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Transmission of Mother-Tongue: Parents' Vs Children's Perceptions

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ABSTRACT: *Languages are at the mercy of people, especially parents, as they are the first and foremost source of transmitting a language a child has access to. However, due to the increased prestige and external benefits, a few languages are promoted more and children are exposed to them at the expense of their heritage language. This qualitative case study aimed to investigate parents' and teenagers' views regarding the transmission and use of mother-tongue. It is unique because it focuses on the Urdu language, which is already a national-official language of Pakistan, is used as a medium of instruction and provides instrumental benefits. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observation of two purposively chosen bilingual families living in Karachi. The findings revealed that there is a contradiction in the participants' words and actions as their views do not match with their practices. The parents see Urdu as their root, and teenagers view it as their national rather than linguistic identity, but their usage and language practices at home supported English because of the perceived benefits, and the parents did not transmit Urdu properly to their children. The study recommended that English should not be an obstacle for any heritage language, and it should be transmitted properly as every child has a right to learn their language.*

Keywords: Mother-tongue, intergenerational transmission, perceptions, subtractive bilingualism, language shift, language maintenance

Introduction

Children are not born with a language. Instead, they acquire L1, which is mostly a mother-tongue i.e. their heritage language, and then they can learn as many languages as they want. In learning those languages, parents' attitude towards bilingualism and their proficiency in two languages affect children's ability to be bilingual (McLaughlin, 1984). It shows that languages are at the mercy of people. Fishman (1991) has also stated that natural intergenerational transmission, which is defined as the transfer of a language from parents to their children, and home language practices are the two factors deciding the fate of any community language.

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It points out two sociolinguistic phenomenon: language maintenance and language shift. Language maintenance is an effort to promote and preserve a living language, whereas language shift is defined as “a downwards language movement”, where the number of speakers of a specific language reduces (Baker, 2001, p. 59). de Klerk and Barkhuizen (2005) stated that the primary condition for language shift is bilingualism as without access to second language speakers cannot shift.

However, the presence of bilingualism should not restrict the transmission of mother-tongue because, according to Noormohamadi (2008), mother-tongue learning is prior and necessary for intellectual ability. In fact, UNESCO has promoted mother-tongue education since 1953 as every child has a right to get primary education in their mother-tongue. As a result, many countries, including India, China and Nepal, have adopted a trilingual education policy. On the other hand, there are children who are not exposed to their mother-tongue because of the need to be a part of the globalized world, to strengthen economies or to advance careers (Henne-Ochoa & Bauman, 2015). Hence, in some cases, parents transmit mother-tongue to the upcoming generation, which is an effort to maintain a language and sometimes they restrict the transmission as in different parts of the world, many indigenous languages are not promoted and the children are taught only mainstream languages. Nonetheless, according to Cummins' (1976) threshold hypothesis, proficiency in second language can be attained only when a child has certain level of competence in their first language. Moreover, denying exposure to a mother-tongue is a violation of rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The major role in this violation is played because of English language since, according to de Klerk (2001), it is “seen as a symbol of prestige and is aspired to for instrumental reasons” (p.198).

Even in Pakistan, due to this growing status of English as an international language and its association with the elite class, many schools have introduced English as a medium of instruction that has not only kept UNESCO's resolution aside but also violated the article 251 of the 1973 constitution of Pakistan where it is overtly stated that English will be used until Urdu language could replace it. It clearly shows that English was not meant to be there for always. Though, the irony is that Urdu is being replaced and in most of the schools, especially elite schools, the focus is more on learning English and a child, along with their parents, is forced to use it in home domain too so that a child can have English-speaking environment, without even realising that it can lead to subtractive bilingualism where L2 is learnt at the

expense of L1. Further, if English is promoted and parents limit the transmission of mother-tongue, children as well as adults can develop differing attitudes towards their L1 without realising that, as Cummins (2001) states, solid foundation in their mother-tongue will help them develop stronger literacy abilities. Besides, discouraging the use of mother-tongue can damage conceptual and personal foundation of students (Ozfidan, 2014) and if they are not exposed to L1 by their parents, they may lack the ability to pass it on to their children (Lewis & Simons, 2010) and the cycle goes on.

Therefore, this research aims to assess the perceptions of parents and teenagers on the transmission and use of mother-tongue and the reasons as to why some families have started shifting from L1 (Urdu) to L2 (English). This study answers the following questions:

1. What are the views of parents and teenagers regarding the transmission and use of mother-tongue?
2. What are the reasons behind the differences and similarities in their perceptions?

Literature Review

Many linguists and researchers have shown interest in the issue of language shift and maintenance (Aitchison, 1991; David, 1998, 2005; de Klerk & Barkhuizen, 2005; Edwards, 1984), and now they are considered as two widely studied phenomenon. Previous research studies show that immigrants, even after living for a longer time in other countries, are able to maintain their mother-tongue (de Bot & Clyne, 1994; Karim & Haq, 2013), which is defined as the language of one's origin (Matsuura, 2008, as cited in Tackie-Ofosu, Mahama, Tetteh Dosoo, Kumador & Toku, 2015). However, if shifted, one of the major causes behind that language shift is arisen out of parental decision when they prefer to send their children to the schools where the medium of instruction is different from the home language as the parents see instrumental benefits in it (de Klerk, 2001; de Klerk & Barkhuizen, 2005). It shows that parents' perceptions and their beliefs play an important role in language maintenance or shift; hence, this section will review a few of the research studies based on parents' as well as children's perceptions regarding mother-tongue usage and its transmission.

Firstly, the comparative case study carried out by Rodriguez (2015) focuses on three Latino families living in the US, who raised their children bilingually. The data were gathered through interviews and participant observation. While investigating their rationale for bilingualism, the data revealed that the families were aware of bilingualism's economic and cognitive advantages, which indirectly shows that parents had positive perceptions regarding the transmission of mother-tongue. Therefore, they promoted Spanish along with the English in home domain. Though children were found using more English as soon as their schooling started and they were unable to maintain their bilingualism. Another study conducted by de Klerk (2001) had already shown that schooling is an important factor influencing the children's use of language in home domain. His study focuses on language shift considering ten cross-linguistic families residing in South Africa. One of the findings of this research disclosed that as the children studied in English medium school, they were more proficient in English and preferred to speak in it inside the home and it also affected parents' choice of language. This research shows parents' willingness to abandon their first language for their children. These two studies do not talk about children's perceptions on the use of mother-tongue yet their use and choice of language are clearly reflected from early age.

In addition to this, one of the studies focusing on parents' perceptions behind choosing a primary English medium school for their children is conducted by Evans and Cleghorn (2014). The data collected through questionnaires revealed the strong support for an English-only approach as 47 % of the parents chose that school because they wanted solely English to be the medium of instruction. This research shows that parents more than children are supporting the other tongue, but it does not provide parents' perceptions on the promotion of mother-tongue. Nevertheless, Tackie-Ofosu et al. (2015) did a cross-sectional study to examine the views of teachers and parents on the use of mother-tongue in a suburb of the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. The data gathered with the help of questionnaires displayed that both teachers and parents favour the use of mother-tongue to communicate with children because they see it as a promotion of cultural identity. It shows their positive views regarding the transmission and use of mother-tongue, but at the same time a few of the parents were against using mother-tongue as a medium of instruction and favoured English language because of its growing importance and status.

Moreover, Henne-Ochoa and Bauman (2015) presented the views of young generation on mother-tongue loss and its renewal by collecting data from a speech contest organised in a school in the US, where the students of high school participated. The students were of the view that elders have the major responsibility to maintain the language through transmitting it to their kids no matter whether the children need it or not. Besides, Ozfidan (2017) did a mixed-method study where the adults expressed their perceptions about the right of knowing and using mother-tongue. Both the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from Turkish and non-Turkish participants disclosed their positive attitudes towards mother-tongue learning, its usage and mother-tongue education. In both the studies (Henne-Ochoa & Bauman, 2015; Ozfidan, 2017), young generation has favoured the transmission of mother-tongue.

On the other hand, the most recent research on a global level has shown children's differing attitudes towards their L1. Firstly, Sahin (2018) conducted research to explore the views of postgraduate students on mother-tongue education in Turkey. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the data. The findings of the study uncovered two different views. Some of the participants favoured mother-tongue education, considering it a basic human right, whereas others objected believing that mother-tongue education would cause division and there will not be any uniformity. Secondly, Kucukler and Tosuncuoglu's (2018) survey-based study looks at the learners' perceptions towards mono, bi and multilingualism. The data were collected from University students of Turkey. The findings revealed that 60% of the students were of the view that they get additional job opportunities because of the second language. In fact, a few of them think that people should give up their own language if they are living in a new country.

Looking at it in the Pakistani context, there are two studies on language shift and maintenance, which do not directly explore parents' perceptions. Still, their perceptions are reflected through the data. Firstly, Karim and Haq (2013) conducted a research to find out the tendency of language shift or maintenance focusing on a single case, who was a 57 year old male Pakistani immigrant to New Zealand. The findings showed the participant's additive bilingualism as he maintained his L1 (Urdu) in home domain whereas English was used for instrumental reasons. The study concluded that despite living in a foreign country, this case was maintaining his native language and transmitting it to his children too, which means he had positive

views regarding the use and transmission of mother-tongue. Secondly, Umrani and Memon (2018) conducted a case study to explore language shift and maintenance in the interactional practices of a Pakistani-Scottish family with the special focus on third generation. The data collected through participant observation and interviews revealed a language shift from Punjabi/Urdu to English due to external factors. The older members of the family were somehow trying to maintain their L1 through code-switching but the younger members were always found speaking in English and they were always facilitated by their elders. The findings also disclosed a belief the older family members had that Punjabi/Urdu is of no use in the society they were living; therefore, it can be learnt later. However, English is important for their children for educational purposes and to stand in that society; otherwise, their children would face problems. It shows that parents themselves are not willing to transmit L1 to their children.

Furthermore, the qualitative study of Ali (2018) aims to find out the views of teachers as well as students regarding mother-tongue education and medium of instruction. The sample was drawn from 64 students belonging to eight ethno-linguistic groups and 8 teachers of a public University. The data collected through focus group discussion and interviews disclosed that most of the teachers as well as students favoured English to be the medium of instruction. At the same time, they supported mother-tongue education too. It shows a sharp contrast in the students' perceptions as on one hand they favoured English and on the other hand they wanted education in their mother-tongue. Nevertheless, none of those eight ethno-linguistic groups had Urdu as their mother-tongue. Hence, these views are of the students who are not provided education in their mother-tongue.

Other than this, a qualitative research conducted by Sarwat, Kabir, Qayyum and Akram (2021) examined the language shift and maintenance in Pakistani-Americans' daily discourse. For this purpose, three generations of a Pakistani family living in US were chosen. The data collected through participants' observations based on video calls and interviews displayed a shift from L1 (Punjabi/Urdu) to L2 (English) as despite the first generation's usage of L1, the second generation communicates in both L1 and L2, where their preference is L2, while the third generation rarely speaks L1. Though the older generation tried to maintain linguistic identity, English was used and promoted to benefit the younger generation

economically and socially so that they could succeed in their academic, social and professional lives.

Over all, the thorough review of literature shows parents' and children's views regarding the use and transmission of mother-tongue, which were indigenous languages in those cases providing less or no external benefits and they were not even the language of education (Ali, 2018; Henne-Ochoa & Bauman, 2015); therefore, these factors have heavily influenced their perceptions regarding their mother-tongue. Nonetheless, no research has been reported examining this phenomenon in a context where L1 is already a national and an official language and is also used as a medium of instruction. Secondly, there is a lack of research studying and comparing parents' and children's perceptions in the same study. Further, in Pakistan, most of the studies focus on language maintenance and shift which then implicitly revealed the perceptions of stakeholders (parents and children) but no study directly investigates the perceptions of parents and children having Urdu as their mother-tongue, which is already a standard and prestigious language and provides utilitarian value. Thus, this study is an attempt to fill that research gap.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach followed by a case study design, which is defined as “a detailed analysis of a person or group” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p.85) and is widely used in second language research studies (Mackey & Gass, 2005; Yin, 2018). For the data collection, two bilingual families (Shahs and Siddiquis) living in Karachi, Pakistan were purposively chosen. Both the families speak Urdu as their mother-tongue and English as a second language. There were two criteria behind choosing these families: firstly, to find people who speak English more frequently than Urdu; secondly, to find a number of teenagers in those families studying in an elite school or college. The sample size of the study was nine participants. Of this number, four were children (Rehan, Amna, Basma and Jazib) and five were parents (Mr & Mrs. Shah, Mr & Mrs Zain and Mrs. Nadir). In order to maintain anonymity, I have used pseudonyms.

Mr. & Mrs. Shah living in a nuclear family system have two children: Rehan and Amna. Rehan learnt Quran by heart and he was in grade ten at the time of the study whereas Amna did A levels and started her undergraduate degree. From the other family, Mrs. Nadir Siddiqui has a daughter, Basmah, who was doing O levels and a son, Jazib, who was in A levels. Since Mrs. Nadir lives in a joint family system,

her brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Zain Siddiqui, are a part of this study too as they also fell under the defined criteria. Their children are bilingual too and studying in an elite school, but they were too young; therefore, they could not be involved in the study. The other demographic details of the participants are presented in the Appendix 'A'. As a primary step, consent was taken from each of the participants, where they were briefed about the purpose of the study. Later, the data were gathered using two tools, participant observation and semi-structured interviews. During the participant observation, field notes were taken whereas the semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded (see Appendix 'B' for interview questions and there were some questions in the interview that were asked on the spot on the basis of their responses, so they are not included in the appendix). Afterwards, the data were transcribed and analysed to draw findings. This research was conducted during the period of four weeks.

Data Analysis

This section presents the qualitative analysis of the views of parents and teenagers on the transmission of mother-tongue, Urdu, and discusses the reasons behind the differences and similarities in their perceptions. Later, it shows some reasons behind this partial shift from Urdu to English in the two selected families where their views related to the usage of Urdu language are revealed.

The data collected from semi-structured interviews of the participants disclose that nobody, neither parents nor teenagers, explicitly showed negative views regarding the transmission of mother-tongue in any of the selected families. All of them favoured the transmission of Urdu language when they were directly asked. Nevertheless, they had different reasons behind this perception. Firstly, looking at the parents' perceptions, on one hand, two of the parents, Mr. Zain and Mrs. Nadir believe that Urdu, as their mother-tongue, is their root and they are connected to it; thus, it should be transmitted to the young generation. At one instance, Mrs. Nadir commented, *'ham Urdu chhoR nahi~ sakte [we cannot abandon Urdu] it should be transmitted so that we would be bounded to our roots'*. On the other hand, a few of the parents connect their perceptions with the purpose of communication. Mrs. Zain and Mrs. Shah believe that Urdu should be taught to the children because they need it in order to communicate with salesman, shopkeepers or the people of interior areas or lower strata. Mrs. Shah also added that Urdu language reduces communication gap among people living in Pakistan. Nonetheless, while

interviewing her husband, Mr. Shah, I found out that he does not favour the transmission of mother-tongue. Instead, his views depend on environmental factors. According to him, the transmission of any language is subject to the environment people are living in and that language can be mother-tongue or other tongue.

When, however, the teenagers were asked about the reasons for giving preferentiality to the transmission of their mother-tongue, it was disclosed that most of the children do not view Urdu language as their mother-tongue. Instead, their views regarding the transmission of their mother-tongue are connected with the reason that Urdu is their national language; therefore, they give it more importance and they all had similar answers. Further, they also see it as a ground for Pakistan's independence, which promotes unity. While interviewing Basmah and then Amna, I found out that for them Urdu is the mark of their national identity and in order to be loyal with their nation, they believe Urdu should be promoted. In fact, during the interview with both the boys, Rehan and Jazib, it was also revealed that if Urdu had not been the national language, they would not have preferred to transmit or use it.

'Urdu should be forwarded to the upcoming generation you see ye hame~ apas me~ joRti he' [it binds us together] ... umm I might not have given it importance agar Urdu hamaari national language na hoti [if Urdu had not been our national language] kiu~ ke mere liye meri national identity matter karti he' [because for me my national identity matters] (Rehan)

It shows that teenagers, rather than parents, have more mature and solid reasons for preferring the transmission of mother-tongue, Urdu. Nevertheless, teenagers' response is significant as it reflects that they do not value their mother-tongue and they own it only because it is their national language. It shows their patriotism. Previous studies have also disclosed that students give more preference to their national languages (Sahin, 2018). Besides this, the participants did not have awareness that cognitive development takes place in one's mother-tongue. When they were told about it, they ignored and did not respond to it except Amna, who completely rejected Cummin's threshold hypothesis. She said, *'I don't believe that mother-tongue learning is associated with cognitive growth like my Urdu is too bad still I have always been a good student, and I am much proficient in English'*. It displays their lack of awareness.

Moreover, as the interview unfolded, a contradiction in the participants' words and actions was found. Their language practices at home or in general

contrasted with what they explicitly stated regarding the transmission of Urdu language. Firstly, their choice of language for the interview showed that they favour the usage of English language as both, the parents and children, gave interviews in English with less instances of code switching except Mrs. Shah, who preferred to use Urdu. Secondly, a few of the parents chose English as an L1 for their children and later on the children were exposed to Urdu.

Afterwards, the parents tried to justify their actions as they said that they were more concerned about their children's standing in the society and their future. They consider that it is their responsibility to facilitate their children with what they would need most. Thus, despite favoring the transmission of mother-tongue, they did not transmit it to their children in their initial years, instead the focus was more on English for their survival. It shows that a major reason behind this shift from Urdu to English was because of the education system. Mrs. Shah and Mrs. Nadir reported that schooling plays a crucial role and because of the education system, they had to limit the exposure of Urdu for their children. At this point, Mrs. Nadir said, *'masla ye he' ke hamaara saara medium of instruction is in English [the problem is that our whole medium of instruction is in English] and we are bound to restrict Urdu to some extent because then in schools children get punishments if they speak in Urdu'*. Her response seems a bit exaggerated because according to my experience children are forced to use English but they are not punished. I think parents should know that children have a right to learn and use their mother-tongue and instead of imposing another language on them, they should fight for their children's rights. However, the parents' reasons show that they themselves are willing to abandon their language.

During the interview, it was also added that there are no external benefits associated with Urdu language, especially at international level, and Urdu medium schools do not provide quality education. Due to this reason, they cannot send their children to these schools. It shows that the education system has influenced the parents' views as Mr. Shah responded, *'if I am spending on them like on schooling on studies in general then in a way I would see what would benefit them so according to that perspective Urdu or Urdu medium schools are useless and I gave preference to English'*. It shows that the parents see English language as a commodity, which would provide them material benefits; therefore, they are motivated to use and spread it. Mr. Shah's views are connected to Karan and Stalder's (2010) Perceived Benefit Model of Language. According to Karan (2011), this model is "based on individual language choice decisions which

are motivated by the speaker's perceived personal benefit" (p. 137). In fact, during the interview, one of the parents' perception revealed that with the growing need of English and globalization, their children would not need Urdu. *Mrs. Zain stated, 'it's just that they don't need it (Urdu) like as such zaruurat to nahi~ he' [there is no need] my children would need English when they grow up'*. Earlier research has also unveiled that English has become a language of survival (McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhol & Zepeda, 2009).

Another primary reason behind this partial shift from Urdu to English was disclosed during the participant observation. It was observed that most of the parents communicate in English with their children more frequently and their usage of Urdu has decreased. Later, the participants accepted that this is a general practice though the reasons behind this usage varied. On one hand, the interview with the parents revealed that they use more English at home with their children to provide them an English-speaking environment. They had a belief that as parents they should provide this opportunity to their children. Mr. Shah's perceptions were heavily dependent on his personal experience. During the interview, he told me, *'and you see there was one more thing like my primary schooling was not in English then I had to learn it and each time before saying anything I had to translate all my sentences I never wanted my children to suffer all this'*. It reflects that the parents want to empower their children and they see English language as their capital. On the other hand, the teenagers disclosed that they use more English because they have less command over Urdu and they always fall short of vocabulary as was admitted by one of the participants:

'actually at times I fall short of words and then I feel sort of handicapped' (Basmah)

Her lack of proficiency in her mother-tongue is significant as it displays the parents' views implicitly. If they had the positive views, they would have transmitted it properly to her and then promoted its usage in home environment, but they are not willing to maintain their language. This was not only the case with Basma, the other teenagers were also unable to use Urdu properly. Even while interviewing Amna, I found out that for her incapability to use her mother-tongue, she blames her parents as they did not initially focus on the transmission of mother-tongue. She said, *'my use of Urdu is very limited my parents never taught me Urdu the way it should have been taught now you know they ask me to use more Urdu but you see this is something they should have asked me from the day one'*.

Other than this, it was also revealed that the parents use more English and transmit it to their children because they view Urdu language as a language of shame, which shows parents' perceptions regarding the use of Urdu and they blame their society for this. Mr. Zain stated, *'and whenever my siblings and their children come they always speak in English when my children were born I never wanted them to you know feel suppressed or embarrassed that's why I taught them English... it was not because I wanted it like it was because of society's pressure'*. It reflects that for some parents English is a source of empowerment and not having knowledge of English is an embarrassment. Other studies have also discussed that the speakers of some heritage languages think that their language is inferior and they feel ashamed when they use it (Bonner, 2001; McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhol & Zepeda, 2009). At this point, Mr. Zain's son, who is five years old, interrupted in between and said, *'Urdu is difficult I don't want to learn Urdu I don't like it English is easy I feel good when I speak English'*. It reveals that the parents' practices are shaping young minds.

When the interview with each of them was about to end, the teenagers' perceptions revealed that they do not favour the transmission of mother-tongue in the early years of a child. Instead their preference for upcoming generation would be English because it has become a core requirement as everything on internet is available in English. This is how Jazib, one of the participants, responded when I asked him about his preference: *'you know English is like prerequisite and without this you don't stand anywhere in socio hierarchy.. it should be acquired first because every child has a right to be educated and you see the entire universe in the form of internet is in front of us and that is in English urdu tou phr aa hi jaye gi [they would ultimately learn Urdu]'*

In fact, all the parents displayed the same perception about the transmission of Urdu language. They think that it is their responsibility to transmit English because in this global era, English would support their children and Urdu is their own language, which can be learnt later and there should not be any fixed time for that. Nonetheless, the interview with Mr. & Mrs. Shah's daughter, Amna, shows that if parents, at the point when their children are young, do not consider it important to teach mother tongue, they will not be able to make them learn it later because once grown up, priorities change. People become more materialistic and learn things which would benefit them. In the end, Mrs. Shah & Mrs. Nadir also added that children should not be informed about this preference of their parents as they may develop negative attitudes then. In other words, the parents are also apprehensive of

the fact that their children should not know the language priorities of their parents. This shows that both, the parents and children, do not disfavor the transmission of mother-tongue, but it is not their primary choice.

Findings

This research explored the perceptions of parents and teenagers regarding the transmission and use of mother-tongue in two selected families. The findings of the study show that the overtly stated views of both, the parents and children, were completely different and contradicted their practices. Firstly, the findings indicate that the parents, despite viewing Urdu language as their root and favouring its transmission, provide limited exposure of Urdu to their children in home domain. Their usage and language practices at home supported English as they think that Urdu language has no standing in our society and more specifically at international level and they do not want their children to be left behind. As a result, the teenagers had never acquired complete proficiency in their mother tongue and they consider it to be their parents' fault, who could not transmit Urdu to their children. According to Conklin & Lourie (1983, as cited in Baker, 2001), when home language is of little or no international importance, it can become a factor that would encourage language loss. Contrary to the parents' views, the teenagers see Urdu language as their national identity rather than linguistic identity and initially supported its transmission, but the way they have been brought up and educated has shaped their minds. Hence, despite considering their mother tongue, Urdu, as a symbol of their national identity, which promotes unity, their preference was English as they believe it has become a core requirement. This finding is in line with Skutnabb-Kangas's (2003) words, 'the dominant languages are learned at the cost of mother-tongue'. Secondly, while people in other regions of Pakistan consider Urdu as a prestigious language and use it for inter-ethnic communication (Shah, David & Gulzar, 2017), the results of this study reveal that people in Karachi belonging to elite community think that the use of Urdu language would cause them an embarrassment; therefore, it should be taught to communicating with the people of limited class only. Thirdly, the findings of the study display a strong correlation between the participants' perceptions and education, due to which home language is suppressed because the available mother-tongue education in the schools of Karachi has no quality, and

English is necessary to compete and stand in this globalized world. It also provides them material benefits. These findings also corroborate the literature that reveals English is more important and is supported in this global era (Evans & Cleghorn, 2014; Henne-Ochoa & Bauman, 2015; McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhol & Zepeda, 2009; Sahin, 2018). In fact, Sarwat et al. (2018) also unveiled that the older generation use English because of its perceived benefits. Overall, it shows that people today have become more materialistic and it is not enough for them that Urdu is their mother-tongue, instead, they need some instrumental benefits so that they can transmit it to their children. However, these findings cannot be generalized because Urdu as mother-tongue is still owned, respected and transmitted, and majority of the students study in non-elite or government schools or even in dini madaaris, where Urdu is still a medium of instruction.

Conclusion

Through the results of this study, which provide empirical information on perceptions of parents and teenagers regarding mother-tongue usage and transmission, following recommendations are made. First of all, it suggests that all parents should understand that children are emotionally and cognitively connected to their home language. Moreover, Shah, David and Gulzar (2017) disfavor multilingualism in the domain of education, but the results of current study propose that multilingualism in educational setting is necessary to maintain Urdu language and there is a need to improve the education system in Pakistan. As David (2005) states, “language policies have been shown to have links with language shift” (p. 3). Thus, the language policy should be designed in a way which would promote Urdu language, and a new education policy is needed, where medium of instruction should be Urdu for all schools and English should be taught as a second language. Otherwise, Urdu language will lose its importance. Further, transferring of mother tongue should not be dependent on external benefits because it has great personal significance and every child has a right to learn and use their mother-tongue. Parents should realise that their mother-tongue is and will be a part of their identity. Moreover, we live in a multilingual society and era, where learning language(s) should not be an obstacle for mother tongue. Parents, today, should understand that children can learn English even when their heritage language is used and valued as, according to Krashen (1992), literacy developed in the mother tongue can be transferred to the other tongue. Therefore, mother tongue transmission should not

be restricted, and bilingualism should be seen as an advantage and an educational accomplishment.

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Appendices

Appendix 'A'

Profile of the participants

Family 1			
Names	Residence	Profession	Age
Mr. Shah	Naya Nazimabad	ENT specialist	Not required
Mrs. Shah		Housewife	Not required
Rehan (Child 1)		-	14 years
Amna (Child 2)		-	19 years
Family 2			
Names	Residence	Profession	Age
Mrs. Nadir Siddiqui	Gulshan-e- Iqbal	Lecturer (semi-govt. university)	Not required
Basmah (Child 1)		-	17 years
Jazib (Child 2)		-	19 years
Mr. Zain		Employee (multinational company)	Not required
Mrs. Zain		General physician	Not required

Appendix 'B'

Semi-structured interviews questions:

1. How many languages can you speak? Which ones?
2. Can you write in Urdu? How often do you write?
3. Do you read Urdu newspaper, poetry, novel etc.? How often?
4. Are you concerned about the future of your language? (more probing)
5. What are your views about your mother-tongue? (more probing)
6. Cognitive growth?
7. How did you learn English?
8. Why did you learn it? (more probing)
9. Do you have any home policy about language?
10. When your parents/children talk to you what language do they use? To what extent?
11. What language do you use in family gatherings? Cousins/relatives
12. Which language do you want to use more? Why? (more probing)
13. Which language is necessary to learn? Why? (more probing)
14. How important is it for you that your child learns English?
15. With this growing need and prestige English language has, do you think your children should speak their Mother Tongue (MT) as well? (more probing)
16. What benefits do you see in sticking with English and ignoring your MT? (more probing)