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A Historical Institutionalism Approach to the Politics of Languages of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the evolution of language regimes and politics of language/s in Pakistan by making use of Selma K. Sonntag and Linda Cardinal's Historical Institutionalism Approach (2015). Secondary data, such as policy documents, policy statements, newspapers, magazines, and webpages collected through purposive sampling have been coded into broader themes and qualitative analysis has been conducted on the data obtained to demonstrate how language policies, and institutional traditions in the policies have often caused critical junctures in Pakistan after independence. The results, as shown in this research, have been political disintegration, critical junctures, linguistic injustice, ethnic conflicts, and social inequality among different ethnic language groups. An inclusive language regime will not only pave the way for linguistic justice but also result in mitigation of language-based critical junctures in different regions of Pakistan.

Introduction

The politics of both language and religion has played an influential role in South Asia which culminated in the violent division of the Indian subcontinent and the establishment of Pakistan. The politics of language polarized around the Urdu-Hindi controversy which was fueled by the institutionalized 'divide and rule' policy of the British colonial government (Jaswal, 2005).

Putting light on the Urdu-Hindi controversy, Schiffman (2016) states that the Indian subcontinent's history of multilingual tolerance was slowly coming to an end as the partition came closer and the ethnolinguistic conflicts between different communities started coming to the surface. Schiffman appears to imply that the language controversy between Hindi and Urdu influenced the historical evolution of the subcontinent. In fact, language related issues have permeated policy making institutions of Pakistan and continue to divide people in Pakistan on ethnic lines and the language regime in the country has not assigned constitutional recognition to small

languages. Today, many languages in Pakistan are on the verge of extinction (Torwali, 2019).

The creation of such ethnically divisive language regimes in Pakistan may be linked with Mohammad Ali Jinnah who championed the cause of Pakistan, a separate homeland for Muslims, and favored Urdu as a national language (Schiffman, 2016). He wanted to create a language regime that made local language speakers learn to speak and write in Urdu. After independence in 1947, addressing a gathering in Dhaka, Jinnah outlined the guidelines for Pakistan's language regime: "… the State language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan. Without one state language, no nation can remain tied solidly together and function" (Dawn, 2017). This language policy recommendation continues to exploit the multilingual reality of the country and it has repeatedly met with critical junctures throughout the history of Pakistan, because of its exclusive nature. Moreover, the language path dependency proposed by Jinnah is a reflection of centralizing tendencies of

power. The policy statement placed Urdu at the vantage point, while the local languages which are spoken in the areas which constitute Pakistan were marginalized. Unfortunately, over time, this oppressive language policy recommendation has grown deep roots in the institutional traditions of the country.

Characteristics of the language regimes of Pakistan have been discussed extensively by research scholars (Durrani, 2012; Schiffman, 2016). A language regime always emerges in the context of power relations, politics of redistribution, and hegemony; according to Liu (2009: p. 24), language regime constitutes three dimensions: functional, symbolic, and legal-political. First, the functional dimension implies language planning. Second, representations or symbols also inform a language regime. Third, the legal-political dimension contains rights, obligations, and constitutional recognition (for details see Liu, 2009). These three dimensions of a language regime can be understood effectively using historical institutionalism approach, because the approach enables researchers to critically study functional mechanisms, symbolic values, and legal-political backdrop of a language regime.

Historical institutionalism approach facilitates the investigation of state behavior and institutional traditions with respect to language policy choices. It also helps in finding out how a language regime favors powerful languages at the cost of minority languages. Accordingly, the incapacity of the language regimes of Pakistan to accommodate minority languages is discussed in this research.

Traditionally, language policy in Pakistan has favored Urdu, and English, while neglecting local languages. The historical institutional traditions of a power centralizing language regime continue to influence the form and content of language policy and planning in Pakistan. Moreover, the politicization of the languages of Pakistan has elicited calculated, organized responses from different language groups who want to create some space for their languages in the country's language regime. Besides, this path dependency has sowed the seeds of divisive tendencies in Pakistan, and many language groups have started resisting with violence the country's language regime.

Recently, the country proposed a new language regime in 2020 by redefining its education and language policies. Unfortunately, this newly proposed language regime is also not far removed from the earlier patterns of linguistic exclusion and injustice, because it also fails to solve the issues of linguistic marginalization of minor languages of Pakistan. This language regime is unfortunately giving more importance to English and Urdu at the cost of the local languages. If this language regime continues in Pakistan, this may enhance power concentration, political exclusion and linguistic injustice. Therefore, there is need to question and critically investigate the country's language regimes and provide guiding insights to prevent undesired consequences. In this regard, making use of Sonntag and Cardinal's Historical Institutionalism Approach (2015), this paper highlights problems in Pakistan's politicized language policy and planning. First, however, a background of the languages in Pakistan is warranted.

Background of Pakistan's Languages

In 1947 when the Indian subcontinent was divided, Pakistan was created and consisted of two separate geographic regions: Eastern Wing and Western Wing (see Map 1). The former was called East Pakistan, while the latter was named West Pakistan. These two geographic units were divided by the vast country of India which lay between them. In East Pakistan, the Bangla speaking people were a majority, and their first language was Bengali but they were denied linguistic rights by the central government of Pakistan which tried to impose the Urdu language on them (Ansari, 2008). The Bengalis of East Pakistan resisted the language regime, and in 1971, East Pakistan won its independence and became Bangladesh.

Unlike East Pakistan, West Pakistan was then and is still multilingual and multicultural (see Map 2). There were then and still are many major and minor languages spoken in West Pakistan (see Map 3). West Pakistan consisted of four provinces: Sindh, Baluchistan, North West Frontier Province and the Punjab. After the separation of its Eastern Wing in 1971, West Pakistan was named Pakistan. Sindh has been a multilingual province where Sindhi, Urdu, Baluchi, Brahui, Seraiki, Punjabi, Aer, Dhatki and many other minor languages are spoken. Many of Sindh's languages have no official status, except for Sindhi and Urdu. The former is the first language of Sindhis, whereas the latter is spoken by some of the immigrants who had come from India during the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. Similarly, Baluchistan is also a multilingual province where Baluchi, Brahui, Pashto, Sindhi, Seraiki, Urdu, Hazargi and other minor languages are spoken. Unfortunately, these languages are neither used as medium of instruction nor as medium of administration in the province except for Urdu, although the number of native Urdu speakers in Baluchistan compared to the speakers of Baluchi, Pashto, Sindhi and Hazargi is much smaller (see details in Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Map 1: A Map of West Pakistan and East Pakistan before 1971 (Dummett, 2011; Source; BBC.com)
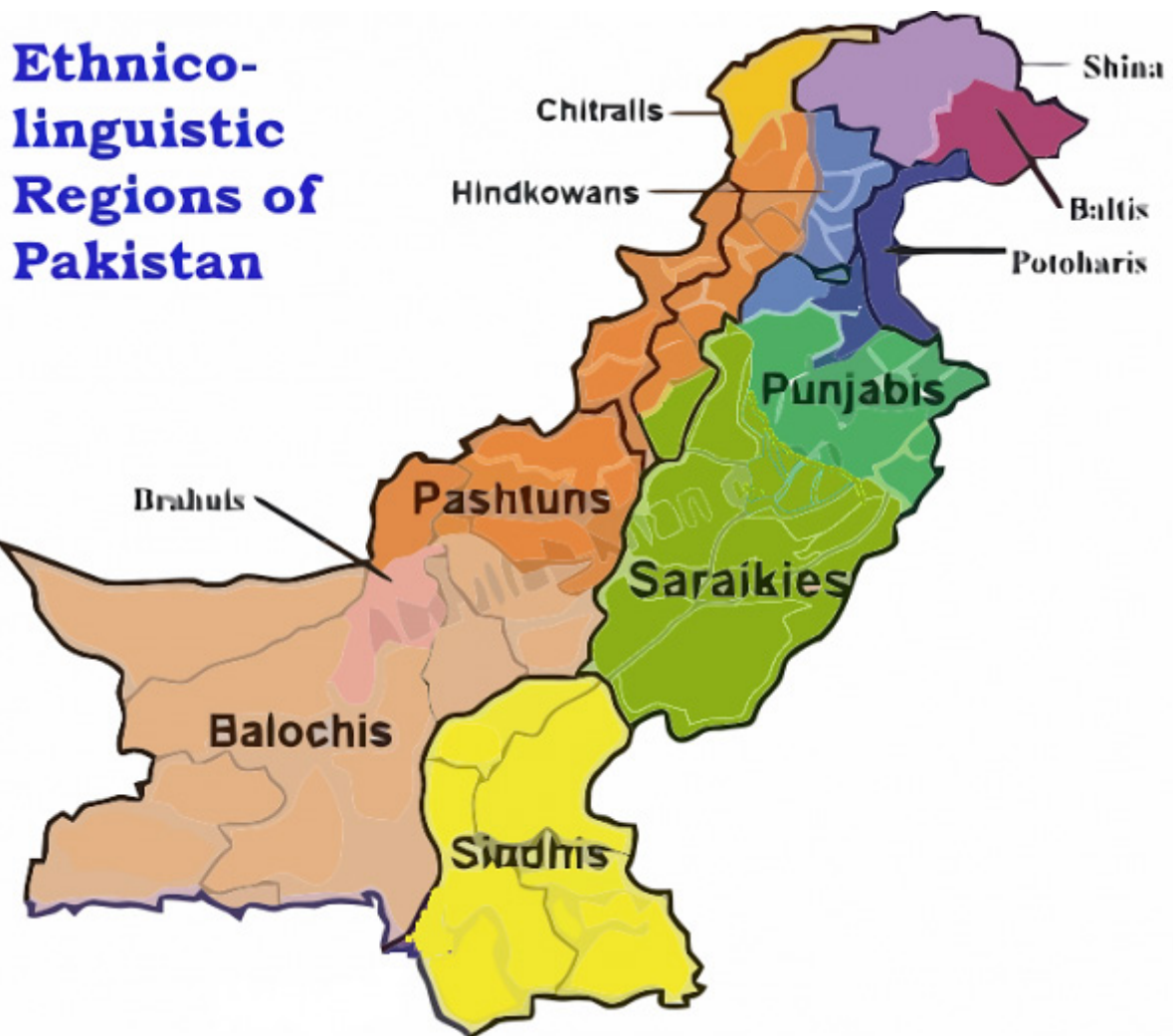
Map 2: A Map of Pakistan showing its ethnic regions (Script Source, 2015)

Map 3: A Map of Pakistan reflecting its multilingual reality (The Polyglot Blog, 2012)

The third province was North West Frontier Province which is also a multilingual region. The North West Frontier Province and the region of Gilgit-Baltistan constitute the northern areas of Pakistan. Pakistan's northern languages, such as *Pashto, Seraiki, Hindko, and Shina* have been given no status in the country's existing language regime. Similarly, the other northern languages, such as "*Badeshi, Balti, Bateri, Burushaski, Chilisso, Dameli, Domaaki, Eastern Kativiri, Gawarbati, Gawri, Gojri, Gowro, Kalasha, Kalkoti, Kamviri or Shekhani, Khowar, Kohistani, Madaghlashti, Mankiyali, Palula, Shina, Torwali, Ushojo, Wakhi and Yidgha"* have not been even recorded in any census of Pakistan (Torwali, 2019). Urdu was also imposed as the language of education and governance in these regions (Rahim, 18 September 2014). In 2014, the former North West Frontier Province of Pakistan was named 'Khyber Pakhtunkwa', a name associated with the identity of the Pashto speaking Pakhtuns/Pashtuns who comprise a majority in the province. The languages spoken in Gilgit-Baltistan region are Balti, Shina, and many other minor languages, but even here Urdu has been imposed as a medium of instruction in educational institutions.

Another province, the Punjab province of West Pakistan consists mainly of the Punjabi speech community who appear to have shifted to Urdu as the latter is seen as prestigious (Nazir, Aftab, and Saeed, 2013). In the Punjab province of Pakistan, there are also Seraiki speakers who used to have their own semi-autonomous princely state of Bahawalpur. The Seraiki speech community lives in almost all the provinces of Pakistan, but they form a majority in the Punjab province of Pakistan where they have been struggling for the establishment of their own province since 1970s.

The separate identities of the princely state and the provinces of West Pakistan were dissolved and a new structure combining all these former provinces of West Pakistan was formed and named One Unit in 1955. This One Unit structure sustained its presence till 1969 when it was finally dissolved by Yahya Khan, a military dictator of that time. After the dissolution of One Unit in 1969, Bahawalpur which was a hub of Seraiki speaking people could not get its autonomous status and was merged with the Punjab Province. In 1971, when East Pakistan became Bangladesh, West Pakistan retained all its four provinces.

This background information is necessary to understand the Historical Institutionalism Approach (HIA) and the critical junctures in the different provinces which comprise Pakistan. This is now discussed.

Theoretical Framework: Path Dependency, Critical Junctures, and Language Regime

This research makes use of a robust theoretical framework: Historical Institutionalism Approach (2015) by Sonntag and Cardinal. This approach is basically used in comparative politics to study the institutional behavior and traditions of states with respect to policy choices. Sonntag and Cardinal (2015) have used this approach to study institutional language policy choices and planning in many countries. The approach to the study of language policy is based on a state's institutional tradition, *path dependency*, *critical junctures*, and *language regime* (Sonntag and Cardinal, 2015). According to Sonntag and Cardinal (2015), every state is a product of specific political traditions which are incorporated in its institutions. The state institutions rely on specific paths to convert the historical traditions into language policies. Sonntag and Cardinal (2015) call this institutional reliance *path dependency*. This dependency is usually not accepted by different language groups, because it leads to policy choices which may neglect and marginalize their respective languages. Consequently, the linguistic groups start movements, create agitation, and cause riots to resist the state's path dependency and language choices. These chaotic situations which emerge as a response to a language policy choice are known as *critical junctures* (Sonntag and Cardinal, 2015). The critical junctures may force government to rely on a more compromising path, but the path is not usually divorced from the earlier patterns of state traditions. Ultimately, the state and its institutions introduce a language policy which creates a specific *language regime* which may also face another critical juncture if it fails to address language issues of the minorities and vulnerable language communities.

In short, a language regime involves a set of rules which determines the institutional use of a language or languages in a particular place and at a particular time. The Historical Institutionalism Approach explains why and how a specific language regime comes into being (Sonntag and Cardinal, 2015). This approach has been selected to study the historical evolution of language regime and politics of languages in Pakistan.

Literature Review of the Historical Evolution of Pakistan's Language Policies

Many researchers (Rahman 2010; Durrani 2012; Manan, David, and Dumanig, 2020; Ali, 2020) have written about the language policies of Pakistan. The Historical Institutionalism Approach used in this study will help

in understanding the history of language policies and language politics in Pakistan and provide reasons for the evolution of the language regime.

Rahman (2010) states that Pakistan is a multilingual country having six major and fifty-seven minor languages and that her language policies have always promoted English and Urdu, while demoting the local languages. Rahman claims (2010: p. 1): "The less powerful indigenous languages of Pakistan are becoming markers of lower status and cultural shame", however, this quote is perhaps too strong because not all speakers of indigenous languages feel ashamed of their languages, in fact many of them are proud of their languages and have resisted the existing language regime by creating critical junctures. Rahman explains that some minor languages are about to become extinct due to the country's language policies and recommends the adoption of additive multilingualism as a policy choice to resist the process of languages becoming extinct in Pakistan (Rahman, 2010).

In addition to Rahman's critical stance towards Pakistan's language policies, Channa, Memon, and Ahmed (2016) have also made use of critical, qualitative reviews of Pakistan's language policies and they too mention an additive bilingual policy as a solution to Pakistan's language problems. Like Rahman, they do not discuss historical process, state tradition, path dependency, critical juncture, and language choice which determine the nature of a language regime. In fact, the solutions of additive multilingualism/bilingualism suggested both by Rahman (2010) and Channa et al. (2016) are probably problematic because they might pave the way for new power relations in which regional languages will marginalize sub-regional languages.

Although like Rahman's (2010), and Channa et al.'s research works (2016), Durrani's research (2012) is also critical in nature, but it is a post-colonial reaction to language policies and planning in Pakistan. Durrani critically conducted qualitative analysis of purposively sampled data with respect to language policies in Pakistan and argued that Pakistan's language-in-education policies are a continuation of the British colonial legacy and such policies will always remain counterproductive unless an effort is undertaken to mainstream local knowledges and realties (Durrani, 2012). Her approach also does not discuss historically inspired state traditions which either bypass or throttle critical junctures, and asserting their relative autonomy seek to establish a language regime.

Like Durrani (2012), Ammar, Ali, Fawad, and Qasim (2015) qualitatively investigated Pakistan's language policies by

focusing their attention on hegemony of the English language. However, they did not critically approach hegemony of the Urdu language in Pakistan. They appear to resist one type of linguistic hegemony, while at the same time support another type of linguistic hegemony. This selective criticality may be due to the lack of a historical institutionalist approach which, if employed, could have resulted in a comprehensive, integrated, critical apparatus to resist linguistic hegemony in all its forms and shapes.

Manan, David, and Dumanig (2016) used a mixed methodology to collect data to study the effects of the English-only language policy in private schools in Pakistan and found that the English-medium only policy in such schools was reducing the importance of local languages and was also creating socio-economic gaps between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'. They treated the language policy and regime from an educational perspective and not from the Historical Institutionalism Approach (Sonntag and Cardinal, 2015) which aids in signaling critical junctures.

Pathan, Shah, Lohar, Khoso, and Memon (2018) have also qualitatively studied the influence of the politicized language policies on the Sindhi language[1] in Pakistan. Although their approach (2018) to language policy draws upon concepts from politics, they too did not employ a historical institutionalist approach to study the politicized role of language policy and planning and like the other studies did not discuss the critical junctures which have impacted the policy choices with respect to the Sindhi language. Although the language movements and the work of language activists have impacted the evolution of the language regime in Sindh, there could probably be resurgence of critical junctures in the province and this has not been discussed in their work.

Much like Pathan et al. (2018), Panhwar, Khatwani, and Abbasi (2018) have also employed a critical, historical, and descriptive approach to investigate language policy and planning of Pakistan's policymakers with respect to Sindh and Sindhi language. Their research is much more concerned with sociolinguistic realities and there is no reference to the institutional traditions and path dependency which influence choices of language policy. Although the researchers have referred to the social unrest in Sindh province against the oppressive language regime, they view it as a sociolinguistic event rather than a collective reaction to institutional path dependency.

They have approached history as a sociolinguistic force without much focus on the institutions and their role in language policy planning.

In addition to Panhwar, Khatwani, and Abbasi (2018), Ali (2020) has also used a qualitative methodology and dynamic, bilingual concept of education to study the language in education policy of Pakistan. Primary data was collected from language teachers but like the other studies Ali has not assessed the role of historical institutionalist traditions which play an influential role in posing challenges to the dynamic bilingual education system which encourages the use of local languages as a medium of instruction.

In short, these studies on language policies in Pakistan reveal that the Historical Institutionalism Approach (Sonntag and Cardinal, 2015) has not been used as a conceptual construct to analyze the history of language policies in Pakistan.

Research Objectives

1. To apply the historical institutionalist approach to the language regime in Pakistan.
2. To analyze the response of Pakistan's language policymakers to critical junctures.
3. To evaluate the evolution of the language regime in Pakistan in the light of the historical institutionalist approach.

Research Methodology

This research design is qualitative in its form and content, and describes, evaluates, and analyzes the research objectives using Sonntag and Cardinal's Historical Institutionalism Approach (2015). The selection of the qualitative design has been made because it facilitates an in-depth exploration of a language regime. Additionally, purposive sampling is used for data collection. Policy documents, such as *Constitution of Pakistan (1973), Sindh Government Gazette (1972), Sindhi Language Bill (1972), National Curriculum Framework Pakistan (NCFP) (2020),* English daily e-newspapers, such as *Dawn (selectively chosen from these years: 2009; 2011; 2012; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2020),* and *The News (selectively chosen from these years: 2016; 2019; 2020), Business Standard (2016)* and magazine *Herald (2015) comprised the data from which information was obtained.* Additionally, the data from these documents have been codified and thematic analysis has been conducted. These news resources were selected due to ease of access, and are widely read by

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[1]Sindhi language is spoken in Sindh, a province of Pakistan.

Pakistanis. These are also standard sources which provide authentic data on the politics of language. Dawn, and The News are English language newspapers published daily in Pakistan, whereas the Business Standard is based in India.

Findings

In this section, findings on Pakistan's language regime along with language politics have been presented and analysed in accordance with Sonntag and Cardinal's Historical Institutionalism Approach (2015).

Pakistan's Language Regime and the Separation of East Pakistan (Bangladesh): A Historical Institutionalism Approach

The politics of language has played a significant role throughout Pakistan's history. The policymakers in the country have always followed a pro-Urdu and pro-English policy which has repeatedly resulted in many critical junctures, such as the separation of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) from West Pakistan (now Pakistan) in 1971, language riots, and alienation of the vernaculars. Additionally, Jinnah's recommendation of adopting Urdu as a national language of Pakistan (Dawn, 2011) paved the way for a power-concentrating language regime, because he believed it would hold the different ethnic communities of Pakistan together. This led to critical junctures in East Pakistan and the students at University of Dhaka called for a strike demanding officialization of their language in the country. During the protests on 21st of February in East Pakistan, many students were shot and killed (Rahman, 2017).

In 1952, Mohammad Ali Jinnah's successor as governor general, Khawajah Nizamuddin, declared a policy statement which put Pakistan on a path to one language policy regime. He wanted to fulfill Jinnah's mission of institutionalizing Urdu as a national language. This proposed language regime met critical junctures in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), because the majority of the people of East Pakistan spoke Bangla and many did not understand Urdu, the language which was imposed on them (Al-Azami, 2013). Such a language policy represented oppressive institutional traditions and on the pretext of so-called national integrity, such institutional traditions embarked upon a path dependency which eventually undid national integrity.

In 1956, Pakistan's first constitution was promulgated. The constitution adopted a seemingly compromising path dependency with respect to the Bangla language,

however, it was not far removed from Nizamuddin's exclusionary language choices with respect to other regional languages. This constitutional tradition neglected the linguistic justice principle and therefore many language groups resisted the language regime. Moreover, the constitutional path dependency was not satisfactory for many Bengalis, because it gave Bangla only a national language status along with Urdu while maintaining English as an official language of the country (Ansari, 2008). Ansari (2008) states categorically that Pakistan's constitutions of 1956 and 1962 gave the Bengali language only a so-called national status, whereas in fact the Bangla language never enjoyed the status as enshrined in the constitutions. His findings suggest that the constitution could not adequately address the linguistic issue and thus the incessant critical junctures ensued which resulted in the disintegration of the country in 1971.

The Bengali Language Movement was launched in East Pakistan against the power-concentrating language regime of Pakistan which was a first step towards the disintegration of the country. The linguistic dissidence led to repeated *critical junctures* till finally East Pakistan was established as Bangladesh in 1971. This is because the linguistic concessions as enshrined in the constitutions of 1956 and 1962 did not address the linguistic concerns of East Pakistan. In the early stages of the critical junctures in East Pakistan, there was a language regime change in 1956 with Bangla being apparently recognized as a national language along with Urdu, however, other regional and small languages were given neither official nor national recognition in the new language regime.

The story of Bangladesh and its separation from Pakistan is, in fact, the story of critical junctures and Bangladeshi activists fought for their political, linguistic rights. Such "fights" resulted in resistance, strikes, boycotts, and occasionally in chaos. Unfortunately, these concerns were not treated seriously, and this resulted in the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971. Such critical junctures were genuine expression of Bangladeshi activists who defied the oppressive language regime of that time which gave no real status to the Bangla language in the country. Moreover, the linguistic path dependency was one of the reasons which brought about the secession of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) from West Pakistan (now Pakistan).

Pakistan's Language Regime and Critical Junctures in Sindh

Apart from critical junctures in East Pakistan, the other regions of Pakistan were also affected by the institutional

patterns of linguistic suppression. The establishment of One Unit in 1955 by merging four provinces Sindh, Baluchistan, North West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), and the Punjab into West Pakistan wreaked havoc on the vernacular languages. There were critical junctures and language resistance against the regime in Sindh, a province in Pakistan, against the decision of establishing One Unit[2] (Dawn, 2011). Furthermore, the activists in Sindh argued that the institutional tradition would gradually erase the linguistic, and cultural identity of Sindh. To crush the politico-lingual activism in Sindh, the government arrested many activists and banned Sindhi language newspapers, such as *Al Waheed* and *Karawan* (Dawn, 2011). These oppressive tactics revealed the state's assertion of *relative autonomy* in the face of *critical junctures.*

The constitutional traditions of 1956 and 1962 also gave the Sindhi language neither national recognition nor official status. The institutional path dependency became more oppressive in 1958 when Ayub Khan, a military dictator, imposed martial law. Ayub's language regime was power concentrating in its form and content. Additionally, his language policy was pro-English which marginalized other regional languages (Pathan et al., 2018). He formed a Commission on National Education which submitted its report in 1959 much to Ayub's satisfaction (Rahman, 1996), and it suggested that Urdu should be developed and encouraged for national unity and linguistic cohesion of West Pakistan. However, West Pakistan formed One Unit which contained disparate regions of Sindh, Baluchistan, North West Frontier Province, and the Punjab. The report also recommended that Urdu should become the common, and popular language of all the people living in West Pakistan (Report on National Education, 1959: p. 284) and was a reproduction of a dictatorial tradition which was suggesting a path dependency which could throttle linguistic diversity and threaten the multicultural reality of the region. Furthermore, this dictatorial path dependency resulted in critical junctures when Sindhi, Baluchi, Seraiki and Pashto language speakers of West Pakistan aggressively resisted the language regime (see Rahman 1996: p. 116). This event of history confirms the fact that when institutionalized dictatorial traditions embark upon a linguistic path dependency which neglects regional, minor languages it causes the speakers of such neglected languages to put up critical junctures and resist oppressive, language regimes. Although Ayub's regime came to an end in 1969 through critical junctures, such as student movements, and protests, the language regime did not change much

and the regime continued to face resistance from students, laborers, intellectuals, and activists.

Sindhi is one of the oldest languages in Pakistan and is rich both in language and literature (Mukherjee, 2020), but the language has not even been given the so-called status assigned to it constitutionally. Much like the so-called status given to the Bangla language as discussed in Ansari (2008), the Sindhi language also faced the same fate in Sindh. The speakers of Sindhi are in favor of a power sharing language regime and are actively supporting the cause of the Sindhi language by calling for the implementation of a *Sindhi Language Bill 1972* (Dawn, 2012). In 1970s when Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's[3] Pakistan People's Party-led government came to power, it institutionally elevated the Sindhi language to an official status (*Sindhi Language Bill, 1972*). Additionally, this met critical junctures from the Urdu-speaking community in Sindh who thought the language regime would minoritize Urdu. In 1972, the declaration of Sindhi as the sole official language of Sindh province (*The Sindh Government Gazette, 1972*), caused the Urdu-speaking Muhajirs (immigrants who had come from India in 1947) to rise in riots against the decision (Hassan, 2015; Kriti and Sareen, 2019). Ethnolinguistic riots broke out in Sindh's cities of Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas, Sukkur, and Larkana (Dawn, 2016). This path dependency pitted Muhajirs and Sindhis against each other. Finally, in 1972, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the then Sindhi Prime Minister of Pakistan, had to revoke the language policy due to the critical junctures and established Urdu as an official language of the province along with Sindhi. In 1988, when Pakistan People's Party chairman, his daughter Benazir Bhutto became the Prime Minister of Pakistan, many of the Urdu-speaking Muhajir politicians of Sindh, bargained with her to institutionally perpetuate the dominance of Urdu in Sindh (Rahman, 1995). Clearly, the state's path dependency could not develop an inclusive language regime. Although this bilingual language regime change might have satisfied Sindhis and Mohajirs, the speakers of smaller languages in Sindh, such as *Dhatki, Aer, Bhavya, and Sansi* have so far not gained any institutional recognition for their languages, and consequently their languages are on the verge of extinction. Thus, even this so-called bilingual language regime could not help in resolving the status of minority languages.

In 1980s, General Zia-ul-Haq imposed martial law in Pakistan by ousting Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's democratically

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[2]The establishment of One Unit was an institutional attempt at erasing multi-cultural diversity and multilingual reality of West Pakistan.

[3]Since Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, his government undertook the responsibility of preserving people's language rights, however, the progress could not be sustained due to critical junctures.

elected government. Zia's linguistic path dependency was to tyrannically 'Urdu-ise' and Islamize the country's institutions (Torwali, 2016). In this way, he imposed a power concentrating language regime by establishing Urdu as the only national and official language of Pakistan depriving Sindhi language of its official status. Moreover, this Urdu-dominant language regime was also espoused by *Muhajir (later, Muttahida) Qaumi Movement,*[4] a Karachi-based political party under Zia's patronage. Zia's linguistic dictatorship undertook a path dependency which marginalized the smaller languages of the country including the Sindhi language. Zia elicited the institutionalization of Urdu hegemony on the pretext of religious solidarity and national unity (Torwali, 2016). This enforced institutional tradition was to backfire as it resulted in critical junctures. The Movement for the Restoration of Democracy[5] in different parts of the country during the 1980s was a manifestation of critical junctures against Zia's dictatorship in all its forms and contents.

In addition to the movement, the elite English-speaking class also offered critical junctures to this language regime. Zia's linguistic dictatorship snatched away language rights from the English language speaking elites. Zia, a military dictator, was trying to impose dictatorial traditions and establish a language, regime which centralized the role of Urdu in the formal domains of the country. The English-speaking elite saw this as a threat to their privileges which were conferred upon them by the virtue of speaking and writing English, and thus resisted Zia's language policy which had to backtrack (Razzaque, 2020). Zia's policy of Urduising the medium of instruction in educational institutions of Pakistan was resisted by parents whose children were enrolled in English medium schools (Rahman 1997: p. 196–197). Additionally, the English dailies of Pakistan also wrote editorials against Zia's pro-Urdu language policy (Rahman, 1997: p. 197). Pakistan's English press and anglicized elites combined their efforts to develop critical junctures and resisted Zia's dictatorial path dependency which led to linguistic hegemony of Urdu. In short, Zia's dictatorial, linguistic traditions also met with critical junctures from Pakistan's English-speaking elites and English print media.

The critical junctures against the marginalization of Sindhi language have been widely discussed by activists not only in the country but those in other countries. The former chairman of the London-based World Sindhi Congress, Lakhu Lohana criticized Pakistan's institutional, linguistic hegemony: "There is a history of apartheid and criminal discrimination against Sindhi language that continues to date. Urdu is the mother tongue of less than one percent. Sindhi people have waged a historical struggle to save their language" (Business Standard, 2016). Lohana implies that there is an institutionalized linguistic apartheid in Pakistan which has marginalized the Sindhi language in Sindh province. He says that the oppressive language regime is a form of linguistic crime being perpetrated against Sindhi speakers in Pakistan and refers to the history of the struggle which Sindhi speakers have been carrying out to save their language against such linguistic apartheid. Lohana, thus clearly discusses the institutional practices of linguistic injustice against the Sindhi language and the constant struggle by Sindhi activists to save their language.

The aim of the language activism of the Sindhi speakers is to achieve their language rights and ensure social inclusion. Indeed, Sindhi is used as a medium of instruction in many government schools in the rural areas of Sindh and in some areas in urban Sindh, and although official status has also been given to the language steps are yet to be taken to implement the Sindhi Language Bill of 1972 in letter and spirit. To date the Sindhi speech community in Sindh has managed to achieve the official status for their language through critical junctures and the activists of the Sindhi language have advocated the linguistic path dependency which ensures the *practical officialization* of the Sindhi language in the Sindh province. Every year Sindhis celebrate their culture and language day on the first Sunday of December to renew their love for their language and culture. Moreover, researchers have also identified that Sindhis in Sindh are emotionally attached to the Sindhi language and therefore have maintained their language and cultural identity (David, Ali, and Baloch, 2017). However, language steps are yet to be taken to implement the Sindhi Language Bill of 1972 in letter and spirit and if this is not attained critical junctures can accelerate and cause turmoil.

Pakistan's Language Regime and Languages of Baluchistan: A Historical Institutionalist Approach

Apart from Sindh, Baluchistan is, also, a linguistically diverse province of Pakistan where Balochi, Brahui, Pashto, Sindhi, Hazaragi, and other languages are spoken. However, due to the power concentrating language regime, these regional languages have never received any national and official status in the province since 1947. Public schools in Baluchistan teach neither Baluchi nor

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[4]Muttahida Qaumi Movement, a political party dominated by Urdu speaking community of Sindh, incited ethnic emotions of Urdu speaking people in Sindh. Although the party did attract many followers, it was not without ethno-linguistic riots.

[5]Movement for the Restoration of Democracy was a populist movement which was started in 1980s against general Zia's oppressive dictatorship. Pakistan People's Party played a very vital role in the movement. Many of their activists were jailed and murdered.

Brahui which are two regional languages in the province (Dawn, 2015). In fact, the Frontier Corps, a paramilitary border force in Baluchistan, has been targeting and confiscating books of Balochi language and literature from bookshops on the pretext of security (Dawn, 2015). This *path dependency* and oppressive *institutional tradition* has elicited many *critical junctures* in the province.

In 1950s, the Baloch nationalists launched their armed struggle against their political, economic, cultural, and linguistic marginalization. The critical junctures have often surfaced against the existing language regime imposed on Baluchistan. One of the Balochi language activists from Germany once protested: "Yes, this is true. Urdu is the language used in Pakistani schools. In Baluchistan also, they are using Urdu language books … It's shameful to say that I am a Baloch. My language is Balochi, but sorry, I can't read or write in Balochi because I was never allowed to learn my own language, it is forbidden" (Business Standard, 2016). This complaint and protest of a Baluchi-speaking person against the language regime shows the extreme marginalization of the Baluchi language in Baluchistan. Moreover, ministers of Baluchistan's provincial assembly caused a *critical juncture* in 2020 when they demanded that Baluchi needs to be the medium of instruction in Baluchistan's schools (Shahid, 2020).

Moreover, other languages of Baluchistan, such as Brahui, Hazaragi, Sindhi, and Pashto have no provincial or official status. Most of these communities rely on Urdu as a medium of instruction due to the language regime. Hazaragi language which is spoken by Hazaras of Quetta has also no social status. Similarly, Pashtuns of Quetta cannot use their language in government institutions. Although Sindhi speakers in South Baluchistan do use Sindhi in their daily lives, the language regime also does not give it any space in Baluchistan's formal domains. Thus, Baluchistan's linguistic diversity is under threat due to the *institutional path dependency* of the government. This existing language regime has proved oppressive for Baluchistan resulting in *critical junctures.*

In fact, Baluchistan has always remained a restive province of Pakistan and one of the causes of the continued insurgency in Baluchistan is the imposition of the Urdu language at the expense of the Balochi language and other languages in Baluchistan. The languages of Baluchistan may be used as a medium of instruction, at least at the primary level, in the areas where they are spoken. The probable solution to Baluchistan's linguistic marginalization lies in the introduction of a power sharing language regime. The language regime may share linguistic space with the Balochi language along with other

minor languages of the province in the formal domains of education and governance. The Balochi language, and other languages of the province need to be used as medium of instruction in schools in Baluchistan, and this is an inalienable right of a multilingual province. If this power sharing regime is not established in Baluchistan, the chances of sustainable peace in Baluchistan appear dim. The critical junctures will, then, continue to haunt language policymakers of Pakistan.

Pakistan's Language Regime and Languages of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan

In 2009, Pakistan People's Party government did not significantly change the language regime in the renewed education policy. The policy allowed provinces to choose any language as a medium of instruction till grade five, while the institutional policy approach from grade six onwards was to retain Urdu and English as the medium of instructions (*National Education Policy,* 2009).

Apart from the National Education Policy (2009), the *Eighteenth Amendment* in 2010 to the *Constitution of Pakistan* (1973) has also failed to solve the language issues of minority communities of the northern areas. The constitutional amendment gave provinces autonomy to make their own educational and language policies, but no comprehensive language policy has been designed by the provinces. Furthermore, language policymakers have also been neglecting these languages since Pakistan's independence in 1947. Given the dictatorial *path dependency* of the state and the institutional negligence of these languages, it is perhaps not wrong to say that these languages will gradually become extinct (Torwali, 2019) or perhaps there will be many more critical junctures.

One of the major languages spoken in Gilgit-Baltistan is the Balti language. Unfortunately, the Balti language is not used as a medium of instruction due to Urdu hegemony. The founder of Washington D.C.-based Institute of Gilgit-Baltistan Studies, Senge H. Sering protests against the oppressive regime: "I strongly condemn Pakistan's policy of using Urdu as a medium of instruction in schools of Gilgit Baltistan. United Nations' UNESCO sees this as detrimental to the proper upbringing of children and hindering their educational development and wellbeing. Instead, local languages should be used as medium of instruction in schools" (Business Standard, 2016). Sering's protest is a manifestation of critical junctures against the oppressive language regime, and institutional path dependency which have marginalized the Balti language in Gilgit-Baltistan. He means to imply that Pakistan's

pro-Urdu language regime not only violates UNESCO's guiding principles but also demotes the principle of using the heritage language as the first language in schools. In other words, he suggests the use of Balti as a medium of instruction for children whose first language is Balti. Sering is therefore advocating for linguistic rights of Balti speakers and condemning the current oppressive language regime.

In addition to the Balti language, language activists and researchers are also involved in revitalizing the 'Dawoodi' language spoken by about 400 people in the village of Mominabad, Hunza Valley, Gilgit-Baltistan (Silk Road Centre, 2020). Dawoodi is an old Indic language which is, unfortunately, dying (Silk Road Centre, 2020). The speakers of Dawoodi are switching to other local languages because 'culture-shame' is associated with their language. *Domaaki* is the real name of their language which has been changed to *Dawoodi* by language activists as there were negative connotations associated with the former name (Silk Road Centre, 2020). Since the community is bent upon switching to other local languages, language researchers and language activists are resisting the negative attitudes towards the Dawoodi language by attempting to revitalize it. This linguistic revitalization of the language in the face of negative social attitudes is a manifestation of critical junctures which the language activists are bringing about. These critical junctures are both mitigating negative attitudes towards the Dawoodi language and revitalizing it.

In the upper Swat Valley, a region in the north of Pakistan, there is a language called Torwali. Torwali is an Indo-Aryan language (Torwali, 2018) and Pakistan's language regime has also neglected the Torwali language. Zubair Torwali with his fellow language activists has challenged the linguistic regime by engaging in language awareness campaigns of the Torwali language in the areas where it is spoken. They are involved in critical junctures by both resisting the linguistic injustice and fighting for the lingua-political rights of the marginalized communities living in the northern areas (Schwelle, 2015). They have set up a Torwali based school, and in 2008, Torwali established an Institution for Education and Development which has been publishing books in Torwali (Schwelle, 2015). Torwali and his team-mates' language revitalizing efforts are manifestations of critical junctures, because these efforts are directed at countering the effect of language shift among Torwali language speakers. These are practical attempts which are establishing a separate language regime in the upper Swat region and such attempts serve to resist the official, oppressive language regime of Pakistan. Their critical junctures may bear fruit because the endangered language is being revitalized.

In addition to the Torwali language, Pashto is spoken in Pakistan's north-western province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Pashto, a symbol of Pashtun identity, has always been supported by Pashtun nationalists, such as Khan Ghaffar Khan, Wali Khan, and Ghani Khan (Rahman, 1996: 145). Ghani Khan even resisted the imposition of Urdu in his province where Pashto speaking people were a majority (Rahman, 1996: p. 146). Moreover, the National Awami Party[6] resisted the Urdu language dominance during the One Unit period from late 1950s to 1969 (Rahman, 1996: 146). These responses of Pashtun nationalists are reflections of the critical junctures which they undertook to protect their language against the pro-Urdu language regime. Their linguistic efforts were challenging the power concentrating language regime imposed by an increasingly centralized government of that time. Their language activism democratically inspired linguistic reaction to the institutional path dependency which had marginalized their language in their province.

In 2014, the Tehreek-e-Insaaf-led provincial government imposed English as a medium of instruction in educational institutions replacing Urdu in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Dawn, 2014). This language regime also sidelined Pashto language along with other provincial languages, such as Hindko, Seraiki, and Chitrali. This *path dependency,* and language policy choice have also led to *critical junctures*. In 2014 when Pashto speaking people initiated Pashtun Tahfuz Movement (Movement for the Protection of the Pashtuns), they demanded not only socio-political rights but also protection for their identity and language. The *Qaumi Milli Awami Party,* a Pashtun-dominated party, organized a rally in which they questioned the existing language regime and demanded the national status for Pashto language and other regional languages (The News, 2020). These language movements demonstrate critical junctures.

Pakistan's language regime and languages of the Punjab

In 1970s, the Seraiki speaking people from the south of the Punjab, a province in Pakistan launched an ethnolinguistic movement to assert their separate identity from the Punjabi speaking people of the province (Mushtaq and Shaheen, 2017). This movement further translated into *critical junctures* when the Pakistani legislators passed the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan and gave provinces autonomy. The Seraiki speaking people felt

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[6]Awami National Party is a Pashtun nationalist party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a province in Pakistan which was formerly known as North West Frontier Province. The province was renamed during Pakistan People's Party's federal government in 2010.

that all the major ethnolinguistic communities were given autonomy in Pakistan after the Eighteenth Amendment was added to Pakistan's constitution, while they were being kept under the shackles of Punjabi dominance in the Punjab province of Pakistan. This feeling of deprivation incited the Seraiki speaking people of the Punjab who launched an ethnolinguistic movement and demanded the creation of their province by carving out the areas where the Seraiki community were a majority and had lived for centuries. Furthermore, Sindhi intellectuals, such as Rasool Baksh Palijo supported Seraikis' legitimate demands for the establishment of their own provinces, but Sindhi politicians desisted from the support when Seraiki nationalists issued a map of their province which also included some border areas of the Sindh province (Dawn, 2009). This movement is still ongoing in the cities in the south Punjab, such as Multan and Bahawalpur where Seraiki speaking people are a majority.

The constant negligence of Seraiki speaking people's ethnolinguistic concerns have translated into critical junctures since 1970s. These critical junctures have consolidated Seraiki speakers' movement for their ethnolinguistic and political rights. Their language activism has succeeded in achieving recognition for their language as a separate linguistic system from the Punjabi language (Sana Ullah, Khalid, and Hassan 2017: p. 168). Before the formation of One Unit in 1955, Bahawalpur was a princely state which was ruled by the Seraiki rulers. The rulers of Bahawalpur had joined Pakistan after independence in 1947. After the formation of One Unit, Bahawalpur's identity as a princely state was also dissolved. In 1969, when One Unit was dissolved, Bahawalpur was made a district of the Punjab and thus was not given the earlier status of a princely state. This incited the Seraikis of the Punjab to start their ethnolinguistic movement for the establishment of a Seraiki province which contained Bahawalpur along with the other areas of the Punjab where the Seraiki speech community is a majority. This shows that critical junctures are a reaction to oppressive language and political policies and thereby usually result in a demand for linguistic justice. If the solution of these ethnolinguistic critical junctures is delayed, they might result in severe, divisive tendencies.

Not only is the Seraiki language marginalized but the Punjabi language is also marginalized in Pakistan's Punjab province. As a matter of fact, the term 'Punjabi dominance' is a controversial concept, because the Punjabi language has also no formal, national status in the institutions of the Punjab. Students, teachers, and government servants must use Urdu to achieve their objectives in the province. The language regime of the Punjab does not recognize the Punjabi language. Consequently, this

institutionalized path dependency has caused some proponents of the Punjabi language to demand their language rights. In 2015, some supporters of the Punjabi language gathered in Lahore, the provincial capital of the Punjab and protested in favor of their language. Their catchword in Punjabi language was: *"Saada haqq ethe rakh (Give us our right, here and now)"* (Soofi, 2015). They were demanding that their mother tongue (Punjabi) needs to be recognized as a compulsory language from primary education up to graduate level. As elsewhere in Pakistan, the language activists in the Punjab are also resisting the language regime through critical junctures. Unfortunately, not much has been done for giving any status to the Punjabi language. This shows that the language of the dominant community is itself marginalized in their own province. Many of the Punjabi rulers have "Urduised" their hegemony both at provincial level and at federal level. In fact, many Punjabis of Pakistan are abandoning their language and shifting to Urdu due to the prestige factor associated with the latter language (Nazir, Aftab, and Saeed, 2013). However, on a small scale some writers, cultural activists, students, teachers, human rights campaigners, lawyers, workers, trade union leaders, artisans, singers, and politicians of the Punjab (Soofi, 2015) are resisting the Urdu hegemony by demanding recognition of their mother tongue. This shows that there is periphery within the Centre as well.[7]

Discussion and Concluding Comments

This paper has set forth how the politicized policies and planning of Pakistan's languages have often entailed critical junctures in different regions of the country resulting in renewed language policies and planning which are not far divorced from the earlier patterns of exclusive politics. Furthermore, the historical institutionalist approach is used to analyze the institutional factors that regulate language policy choices with respect to regional and

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[7]Pakistan's small provinces, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have reservations over the distribution of resources and sharing of power with respect to the Punjabi dominated federal government of Pakistan. The provincial governments think of the Punjabi majoritarian federal government encroaching upon their rights and resources. Many people in these small provinces have over a period developed a sense of deprivation. This situation puts the Punjabi dominated federal government at the Centre, while the small provinces remain at the periphery. Moreover, there is also a periphery in the Centre. The Punjabi ruling class have mostly neglected their own language and shifted to either Urdu or English. The lower middle/lower class of the Punjabis (periphery within the Centre) mostly speak Punjabi language who are also deprived because they cannot speak Urdu or English fluently. Some of these lower middle class Punjabis are even demanding their linguistic rights as discussed above, but nothing has been done to address their concerns. This shows that there is periphery even in the Centre.

minority languages (see also Royles and Lewis, 2019). Insights have been given on Pakistan's formal language policies and practices, on the historical, institutional traditions, and on what Sonntag and Cardinal (2015) define as "critical junctures".

The insights derived from this research also suggest that the lack of power sharing language regime, and linguistic injustice become hurdles to socio-linguistic justice in Pakistan. On the one hand, the language activists of different ethnolinguistic regions are demanding and struggling for a space in the country's language regime but, on the other hand, the top-down language policy and Urdu-English hegemony in what Sonntag and Cardinal (2015) define as state traditions of language policy and planning offer little space to minority languages. The challenge is how to situate this struggle against linguistic hegemony and convert a power concentrating language regime into a power sharing language regime so that Pakistan's minor languages can be protected against oppressive state traditions.

In Pakistan, the proportion of first language speakers (Urdu) and second language speakers (English) is lower than those who speak regional vernaculars (Sindhi, Pashto, Punjabi, and Seraiki) (PHP Generator Feature Demo, 2020). These regional languages need to be given equal status with Urdu and English. Different language groups in Pakistan are still engaged in language activism and are demanding official status for their languages through critical junctures. Although these critical junctures are gaining some ground, their potential success can only be realized when linguists, applied linguists, and language policy planners all support language activists. Sonntag and Cardinal (2015) suggest that such a struggle will lead to the stability of a language regime only when the status offered to a speech community matches the anticipated status. Understanding the lived experiences of Pakistan's ethnolinguistic communities will also guide these efforts towards employing a bottom-up approach with respect to language policy and planning. This approach will be helpful in establishing a power sharing language regime and thus ensuring linguistic justice and inclusivity to Pakistanis. The ramifications of the critical junctures are a major concern, and if not resolved may cause potential, serious consequences for the country. If a language community has not received linguistic rights for decades, the community may be disadvantaged in terms of competing with the dominant language community.

However, considering the new language policy proposal (2020), there are probabilities that the critical junctures

will resurge in different ethnic regions of Pakistan. The language regime as enshrined in the proposed language policy (*Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training, National Curriculum Framework Pakistan (NCFP), 2020*), much like the previous language policies, also fails to address the language issues of minorities. There is no provision in Pakistan's newly proposed language regime for revitalizing and modernizing these institutionally neglected languages. In fact, it debases the minority languages by asserting: "not all provincial or local languages are equally developed. Certain languages can best be used for oral communication or folklore only. Their use for education is yet to be assessed" (*Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, National Curriculum Framework Pakistan, 2020: p. 64*). This path dependency shows that Pakistan's existing language regime adds consistency to the institutional tradition of neglecting the small languages. This power concentrating language regime will also face critical junctures since it is the continuation of previous power-concentrating language regimes. Pakistan's policy makers need to introduce a power sharing language regime and language revitalization programs to preserve regional and endangered languages.

The lack of linguistic justice, particularly in Pakistan's provinces, contributes to social inequalities and causes potential hurdles to social mobility and career development. Additionally, the prevailing situation of linguistic injustice is severely affecting the identity and culture of minoritized language communities. Gradually, it will become difficult for their languages to survive. The analysis of linguistic injustice shows that institutional traditions have influenced the evolution of the language regime in Pakistan. It also shows how power concentrating language regimes in Pakistan have brought about critical junctures, such as the separation of the subcontinent in 1947, the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971, and ongoing language issues in Sindh, Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the Punjab provinces of Pakistan. Furthermore, the education policy reveals the state's traditional obsession with the Urdu-English dominant language regime. Such policy choices and path dependency are not going to mitigate the critical junctures which will resurge repeatedly in different regions of the country unless an inclusive language regime based on linguistic justice principle is established. Pakistan can introduce an inclusive language regime and language revitalization programs to preserve her multilingual reality. An inclusive language regime will promote mother languages, local languages, and a generally accepted lingua franca and if Pakistan adopts an inclusive language regime, many of her language policy issues might be slowly but surely

resolved. Ultimately, by neutralizing power politics, the respective language regime might also ensure a smooth flow of governance.

Competing Interest Statement

Acknowledgements

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