



## Research Article

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### Family Language Policy

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**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the family language policy of the researcher. Ethnographic observation and transcription has been used for the collection of data. Qualitative research including analytical approach has been done. Results claim that language shifting and code switching is common in Multilingual families.

**Keywords:** FLP; family language policy, multilingual, conversation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Family Language Policy depicts the usage of language within family members. It is generally defined as an explicit and overt planning in relation to language use within the home and among family members. (King, 2017). It presents the frame for the examination of different types of ideologies i.e. Parental language ideologies, societal ideologies, language ideologies and even the Child language development are framed by it. The actual expression of family language policy occurs at home. An Individual, as a child, hears the words of her mother upon entering the world. (Caldas, 2012). That's why it is called a mother tongue. Later on, the child has maximum exposure to Mother language during the most crucial linguistic formative years in the early age of ones life. Family language policy is not a planned conscious process, rather it has been formulated by family circumstances, linguistics and cultural history of family. The default home language policy is mostly the mother native language or paternal language, in case of bilingual parents. Parents do not plan a strict family language policy though it is organically developed and evolved. Multilingual families encounters decision making regarding the linguistic upbringing of their children. Such decisions shape their family language policy (FLP) which impacts the children and their family potentially. (Hollebeke *et al.*, 2020). This article aims to study the family policy of my own family.

- What kind of family policy is being used at my home?

#### Background of the Study

Family language policy (FLP) has been establishing itself as a field in the past decade (Gomes,

2018). The definition of FLP by King, Fogle & Logan Terry (2008) was an important turning point in the development of this field. Many comprehensive overviews on Family Language Policy have already been published (e.g. Curdt-Christiansen 2013; Curdt-Christiansen & Lanza 2018; King 2016; King & Lanza 2017; King & Fogle 2013; King *et al.*, 2008; Schwartz 2010; Smith-Christmas 2017; & Spolsky 2012). Christiansen worked on how FLP is established and realized in everyday interactional practices among family members.

Mother linguistic and cultural background plays a vital role in the development of a more fluid family Language, that better prepare their children for educational success (Mingyue & Tong, 2020). Parents, especially mothers, use different strategies deliberately or unintentionally to negotiate the 'rules of speaking' or 'code of speaking' in order to raise bilingual children in a multilingual society where English increasingly is gaining both political and social functions in public and private spheres (Christiansen, 2013). Mingyue worked on the children alignment of linguistic practices with FPL and how their mothers help them to cope up with it.

## METHODOLOGY

Living in a multilingual Society, three languages are spoken i.e. English, Urdu and Punjabi. Urdu is our National Language, English is our official language and Punjabi is our mother language. We use different languages in different contexts.

This is an ethnographic observation and respondents are not informed for avoiding observer

paradox. I put an audio recorder in a living room and transcribed the audio recordings later. The Language of my family will be recruited for identifying FLP of my home.

I observed my own family. I have a Punjabi mother and a late Pathan father. We are 6 siblings including 3 sisters and 3 brothers. Total 9 respondents are there including my two nieces (age, 7-9). All the respondents are educated and jobians. They are exposed to different languages in different social settings in their daily routine.

I observed my conversation with my family members after coming home from a hectic Job routine.

## ANALYSIS

My father was Pathan and My mother was Punjabi. Both were multi lingual. Urdu and Punjabi are mostly used while English is also used and taught efficiently to kids. My all siblings are also multilingual, ranging between the age of 20 - 38. At my home, Arabic language is also being taught to my nieces and nephews by Hafiz e Quran. We have a house help and she speaks Jangli language as she came from 10-chak.

When I came home after a hectic day.

- My conversation with my mother is simple and informal. My mother speaks Punjabi and I speak Urdu while talking to each other.

Me: Assalam u Alaykum, Mama!

Mama: Wa Alaykum Assalam, mera bacha! jeeti raho.

Me: I'm dead tired, Ama! Khanay me kia hai?

Mama: aj mein Palao banaya hai. Tu subha keh k gai c. (Then I shift to urdu and my mother shifts to Punjabi gradually).

Me: Bohat bhook lagi hai. Sara din bohat kam tha aj.

Mama: Changi gal aa. Rizak halal kr k he khana chaey da. Allah raazi rehnda mehnti banday tou.

Me: Acha Mama. Mein khana laga deti hun

Mama: Ap v kha ty menu v paa k day. jindi reh. Allah teray changay naseeb karay.

- My conversation with my elder sister is mostly English and Urdu based. We don't use Punjabi with each other.

Me: Hello! kesi ho? kab I tum?

Sister: Abhi kuch time phelay i hun. Whats up?

Me: Mama is calling for a lunch. Wanna join?

Sister: Coming! Kapray change kr k ati hun. Zra relax ho k

Me: Mama ny palao bnaya hai

Sister: Yummy! I love it.

- My conversation with my maid who speaks jhangli. She is 19 years old and her name is Nazia. She understands Urdu but couldn't speak it. She replies me in Jhangli language.

Me: kesi ho lrki?

Nazia: Mein theek vaaa baaji, tusi kidaaa?

Me: Mein bhi thek hn. Bartan rkhna shuru krtay hain.

Nazia: Panday saray dho ditay naay. Tu beh jaa bajji. Mein api rkh lendi aan.

- My conversation with my nieces is informal and English language is mostly used. Next generation of my family speaks English. Their parents tried to frame their FLP consciously.

Me: Hi dollies, how was your day?

My nieces: Fine, Khala! How was yours?

Me: It was good. Get ready! Hafiz Sahab (Quran teacher) has come.

My nieces: Hafiz Sahab!!! May we off today khala? Aj dil ni kr raha.

## CONCLUSION

Family Language policy of my family is mainly based on practice of three languages i.e. English, Urdu and Punjabi. My mother converse with us in Punjabi language as she has a Punjabi background. While my late father also used Pashto Language in his life. Conversation with brothers and sisters is mostly Urdu based with short English sentences. (What's up, Wanna join?) But the younger or third generation of our family (nieces and nephews) are preferably taught English to speak. Their conversation is mostly English based. Children are also learning Arabic language and Quranic Qirat. Children use simple and short English sentences. While the house help speaks Jhangli Language (Punjabi dialect). Eventually, Urdu is the most used language at our home.

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