

Stratification of /r/ pronunciation in Sindhi, spoken in Sindh, Pakistan

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National Conventions

- () indicates the linguistic variable
- // indicates the phonemic representation of the variant
- [] indicates the variant realization of the variable

Abstract

The study is concerned with presence or absence of r, a voiced apico alveolar trill, following the voiceless retroflex stop /t/, the voiced retroflex stop /d/ and the aspirated voiced retroflex stop /dh/ in the end of words like; ma:itru (relative) can be pronounced as ma:itu, jadru (a handmill) as jadu and wa:dhri (robe) as wa:dhi that frequently occur in the speech communities of various parts of rural and urban Sindh.

Information regarding the (r) variable is scant but from the literature available, provided mainly by Grierson (1919), Baloch (1965) and Allana (1967), we are able to glean important information which helps throw light on the two variants in our speech communities under investigation and explain stratification between the two variants.

Grierson (1919) observed that pronunciation of r varied according to particular dialects of Sindhi: in Lari (Lower), he maintained, [r] was dropped in pronunciation, eg. te for tre (three), khadu for khadru (sugar), dadhu for dadhru (ringworm), while in Siroli (Upper) and Vicholi (Central) it is pronounced.*

Nearly 50 years later Baloch (1965) and Allana (1967) observe that this trilled [r] is only pronounced in Siroli and it not pronounced in any other dialect including Vicholi. We can clearly see that within this space of time a major linguistic change took place from (indigenous) pronunciation of [r] to dropping of [r], the innovative variant in Vicholi dialect.

We may speculate that this change is bound up in the increasing significance which education came to have in Sindhi in the 1930's, especially after 1936 when Sindh was separated from the Bombay presidency and was made an independent province. An increase in education meant that there was increased exposure to the standard

Sindhi script which omitted [r] through newspapers, academic works and so forth, and it is very likely that this increased and constant exposure to the script influenced the educated so that they did not pronounce [r].

From this we may surmise that [r] deletion in both our speech communities may be indicative of educated speech while [r] pronunciation (the indigenous variant) may be characteristic of old and uneducated speech and that it has a higher occurrence in Old Hala which is more linguistically conservative than Hyderabad (which retains indigenous and older speech forms).

*The paper investigates and examines the stratification of *r* in rural and urban areas of Sindh relating social parameters of age, education and sex.*

** Sindhi has five major dialects; Siroli or Utradi (Upper or Northern), Vicholi (Central), Lari (Lower), Thari (spoken in desert area) and Lasi (spoken in Lasbello of Balochistan).*

Introduction

The study is concerned with presence or absence of *r*, a voiced apico alveolar trill, following the voiceless retroflex stop /*t*/, the voiced retroflex stop /*d*/ and the aspirated voiced retroflex stop /*dh*/. For example *ma:itru* (relative) can be pronounced as *ma:itu*, *jadru* (a handmill) as *jadu* and *wa:dhri* (robe) as *wa:dhi*, in Vicholi (Central) dialect of Sindhi, spoken in central areas of Sindh that is adopted as Standard Sindhi for education purpose in Sindh, a southernmost province of Pakistan.

Information regarding the (*r*) variable is scant but from the literature available, provided mainly by Grierson (1919), Baloch (1965) and Allana (1967), we are able to glean important information which helps throw light on the two variants in our speech communities under investigation and explain variation between the two variants.

Writing in 1919 Grierson observed that pronunciation of *r* varied according to particular dialects of Sindhi (1): In Lari (Lower), he maintained, [*r*] was dropped in pronunciation, eg *te* for *tre* (three), *khadu* for *khadru* (sugar), *dadhu* for *dadhru* (ring worm), while in Siroli (Upper) and Vicholi (Central) it is pronounced.

Nearly 50 years later Baloch (1965) and Allana (1967) observe that this trilled [*r*] is only pronounced in Siroli and is not pronounced in

any other dialect including Vicholi. We can clearly see that within this space of time a major linguistic change took place from (indigenous) pronunciation of [r] to dropping of [r], the innovative variant.

We may speculate that this change is bound up in the increasing significance which education came to have in Sindhi in the 1930's, especially after 1936 when Sindh was separated from the Bombay presidency and was made an independent province. An increase in education meant that there was increased exposure to the standard Sindhi script which omitted [r] through newspapers, academic works and so forth, and it is very likely that this increased and constant exposure to the script influenced the educated so that they did not pronounce [r].

From this we may surmise that [r] deletion in both our speech communities may be indicative of educated speech while [r] pronunciation (the indigenous variant) may be characteristic of old and uneducated speech and that it has a higher occurrence in Old Hala which is more linguistically conservative than Hyderabad (which retains indigenous and older speech forms).

Another important source we have on Vicholi speech is the brief account given by Khubchandani (1961). Given Khubchandani's work on Vicholi speech it may appear strange that no reference is made to the consonantal group tr, dr, dhr. This is presumably owing to the fact that, besides the written text, Khubchandani analyzed his own speech only. Although he claims to be a native speaker of the Vicholi dialect it must be borne in mind that his speech may have been influenced by his migration from Sindh which began during his teenage years (cf. Khubchandani, 1961:3). Similarly with Allana's work ([1963], 1990). Although he analyses his own speech, which he considers as belonging to the Vicholi dialect, no reference is made to tr, dr, and dhr. We may assume from this that the influence of the Lari dialect, his original dialect, is still present and makes for elision of [r].

The paper investigates and examines the stratification of r in selected words stated above in rural and urban areas of Sindh, Pakistan relating social parameters of age, sex and education.

The locale of study

Sindh, the southernmost province of Pakistan, is situated in northwest corner of the Indian sub-continent and covers about 17.5% of the total

area of Pakistan. It is a fertile land, mainly due to the river Sindhu and its many tributaries, and the province is also rich in natural resources.

Sindh is made up of urban and rural areas with 43% of the population being concentrated in the urban areas. The majority of these people are immigrants, so it is not surprising that the urban areas are characterized by a multilinguistic flavor. Particularly in the large cities, i.e. Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur, Urdu is the language of everyday communication in the streets and for business purposes.

Conversely, in the rural areas Sindhi takes on the function, which Urdu has in the large cities. Rural areas, in general, are less developed than the urban parts of Sindh in terms of services and communications. Educational facilities are not so numerous here, which accounts for the low literacy rate. Salient to our study, which takes sex as a social parameter, is the wide gap that exists between male and female literacy rates. As table below shows, there are sharp differences in the literacy ratios for males and females. It is much higher for males, i.e. 39.7% compared to 21.6% for females.

AREA	BOTH SEXES	MALE	FEMALE
ALL AREAS	31.45%	39.74%	21.64%
URBAN	50.77%	57.77%	42.23%
RURAL	15.57%	24.54%	5.21%

Table: Literacy ratio by sex and rural/urban areas

Also of pertinence to our study are the sizeable differences between the literacy ratios of rural and urban areas. The ratio in urban areas is 50.8% compared to only 15.6% in the rural areas. Besides this there is also a wide contrast between male and female literacy ratios in both areas. In rural areas the ratio of female to male is approximately 1: 5 whereas in urban areas it is approximately 1: 1.35.

For the purpose of this study we decided that one community should be small and relatively isolated and the other a somewhat larger one which has been exposed to a range of linguistic influences. Such a choice facilitates an investigation into the urban/rural linguistic dichotomy, which the researcher feels to be valid in Sindh. By analyzing the speech of both communities we can examine their rate of linguistic change and effect a comparison of the two sets of changes.

Hyderabad

Hyderabad is home to 1.1 million people. It has municipal status and functions as a major trade center for the surrounding districts. The city is 110 miles north east of Karachi and has a good communications infrastructure that links it to the other major cities of Pakistan.

Like any major city, Hyderabad provides a range of educational services, which serve the entire province of Sindh. Significant also is Hyderabad's commercial and cultural value, which attract immigrants.

Old Hala

The town of Old Hala, 40 miles north east of Hyderabad has a population of approximately 20000, mainly Sindhis, the majority of whom depend on agriculture for a living. The inhabitants of Old Hala have contact with the speech community of Hyderabad. There are those who commute on a daily basis for employment, those who travel for purposes of shopping, attending hospitals, etc. and those who attend the high schools, colleges and universities in Hyderabad.

The survey itself comprised 54 males and 51 females, Of the 54 informants from the urban area 27 were females and 27 male; in the rural area 24 were female, 27 male.

Age Group	Total	Sex		Education		
		M	F	M/F	F/M	U.ED
1 (15-30)	36	18	18	6/6	6/6	6/6
2 (31-50)	36	18	18	6/6	6/6	6/6
3 (50+)	33	18	15	6/3	6/6	6/6
Total	105	54	51	18/15	18/18	18/18

Table: The distribution of the total informants according to age, sex and education

The quantitative method used

Our statistical tool for the frequency index of the variants for the variable is based on Labov 's (1966) quantitative method. The probability of the realization of the /r/ variant is calculated by application of the following equation.

$$\text{Frequency index of Urban variant} = \frac{\text{total number of occurrences of urban variant}}{\text{total number of occurrences of urban variant} + \text{total number of occurrences of rural variant}}$$

for example, then, if an informant used the urban variant 50 times during the course of the interview and the rural variant 70 times the frequency index of the urban variant will be:

$$\frac{50}{50+70} \times 100 = 42\%$$

Results of the analysis

The age factor

So far in our study we have noted the significance of age differences for the use of our variable under investigation. The analysis results of our data for the (r) variable in both our communities have demonstrated that age differences appear to be indicative of language change whereby linguistically the young informants are distanced from the other non-young age groups in Hyderabad.

The age factor and the distribution of the (r) variable in Hyderabad

AGE	[r] deletion %	[r] %	TOTAL
YOUNG	52 %	48 %	
MIDDLE AGE	30 %	70 %	
OLD	21 %	79 %	
Total Tokens	806	1551	2357

Table 1: The distribution of the (r) variable according to age in Hyderabad

An examination of the data in table 1 reveals that there is a clear correlation between the age of the speaker and his/her realization of the (r) variable. Youngest informants are remote from the old and middle aged speakers, displaying the highest use of the innovative variant, 52 %. This higher use among the young of the innovative variant seems best explained by the argument that the young in general, being more educated, are more in touch with linguistic innovations and have higher

degrees of sensitivity to the sociolinguistic connotations of the use of different variants.

The age factor and the distribution of the (r) variable in Old Hala

AGE	[r] deletion %	[r] %	TOTAL
YOUNG	7 %	93 %	
MIDDLE AGE	18 %	82 %	
OLD	5 %	95 %	
Total Tokens	246	2173	2429

Table 2: The distribution of the (r) variable according to age in Old Hala.

The log linear analysis of our (r) variable for the Old Hala speech community shows a pattern that differs significantly from that which we found in Hyderabad. First of all each of the respective age groupings in Old Hala have much lower realizations of the [r] deletion variant. More significantly though, we note an age patterning in which our old and young informants fall almost at the same end of the scale with the middle age group deviating from the old at the opposite end.

Chambers and Trudgill (1980) also observed the similar type of age differentiation pattern η in the Norwich variable (ng). This is the suffix –ing in the present participle such as ‘walking’, ‘fishing’ and ‘singing’. The –ing suffix can alternatively be pronounced [n] or [ŋ]. Thus this variable has two variants [n] and [ŋ]. Age patterning here locates the young and old at the same end of the scale with their usage of [n] standardization whereas the middle aged are further away, having the lowest score. This type of pattern Chambers and Trudgill (1980:92) explained, concluding that:

...for younger speaker, the most important social pressures come from the peer group, and that linguistically they are more strongly influenced by their friends than by anybody else. Influence from the standard language is relatively weak. Then, as speakers get older and begin working, they move into wider and less cohesive social networks... For older and retired people, on the other hand, social pressures are again less as success has already been achieved.

How do we explain the age patterning for our (r) variable in the rural homeland? Khtani, (1992:105) by way of explaining a similar pattern of age differentiation for the Saudi Arabia, tells us that it is a reflection of the social makeup of the speech communities' family system. In the Asir community, he tells us, young persons live with parents who are seen to be influential in shaping the young's speech patterns.

The above explanation, however, has no bearing on our (r) variable for two reasons. First, and most significantly, our age divisions differ somewhat from those, which Khtani devised. Whereas young age for him consisted of 12-18 year olds, the equivalent category for us is year 15-30, quite a considerable difference here where a sizable number of persons in our speech community would have left their parents home, being married and taking on the role of parents themselves.

Regarding the differentiation pattern that has emerged for our (r) variable, it remains quite difficult at this stage to offer any definitive explanations or to account satisfactorily for observed patterns. As we shall see it is bound up with the linguistic behaviour of a small number of females whom we shall look at in due course.

The education factor

Usually as speakers gain significant amount of education they become more aware of the social values of using one variant rather than another since they have much higher rates of contact with other speech communities and are more sensitive to any social values associated with particular speech forms.

The social values associated with the use of the (r) variable seem to be the most trenchantly marked as such the (r) variable aroused comment, albeit conflicting comment, primarily from our educated informants.

For example, speaker 70, a professor of literature, while espousing various views on language, commented that [r] deletion was only a recent phenomenon among Hyderabad Sindhi speakers, characterizing the speech as mainly of the young and sophisticated or those who, as he said, like to 'put on airs and graces'. 'Go to Hatiri' (a small village 5 miles north-east of Hyderabad), he said, 'and you notice how the joyful [r] sound is strongly pronounced' (ai: to khe khabara pawadi ta ki:a na r jo mazeda:ru a:wa:zu cito ucariyo tho wane). We may surmise that [r] deletion for this speaker is representative of the up-and-

coming young population, a fact that his purist sensibilities would seem to regret. Taking into consideration this speaker's favorable attitude towards the (r) variant we would have accommodated most closely to it. Strangely, in his statement above the speaker alternated between the indigenous and innovative variant. There is no definitive explanation behind this behaviour but it may be the case that this informant was originally a speaker of the urban variant, who, because of his affiliation with the Hatiri to abandon his use of it. As we have witnessed, his attempts have been unsuccessful, with the result that he now straddles both sides of the linguistic variable.

Informant 82, a 34 year old teacher from Old Hala remarked that her 'failure' to pronounce (r) was just one of many things which 'betrayed' her when she came back from university in Hyderabad to live at home again. This speaker openly admitted that she made a conscious effort to reconvert to her original pronunciation norms in order to 'fit in', as she put it. Depending on who she was talking to, this speaker said she had to be careful about her speech and implied that those people who had never lived outside their own community were not fully aware of how one could lose part of an original accent and adopt features from another one. Hence, she continued the fun poking which often is targeted at people who return home with a new accent.

The (r) variable was very salient to this speaker who was most acutely attuned to the social ramifications of her [r] deletion variant 96% of the time, which accounted for the entire length span she was engaged in conversation with the interviewer, my wife. The 4% where she used the [r] variant was during her short conversation with her cook who interrupted the interview when she came back from a short visit to her neighbours.

This vacillator linguistic behaviour is most interesting and exemplifies quite unambiguously Le Page's notion about the fluidity of individual linguistic behaviour and the area of choice open to people in their use of language as a means of symbolizing identity. Le Page (1980:15) comments: we create our own rules so as to resemble as closely as possible those of the group or groups with which from time to time we wish to identify. According to him every utterance produced by a speaker is a declaration of a social identity. Le Page and Tabouret Keller (1985) stress that speakers use the variable linguistic resources open to them to point to various aspects of their social identity while

they move through a multidimensional space. This interpretation of individual modification of linguistic behaviour may fully be realized when it is made clear that the interviewer of the above speaker uses the [r] variant. During the switch in the interview the speaker accommodated to each of her addressee's linguistic norms. This is in keeping with Le Page's beliefs that speakers can adjust their speech in different directions at different times and furthermore what motivates individuals to modify their speech is not so much a desire for 'prestige' as a concern for identifying with the relevant group.

The education factor and the distribution of (r) variable in Hyderabad

EDUCATION	[r] deletion%	[r] realization%	Total
H. ED.	39%	61%	
ED.	43%	57%	
U. ED.	21%	79%	
Total Tokens	806	1551	2357

Table 3: *The education factor and the distribution of the (r) variable in Hyderabad*

Turning now to the log linear analysis results of the distribution by level of education in Hyderabad, we can see that more educated a person the more he/she approximates to the urban variant. A look at table 3, above shows that both educated groups have significantly higher scores for the innovative variant than the un-educated – respective scores for educated and higher educated were not significantly different at 43% and 39%, whereas the uneducated approximated to the innovative variant by 21%. These findings are best explained from the network view (Miloy, [1980] 1987) that educated persons usually have loose networks and are more in touch with linguistic innovations – uneducated on the other hand have more close-knit networks, have less contact with outside communities and are more likely to conform to local conservative linguistic norms.

The education factor and the distribution of (r) variable in Old Hala

EDUCATION	[r] deletion%	[r] realization%	Total
H. ED.	13%	87%	
ED.	10%	90%	
U. ED.	7%	93%	
Total Tokens	246	2173	2419

Table 4: *The education factor and the distribution of the [r] variable in Old Hala*

In the rural speech community, seen from the data displayed in table 4, it appears that there is no real significant difference between each of the educated groups in their use of the [r] deletion variant. Between educated and uneducated [r] deletion accommodation we have a nominal difference of 3% (6% between uneducated and higher educated).

These figures prove interesting and indeed were unanticipated. As educated speakers did not have a significantly higher accommodation to the urban variant, suggests that consciously or subconsciously the [r] variant is used to assert group distinctiveness in Old Hala. Clearly the concern for solidarity is more important to the Old Hala speech community than the desire to use the urban variant. As Milroy and Milroy (1985:359) remark, "...a close-knit network has an intrinsic capacity to function as a norm-enforcement mechanism to the extent that it operates in opposition to larger scale institutional standardizing pressures". If we apply this remark to the present case it, implies that the close-knit social networks of Old Hala enforce the maintenance of the indigenous variant [r] against the urban variant.

The distribution of [r] deletion by the education and age factor in Hyderabad

As there is a statistically significant correlation between the social parameters of age and education, it holds true for our (r) variable as can be seen from the table below.

AGE	EDUCATION		
	H. ED%	ED%	U. ED%
YOUNG	60%	58%	38%
MIDDLE AGED	32%	39%	19%
OLD	21%	26%	16%

Table 5: The distribution of [r] deletion by education and age factor in Hyderabad

As before the log linear results show that the younger and more educated the informant, the higher his/her realization of the urban variant. It would appear that age is the primary significant variable in this correlation: we will note the greatest difference in scores for [r] deletion when education is kept the constant variable. In fact there is a considerable significant difference of 39% between young higher educated and old higher educated.

The sex factor

Correlating sex with the social parameter of education in both our speech communities, we noticed that in the urban speech community females from both educated groups had higher scores of the innovative variants than their counterparts. In this respect, this followed the sexual differentiation pattern, which is commonly observed in the west that sees that women are more sensitive than men to prestige patterns, having greater consciousness of social status.

With regards to the uneducated females who had lower accommodation to the urban prestige norm than men from the same group, it was said that this was owing to the fact that lack of education usually entailed limited access to public life and, thus, lack of awareness of linguistic prestige patterns. Also as mentioned before the network ties among the uneducated are usually considerably stronger than among the educated that makes for a higher maintenance of the indigenous variant. Our data analysis for the distribution of the (r) variable by sex and education in Hyderabad shows this pattern.

The distribution of (r) variable by sex and education in Hyderabad

EDUCATION	[r] deletion	
	MALE	FEMALE
H. ED.	27%	51%
ED.	31%	55%
U. ED.	25%	17%

Table 6: The distribution of [r] deletion according to sex and education in Hyderabad

In both educated groups, we will note the females have higher occurrences of [r] deletion with the men scoring higher in the uneducated group. The difference between male and female approximation to the urban variant is most significant (24% among higher educated and 22% among educated). In fact, in our linguistic variable under investigation the differences above are the most pronounced. This will reinforce our belief that the (r) variable is the most socially marked, carrying the most salience for its (female) speakers. Al-Wer (1991:185) posits that the salience of variables and social values are connected, 'the higher the salience the stronger the values'. Public comment, as mentioned, was varied, and was more common among the female informants.

Speaker 30, a speaker of the [r] deletion variant informed me that her 69 year old mother used a number of different linguistic forms from her, including a strong 'r' pronunciation which she found 'quaint'. Informant 33, another speaker of the [r] deletion variant expressed her concern that her own daughter might start speaking like her servant's children with whom she was in regular contact. 'You see, it is important that a girl should talk according to her station', she said. When I asked her to expand, she exemplified her point. 'For example, back to your point, brother, it's not very becoming for a girl of Tanya's (her daughter) background to come out with the har [r] sound in her speech, you know, which other folk, from humble backgrounds use'.

From the above, we can glean quite a lot of information about our variable. Clearly for speaker 33, the matter of using the urban or indigenous variant depends primarily on what 'station' one belongs to, i.e. one's level of educational attainment. Besides seeing the [r] deletion variant as a linguistic 'prerogative' of the educated evidence would seem to suggest that more specifically she sees it as a 'prerogative' of the educated female. This may be intimated from the fact that the informant was concerned about only her daughter's linguistic habits; the fact was that during the interview two of her sons were present and yet she did not prescribe any 'correct' linguistic behaviour for them.

The [r] deletion variant then would appear to be an example of change from above (Labov, 1966:328) in the sense that it receives quite a lot of female public attention and is subject to overt comment. The pattern here corresponds to the belief shared by many observers that in western societies women are in the vanguard of change from above.

Wardhaugh (1986:204) states that in change from above women favour the incoming prestige variant more than men because women are motivated to conform to and co-operate with those who are socially more powerful where as men are more inclined to seek solidarity with peers. Women, therefore, consciously 'look up' whereas men do not, preferring instead the solidarity of masculinity of their peers.

With regard to our present variable we may postulate that female change from above may have been assisted by the positive social change that has been sweeping Sindhi society for the past three decades. These changes have meant that there has been increased access to educational instructions and increased participation of women in the work place. Effectively, this means that greater number of women than the same in the past are leaving the seclusion of the home domain and are participating in public life and adapting to new roles.

During the course of my interviews, the comments made by one informant spelled out the implication of these changes. Speaker 17, a 70-year-old uneducated widow proudly told me that her five daughters had managed 'to do well in life'. Three of them were qualified doctors, one of whom had just opened up a gynecological surgery unit along with her husband, also a doctor. Another daughter was a dentist and the youngest was successful lecturer. As the informant remarked:

In my day you couldn't have imagined this happening to a family of girls. For a start girls would stay at home all day, working hard, sweating you know, to survive. We didn't know about reading or writing or fancy stuff like that-just some of the boys did – but now, I know it's still hard for young girls, but with some fire in your heart and strength you can achieve, you can do well just like men do, like you.

Change for this speaker then is rated positively as it has meant that women have greater access to educational facilities and the possibility of ameliorating their lives, challenging former domestic based existences. Here we touch on an important point made by Holmquist (1985:199) on the issue of female linguistic prestige patterns. For him the reason why women consistently opt for prestige varieties is an indication of how they are turning away from things associated with women's housebound position in society.

The distribution of (r) variable by sex and education in Old Hala

In this speech community we found that for all educational groups, it was the men who favored the prestige variant. This we explained from the view of the patriarchic make-up of the speech community where social and cultural roles require women not to take active part in communicating with the public.

EDUCATION	[r] deletion	
	MALE	FEMALE
H. ED.	9%	17%
ED.	13%	7%
U. ED.	8%	6%

Table 7: The distribution of the [r] deletion variant according to sex and education in Old Hala

A look at our data analysis shows that among educated and uneducated groups the females have a slightly lower use of the innovative variant than the males. Among the higher educated, however, there is a reversal in this pattern with females having an 8% lead in the use of the innovative variant. Why this pattern emerged is best explained by examining the behaviour of a ‘minority’ group of females who challenge local community forms. Before doing this, however, it is necessary to account for the ‘majority’ who maintain the use of the [r] variant.

Milroy’s perception of networks is most illuminating in accounting for matters here. On the whole Old Hala society is comprised of strong networks that give rise to local cohesion. As the more deeply rooted an individual’s social relations are within a community, the more s/he will conform to its norms. For the Old Hala community, the [r] variant is the indigenous and local variant, the use of which symbolized Old Hala (rural) identity as opposed to city identity.

Moving on, prestige is associated with the [r] variant in Old Hala, a prestige that is of the local type, born out of the pressure that the community places on maintenance of its speech norms.

Contrariwise, it would appear that another form of prestige of the social kind is beginning to appear with the use of the [r] deletion variant. This is most pronounced among a group of females, who stand on the fringes of mainstream society in that their network ties are much looser

than the community's as a whole. In the context of linguistic change this small minority are important. As J. Milroy (1989) states, 'the social function of weak ties has a number of important implications for a socially accountable theory of linguistic change diffusion'.

In the following section we will look at some of those speakers who 'deviated' from the non-local variant by their adoption of the [r] deletion variant.

(i) Speaker 79, 37 years old, a radio announcer who is higher educated, lives in Old Hala with her father and younger sister. During the course of the interview, she expressed her dissatisfaction at living in Old Hala, which she described as humdrum and uneventful. She made it known that she would rather live in Hyderabad to which she commutes twice weekly to work, and where, at times, she stays for extended periods at in-laws. However, her father, a widower, has strong affiliations with Old Hala and resists her suggestions to live in Hyderabad, preferring instead to remain to be buried beside his wife.

Speaker 79 went on to say that her contact with Old Hala society was virtually nil. Her work that she enjoyed and which kept her busy was Hyderabad-based and she said that she spent a lot of her time in telephone correspondence with her Hyderabad headquarters.

Ever since she left Old Hala in her 'salad days' to attend university in Hyderabad, she had lost touch with friends and society in general. Now most of her friends were professionals residing in Hyderabad and Karachi. This speaker held very liberal views and was most articulate overall. 'I know', she confided, 'I 'm probably considered a bit of an anomaly here and breach the boundaries of female propriety but the fact is I feel I am not harming anyone and also I have a most compatible husband who shares most of my views'.

Speaker 79 briefly discussed Old Hala speech habits in which a passing reference was made to the [r] variant. She did not refer to her own linguistic behaviour or her abandonment of the [r] variant, a fact that, no doubt, ties in with her overall nonchalant attitude toward her community.

So then we may gather that speaker 79's adoption of the [r] deletion variant obviously stems from the fact she attaches prestige to it, consciously or otherwise. The fact that speaker 79 is in regular contact with the Hyderabad speech community where the [r] deletion variant is common feature of educated female speech helps to account for her

adoption of the [r] deletion variant and her total abandonment of the [r] variant.

(ii) Speaker 80, a 39-year-old botanist lives in Old Hala with her husband and two children. Whenever time permits from her busy schedule, she says she visits her parents in Hyderabad who moved there when her brother secured a job after graduation. She emphasized that it would be good to be with her parents but that her work keeps her in Old Hala, which is teeming with plant species. 'It's hard to conduct fieldwork on plants in a concrete jungle' she joked.

This speaker acknowledged that her linguistic behaviour differed somewhat from the community form. This she put down to the fact that her education and career exposed her to new linguistic environments and that, no doubt, she had been influenced. After graduating from Hyderabad she said that postgraduate work took her to Britain and India and that now she tries to fit in any important conference if possible.

Besides her non-local engagements this speaker appeared to be quite actively engaged in the community to the extent of organizing exhibitions and women's groups. From what I could gather she was afforded quite a lot respect.

In this instance, we have someone who embodies Labov's (1980:261) characterization of the linguistic innovator:

...the most advanced speakers are the persons with the largest number of local contacts within the neighborhood, yet who have at the same time the highest proportion of their acquaintances outside the neighborhood.

In the case of our informant she has been able to 'successfully' deviate from community forms by virtue of her prestigious social status. It is quite evident that while she was born in Old Hala and still lives there she leads an extremely mobile existence, using Old Hala more as a base. Thus, in respect of her peripatetic lifestyle, she has abandoned the local linguistic variant.

(iii) Finally, speaker 105 differs from our previous two informants in respect of her uneducated status and her younger age-she is 18. This informant works as servant for a civil servant and his family. Often she spends periods away from home when she accompanies her employers to various regions in and out of the province.

Owing to the nature of her work, this speaker said she has limited contact with the community. She seemed somewhat indifferent to local functions and events and preferred to talk about her visits to different parts of the country with her employers. Eventually, she said, she hoped to pursue a study course in Karachi where her employers would organize things for her. When the subject of linguistic behaviour was introduced, during the course of conversation, the informant did not express any opinions.

Speaker 105's adoption of the urban variant, we may speculate, is a result of her working environment where the likelihood is she is exposed to speakers of the [r] deletion variant. She obviously attaches prestige to the [r] deletion variant, although it is not at the conscious level.

Putting the various strands of information from these three cases together, we may conclude as follows:

- i. The [r] deletion variant works in opposition to the local [r] variant and at the micro-level is socially prestigious.
- ii. Speakers who deviate from the local linguistic norm are in some cases socially powerful and/or ambitious and wish to live somewhere else.
- iii. Lastly, these speakers share a general unorthodoxy when it comes to community attitudes – an overall nonchalant attitude which means they are not sensitive to network pressures, or at least do not value them seriously.

With regards to our linguistic innovators, it is interesting to speculate whether other members of the speech community will accept and adopt this innovation. In so speculating we touch on a topic addressed by many sociolinguists – the distinction which is commonly made between speaker innovation and linguistic change.

Most linguists argue that a personal innovation is not necessarily the same thing as a change. Weinreich et al. (1968:187) points out:

Linguistic change is not to be identified with random drift proceeding from inherent variation in speech. Linguistic change begins when the generalization of a particular alternation in a given subgroup of the speech community assumes direction and takes on the character of orderly differentiation.

Romaine (1982:17), arguing along similar lines, states that,

A whole group has to show change before it is considered real change. This suggests that changes or innovations have to keep recurring within individuals until they are selected and then transmitted.

Perhaps the most comprehensive account of the issue of innovation and change is that given by J. Milroy (1992). He proposes a distinction between speaker innovation and linguistic change based on the very clear distinction he makes between speaker activity on the one hand and linguistic system on the other.

Innovation and change are not conceptually the same thing: an innovation is an act of the speaker, whereas a change is observed within the language system. It is speakers and not languages, that innovate (ibid: 169).

It seems unlikely that our three linguistic innovators will successfully influence the linguistic structure of their immediate speech community. Put otherwise, we do not think it probable that the Old Halain speech community will totally abandon the indigenous variant as a result of pressure from the innovators. Moreover, it is likely that if the Old Hala speech community continue to maintain their strong ties the local cohesion which this gives rise to will not be so easily disrupted. The innovators after all are a relatively small minority (3 out of 24). If we exclude these informants from the overall score for this group, the group score will change significantly. From 17% to 7% among the high educated females and from 6% to 0% among the uneducated.

That is to say that lower realizations of the innovative variant among women in Old Hala are an indication of how sexual codes are more pronounced in rural areas of Sindh which means that women essentially take on a private role in society, giving priority to their prescribed roles of mother and housekeeper. In effect this means they will be less exposed to other innovating linguistic forms.

Notes

1. Sindhi has five major dialects; Siroli or Utradi (Upper or Northern), Vicholi (Central), Lari (Lower), Thari (spoken in desert areas of Sindh) and Lasi (spoken in Lasbello of Balochistan province)

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