonstrates the practical advantages of language shift for market integration is the sale of vegetables. The durability of adaptive processes can be seen in the generational transfer of language patterns within families. The more intricate social processes at work are indicated by the challenges and discrimination the population suffers outside of the camps, particularly in housing. Despite these challenges, the positive impression of the camp's educational programs offers a potential route for socioeconomic advancement. Overall, the results shed light on the complex linguistic dynamics that exist within the Bihari community and offer important insights into their everyday lives and coping mechanisms for cultural and historical obstacles.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Limitations of the Study

A thorough grasp of the research's breadth and any ramifications requires acknowledging the limitations that were encountered during the study's execution. First off, the study's narrow emphasis on the Bihari minority in Dhaka limited the applicability of its conclusions to other language or cultural situations. The results' wider relevance may be impacted by the small sample size of thirteen participants, so care should be taken when extending these findings to bigger populations. Despite being useful for in-depth investigation, the qualitative character of the research inevitably involves subjectivity in interpretation. The utilization of participant self-reported data raises the risk of memory errors or social desirability bias. Furthermore, the use of interviews as the main method of data collection and the absence of triangulation with alternative methodologies may have reduced the study's overall robustness. Due to the complex geopolitical factors influencing the language practices of the Bihari people as well as the political and historical context of their movement, it is difficult to isolate the influence of language shift alone. Despite these shortcomings, the study provides valuable insights into the language dynamics of the Bihari community and establishes a foundation for further research in this area.

5.2 Recommendations

This work opens up various directions for future research and offers advice for scholars studying the linguistic dynamics of marginalized communities, especially those going through language change. First and foremost, it would be advantageous to conduct more

research on the long-term effects of language shift on both individual and group identities. Determining the ways in which linguistic adaptation affects self-identification and cultural preservation within the Bihari community may help to clarify the ways in which language, identity, and survival tactics interface. Furthermore, a comparison analysis with other language minority groups dealing with comparable issues could provide light on common themes. Researchers might also look into the function of educational initiatives in underprivileged areas and how they affect language retention. It would greatly enhance the body of literature to look into how educational possibilities support linguistic adaptation and whether they provide a sense of cultural continuity. Finally, considering the political and historical background of the Bihari community, a more thorough investigation of how geopolitical events affect linguistic preferences and adaptation could offer a thorough comprehension of linguistic shifts within marginalized communities.

5.3 Conclusion

According to Khan(2015)during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, the Urdu-speaking Biharis, descendants of Muslim refugees who fled from India to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) because of fears of communal rioting following the 1947 partition, suffered several difficulties. He added that after Bangladesh attained independence, they were forced to flee to camps after having supported West Pakistan throughout the fight. Biharis, who live in Bangladesh but see Pakistan as their motherland, struggle with a lack of political position and identity. Khan(2015) also stated that the unresolved problem of repatriation between Bangladesh and Pakistan has heightened their sentiments of diaspora. Through the use of content analysis, this study explores the gender dynamics within the diasporic identity of the Bihari community in Bangladesh, highlighting the particular difficulties that women confront in this context(Khan,2015).

To sum up, the research illuminates the complex linguistic dynamics of the Bihari population residing in Dhaka. Their linguistic modifications, motivated by pragmatic requirements and cultural adjustment, demonstrate a flexible reaction to societal obstacles. A thorough knowledge of the community's linguistic experiences is aided by the generational continuity of language practices and the difficulties encountered outside of the camps. For academics, decision-makers, and anybody else curious about how language, identity, and survival tactics interact in diasporic communities, this study is a great resource.

This dissertation provides a thorough investigation of the complex linguistic dynamics of the Dhaka-based Bihari population. The study elucidates the complex process of linguistic change in this community, which is fueled by both adaptive responses to cultural constraints and pragmatic needs. The participants continuously underlined how important language is to their day-to-day activities, demonstrating a dynamic and adaptable response to social barriers. The Bihari group's linguistic identity has been permanently impacted by historical events, as evidenced by the generational continuity of language practices among families.

Additionally, the study highlights the complex relationships between language, identity, and social integration while shedding light on the difficulties the Bihari community faces outside of the camps, notably with regard to housing arrangements. The discrimination encountered during the rental process highlights the importance of having a comprehensive awareness of the social dynamics and prejudices that the Bihari community faces within the larger Bangladeshi society. Positive perceptions of the camp's educational offerings highlight the complex interrelationships between language, education, and communal life while providing a possible path for socioeconomic improvement.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. Which languages do you speak?
2. What is your mother tongue?
3. Whom do you interact in your daily life and what is the purpose of the interaction? What is the mother tongue of those with whom you interact?
4. Which language do you use with them (with the other community where you interact for business purpose and earn your livelihood)?
5. Are you happy with this language shift?
6. When did you migrate to this country?
7. When did your family migrated to this country?
8. Do you use your mother tongue with your family members?/Which language do you speak at home?
9. Give an example of a situation where you shift your language on a daily basis?
10. How did you learn to speak in Bangla?
11. How did you learn to write in Bangla?
12. Do your other family members have to shift their language equally?
13. Do you face any challenges when you shift languages?
14. Do you think you need to speak Bangla to survive economically?
15. Do you feel the necessity to write in Bangla?

16. Do you feel neglected of not being able to join school?

17. Do your kids go to school? Did they face any issue while getting admission in school?/Did you face any issue while getting them admitted?

18. Do you face any problem outside of your camp as a Bihari?

19. Did you face any issue while getting admitted in school in your childhood?

20. Do you face obstacles while getting house-rent ?

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