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DIFFERENCE IN CHOICE OF OCCUPATION AMONG LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES OF KARACHI

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Abstract

Pakistan is a country where more than 57 languages are being spoken, belong to different cultural background. Karachi, being the biggest city and the major economic arena of the country, is a place where many communities reside together. To name the major communities, there are Urdu speaking, Memon, Makrani, Agha Khani, Hazara, Hindu, Christian, Parsi, Bohri, Pashtun, Punjabi, Balochi, Behari, Bangali and Sindhi. The aim of the present research is to investigate if there a difference exists in the choice of occupation in the major linguistic communities in Karachi. The occupations were categorized into three domains: business, government jobs, and private jobs. A forth category was made for the people who were jobless. The sample of 479 participants consisted of 331 men and 48 women out of whom 83 belonged to Bangali, 99 Memon, 53 Punjabi, 17 Pushto, 125 Sindhi, and 102 to Urdu community. Participants were asked two simple questions: which linguistic community they belong to, and what occupation they belong to. Results demonstrated difference in the choice of occupation among different linguistic communities. Memon and Bangali prefer to be a businessman while a bigger proportion of private jobs is occupied by Urdu speakers while the government sector is predominantly a place of job for Sindhi speakers.

Keywords: Languages, Occupations, Gender, Descriptive Statistics, Karachi

INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where hundreds of languages are spoken. No word is of any value to us unless we understand its meaning. Knowing a language does not only help us understanding Information and communication but also provides us information about its speakers. Language does not exist in space rather it is bound up with social and cultural norms and values. Social norms provide the basis of how and what to say, in what circumstances and to whom.

Language shape our way of thinking about and looking towards the world. Researches in the past have demonstrated that different linguistic communities differ in their perception and cognition in a number of ways. It affects on how people interpret events, reason about causality, keep track

of number, understand material substance, perceive and experience emotion, reason about other people's minds, choose to take risks, and how they choose professions and spouses [1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8].

Pakistan is a country where more than 57 languages are spoken each having its own cultural background [9] and Karachi being the biggest city and the major economic point of the country is a place where many communities reside together. To name the major communities, there are Urdu speaking, Memon, Makrani, Hazara, Hindu, Christian, Parsi, Bohri, Pashtun, Punjabi, Balochi, Behari, Bangali and Sindhi [10]. The aim of the present research is to investigate the existence of difference in the choice of occupation in the major linguistic communities in Karachi. The occupation plays an important part in strengthening the culture and family growth. Most of the times, son adopts the same occupation as father. To investigate these concepts in our society, the idea is being studies.

The knowing of prevalence rate of languages in different occupations is the significant task for the research. Numerous linguistic communities have their own culture and traditions that are dissimilar to others relatively. Several supported studies were reviewed in order to support the literature in favor of estimating the preferences for selecting the occupation in different linguistic communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language is defined as "a purely human and non- instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols." [11]. Language is the asset of mankind that differentiates man from animal. Language is vital to communication which helps us interacting with people around us in an effective manner. Without the presence of language it would not be possible for anyone to gain and share knowledge, ideas, emotions, and feelings. Knowledge of a language does not only help in communication but it builds economic relationships, friendships, and culture ties.

Culture belonging to a particular language provides the basis for communication manner. culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted [12]. For instance, every language has some taboo words which reflect the beliefs and values of the society related to the act. These words vary from culture to culture. One word taboo for one society may not be of any issues for the other.

Language also serves the function of activating culturally shared ideas. According to cultural psychologists [13][14][15]. Culture is a system of shared meaning which consists of a large, diversified pool of shared ideas, values, beliefs, and causal knowledge, coherently organized in a network of interrelation [16]. Activation of this system limits the people's thoughts to certain ideas [17][18], and the use of a particular language serves as a cue to activate the system. For instance, in their response to the Dogmatism Scale [19], bilingual Chinese students proved to be less dogmatic when they answered the English version of the scale than when the answers were taken on Chinese version [20]. Bond (1983) also found the same results in his research. In his research the bilingual Chinese students were asked to complete the Rokeach Value Survey from the perspective of a typical Hong Kong Chinese. Respondents were divided into two groups; one responded to the original English version of the questionnaire while the other responded to the translated Chinese version. As expected, the use of English version led to the greater endorsement of Western values [21].

During conversation words spoken are not the only expression but a good deal of information is conveyed through non verbal behaviors, or some elaborating their importance call them *co-verbal behaviors* [22]. These behaviors may include gestures, gaze, facial expression, and tone of voice. The interpretation of these non verbal behaviors is also affected by the language we use. People belonging to different cultures, and thus of course speaking different languages may interpret the same non verbal behavior differently even to the extent of total opposite [23].

The words used in communication are not the sole characteristic of a language that conveys the message but the interpretation of the meaning also relies on how and to whom the communication is done. Even when the context is same the same words may yield different meanings to the different listeners. That's why before designing the messages speakers attempt to take properties of their addressees into account [24][25][26][27][28].

Languages not only differ in their way of expression but also each language has an ability to mould the cognition and perception of its speakers in its own particular direction. For instance, perception of time across languages is different. The spatial metaphor of time in English is horizontal while for Mandarian people it is vertical [29]. Similarly, preference of English speakers to talk of duration in terms of length affects their cognitive abilities in a different way than the Greek speakers who prefer to express time in terms of amount [30].

What the world looks to us is affected at the subconscious level through language we use. Grammatical gender may be a good example. In Spanish and other Romance languages, nouns are either masculine or feminine. In many other languages, nouns are divided into many more genders (better to say classes or kinds). Moreover, one thing may be treated as masculine in a language while in the other language it is a female character. This difference leads speakers of different languages to treat and think about the specific item in quite a different manner. Boroditsky, L. et al. (2003) research provided the empirical evidence for the claim. In the study German and Spanish speakers were asked to describe objects having opposite gender assignment in those two languages. For instance, "key" — a word that is masculine in German and feminine in Spanish — was described as "hard," "heavy," "jagged," "metal," "serrated," and "useful," by the German speakers whereas Spanish speakers were more likely to use the words like "golden," "intricate," "little," "lovely," "shiny," and "tiny. Similar kind of compelling results were obtained for the language that does not have a grammatical gender [31].

METHODOLOGY

The sample of 479 participants consisted of 331 men and 48 women out of whom 83 belonged to Bangali, 99 Memon, 53 Punjabi, 17 Pushto, 125 Sindhi, and 102 to Urdu community. The sample was extracted from different market and work places situated in the city of Karachi. Participants were asked two simple questions: which linguistic community they belonged to, and what occupation they belonged to with their gender. The occupations were categorized into three domains: business, government jobs, and private jobs. A fourth category was made for the people who were jobless. Quota non-random sampling method was used in order to gather data and certain types of people were targeted while gathering data. Data was made into several categories and descriptive statistics were applied for analyzing the results and put into meaningful form.

RESULTS

Table 4.1: *Descriptive Statistics of Languages, Occupations and Gender*

| Language | Frequency | Percent | Occupation | Frequency | Percent | Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|-----------|---------|--------|-----------|---------|
| Bangali | 83 | 17.3 | Business Man | 192 | 40.1 | Female | 148 | 30.9 |
| Memon | 99 | 20.7 | Govt. Servant | 121 | 25.3 | Male | 331 | 69.1 |
| Punjabi | 53 | 11.1 | Jobless | 69 | 14.4 | Total | 479 | 100 |
| Pushto | 17 | 3.5 | Private Job | 97 | 20.3 | | | |
| Sindhi | 125 | 26.1 | Total | 479 | 100 | | | |
| Urdu | 102 | 21.3 | | | | | | |
| Total | 479 | 100 | | | | | | |

The above table showed the percentages of distinct community members in the categorized occupation were calculated. Results were obtained as follows: out of the total business men 35.9% are Bangali, 33.9% Memon, 5.7% Punjabi, 4.7% Pushtuns, 14.6% Sindhi, and 5.2% Urdu. In the Government services there are 19% Punjabi, 0.8% Pushtuns, 59.9% Sindhi, and 20.7% Urdu. Among the people doing jobs in the private sectors there are 6.2% Bangali, 8.2% Memon, 19.6% Punjabi, 13.4% Sindhi, and 52.6% Urdu. Out of the total jobless people there are 1.6% Bangali, 37.7% Memon, 10.1% Pushtuns, 17.4% Sindhi, and 23.2% Urdu.

Table 4.2: *Occupations according to languages*

| S. No. | Language | Business Man | | Govt. Servant | | Private Job | | Jobless | |
|--------|----------|--------------|---------|---------------|---------|-------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| 1 | Bangali | 69 | 35.9 | --- | --- | 6 | 6.2 | 8 | 11.6 |
| 2 | Memon | 65 | 33.9 | --- | --- | 8 | 8.2 | 26 | 37.7 |
| 3 | Punjabi | 11 | 5.7 | 23 | 19 | 19 | 19.6 | --- | --- |
| 4 | Pushto | 9 | 4.7 | 1 | 0.8 | --- | --- | 7 | 10.1 |
| 5 | Sindhi | 28 | 14.6 | 72 | 59.5 | 13 | 13.4 | 12 | 17.4 |
| 6 | Urdu | 10 | 5.2 | 25 | 20.7 | 51 | 52.6 | 16 | 23.2 |
| | Total | 192 | 100 | 121 | 100 | 97 | 100 | 69 | 100 |

By above chart, results revealed the several significant findings through above chart and explained that the big proportion of business men is of Bangali, and Memon (35.9% and 33.9% respectively). It showed that business is preferred over jobs by these two communities. The claim is backed by the point a big proportion of the Memon (37.7%) and Bangali (11.6%) were jobless. None of the two community members are present in government jobs, while in the private jobs their existence is quite small (6.2% Bangali and 8.2% Memon). An alternative explanation of the results may be the job sectors does not very much prefer people from these communities so those who have resources go for doing their business while the other remain jobless.

The results for the government services are drastic. A big proportion (59.5 %) is occupied by Sindhi community followed by Urdu (20.7 %) and Punjabi (19 %). It points out towards a social

issue i.e. Provincial government. The Provincial government of Sindh is mostly occupied by Sindhi community so they prefer their own community members to join the government services. Urdu speakers being the real natives of Karachi may have got the edge over other communities in the government services, though the proportion is very much less than the Sindhi. The Punjabi speakers are in competition with the Urdu community, again the reason may be the government scenario as the federal government is run by the Punjabi community.

A big proportion of private jobs (52.6 %) are occupied by Urdu speakers followed by Punjabi (19.6 %) and Sindhi (13.4 %). One reason for these results may be the Urdu community resides in Karachi in a bigger proportion than the other communities. The results also demonstrate that Urdu speakers are more prone to do jobs rather than doing business.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present survey research was to investigate if there exist any difference in the choice of occupation in the major linguistic communities in Karachi. The results do demonstrate that different community members are different in their choice of occupation. The results along with their limitations and implications are discussed below. Similar kind of survey has been done previously and addressed significant findings for the packet sizes and their turnover rate ^[32].

The knowledge of difference in preference of occupation is helpful in creating persuading messages for the target population. For instance business related messages may represent beliefs held in Memon community. Likewise, if the target population is jobs doing people, the values related to Punjabi and Urdu community may be enhanced. If we get to know what kind of people we are going to deal with we can work accordingly to get the desired results.

Although the present research provides us an insight into the differences in the choice of occupation among different linguistic communities, however the issue needs further interrogation on what are the factors that produce such differences. There may be some occupation related beliefs among the member of a community or some other social and economic factors may be responsible for creating such differences.

Moreover, the present research was limited in a number of ways. It provides us information on the extent to which the members of particular community are present in the specific occupation; it does not provide information on how many of the total members of the community belongs to the particular occupation. To elaborate the point, the research tells us out of the total business men 40% are Memon, but it does not tell how many of the Memons were found business men. In order to get the information on this issue, quota sampling on the basis of community will provide a better representative sample.

Another limitation of the research is it does not provide any information on what kind of the business and jobs the people belong to. Furthermore, the research is limited to one city; it ought to be expanded to other cities to get a representative sample of the country. The findings of the research are limited to sample size and need further exploration regarding same discipline with extended sample size.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that there exists a difference in the choice of occupation among major linguistic communities of Karachi, the biggest metropolitan city of Pakistan. Different linguistic communities' members prefer occupation according to their own choice and almost every category's persons like to own business.

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