

DYING LANGUAGES: SPECIAL FOCUS ON ORMURI LANGUAGE

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LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Some languages have a population of its native speakers numbering at millions while most of the languages have lesser speakers ranging from a few thousand to a few hundred only. Dr. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas of Roskilde University presents yet a gloomier picture of the world languages that are spoken by relatively few people; the median number of speakers of a languages is probably 5,000-6,000. There are fewer than 300 languages with more than one million native users; half of all languages have fewer than 10,000 users and a quarter of the worlds spoken languages and most of the sign languages have less than 1,000 users.

Languages with more than 50 million speakers

Following are the 20 languages with native speakers' population from 58 to 885 million. The information is based on the Ethnologue's figures (in million) of November 2000².

1. Mandarin Chinese (885), 2. Spanish (332), 3. English (322), 4. Bengali (189), 5. Hindi (182), 6. Portuguese (170), 7. Japanese (125), 8. German (98), 9. Chinese, Wu (77,2), 10. Chinese, Yue (66,7), 11. Javanese (75,5), 12. Korean (75), 13. French (72), 14. Vietnamese (67,7), 15. Telugu (66,4), 16. Chinese, Yue (66), 17. Marathi (64,8), 18. Tamil (63.1), 19. Turkish (59), 20. Urdu (58). The lists Keep changing, and latest figures could be checked from updated *Ethnologue*.

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Languages with more than a million speakers

According to Erik Gunnemark (Countries, peoples and their languages. The geolinguistic handbook, 1991³), the following 208 languages had more than 1 million native users a decade ago: Achinese, Afrikaans, Akan, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Assamese, Aymara, Azerbaijani, Bai, Balinese, Baluchi, Bambara, Bashkir, Batak, Bemba, Bengali, Berber, Bete, Beti, Bhili, Bhojpuri, Bikol, Buginese, Bulgarian, Burmese, Buyi, Byelorussian, Catalan, Cebuano, Chinese, Chokwe, Chuvash, Congo, Czech, Danish, Dinka, Dong, Dutch, Edo-Bini, Efil-Ibibio, English, Estonian, Ewe, Finish, Fon, French, Ful, Galician, Ganda, Garhwali, Georgin, German, Gisu, Gondi, Greek, Guarani, Gujarati, Gurma, Hadiyya, Haitian, Hani, Hausa, Haya, Hebrew, Hehe, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Ho, Hungarian, Igbo, Ijo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Javanese, Kamba, Kannada, Kanuri, Karen, Kashmiri, Kazakh, Khmerr, Kirghiz, Kisii, Konkani, Korean, Kumauni, Kurdish, Kurukh, Kuyu, Lao, Latvian, Li, Lingala, Lithuanian, Low German, Luba, Luhya, Luo, Macassar, Macedonian, Madurese, Magahi, Maguindanao, Maithili, Makonde, Makua, Malagasy, Malay, Malayalam, Malinke, Manipuri, Marathi, Marwari, Mbundu, Mende, Miao, Minangkabau, Mongolian, Mongo-Nkundu, Mordva, More, Mundari, Nahuatl, Nandi, Nandi-Kipsigis, Ndebele, Nepali, Nkore-Kiga, Norwegian, Nuer, Nupe, Nyamwezi, Nyanja, Occitan, Oriya, Oromo, Pampangan, Pangasinan, Panjabi, Pashto, Prdi, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Quechua, Romany, Romanian, Ronga-Tsonga, Russian, Rwanda-Rundi, Santail, Sasak, Senfo, Serbo-Croatian, Serer, Shan, Shona, Sindhi, Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Somali, Songe, songhai, Sotho, Spanish, Sundanese, Swahili, Swazi, Swedish, Tagalog, Tajiki, Tamil, Tatar, Teke, Telugu, Temme, Teso-Turkana, Thai, Tibetan, Tigrinya, Tiv, Tinga, Tswana, Tulu, Turkish, Turkmen, Ukrainian, Umbundu, Urdu, Uygur, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Waray, Welamo, Wolof, Xhosa, Yao (Man), Yao (Chiyao), Yi, Yoruba, Zande, Zhuang, Zulu.

LINGUISTIC GENOCIDE

Language extinction is, no doubt, sad for the people involved, but why should the rest of us worry? What effect will other people's language loss have on the future of people who speak English, for example? Replacing a minor language with a more widespread one may even seem like a good thing, allowing people

³ *Erick Gunnemark, The geolinguistic handbook, 1991*

to communicate with each other more easily. "But language diversity is as important in its way as biological diversity," Rosemarie⁴ argues.

Andrew Woodfield, Director of the Centre for Theories of Language and Learning in Bristol, England, suggested in a 1995 seminar on language conservation that people do not yet know all the ways in which linguistic diversity is important. "The fact is, no one knows exactly what riches are hidden inside the less-studied languages," he says.

Woodfield compares one argument for conserving unstudied endangered plants that they may be medically valuable with the argument for conserving endangered languages. "We have inductive evidence based on past studies of well-known languages that there will be riches, even though we do not know what will they be. It seems paradoxical but it's true. By allowing languages to die out, the human race is destroying things it does not understand" he argues.

Stephen Wurm, in his introduction to the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing, tells the story of one medical cure that depended on Knowledge of a traditional Language. North Australia experienced an outbreak of severe skin ulcers that resisted conventional treatment. Aborigines acquainted with the nurse told her about a lotion derived from a local medicinal plant that would cure the ulcers. Being a woman of broad experience, she didn't dismiss this claim for non-western medical Knowledge. Instead she applied the lotion, which healed the ulcers.

While new trees can be planted and habitats restored, it is much more difficult to restore languages once they have been murdered. And languages are being murdered today faster than ever before in human history. Even the most optimistic prognosis claim that only half of today's 6,000 - 7,000 spoken languages will exist by 2100. The media and educational systems are the most important direct agents in language murder today.

To stop linguistic genocide, linguistic human rights in education need to be respected. The most important linguistic human right for maintenance of

⁴ Rosemarie Ostler, *Whole Earth, Disappearing Languages*

Linguistic Diversity is the right to mother tongue medium education. But the existing draft human rights instruments are completely insufficient on protecting linguistic human rights on education.

THE POSITION OF PAKISTAN

The number of languages (including dialects) listed for Pakistan, in the Ethnologue of Summer Institute of Linguistics, is 66. The Indus Valley, which is the present day Pakistan, has been one of the most ancient civilizations of the world. Its languages, which were part of the culture of the people of this region, too have ancient roots. According to Dr. Tariq Rahman, these languages have not generally been used in the domains of power because the rulers of this region were generally foreigners. But the foreigners - whether Achaeminian, Greeks or Muslim Arabs, Turks and Pathans as well as British - have also enriched the indigenous languages so that their vocabulary remains multilingual and varied. As the people converted to Islam the Arabic and Persian words became part of their Islamic identity and remain so. In a sense it is their very presence as well as the Arabic-based scripts of all present-day Pakistani languages which give them a kind of cultural unity. Linguistically, then Pakistan faces two directions: India - because the roots of its languages are Dravidian as well as Indo-Aryan; and the Middle East - because its scripts and vocabulary owe much to Arabic and Persian, Tariq Rahman concludes. A brief sketch of some languages spoken today is given as under:

Pashto

Pashto belongs to east Iranian family of languages and is spoken in the NWFP, Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and parts of Punjab and Karachi. It is also spoken in some parts of India. Pashto has a rich history of literature of about eight hundred years. In the recent past the writers and intellectuals of the two countries i.e. Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed upon a common script.

Punjabi

Punjabi is spoken in a vast area of Punjab in both Pakistan and India. It has produced eminent poets like Bulleh Shah, Waris Shah, Sultan Bahu and many others. According to Dr. Tariq Rahman, Punjabi, which serves no instrumental functions, is not dying either.

Sindhi

Sindhi is also spoken on both sides of border of Pakistan and India. It is being taught in schools as a compulsory subject. The revenue and police record is officially maintained in Sindhi in the Interior of Sindh. It is being taught and used more than any other Pakistani language except Urdu.

Gujrati

Gujrati may, however, be a weakening language. It is spoken mostly in Karachi but there are also many speakers of the language in the Indian Gujrat and in East Africa. Indeed, it is even taught in England where there are many Gujratis.

Shina

Shina is spoken in a large mountainous area stretching from eastern Baltistan to Chitral and from Hunza to Indus Kohistan. Majority of Shina speaking people however live in Gilgit valley along the Indus in Diamer and Kohistan districts. According to Carla F. Rodloff, Shina is a very vital language in all areas where it is spoken. There is no question of its dying out.

Burushaski

Burushaski is spoken towards the North of Gilgit in Hunza and Nagar valley. The population of its speakers, according to Carla, is estimated at about 60,000 speakers. The language is related to no other language in the world. The speakers can be considered as aborigines of the area.

Domaaki

The Doma, speakers of Domaaki, are the modern descendants of the traditional 'musician' and 'blacksmith' caste, primarily living in Hunza. They wandered north from the central plains of the subcontinent centuries ago, but have been living for so many generations among Shina and Burushaski-speakers that they have adopted much vocabulary from those two languages.

Wakhi

According to Morgenstierne, Wakhi is spoken in upper Yarkhun. The number of Wakhi settlers, who in Gurdon's time amounted only to some fourteen families, has increased. The language according to Carla is spoken by pockets of people living in the northern ends of several valleys in the Northern Areas and across the borders in the mountainous Pamir regions of China, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. There may be 10,000 Wakhi speakers native to Pakistan, Carla suggests.

Bali

Bali is the only language of the Tibetan language family in Pakistan. It is related to the Ladakhi language, and, more distantly, to Tibetan. It is the dominant language in Baltistan.

Khowar

Khowar, according to Morgenstierne, means the language of the Kho tribe, which has its home in the northern part of the state (Chitral) in the valleys called Malikho and Turikho the lower and the upper Kho (valley). The population is estimated at about 200,000 speakers. Khowar is part of the Dardic branch of the Indo-Aryan language family, but it is difficult to say that it is related to Shina. Khowar is a very vital language and is spoken with pride by the Chitralis.

Kalasha

In "Kalasha Dictionary", Ronal Trail and Gregory R. Cooper give a brief description of Kalasha and its speakers. According to them, "the Kalasha language is spoken in several valleys in District Chitral, North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan.

The position of major languages spoken by a large number of people is fairly good and there is no immediate threat to their vitality. However, conscious efforts for preservation and promotion are required through media at all levels.

Ormuri

Ormuri is spoken in the Kaniguran valley of South Waziristan. It is the main focus of my present study.

ORMURI TRIBE

It is always difficult to locate the origin of a race when the question of its history is raised. One has to rely on the record available in hand, and room for further research is always open in view of availability of modern means of research.

Much has been written and much more will be written on the origin of Barakis/Ormurs. Both the words Barakis and Ormurs are synonymously used for the same tribe although the latter one is comparatively new and not used by the tribe itself. They call themselves “Brakees” rather than Ormurs and their neighbouring Pathans use the latter name for them. Their language is known as Ormuri although the words Baraki, Bargista, Barakey have also been used for the language by the historians and linguists in the past.

Dr. Bellew traces their early history from a passage of Herodotus’ book. The Persian Emperor Darius Hystaspes, Governor of Egypt conquered the Greek colonies of Barke and Kyrene in Libya and took them to Egypt on their return from the expedition. By this time the King himself had also returned from his Skytian campaign to his capital Susa. He gave Barakies a village in Baktria to dwell in. They gave the name of Bark’e to this village which was still inhabited by them in his (Herodotus) time in the Baktrian territory. Dr. Bellew repeats the words of Herodotus that after a lapse of about two thousand three hundred and fifty years (2350), the village Barke was still inhabited in his days (1891) and that too in the very territory, which Herodotus had indicated. “*The colony of Barkaians in Baktrian territory, of which the “ Father of History “ has thus informed us, is today represented by the Baraki tribe inhabiting the village of Baraki Barak and Barki Rajan in the Logar districts of Kabul, which last a tract comprised within the Bakhtar zamin, or Bakhtar territory of Orientals, and Baktriana of the Greeks*⁵”

Thus, being settled in a village named as Barke in Kundooz in commemoration of the Libyan Barke a Greek Settlement in Kyrene, Dr. Bellew refers to a passage from Arrian (BOOK-III,28) and says that “*these Barkai of Herodotus, were recognized as Greek by Alexander and his followers when (Alexander) directed his march against Baktria, and on his way received homage of the Dragai, Gadrosoi, and Arakhotoi (Ghazni)*”.

⁵ Dr. Bellew, *An Enquiry into the Ethnography of Afghanistan* p-52

THE ORMURI LANGUAGE

The first man to have made mention of the Baraki languages is Babar. In his Book “Babar Nama” while describing the inhabitants of Kabul, he says,

“there are many differing tribes in the Kabul country, in its dales and plains are Turks and clansmen and Arabs; in its town and in many villages of Sorts; out in the districts and also in villages are the Pashai, Paraji (Parachi), Tajiks, Birki and Afghan tribes. In the western mountains are the Hazara and Nikdiri tribes, some of whom speak the Mughuli tongue. In the North certain mountains are the places of the Kafir, such as Kitur (Gawar?) and Gibrik. To the south are the places of the Afghan tribes. Eleven or twelve tongues are spoken in Kabul, Arabi, Persian, Turki, Mughuli, Hindi, Afghani, Pashai, Paraji, Gibri, Birki and Lamghani. If there be another country with so many differing tribes and such a diversity of tongues, It is not Known⁶”.

Bayazid Ansari, Pir Roshan who is the first Known Pashto prose writer and composer of Pashto alphabets has also used several Ormuri words in his famous book *“Khairul-Bayan”* The book is written in four languages i.e., Pashto, Punjabi, Persian, and Arabic, and is considered the first book on Pashto prose. The book was thought to be lost but Moulana Abdul Qadir of Pashto Academy-Peshawar, discovered a hand-written copy of it in a Library of Tubingen University of Germany. A few examples of Ormuri words in the Pashto part of his book are *Nallattti (Pigs), Nmandzak of Mazdak (mosque) Teshtan (owner) Burghu (flout) Haramunai (ill-born) etc. This book was published some time in 978 H.*

Captain Leech is the first person who has given some detailed notes on the Barki Barak (Logar) dialect of the Ormuri language. He collected quite a few words and sentences and published them in “The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal” {(Vol. VII-1838), Part-I Jan to June, 1838}, under the name of “A Vocabulary of the Baraki language”. About five pages from 727 to 731 have covered the subject. While introducing the tribe and its language, he says:

⁶ Babar Nama, p-207

“The Barkis are included in the general term of Parsiwan, or Tajak; they are original inhabitants of Yemen whence they were brought by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni; they accompanied him in his invasion of India, and were pre-eminently instrumental in the abstraction of the gates of the temple of Somnath. There are two divisions of the tribe. The Barkis of Rajan in the province of Lohgad, who speak Persian, and the Barakis of Barak, a city near the former, who speak the language called Barki; at Kaniguram under SHAH MALIK who are independent. The Barakis of this place and of Barak alone speak the Baraki language.

We receive a warning from the study of this Vocabulary, not to be hasty in referring the origin of a people merely from the construction of their language; for it is well known that the one now instanced was invented by MIR YUZUF who led the first Barakis from Yemen into Afghanistan; his design was to conceal and separate his few followers from the mass of Afghans (called by them Kash) who would no doubt at first look upon the Barkis with jealousy as intruders. The muleteers of Cabul, being led by their profession to traverse wild countries and unsafe roads have also invented a vocabulary of pass words⁷.”

Major Raverty has contributed a lot to the Pashto language and its grammar. He has also narrated the history and roots of the Area. He has followed suit by giving some words of the Ormuri languages (Logari dialect) and published in the Journal of Asiatic society of Bengal (XXXIII), 1864⁸. This work is also of identical nature and contains material from the work of Leech mentioned above.

The first man who has worked on the Grammar of Ormuri language (Kaniguram dialect) is Ghulam Mohammad Khan of Charsadda who has written Grammar of the language with Urdu explanation. Ghulam Mohammad Khan was a District Inspector of School, D.I. Khan who was sent to Kaniguram by Major Macaulay in 1881 for the purpose. Major Macaulay was one of the first political officers who led many expeditions to the Waziri area (now called Waziristan). The name Waziristan is a latter phenomenon when it was declared as an Agency of the tribal area.

⁷ Leech, *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* {(Vol. VII-1838), Part-1 Jan to June 1838,} by the name of “ A Vocabulary of the Baraki Language.” P-327-31

⁸ H.G. Raverty, *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (xxxiii), No. 1. of 1864, p-272-76

Ghulam Mohammad Khan's Book "*Qwaed-e-Zaban-e-Bargista*" contains Grammar of the language, specimen of short stories and sentences. The Book, a manuscript (copies are available in the libraries of Islamia College Peshawar and Pashto Academy) was completed in 1886.

George Grierson has given a detailed account of the language in the "Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal"⁹ 1918, alongwith history of the tribe and the language. This work has been revised by including more information on the subject and published in his well-Known "*Linguistic Survey of India Vol. X*" in 1921¹⁰. He has based his description of Grammar mainly on the work of Ghulam Mohammad Khan. However, he has pointed out many mistakes of Ghulam Mohammad Khan and has relied on his own information gathered from political administration of Bannu and Derajat.

His work is almost a full description of Grammar of the language of his time. Besides grammar, he has touched upon the sound system of the language alongwith philology. The Pashto alphabets have been used for the language with addition of an Ormuri-specific sound symbolised as [ہنر], although he has not been able to describe this sound exactly and in a manner becoming of his work, he has pointed out its uniqueness to the future linguists. He has given more space to the language than Pashto and Baluchi, its sister languages belonging to the same East Iranian family. Grierson has rightly classified Ormuri as an Iranian language but there is room for difference for his placing the language as Western Iranian contrary to its other two sister languages i.e. Pashto and Baluchi. However, his observation of contact of Ormuri with Dardic languages carries weight as there exists a remarkable resemblance of infinitive verbs ending with " aek or yek" in both Ormuri and Kalasha languages. According to him:

"Ormuri is a West Iranian language, and its nearest relatives are the dialects of western Persia and Kurdish. Another interesting point is that Ormuri, although a West Iranian language, contains manifest evidence of contact with the Dardic languages whose present habitat is the hill country south of the Hindu Kush. At the present day these languages are being gradually superseded by Pashto,

⁹ George Grierson, *Memories of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol., vii, No, 1--104

¹⁰ George Grieson, *Linguistic Survey of India Vol. X*, 1921, Calcutta

and are dying out in the face of their more powerful neighbour. Those of the Swat and Indus Kohistans are disappearing before our eyes. There is reason to believe that this has been going on for several centuries. In historic times they were once spoken as far south as the Tirah valley, where now the only language heard is Pashto, and the fact that Ormuri shows traces of them leads to the supposition that there were once speakers of a Dardic languages still further south in Waziristan and, perhaps, the Logar country before they were occupied by the Afghans.”

The next writer on the Logari dialect is Morgenstierne of Norway, a familiar name (to the history, languages, and culture of) the area. He had attempted to visit the inaccessible area of Kaniguram but was not allowed by the British administration to go beyond Razmak in 1929. However, he was able to interview some locals in the Razmak cantonment. He has also gone through the work of Grierson mentioned above which has enabled him to make some comparison of the two dialects. While describing the Logari dialect in his book Morgenstierne narrates his intended visit to Baraki-Barak himself but the news of insurrection spreading to Logar, and that the rebels from Khost had crossed the Altimur Pass and entered the valley, prevented his visit. However, in spite of these difficulties the Afghan foreign office had managed to fetch an old man, Din Muhammad by name, from Baraki-Barak to Kabul. He worked with him for about a week, but he could not induce him to stay longer away from his home.

Morgenstierne states: *“Din Muhammad said that he was one of the few persons in Baraki-Barak still speaking pure Ormuri, and this statement agreed fairly well with what had been told me by my informant. According to the LSI the Ormurs now occupy some four or five hundred houses in Kaniguram. At Butkhak, about ten miles east of Kabul, people said that they belonged to the Ormur tribe; but they all spoke Pashto, and I met with no one there who knew any Ormuri. The Ormurs living in the Khalsa Pargana of the Nowshehra Tehsil in the Peshawar district are also all of them Pashto speaking. I did not hear*

anything about Ormurs living in Ghorband, Bamian or Kunduz (cf. Bellew quoted above), and I think it is at any rate very improbable that they have preserved their original language¹¹".

About the myth whether the Ormars were fire-worshippers, Morgenstierne says:

"Nor is it impossible that there may be a nucleus of truth in the statement that they were "fire-worshippers" till comparatively recent times. And it is interesting to note that Ormuri is the only modern Iranian dialect, which has preserved the ancient technical term of Zoroastrian theology of "studying" and "reading". The account of the extinguishing of lamps at their religious festivals, reminds us of the slanders told about Yezides, Druses and other sects of Western Asia, and need not have any foundation in fact. And the etymology of the word Ormur suggested by Bellew seems rather fanciful".

Morgenstierne compares the two dialects in detail and reaches to the conclusion that, *"The Ormuri of Kaniguram (Waziristan) and the Ormuri of Baraki-Barak (Logar) are two distinct dialects, the Kaniguram form being, generally speaking, the more archaic¹²".*

Kiefer is perhaps the last writer who has given a fair description of the Logari dialect of Ormuri in 1977. His work has been published in the *International Journal of Sociology of Languages*. An extract from his article is given below as a specimen;

In Baraki-Barak, Ormuri has thus reached the last stage of its resistance. All the Ormuri speakers are at least bilingual and for the most part trilingual (Ormuti, Pashto, rural Persian or Kaboli) and their tribal language has no more than a weak function; It is not a local language, nor one of civilization, it has no written or oral literature, and it no longer serves as a vehicle for any tradition. This suffices to doom it. As soon as forms itself, through the play of exogamic marriages, it suffers competition with Pashto and Persiaon.

¹¹ Morgenstierne, *Indo-Iranian Frontier languages (Vol. I Parachi & Ormuri)*, p-310-11

¹² Morgenstierne, *Indo-Iranian Frontier languages (Vol. I Parachi & Ormuri)*, p-313

A chapter on Ormuri tribe and Ormuri language appears in a book titled “*The languages and Races of Afghanistan*” by Dost Mohammad Dost of Pashto Academy, Kabul, Afghanistan 1975. The material is mostly a collection of articles on Ormuri Grammar published in “Kabul magazine” *De Kabul Mujulla* for the months October, November and December 1972. However, the information is more of a translation from the work of Morgenstierne mentioned above. The writer has held the language “*a dialect of Pashto separated from it a few hundred years back*”. This observation is not only misleading but self-contradictory to the statement of Morgenstierne quoted in the very start of the extract of Dost’s book that “*for the earliest information about Ormuri or Baraki we are indebted to Babar, who is also the first to mention Parachi*” as the period only since mentioning the language (*not derelict*) by Babar to the writing of Dost Mohammad’s book comes to more than four hundred and sixty-five long years. In fact no language other than Ormuri can claim the word “**Spuk** سپک” for dog mentioned by Herodotus two thousand and five hundred years ago.

It is true that both languages i.e. Pashto and Ormuri are sister East Iranian languages alongwith Baluchi but all three have developed separately from a single mother and none of these can be held the off-spring of another in the absence of any historical or linguistic evidence. The phonetic and sound system and existence of more sounds in Ormuri as compared to the two other languages does not at all prove this presumption, especially in the near past of “few hundred years.” The Ormuri has sounds like \check{F} , r, ʒ, ʕ, out of which r dose not exist in Pashto at all, while F has never been there in Pashto until adopted for the loan word from Arabic and Persian. In Ormuri this is a normal sound used quite frequently. Z and C sounds do exist in the Waziri dialect but their adoption from Ormuri cannot be ruled out due to its close proximity with Ormuri. Moreover, the Ormuri speakers occupied vast area in the past, ranging from Hindukush to Sulaiman hills and the influence of Ormuri language on Eastern Baluchi speaks of its richness in the past as mentioned by Morgenstierne.

The latest Socio-Lingustic Survey of North Pakistan Vol: 4 made by Don Hallberge in 1992 suggests equal chances of the survival of the language due to factors given by him. He argues, “*In summary, it would seem that the Ormuri of Kainguram may be significantly different than the variety spoken in Loger since Kieffer reports that the Kaniguram variety is not understood in*

Baraki-Barak (Logar). However, the question of dialect variation may be one of little import today since Ormuri has apparently all but disappeared in Logar. A more importance question might be one which asks, to what extent other languages, such as Pashto, have had an influence on Ormuri, and in general on the Ormur community. In Logar it would seem that the pressures of much larger languages, such as Pashto and Persian, have virtually eliminated Ormuri from the scene. But in Kaniguram, the Ormuri seems to have maintained a certain degree of distinctiveness as a language community. Comparative word list data presented in this study demonstrate this fact, since the Ormuri of Kaniguram has a low degree of lexical similarity with the Pashto, which surrounds it¹³.

Don Hallberg indicates the factors both for and against the survival of Ormuri and states; *“Patterns of language use, as reported by interviewees in this present study, would also support the conclusion that Ormuri is being maintained in Kaniguram. This also corresponds to expressed feelings of positive attitudes toward Ormuri by those from this community. However, patterns of bilingualism within this community would suggest that the environment is one where bilingual proficiency, especially in Pashto, is pervasive.*

These facts taken by themselves cannot decide the fate of Ormuri, as it is spoken in Kaniguram, but if the influences which have caused the virtual death of Ormuri in Logar are also present in Kaniguram, then one must wonder about its future viability there also. It is with all of these forces in mind that one must reserve judgement about the future of Ormuri in Kaninguram. At present, it seems that Ormuri is being maintained in the Ormur community of Kaniguram, but there are also powerful influences at work, which, even now may be slowly turning the wheels, which will eventually lead to language shift. It would be a valuable contribution if someone were to investigate the Ormuri of Kaniguram further to find out more about why the language continues to be maintained in the face of such influences¹⁴,” Don concludes.

¹³ Don Hallberg Socio-Linguistic Survey of North Pakistan Vol: 4,p-63

¹⁴ Don Hallberg Socio-Linguistic of North Pakistan Vol: 4, p-63-64

Finally the author has at his credit the first ever book purely written and compiled in Ormuri language. Its name is “ماخ ا خوئی زبان ته گور غاره زر ژیبڼ” *should we leave our language at deathbed?* In this book sounds specifically used in the language, both vowels and consonants, have been explained and for this purpose symbols have also been created with the technical help of professional foreign linguists who are working on codifying languages of Northern Areas such as Brushuski , Kalasha, Shina, Kohistane etc. For rest of the sounds Pashto symbols have been adopted except for those which are not needed in Ormuri. Ormuri-specific sounds have been symbolised in this work as follows:

[ږ] (voiceless trilled-r); It is an Ormuri-specific sound, which is not used in any other language of the subcontinent and other Indo-Iranian languages. It is a voiceless trilled r, which has also been explained by Joan Baart in the January, 1998 issue of North Pakistan Newsletter as follows: “Among other things, it was interesting to learn that the language has a voiceless trilled r of Czech (as in the name of the composer Antonin Dvorak). There is also a hard to hear phonemic contrast between two Kinds of esh sound, probably palato-alveolar vs. alveolo-palatal.”

[ڙ] (voiced alveolo-palatal grooved fricative). This sound is though also used in Waziri dialect of Pashto but Pashto has no symbol for its expression and the regular symbol of (څ) is used for this sound despite the difference. It sounds like [S] in pleasure, which is different from [S] of vision.

[ښ] (voiceless palato-aolveolar grooved fricative). It is also a specific Ormuri sound though also used in Waziri dialect. It sounds like [ش] in pissing in Urdu or Punjabi. In Pashto no specific symbol is used for this sound and is written with a regular [ش]. In Ormuri if the difference of both the sounds i.e. [ش] and [ښ] is not indicated, many words and their meaning would cause confusion:

Nasalization symbol [~] has also been included in the alphabet by indicating it with (ڻ) and adjustable in all positions i. e. initial, medial, final and isolate in a word. Urdu and all other Arabic based script do not distinguish it from the regular [ن ڻ] especially if it comes in the middle of the word. In Ormuri it is used even at the start of words.

[ٲ] = e , This symbol has been prescribed for indicating the difference of vowel length and stress. For example, the *barri ye* appearing in the middle of word in Urdu is indicated with the same shape as is the case of *chhoti ye*. In Ormuri this difference has been indicated by prescribing two vertical dots for *barri ye* as against horizontal dots for *chhoti ye* so that the difference of *Sher* for lion and *Sheer* for milk is Known.

[ٲ] This *lane-mad* has been created for removing the confusion about the vowel length and stress. There is a difference of vowel length indicated normally by zabar i. e. the one with stress and the other without stress. When stress is needed this vowel would be placed as a diacritic symbol instead of the usual zabar. For example the [Sə r] in *Sardar* is different from Urdu *Sar* [sΛ r] (head) and English Sir. If the two are not differentiated in Ormuri, a lot of confusion is caused. Hence this symbol has been prescribed for vowels similar to the Urdu (sΛ r) and English Sir.

Besides, diphthong used in the final case of words has been explained and where necessary, the required symbol has been created. Phonetic transcription of a number of words representing all sounds has been made in this work alongwith the parts of speech and meaning in English and Urdu. A specimen of prose writing and a bit of poetry have been included to attract the young readers which may help in promoting and streamlining the languages.

Moreover, work on Lexicography and Grammar is under way and special computer software is used for recording and describing words as and when fresh words emanate from memory. About three thousand words have so far been stored in the computer. A similar number of words would hopefully complete the dictionary.

Before closing the subject the reader may like to see a specimen of the Ormuri Alphabets and a few poems composed by me:

ٲ	t	p	b	ə	ʌ	ā
d	x	[h]	ts	dʒ	ج	[s]
ʒ	z	r	ř	r	[z]	d
[t]	[z]	[s]	š	ش	s	ž
g	k	q	f	غ	[ʔ]	[z]
y	h	w	~	n	m	l

vowels مجهول

ā ī e o u u i ə ʌ ā

خبيہ يې گده په راتگ ته څه مهمان نک شيوکم
سن خوش ته نک زلی په راتگ ته خوئی جانان نک شيوکم

Although I don't mind guests coming
but her half-hearted coming didn't
make me happy.

زری يې ستر شيوکم خونیم سو ا زریودی گه سپره
خوانی وي څه سکې په خوانه خوانی خوان نک شيوکم

I have matured early and will soon
grow old, O! Youth where have you
gone, as I don't feel youthful even
while I am young.

برزیمت سو سپوره قسمت وي که خونیمت گده
ترئو په وجه يې خوئی ژوند نر خوش په خان نک شيوکم

O! My misfortune! I will kill you, if I
ever come across you; it is you,
who ever deprived me of happiness.

خورا بو ا مينه ته پنه غتدک وينر لاس
واک يې بو گده سا قا بو ای بد پنه زر

Love kills one from inside but
can intense love be guarded?

زلی و بونک خوانی زرسه ته دس په و لک
که څه فرق غوزا نک ته مخ گونه زر

She doesn't let me share her youth as
she doesn't want to lose her modesty.

ته پاچکه په و ختم بو درا آه لاست
گرده ره دي که نک زا ته رت آینه زر

She is scared of being kissed as she
does not want to lose the freshness of
her cheeks.

تسا له بو، ترکوک شخه بو سپن که اخمي
زلی مه بونک بی کوک کی سه جیکه خنه زر

Whoever would see her would be
attracted I therefore do not like her
to smile at someone else.

CONCLUSION

A healthy language is one that acquires new speakers. No matter how many adults use the language, if it isn't passed to the next generation, its fate is already sealed. Although a language may continue to exist for a long time as a second or ceremonial language, it is moribund as soon as children stop learning it. Pressure to abandon a language in favour of a more dominant one has historically been direct and forceful. In nineteenth-century, in Australia and United States, native children were sent to boarding schools, where they were punished for speaking their own language. No public or official use of native languages was allowed. The English government used similar methods to forcibly repress the Celtic languages of Ireland and Wales.

Can Languages Come Back to Life?

1. The deck is stacked heavily against the world's minority languages, but the case isn't hopeless. We've seen that, with effort, plants and animals can be brought back from the edge of extinction. Languages too, can be turned around. In fact, they have an advantage over biological species because they can be revived even after they have died.

The Celtic language of Cornish, once spoken in southwestern England, ceased to exist abruptly in 1777 when its last living speaker died. Reports of its death may have been exaggerated, however. Cornish has made a comeback in recent years. Using surviving written documents, descendants of Cornish speakers began to learn their language and now even speak it to their children. Road signs began appearing both in Cornish and English. Now, about 2,000 people speak Cornish.

Another example of a resuscitated language is Modern Hebrew. Hebrew survived for centuries as a religious and scholarly language. In the late nineteenth century, a movement led by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda reintroduced Hebrew into Palestine as a spoken language. After the founding of Israel, Hebrew was taught in the schools and is now the common language of Israeli citizens.

Other languages have risen from their cultural sickbeds to new life. Welsh and Navajo speakers revitalised these dying languages through “immersion” school where children used their ancestral language everyday. Both languages have grown in number of speakers over the past few decades.

2. In the past, language revitalisation was mostly left to the speakers of the language. It was a haphazard process, dependent on individual initiative and whatever funding could be scraped together. Recently, linguists and other interested people have started a number of umbrella organisations for a more comprehensive approach to language rescue.

The Alaska State legislature made one of the earliest organised language preservation efforts when it established the Alaska Native Language Centre in 1972. Its work is typical of many such organisations. The Centre concentrates on documentation, the importance of which, says Director Michael Krauss, should not be underestimated. “That documentation”; he says, “could be the basis for revival at any time in the future, if people have the will”. Because it’s easier to keep languages alive than to bring them back from the dead, the Centre also supports bilingual education.

3. Many groups, including some Native Californians, don’t consider preservation an adequate goal. They want their language to live as communal speech. Nicholas Ostler suggests that people in monolingual cultures (English speakers in the United States, for example) learn and use another language and encourage others to learn one, too. If you are already multilingual, use all the languages you know, especially in front of small children. A vote for bilingual education and positive language policies is also a step in the right direction. Hinton offers similar suggestion. “The main thing that people in the United States need to do,” she says, “is to recognise when other languages are being discriminated against in some ways and to do what they can to stop it. “We should remember, she continues, that most people in the world are bilingual or multilingual”. Speaking one language all the time is not the norm.

4. We face two alternative scenarios for the future. In one, the world becomes increasingly homogenised as minority cultures and their languages are swept away in the oncoming tide of standardisation. The accumulated knowledge of millennia disappears, leaving the world a poorer place. In the other scenario, minorities keep their cultural-integrity, and minor languages continue to exist alongside large ones. Which scenario comes to pass depends to a large extent on our actions now.

5. Language loss can be reversed, but that is a consequence of individual, usually conscious, family decisions. When parents and other caregivers decide that children should learn both the home language and a second language, speak to them in both languages and insist that they answer in both languages (sometimes at slightly different ages, to avoid confusion), children can successfully become bilingual and language loss can be reversed. Coming to a realisation that some children (but not your own) must learn the home language for it to survive is not quite enough---your own children are the keys to language survival.

SUGGESTIONS

Documentation:

Write, tape-record, and videotape the elders; find old documentation by linguists and set up tribal or community archives; hire linguists to document the languages and create language-lesson book, school curricula, phrasebooks, dictionaries, tapes, games, and other learning materials.

Write It Down:

Develop writing systems for endangered languages; teach them in the schools.

Create Second-language Programs:

For community members (children or adults) who have learned their language at home, organise classes and programs, informal evening classes, some in the schools, and some at the college level.

Immerse:

Some groups have been able to set up schools where children are educated entirely in the ancestral language. Mohawk, Arapaho, and Blackfoot Red Indian have developed pre-schools and elementary schools where their language is the language of instruction. Students in Hawaii can now go from pre-school all the way through high school and even up to a master's degree with Hawaiian as the language of instruction.

Encourage The Community:

Set up support teams that speak only in the native language; setup summer Language camps; use the language at the dinner table at home; hold potluck dinners where speakers are honoured and speeches are given in the language; ask tribal employees to speak their language; teach children to give greetings in their language....

Change Language Policy:

In 1990 the Native American Languages Act was passed by Congress and signed into law, recognizing the uniqueness and importance of Native American languages and stating that the government has a responsibility to co-operate with Native American communities trying to keep their languages alive. The subsequent Native American Languages Act of 1992 provided for a small amount of funding (presently about \$2 million per year) for Native American language revitalisation programs.

Attend Conferences, Institutes, And Workshops:

In this difficult and never-ending task of trying to turn language loss around, it is easy to get discouraged or burntout. Exciting conferences and institutes at the local, state, national, and international level give support to the heroes of language activism, giving them a chance to share their problems and successes, to get ideas from each other, and to be reminded that they are not alone.



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