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LANGUAGE SHIFT AND LANGUAGE DEATH: MAJOR CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES: SOCIOLINGUISTICS STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the major causes and consequences of language shift and language death from sociolinguistic perspectives concerning minority languages. It additionally studies how language loss can be mitigated and our linguistic heritage preserved. The results suggest that language shift is primarily driven by globalization, migration, education in dominant languages, and the influence of media. The language death leads to catastrophic consequences among the afflicted people socially, culturally, psychologically, and identity-wise. The study stresses that effective language preservation efforts are multifaceted, encompassing mother-tongue education, community participation, positive attitudes towards language, policy support, and the use of media and technology for endangered languages. Ultimately, the study emphasizes the growing need for the educational context, policymakers, local society, and media industries to work together in fostering and protecting the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world. The researchers recommended implementing bilingual or mother-tongue education programs, especially in early childhood and primary education, within minority language communities, as well as exploring the role of digital technology in language revitalization and preservation.

KEYWORDS: Language shift, Language death, Sociolinguistics, Globalization, Dominant language.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is crucial in shaping our cultural identity and fostering social connections. It's more than just a collection of letters and words; it's a powerful tool for communication that helps speakers express their thoughts and feelings. Language reflects our understanding of the human experience and the cultures we belong to. It has been the foundation of the arts, religions, and scientific advancements throughout history. Abdullah (2024) states that language thrives through its speakers; without them, it simply cannot exist. When these speakers face threats, their language is at risk of fading away. This makes language a confrontational subject for researchers and philosophers, as its origins remain debatable. Adding to the complexity, language has acquired some characteristics of a living being; it can be born, evolve, and even die. Crystal (2000) emphasizes that just as biodiversity is essential for ecosystems, linguistic diversity is vital for humanity. Protecting a language not only preserves cultural diversity but also supports human rights and deepens our understanding of how speakers think and communicate.

Many languages around the globe are facing a troubling decline, which leads to language shift (LS) and, ultimately, language death (LD). This era is characterized by the death of languages at an alarming rate. While there are over 7,000 languages spoken today, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) predicts that more than half could disappear by the end of this century. According to the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, published by the UN, a language goes extinct every two weeks. That adds up to about 25 languages disappearing each year. If this trend continues, 90% of the languages will be completely extinct (Moseley, 2010).

Language shift (LS) and language death (LD) are fascinating linguistic phenomena that take place when communities or populations gradually abandon their native or traditional languages in favor of another, often more dominant one. These changes can happen over generations and are shaped by a mix of social, cultural, economic, and political influences. According to Crystal (2000), language death refers to the point at which a language is no longer spoken as a native tongue. He makes a distinction between language death, where there are no speakers left, and language shift, which occurs when a community starts using a different language. Language shift (LS) is the process by which a community moves away from its native language and embraces another one, influenced by a mix of

sociocultural, economic, and political factors.

Sevinc (2017) describes language shift as "the gradual displacement of one language by another in the lives of the community members" (p.3). Andriyanti (2019) explains that a language shift happens when a mother tongue, often a minority language, is slowly diminished or completely abandoned by its speakers in favor of a more commonly used language. He points out that this new language not only takes over the roles and functions of the mother tongue but also creates a growing dependence on one language over the other. Moreover, he highlights that the loss of the mother tongue is especially common in bilingual or multilingual societies where another language is more dominant.

When speakers start to see their language as inadequate for everyday use, it often leads them to shift towards a language they find more suitable. Baker-Jones (1998) notes that "when a group progressively abandons its language of origin, it simultaneously adopts the language of the socially or economically dominant group." Additionally, Andersen (2009) states that "language shift is a process in which successive generations of speakers, both individually and collectively, gradually lose proficiency in their mother tongues or the language of their community in favor of other languages." This trend is particularly evident in bilingual and multilingual countries.

A classic case of language shift (LS) can be seen in the "English only" movement in the United States. Many Native Americans found themselves pressured to switch from their native languages to English. This movement began with an amendment in Arizona in 1988 that proposed making English the sole language, and it was later picked up by the Utah government, which aimed to establish English as the main language for its residents. As a result, government policies have a huge impact on both the shift away from native languages and the efforts to maintain them (Janse, 2003). Another instance of language shift is highlighted in Bodomo et al.'s (2009) research on languages in Ghana. He found that many Ghanaian parents were encouraging their kids to speak English, the language of their former colonizers, in everyday life and at school. These parents believe that promoting English as a primary language will enhance their children's intellectual, social, and economic growth.

One of the main reasons for a language shift is globalization. It pushes the popularity of widely spoken languages like English. As communities dive into global trade and communication, the practical

benefits of picking up a more dominant language often outweigh the urge to hold onto their linguistic roots. On top of that, socio-political factors, like government policies that favor a national language or the negative perceptions surrounding minority languages, make the situation even harder. Many young people start to view their native languages as less useful for education and job prospects, which leads to a decline in passing those languages down through families. Over time, these trends can chip away at linguistic diversity, putting once-thriving languages and cultures at risk of disappearing. Consequently, language shift (LS) is a complicated issue shaped by various social, economic, and political influences. This shift can have serious consequences for cultural diversity and identity. When minority languages are marginalized or lost, valuable cultural knowledge and traditions may also be at risk of disappearing. Societies must recognize the importance of preserving linguistic diversity to keep their rich heritage alive.

Understanding language death (LD) stems from the phenomenon of language shift, where speakers abandon their mother tongue in favor of another language, which can lead to the gradual or rapid disappearance of the original language. Language death happens when a language loses its last native speakers and ultimately becomes extinct. Campbell (1994) defines language death as “the loss of a language due to a gradual shift to the dominant language in language contact situations”. Essentially, it means that a language has completely vanished, usually when the last native speakers either pass away or stop using it altogether. Even if a language is still used in religious contexts, it’s considered dead if no one speaks it in everyday life. What’s fascinating is that languages don’t always die in the same way (p. 1961).

Mesthrie and Leap (1995) pointed out four distinct types of language death: gradual death, death from the bottom up, sudden death, and death from the roots. Gradual death is the most common form, occurring when speakers of a language come into contact with a more dominant language that holds a higher status. It is noticeable that these communities have been bilingual for generations; over time, fewer children learn their traditional language, and the new generation often struggles with it, leading to distortions and a decline in its use. While the traditional language may still be spoken in casual settings, it eventually completely disappears, even from everyday conversations. A prime example is the Cornish language, which is a South-western Brittonic language of the Celtic language family. Along with

Welsh and Breton, Cornish is descended from the Common Brittonic language spoken throughout much of Great Britain before the English language came to dominate and became extinct in the late nineteenth century due to the growing influence of English. Many in the community viewed Cornish as a language of the lower class, although there were efforts to revive it and encourage its use.

To sum up, language shift (LS) and language death (LD) are intricate sociolinguistic issues that highlight the ever-changing connection between language, culture, and society. Languages serve as more than just communication tools; they carry the history, identity, and shared memories of their speakers. Unfortunately, factors like globalization, urbanization, government policies, and socio-economic challenges are speeding up the decline of many minority languages worldwide. As communities start to let go of their native tongues in favor of more dominant languages, we risk losing invaluable cultural knowledge, traditions, and perspectives forever. It’s essential to grasp the reasons behind LS and LD, as well as their impacts, to create effective strategies for preserving linguistic diversity and encouraging language maintenance. Safeguarding endangered languages not only protects cultural heritage but also promotes social inclusion, identity preservation, and respect for human rights. It’s up to societies, educators, and policymakers to champion language revitalization efforts, ensuring that linguistic diversity continues to enrich our global heritage for future generations.

1.1. Significance of the Study

This study is notable for concerning itself with the pivotal sociolinguistic phenomenon of language shift and death, which is now common with multilingual and minority language speakers across the globe. Analysing the reasons for language shift and death helps in the efforts to strengthen the diversity of languages and the culture associated with them. The results of this study will aid many linguists, scholars, decision-makers, and planners in trying to formulate concepts concerning the maintenance and revitalization of languages. Besides, this research emphasizes sociocultural and economic determinants of language use within speech communities and the impact of globalization, migration, and education on languages that are rapidly fading.

1.2. Statement of Problem

Language shift and death are significant threats to the diversity of languages and cultures anywhere in

the world. There is a gradual declining trend in the use of many minority languages owing to external socio-political, economic, and cultural factors. There is now considerable concern over the disappearing indigenous and minority languages, but there is little understanding of the reasons for concern, the shift of languages, or the consequences of the death of the language on the community in the long term. Thus, this study aims to explore the sociolinguistic factors that lead to language shift and death and examine the impacts on community identity, cultural transmission, and social cohesion.

1.3. Study Objectives

To examine the sociolinguistic causes and consequences of language shift and language death, and explore the strategies for language maintenance and revitalization.

1. To identify and analyse the major social, cultural, economic, and political factors contributing to language shift and death in minority language communities.
2. To investigate the consequences of language death on community identity, cultural heritage, and intergenerational communication.
3. To explore successful strategies and interventions for preventing language death and promoting language revitalization efforts.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the major sociolinguistic causes that lead to language shift and eventual language death within minority language communities?
2. What are the social, cultural, and psychological consequences of language death on the affected communities?
3. What strategies can be implemented to prevent language shift and preserve endangered languages within minority communities?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section explores key sociolinguistic theories that explain the mechanisms behind language shift and death. In addition, previous empirical studies were reviewed to provide a foundation for the current investigation, highlighting patterns and variables that have been identified in different sociolinguistic contexts. Together, these elements offer a comprehensive background for analysing language shift and death, laying the groundwork for deeper inquiry into their impact on linguistic communities worldwide.

2.1. Sociolinguistic Theories Related to Language Shift and Language Death

Sociolinguistics provides several theoretical models that explain the processes of language shift and language death within speech communities. These theories help in understanding why certain languages decline while others dominate.

First, the Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory, articulated by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding why certain language groups exhibit a strong resistance to language shift. This resilience is largely attributable to the concept of "vitality," which refers to the capacity of a language community to endure and prosper. The components of this theory can be categorized into three main areas:

1. Status Factors: These include the prestige, economic power, and cultural importance associated with the language.
2. Demographic Factors: This encompasses aspects such as population size, distribution, and migration patterns that can significantly influence the stability of the language.
3. Institutional Support: This highlights the role of government policies, educational frameworks, and media representation in reinforcing the language. Consequently, communities characterized by low ethnolinguistic vitality are at increased risk of language shift and, ultimately, language extinction. Fostering improvements in these vital areas is essential for promoting language maintenance and ensuring the sustainability of diverse linguistic communities.

Second, Domain Theory (Fishman, 1965) emphasizes the concept of language domains, specific contexts in which certain languages are used (such as home, school, and workplace). This theory illustrates that language shift often begins with the decline of native language use in public or formal settings. However, the preservation of native language in intimate domains, like the family, plays a crucial role in ensuring language survival. Consequently, if minority languages are not transmitted within the home (the private domain), the risk of language death becomes inevitable.

Third, Social Network Theory: Milroy's research in Belfast emphasizes the significant impact of strong and weak social networks on language maintenance. The key concepts of this theory include Dense and Multiplex Networks, where communities with strong social ties are better able to resist language shift, and Loose Networks, which tend to facilitate a quicker adoption of dominant languages. As a result,

language death occurs more rapidly in communities characterized by weak social bonds and limited interaction in the mother tongue (Milroy & Milroy, 1985).

2.2. Previous Studies Related to Language Shift and Language Death

Language shift and language death have been the subjects of numerous sociolinguistic studies worldwide. These studies provide empirical evidence on the causes, processes, and consequences of language shift, as well as efforts toward language maintenance and revitalization. The following section presents a review of selected previous and contemporary studies related to the topic.

Awal (2023) conducted a systematic qualitative review examining the sociocultural effects of language loss and the complexities of preservation and revitalization efforts. The study underscored the cultural, historical, and intellectual significance of endangered languages and identified globalization, urbanization, and the dominance of major languages as key accelerators of linguistic endangerment. The results showed that globalization and urbanization contribute significantly to language endangerment, and language loss results in the erosion of cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge. Moreover, effective revitalization requires community engagement and tailored strategies. Greer (2021) addressed questions regarding the linguistic effects of bilingualism in environments where language shift is occurring. The study explored how unstable bi- or multilingualism affects language patterns and the implications for language preservation. The findings showed that bilingualism can both hinder and support language maintenance, depending on societal attitudes and policies, and Language shift often results from complex interactions between linguistic communities; in addition, targeted interventions are necessary to support endangered languages in bilingual settings.

Romaine's (2007) study focused on the link between language and cultural identity. The study highlighted that language death is not only a linguistic loss but also a loss of cultural practices, oral traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems. The findings showed that language death affects social and cultural cohesion, and revitalization requires integrating language into education and media. Grenoble and Whaley (2006) explored case studies

from different parts of the world where endangered languages were either revived or are being preserved through community efforts, documentation, and educational programs. The results display that community participation is vital in language maintenance and documentation, and technology can assist in revitalization efforts. Batibo (2005) examined the language shift situation in African countries, where many indigenous languages face decline due to the spread of colonial languages such as English, French, and Portuguese. The results illustrated that socio-political factors (colonial history, education policies) contribute to language shift, and urbanization and migration weaken the use of indigenous languages.

Crystal (2000) examined the global phenomenon of language death and argued that over half of the world's languages are endangered. He highlighted that language death results in a loss of cultural knowledge and history. The findings indicated that language death leads to cultural impoverishment and globalization, with dominant languages (e.g., English) contributing to the acceleration of language death. Fishman's (1991) study is regarded as one of the most influential works in sociolinguistics concerning endangered languages. He emphasized that a language shift occurs when younger generations stop using their native language in favor of a more dominant one. Fishman proposed an eight-stage framework for reversing language shift, focusing on the critical role of family and community-based efforts. The findings showed that language shift starts at the intergenerational level, and revitalization requires promoting native language use at home and in local institutions.

2.3. Examples of Language Shift

Language shift refers to the gradual process by which a community abandons its native language in favor of a more dominant one, often due to social, political, or economic pressures. Language shift can result in the erosion of cultural identity, the loss of unique linguistic features, and the disappearance of valuable traditional knowledge embedded in the language. Examples of language shift include the decline of indigenous languages in the Americas, the movement from Gaelic to English in Scotland, and the replacement of local dialects with standardized forms of national languages.

Table 1: Examples of Language Shift with References.

No.	Example	Description of Language Shift	References
1	Gaelic in Scotland	Scottish Gaelic has been replaced over generations by English due to socio-economic pressures, urbanization, and educational policies favoring English.	MacKinnon, K. (2019). Language Shift in Scotland: The Case of Gaelic. <i>Journal of Celtic Linguistics</i> , 21(1), 1-23.
2	Irish in Ireland	The Irish language declined due to British colonization, compulsory English education, and internal migration; now, it is limited to Gaeltacht regions.	Ó hIfeárnáin, T. (2021). Irish Language Maintenance and Shift. <i>Language Policy Journal</i> , 20(2), 145-162.
3	Arabic Dialects in North Africa	Indigenous Berber (Amazigh) languages have experienced a shift to Arabic and French due to political dominance and education systems.	Ennaji, M. (2020). Multilingualism, Cultural Identity, and Language Shift in Morocco. <i>International Journal of the Sociology of Language</i> , 263, 31-51.
4	Indigenous Languages in Canada	Many Indigenous languages (Cree, Inuktitut, Mohawk) are threatened due to residential school systems and assimilation policies replacing native languages with English or French.	Norris, M. J. (2022). Language Shift and Loss in Indigenous Canada. <i>Canadian Journal of Native Studies</i> , 42(1), 25-50.
5	Minority Languages in Malaysia	Indigenous languages like Kadazan-Dusun and Iban are declining due to Bahasa Malaysia's dominance in education and media.	David, M. K., & Dealwis, C. (2021). Language Shift in Malaysia: Factors and Trends. <i>Southeast Asian Linguistics Journal</i> , 14(2), 70-89.
6	Minor Languages in Indonesia	Indigenous languages (e.g., Javanese, Balinese) are shifting towards Bahasa Indonesia, especially in urban centers, due to national unity policies and modernization.	Musgrave, S. (2019). Language Shift in Indonesia: Trends and Implications. <i>Journal of Language Contact</i> , 12(1), 54-77.

Table 1 presents various examples of language shift. Firstly, the transition from Scottish Gaelic to English has occurred over generations, primarily driven by socio-economic factors, urbanization, and educational policies that prioritized English over local languages (MacKinnon, 2019). Secondly, the decline of the Irish language can be traced back to British colonization, the implementation of compulsory English education, and internal migration. Today, Irish is mainly spoken within the Gaeltacht region (Ó hIfeárnáin, 2021). Thirdly, in North Africa, indigenous Berber (Amazigh) languages have shifted toward Arabic and French, influenced by political dominance and educational systems that favor these languages (Ennaji, 2020). Additionally, indigenous languages such as Cree, Inuktitut, and Mohawk are now endangered, primarily due to historical policies like residential schools and the forced assimilation of native languages with English or French (Norris, 2022). Furthermore, indigenous languages like Kadazan-Dusun and Iban are experiencing decline, largely

owing to the predominance of Bahasa Malaysia in education, media, and public life (David & Dealwis, 2021). Lastly, indigenous languages such as Javanese and Balinese are increasingly being replaced by Bahasa Indonesia, especially in urban areas, as a result of national unity policies and the pressures of modernization (Musgrave, 2019).

2.4. Examples of Language Death

Language death refers to the complete extinction of a language, typically resulting from a prolonged shift toward a more dominant language or the abandonment of the language by its speakers. This phenomenon is particularly evident among indigenous and minority languages, which often struggle to survive in the shadow of more dominant tongues in their regions. Examples of language death can be observed in situations where entire linguistic communities have been displaced, marginalized, or assimilated, leading to an irreversible loss of their cultural and linguistic heritage. Understanding the concept of language death not only brings attention

to the vulnerabilities faced by endangered languages but also emphasizes the importance of efforts to

revitalize and preserve linguistic diversity.

Table 2: Examples of Language Death with References.

No.	Example	Description of Language Death	References
1	Latin (Europe)	Latin gradually died as a spoken language in Europe, replaced by Romance languages like Italian, Spanish, and French due to socio-political changes after the Roman Empire.	Crystal, D. (2000). <i>Language Death</i> . Cambridge University Press.
2	Eyak (Alaska, USA)	The Eyak language died in 2008 with the death of its last native speaker, Marie Smith Jones. Factors include language shift to English and isolation of speakers.	Krauss, M. (2007). Keynote: The World's Languages in Crisis. <i>Journal of Linguistic Anthropology</i> , 9(1), 3-21.
3	Manx (Isle of Man)	Manx Gaelic became extinct as a native language in the 20th century due to British colonization, English dominance, and reduced transmission to younger generations. Revitalization efforts are ongoing.	Broderick, G. (1999). <i>Language Death in the Isle of Man: The Decline and Revival of Manx Gaelic</i> . Niemeyer.
4	Ubykh (Caucasus, Russia)	Ubykh language became extinct in 1992 with the death of Tefvik Esenç, the last fluent speaker, due to forced migration and assimilation into Turkish society.	Harrison, K. D. (2007). <i>When Languages Die: The Extinction of the World's Languages and the Erosion of Human Knowledge</i> . Oxford University Press.
5	Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages (Australia)	The original languages of Tasmania became extinct in the 19th century due to European colonization, violence, and cultural suppression. Efforts at reconstruction are underway.	Dixon, R. M. W. (1997). <i>The Rise and Fall of Languages</i> . Cambridge University Press.
6	Livonian (Latvia)	Livonian, a Uralic language, is considered extinct after the death of its last native speaker, Grizelda Kristina, in 2013, primarily due to Russification and low population.	Salminen, T. (2015). <i>Endangered Uralic Languages</i> . In <i>The Oxford Handbook of Endangered Languages</i> . Oxford University Press.

The six examples of language death presented in Table 2 highlight a range of historical, socio-political, and cultural factors that contribute to the extinction of languages across different regions and periods. Firstly, Latin illustrates the complexities involved in determining language death. McMahon (1994) asserts that "what has happened to Greek or Latin is not death, but metamorphosis." According to her theory, these languages have undergone typical linguistic processes and thus have not vanished but have evolved into Modern Greek and the contemporary Romance languages such as French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, Romanian, etc. Latin transitioned into the Romance languages due to the fragmentation of the Roman Empire and the influence of local vernaculars. Though it survived in written and liturgical contexts, it ceased to be a native spoken language, illustrating how political and

administrative changes can reshape linguistic landscapes (Crystal, 2000).

Secondly, the Eyak language exemplifies a more abrupt and tragic form of language death. The death of the last speaker, Marie Smith Jones, marked the end of the language's natural transmission. Eyak's decline resulted from a language shift toward English, a lack of intergenerational transfer, and geographic isolation. This case emphasizes the vulnerability of indigenous languages in colonized regions (Krauss, 2007). Thirdly, Manx Gaelic's extinction as a native language in the 20th century was due to British colonization, English-language education, and economic integration with the UK. However, unlike some other cases, Manx has seen organized revitalization efforts, making it a rare example of a "revived" language after being declared dead (Broderick, 1999).

Then, the extinction of the Ubykh highlights the impact of forced migration and assimilation. After the community was exiled to Turkey, Turkish replaced Ubykh, and younger generations did not learn the language. The death of the last speaker in 1992 marked the end of one of the world's richest phonemic inventories (Harrison, 2007). Next, Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages (Australia). These languages experienced catastrophic loss due to colonization, violence, and cultural erasure by European settlers. This case reflects how language death can be linked directly to genocide and displacement (Dixon, 1997). Finally, the death of Livonian, a Uralic language, illustrates the effects of

political repression (Russification) and demographic decline. As a small linguistic group in a politically dominated region, Livonian could not resist assimilation pressures, eventually becoming extinct in 2013 with the death of its last native speaker (Salminen, 2015).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results Related to the first Question

- What are the major sociolinguistic causes that lead to language shift and eventual language death within minority language communities?

Table 3: Major Sociolinguistic Causes of Language Shift and Death.

No.	Cause	Description	References
1	Globalization & Economic Pressures	The dominance of global languages like English for employment, education, and communication leads minority speakers to abandon their native languages for socio-economic advancement.	Awal (2023)
2	Urbanization & Migration	Migration to urban areas exposes minority speakers to dominant languages, reducing the use of their mother tongue in daily life.	Greer (2021)
3	Intergenerational Language Transmission Breakdown	Parents stop teaching their native language to children due to the perceived benefits of dominant languages, leading to language loss.	Lodhi (2022); First Nations Schools Association (2023)
4	Education Policies & Linguistic Marginalization	Schools favor dominant languages, excluding minority languages from curricula and lowering their status in society.	Kvietok & Hornberger (2023)
5	Negative Language Attitudes & Identity Crisis	Minority speakers perceive their language as inferior, old-fashioned, or unprofitable, leading to a voluntary shift.	Peters (2022)
6	Media & Technological Domination	Dominant languages dominate media, entertainment, and online platforms, limiting the presence of minority languages in modern life.	Awal (2023); Peters (2022)

Table 3 shows the causes, descriptions, and references of the major sociolinguistic causes of language shift and language death. Recent studies and sociolinguistic literature indicate that language shift and language death among minority language communities are driven by a complex interaction of sociolinguistic, economic, political, and cultural factors. These causes are often interrelated and vary depending on the specific context of each linguistic community.

3.1.1. Major Sociolinguistic Causes of Language Shift and Death

1. Globalization and Economic Pressures: The spread of global languages (especially English) as the language of business, education, and technology has accelerated language shift.

Moreover, minority language speakers often abandon their native language to access better job opportunities or higher social status (Awal, 2023, and Lodhi, 2022).

2. Urbanization and Migration: The movement from rural areas to urban centers leads to exposure to dominant languages. In cities, minority language speakers often adopt the majority language for social integration. (Greer, 2021)
3. Intergenerational Language Transmission Breakdown: A critical factor in language shift is when parents choose to speak the dominant language with their children for educational or economic advantages. The language becomes endangered once children stop learning their mother tongue (Lodhi, 2022).

4. Education Policies and Linguistic Marginalization: Education systems that exclude minority languages contribute to their decline. The absence of mother-tongue instruction undermines the status and use of indigenous languages (Kvietok & Hornberger, 2023)
5. Negative Language Attitudes and Identity Crisis: Minority language speakers may develop feelings of inferiority about their language, seeing it as outdated or useless. Language stigma can lead to voluntary language abandonment (Peters, 2022)
6. Media and Technological Domination: Media content is dominated by the majority languages, leading to reduced visibility and usage of minority languages. Digital platforms often lack resources or content in endangered languages (Awal, 2023; Peters, 2022).

The results show that language shift is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a deeply sociolinguistic issue connected to power, identity, and access to resources. Minority language communities are often pressured to shift to dominant languages due to perceived socio-economic benefits, political oppression, or cultural marginalization. Intergenerational transmission remains the most crucial factor in language preservation. Without daily use of the language in family and community settings, efforts for revitalization become increasingly difficult. Moreover, globalization and urbanization have exposed minority speakers to broader linguistic ecologies where dominant languages serve as tools for mobility and modernity.

This exposure leads to the gradual erosion of traditional linguistic practices. Negative language attitudes further accelerate language death, as speakers may associate their native language with backwardness or poverty. Thus, language preservation requires not only structural support (education, media) but also psychological and social empowerment. Efforts such as community-driven language revitalization programs, mother-tongue education, and the use of technology to promote minority languages are essential to counteract language shift.

In conclusion, language shift and death are driven by both external pressures (globalization, urbanization, and education policies) and internal factors (negative attitudes and loss of transmission). Sociolinguistic studies emphasize the need for multi-faceted approaches that combine policy reforms, community activism, and cultural pride to preserve endangered languages.

3.2 Results Related to the Second Question

- What are the social, cultural, and psychological consequences of language death on the affected communities?

The results from contemporary sociolinguistic research highlight that language death has serious and long-lasting consequences on minority communities. These consequences extend beyond mere communication barriers and affect the social structure, cultural identity, and psychological well-being of individuals and groups.

Table 4: Major Consequences of Language Shift and Language Death.

No.	Type of Consequence	Description	Reference
1	Social Disintegration	Loss of language weakens family and community ties, especially across generations, reducing social cohesion and intergenerational solidarity.	Awal (2023); Lodhi (2022)
2	Cultural Loss	Language carries cultural knowledge, traditions, oral literature, history, and indigenous wisdom. Its death leads to cultural impoverishment.	Greer (2021); First Nations Schools Association (2023)
3	Loss of Identity	Language is a core marker of group identity. Losing it causes a weakened sense of belonging and community distinctiveness.	Peters (2022)
4	Psychological Effects	Language death can lead to feelings of alienation, loss, an inferiority complex, and cultural shame within affected individuals.	Lodhi (2022); Kvietok & Hornberger (2023)
5	Marginalization & Discrimination	Language death often results in reduced political and social representation of minority groups.	Greer (2021)
6	Educational Disadvantages	Loss of mother tongue may lead to poor academic performance, lower self-esteem, and detachment from educational content that doesn't reflect one's heritage.	Kvietok & Hornberger (2023)

Table 4 demonstrates the types of consequences, descriptions, and references of the major consequences of language shift and language death. Language death produces a wide range of social, cultural, and psychological consequences that

directly impact minority language communities. Socially, language loss weakens bonds between generations, especially when younger people cannot communicate in their ancestral language with elders. This reduces community solidarity and isolates

individuals from their cultural roots. Culturally, the death of a language results in the loss of oral traditions, storytelling, folklore, and indigenous knowledge that are often untranslatable or deeply embedded in the native tongue. Psychologically, language death fosters identity crises, feelings of loss, shame, and alienation from one's heritage. These effects can be passed down through generations, contributing to a sense of cultural inferiority. Moreover, marginalized language speakers face political and educational disadvantages, as their needs and perspectives are often excluded from mainstream media, policies, and school curricula.

To sum up, the consequences of language death are far-reaching and multifaceted, affecting not only communication but also cultural survival, social structure, and mental health. Revitalization strategies must address both linguistic and psychological empowerment, ensuring that speakers

of endangered languages regain pride in their linguistic heritage and cultural identity.

3.3 Results Related to the Third Question

- What strategies can be implemented to prevent language shift and preserve endangered languages within minority communities?

Recent sociolinguistic research emphasizes that preventing language shift and preserving endangered languages requires multi-level strategies involving education, community participation, policy-making, media, and technology. Effective language preservation strategies should focus on revitalizing intergenerational transmission, promoting positive language attitudes, and increasing the presence of minority languages in public and digital spaces.

Table 5: Proposed Strategies for Language Preservation.

No.	Proposed Strategies	Descriptions	References
1	Mother-Tongue Education	Incorporating minority languages in school curricula fosters literacy and language pride among younger generations.	Kvietok & Hornberger (2023); Lodhi (2022)
2	Community-Based Revitalization Programs	Organizing language classes, cultural events, and storytelling sessions within communities to promote daily language use.	Awal (2023); First Nations Schools Association (2023)
3	Media & Technology Integration	Creating media content (TV, radio, online platforms) in endangered languages to increase their visibility and relevance in modern life.	Peters (2022); Greer (2021)
4	Language Policy & Legal Protection	Government recognition of minority languages through official policies and language rights ensures institutional support for preservation.	Lodhi (2022)
5	Positive Language Attitude Promotion	Campaigns to promote pride in linguistic heritage and eliminate language stigma within minority groups.	Peters (2022)
6	Intergenerational Language Transmission	Encouraging families to speak the native language at home to ensure its natural and sustainable transmission.	Awal (2023); First Nations Schools Association (2023)

Table 5 shows the proposed strategies that can be implemented to prevent language shift and preserve endangered languages within minority communities. The findings highlight that successful language preservation requires an integrated approach involving educational reforms, community engagement, media support, and favorable language policies. Mother-tongue education has been proven to enhance not only language skills but also cognitive

and academic performance. It affirms students' cultural identity and increases motivation for language learning. Community involvement plays a central role, as language vitality is strongest when used in daily life at home, in markets, cultural gatherings, and religious settings. Moreover, in the digital age, the presence of minority languages on social media, mobile applications, and entertainment platforms (e.g., YouTube, podcasts) has become a

crucial factor in maintaining language relevance. Positive language attitude campaigns, especially targeting youth, help break the cycle of language shame and inferiority, promoting cultural pride. Finally, language policy and legal frameworks are essential in supporting the revitalization process, providing institutional backing for language education, media production, and public usage.

Therefore, preventing language shift and language death requires a comprehensive strategy that empowers minority language communities socially, educationally, and culturally. Revitalization efforts must ensure that the endangered language is seen as valuable, modern, and worth preserving both in traditional settings and the contemporary digital world.

4. CONCLUSION

This sociolinguistic study examined the major causes and consequences of language shift and language death within minority language communities. The findings reveal that language shift is largely driven by external sociolinguistic factors such as globalization, urbanization, educational policies favoring dominant languages, and media influence. Additionally, internal factors like negative language attitudes and the breakdown of intergenerational language transmission contribute significantly to the decline of minority languages. The consequences of language death extend beyond the loss of communication. They include severe social fragmentation, cultural erosion, loss of group identity, and psychological impacts such as alienation and low self-esteem within affected communities. However, the study also identified several effective strategies for language preservation, including mother-tongue education, community-based programs, positive language attitude

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promotion, integration of endangered languages into media and technology, and supportive language policies at the national level. Thus, preserving endangered languages is not only a linguistic task but also a cultural, social, and psychological mission. It requires collaborative efforts from educational institutions, policymakers, community members, and media developers. Sustaining linguistic diversity is essential for maintaining the world's rich cultural heritage and promoting global intercultural understanding.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. For Educational Institutions:

- Implement bilingual or mother-tongue education programs, especially in early childhood and primary education, within minority language communities.
- Train teachers in bilingual education methodologies and provide resources for teaching in local languages.

2. For Government & Policy Makers:

- Develop and implement language policies that recognize and protect minority languages as part of the national cultural heritage.
- Provide financial and institutional support for language documentation, research, and preservation projects.

3. For Researchers:

- Conduct further studies on the sociolinguistic dynamics of language shift in specific regional and cultural contexts.
- Explore the role of digital technology in language revitalization and preservation.

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