



Guest Lecture
Impacts of War on Terror on Pashto Language



About FRC Publications

FRC is working on multiple projects at a time that go on around the year with the aim of transforming the information extracted through these projects into a proper publication. FRC main publications are as follows.

Research Studies: Previous research studies that were undertaken by FRC were “An Overview of Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic Landscape of FATA”, “Post US/NATO Withdrawal Scenario in Afghanistan: Impacts on Peace and Development in FATA”, “Impact of Terrorism on Culture of FATA”, “Issues and Challenges: IDPs of FATA”, “Impacts of war on terror on Pashto literature and Art”, “Local Government System in FATA” and “Interpreting ‘The change’ perceptions verses Reality”.

Guest Lecturers Report: Regular guest lectures are delivered by experts who not only share valuable information but enrich participants with latest updates on political, social, economic, cultural and other aspects of the issue in question.

Tigah Journal: This journal takes an account, broadly, of the socio-economic, educational, technological and cultural damages inflicted on the people of this once peaceful area and seek ways and means; how to settle this long standing issue to give people a chance to live with dignity and honor. Tigah is published by-annually with research papers on wide range of important topics.

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Acknowledgement

FATA Research Centre was able to hold a guest lecture on a major and most burning issue related to FATA with the collaboration of The Royal Danish Embassy in Pakistan.

FRC would like to thank the honorable guest speakers, M R Shafaq and Ghani Khattak who took out time from their busy schedules and shared their knowledge on the topic “Impacts of War on terror on Pashto language”

FRC is also thankful to the guests from academia, media and civil society, for their presence and valuable participation in the event. The contribution of our FRC team is worth acknowledging for managing the event affectively. This report has been drafted by Ms. Rubab Zahra (Research Associate), assisted by Mr. Asad Kamal (Research Assistant), supervised and reviewed by Irfan U Din (Senior Researcher) and approved by FRC Director Research.

The report is based on the contents of speeches delivered by the guest speakers and participants at the event.

Introduction

After the incident of 9/11 a wave of insurgency has significantly affected Pashto language by making vital changes in the colloquial and written way of expression. Pashtun were targeted in this conflict which geographically took place in Pashtun inhabited areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Violence has enveloped all kinds of expressions of Pashto language. One can easily find the shift in these expressions, where new and aggressive terms replaced the 'soft-accommodative-tolerant' Pashto language words. As mentioned earlier, the strategic location of Pashtun is the main reasons due to which the violent conflict has been implicated on the nation and its way of life.

Pashto language is known as the mother language of Pashtun ethnic population in Pakistan while it is the official language of Afghanistan. Pashto speaking people are mainly inhabited in Baluchistan, FATA and Khyber Pashtunkhwa. Apart, Pashtuns are the second largest ethnic group (25%) in Karachi city after Muhajirs.

Pashto language is mainly spoken in FATA and KPK as well in all eastern and southern provinces of Afghanistan. Since the invasion of War on terror violence and fundamentalism in the region set off and destructed peace and stability by uprooting the fabric of social structure and culture.

Pashto language has undergone several changes which has pushed people from collectivism to isolationism. The phrase "cooperation" has been replaced by "survival", the words 'bombs' and 'suicide jackets' have taken place of flowers. There is a chain of these kinds of changes in Pashto language, but few are mentioned here such as; terror, violence, insecurity, drone attacks and suicide bombings.

Pashtuns are fighting a war for their very survival; under the circumstances it is hard to save language and culture. Sense of insecurity manipulates routine conversations and activities of tribal people. Like others, literary persons and writers have also been affected from this malicious situation.

In future all these elements can affect the purity and lovability of Pashtun language due to ongoing warlike situation in FATA region. The guests invited by FRC, to speak on this issue were well known Pashto poets of FATA. They expressed their opinion on the current situation of pashtun language and they shared doable outcomes of it for the days to come. Their opinion gave FRC a greater insight to produce a report with an in-depth analysis reflecting the fate of Pashtun language in the coming future.

In view of the above, finding ways to shield the Pashto language is the question of the hour. In this context, FRC organized a guest lecture with the following objectives in mind;

- To measure the extensity of the impact on Pashto language due to war
- To aggregate pessimism and uncertainty in Pashto language
- To suggest a way forward in this respect

Pashto Language

Pashto is the native language of the Pashtun people who live in western Pakistan and Afghanistan. In present estimated 50-60 million Pashto speakers are living around the world. Pashto is a part of the Indo-European language family, in the Indo-Iranian branch. Thus, it is associated to languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Dari, Kurdish, and Persian.

FATA Research Centre celebrated international ‘Mother Language Day’ which is an important national and international day thereby inviting well known personalities of the country on the occasion to record their insight into the important event in context of Pashto language.

Pashto language has undergone several changes manifested in all fields of the language. Different [new] words of terror, violence, insecurity, uncertainty, drone attacks and suicide bombings have been added to Pashto language due to hard realities of war on terror. Linguists have traditionally divided language into the following five areas for purpose of study and analysis: vocabulary, word structure, sound system, grammar and ways to connect sentences and organize information.

US-led war on terror directly influenced the language, literature, and culture of Pashtuns. Under such circumstances it is important to understand the sensitivity of the issue and then to design coping up mechanism to protect lovability of Pashto language.

As the 9/11 incident had straight contact with politics, literature, history and geography of Pashtun that is why the effects of this incident could be seen in all the genres of literature created in Pashto language. Both prose and poetry has its effect but the Pashto poetry was highly affected by the rise of militancy in the region.

On International Mother Language Day, FRC organized a guest lecture on the topic, ***“Impacts of War on Terror on Pashto Language”*** to highlight the importance of Pashto language. It is supposed that crisis affects language. After the tragic event of 9/11, when US-led forces entered into Afghan territory new terminologies diffused into Pashto language in order to measure the impact of post 9/11 events on Pashto language, and to discover how to preserve it in its genuine structure, FRC invited guest speakers who were specialists on the subject in question and well-known literary figures to analyze clear picture of the very issue. Furthermore, on the basis of their expert opinion, FRC suggested a way forward to cope up with the issue.



Profile of Guest Lecturers

Mr. M. R Shafaq

Meem Ray Shafaq was born on the 1st of July 1946 and hails from a literary family in Toru. He worked as a Pashto language translator in Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation Islamabad. From time to time he used to read Pashto news on the radio. He got involved with poetry in young age. He is very keen to see the progression and development of Pashto language. For Urdu speaking people he wrote a book about how to learn Pashto "*Pashto Urdu Bol Chaal*". His other Pashto books are: *Da Reekhteen khabarey Qalandar Momand aw Shakhsiat Spogmay* (award winning). Currently he is the Chairman of *Pashto Adabi Society Islamabad* and intends to publish more books in the near future.

Mr. Ghani Khattak

Mr. Ghani Khattak belongs to Noshera and is a well-known Pashto poet and writer. He also served as a chief editor in National assembly. He writes books in different languages including Pashto, Urdu and English. He recently wrote a book titled *Da Nangyal Ao Sardar Pa latoonky*. While in Urdu, he wrote two books on famous poet Pashto poet Khushhal Khan Khattak "*khuskhal Khan Afghan Qaumi Shair aur philosopher*" and "*The Afghan worries Poet & philosopher*". Ghanni also translated a book "*The Bacha Khanyundo phalsafa*" into English and also recently launched a Pamphlet entitled "*Da Karachi pakhtoon*". He contributed a lot in Pashto literature and Pashto poetry.

Key points taken from the Event

Mr. Ghanni Khattak

Language provides and determines the foundation of identity among people. Advocating utility and importance of mother language is extremely important. This purpose can be achieved by observation and through celebration of international mother language day. Besides, there should be appropriate mechanism to use language in day-to-day's life business.

- War on terror has deeply affect language and culture of Pashtun which further implicated on peace and stability in the Pashtun inhabited areas cross side Pakistan and Afghanistan border. Pashto is a strong and well-built language and Pashto Poetry has played a major role in the history of the Pashtun people by remaining a popular traditional form of expression even in this modern era. A rich oral tradition that has been ever-present in their culture laid the groundwork for a number of literary contributions. Pashto writing places a strong emphasis on love and peace.
- A language cannot survive if it is not the official and curriculum language of a country and/or of a political geographic entity. Because when a language is no longer used in a certain area of



expertise, it ceases to develop as a means of communication in the area because no quantitative change can be examined. Although Pashto language still exists due to its resistive nature, but if it has no use in dealing the daily life's affairs, it will eventually be difficult to write and speak of new innovations in it.

- The observance of Mother Language day aims to highlight the importance of mother languages to attract the attention of native people, especially youth, towards their mother tongue. This kind of observations and celebrations of national and international events advocate about the responsibility of people regarding the specific issue(s). The Pashtun nation, particularly children, must know about the importance of his/her mother's language, because mother language provides foundation of his/her identity. Many of Pashtun children suffer from identity crisis where one of the factors is the ignorance of their mother language.
- The lack of utility of Pashto language in official business is one of the reasons of its ignorance. Men [Pashtun] have to interact with people in difference workplaces and offices, for that they [men] cannot keep the original beauty of the Pashto language. But Pashtun women, on the other hand, have little interactions with people out their houses. Therefore, they [women] speak, comparatively, genuine [old/original] language. Besides, in rural areas [comparatively] pure language is spoken by Pashtuns where means of communication (electronic media, print media and inter-social interaction) are not accessible.
- Pashto language is the 40th most widely spoken language of the world, though it has faced many wars and conflicts, in different periods of time. It is widely observed that only wars and conflicts are not responsible for under-development of language rather it is the ignorance of government which keeps Pashto language under-developed. Khushkhaal Khan Khattak said that,

“Pashtuns have been going through foreign invasions since last five decades”

- In the history of Pashtuns, present destruction is the largest and the most brutal, resulting from the war on terror. According to several political officials “it is the 3rd largest war on Pashtun land”. Nobody has idea about the nature of ongoing disaster. USA and Russia are not merely responsible for this constant conflict while Pakistan is equally accountable as they want Pashtun land in lieu of Pashto language and Pashtuns. With reference to Bangal conflict, a cruel stance of Pakistan officials on that, which was:

“We don't want Bangalis we just need Bangal land”

- Pashtun Laymen have been kept [circumstantially] away from their language, resultantly; they are unable to understand their own literature and language. This ignorance of Pashtun regarding their language has been observed by Pashtun literary societies, Pashtun writers and scholars.
- There should be newspapers and TV channels [operating] in Pashto language to promote the language, but unfortunately there is not such channel(s). Those channels that claim to work for the promotion of Pashto language actually demote and damage Pashtun culture. Few attempts



have been reported for establishing Pashto TV channels but, according to those who apply for establishing the channel, government's attitude was discouraging in this regard.

- An ordinary Pashtun is well-mannered and civilized. But unfortunately Pashtuns are incapable to contribute in Pashto language development due to imposed haphazard circumstances. On the other hand Americans and British are observed violent as a human being. Even English People are rigorous violent people but they have state level mechanisms that protect them from violence. An American Writer in his book entitled "*Afghanistan*" wrote that:

"Although Afghanis are not educated but they can't be called uneducated as they are well cultured and well mannered"

- Pashto language is being corrupted by foreign words which are being included in it as it adopted many words from different language for new inventions instead of enhancing vocabulary of Pashto language due to lack of resources for preserving and flourishing of their native language in current era of globalization. If Pashto language has its own media means then Pashtuns will simply remove foreign terminologies from Pashto language. As this current situation created restlessness among Pashtuns and they want to save their culture along with Pashto language. Consequently, the ongoing conflict has a healthier impact on Pashtuns as it is enhancing unity among pashtuns.

Mr. Rehman Shaffaq

Suitable importance should be given to native languages as English is the official language in Pakistan. Even in educational institutes native languages are not part of the curriculum. Resultantly, when students adopt other languages, the requirement is to perform at intellectual level below their age, which may end result in academic failure. To develop self-esteem and confidence in young generation of Pashtuns in their unique identity within a multicultural society it is essential to teach them in their native language and for stepping towards development in FATA region. In order to preserve native languages, there is a need to prefer them over the foreign languages both at National and local levels.

- Pashto is one of the important languages of the world. International transmissions in Pashto language from different countries show the international nature of Pashto language. Pashtun leader and rulers have been delivered speeches in Pashto language in international conference. But unfortunately it has not given due respect and weightage, in terms of its implacability, in Pakistan. It is not only the case of Pashto language where policy intentionality kept it under-development, rather other vernacular languages faces the same circumstantial hurdles in Pakistan. The present educational culture is suitable for the promotion of vernacular languages in Pakistan.



- Political leaderships, after independence, could not vision language conflict between Urdu and Bangali. Resultantly the newly born Pakistan splited over into two different parts. At this stage when war on terror contributing in intolerance and frustration among different ethnicities in Paksitan, the government cannot suppress any of the languages. Government should give due respect to all local languages in Pakistan.
- There is more than one official language in many countries including Canada, India and Afghanistan. Then why Pakistani authorities cannot implement more than one official language at least the provincial languages at provincial level. As Quaid-e-Azam said:

“Urdu will be a National language of Pakistan while all provinces will be autonomous in choosing native languages”

In KP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), ANP (Awami National Party) and PPP (Pakistan People’s Party) during their tenures, imposed a law that provinces should have the power to include their respective native languages as a subject within educational institutions in the provinces.

- No special measures like promoting and preserving literature are taken by government. Students are not being taught in public and private schools in native languages. However, when students adopt other languages, they are functioning at intellectual level below their age, which may result in academic failure. As it is said by linguistic specialists,

“Children should be taught in their native languages for their better understanding”

- Through language we develop our thoughts, shape our experience, structure our community, construct our laws and gives expressions to our hopes and ideas. Mother language is a common language that is freely and comfortably spoken by its natives within their communities. Teaching native languages in schools will be encouraging for young children as it will help them to develop self-esteem and confidence in their unique identity within a multicultural society.
- At present, it is necessary to create national integrity and harmony among the natives of all provinces. The finest technique is to start from basic education by adding Pashto, Sindhi, Punjabi, Balochi and Saraiki as compulsory subjects in educational institutions across the country. If people will be familiar with the languages of other provinces, it will generate better understanding and unity among them.
- Pakistani policies regarding languages needs to be changed. Primarily the education policy should be altered. Scholars all over the world agree on the view that basic education should be provided in mother language.
- Even the Quran (Holy Book) says that different people have different languages and these are the signs of beauty of nature. Hence, shielding nature is our responsibility. Languages are the creation of Almighty; therefore, they should not be looked down upon.



- Negative perception about pashtuns illustrate them as a backward faction which don't yearn for learning science and technology; on the other hand, Pastuns suffered foreign conflicts which coerced them to avail opportunity to interact with the world of science and technology.
- Pashto is a widely spoken language, as it is the national language of Afghanistan. In addition, it is broadly spoken in FATA and KP as well as in the far flung mountainous areas of Baluchistan.

Recommendations

- Government should bound electronic media, particularly private TV and FM radio channels, to air programs in native languages for a specific duration every day.
- Licenses should be issued for opening community radios, print media and private TV channels which should be purely dedicated to all ethnic groups. It will contribute a lot to promote and advance native languages and culture, national and international level.
- Government should change policies regarding native languages and all native languages official in all provinces for their betterment and preservation. Particularly, for further advancement of Pashto language it should be included as the official language of the province KP (Khyber Pakhtun Khawa) on urgent basis.
- To make native languages part of the curriculum up to intermediate level in all provinces for better understanding of students.
- Provincial governments, in alliance with Central government, should take steps to promote and preserve literature of their respective languages
- In the conflict zone KP (Khyber PakhunKhwa), Provincial government should take fastidious measures to prevent the sophistication and grace of Pasto language from dreadful impacts of War on terror
- Vital efforts should be taken by literary societies within KP (Khyber PakhunKhwa) in collaboration with Provincial government to remove violent words from Pashto literature that have entered into the language as a result of ongoing warlike situation.
- Under the patronage of the State Government, new literary societies at National and Provincial levels should be established for the progression of National and all native languages.



Conclusion

Language reflects culture and ethnicity while it is persistently affected by communal circumstances which are always expressed through literature around the globe. The goal of learning mother tongue should be to endorse and transmit the cultural heritage, within the framework of multiculturalism. War on terror changed the pattern of Pashto poetry and Pashto language. Several harsh words diffused into it and corrupted the softness and lovability of Pashto language. Pashto language has always been ignored like other native languages in Pakistan. However, Pashto is a strong and well-built language as it has maintained its original shape despite remaining the language of a quarrel zone over centuries.

The English language is colonizing the world. Political, cultural and technical influences from abroad are constantly affecting national and native languages of Pakistan. Because of an accelerating influence, the English language has come to be a threat towards our indigenous languages and our culture. As it is not just a language that is dominating, but also the culture it brings with it is a threat towards our culture. According to linguists,

“Thousands of languages will disappear within the next hundred years”

Furthermore, suitable importance has not been given to our national and native languages as English is the official language in Pakistan. In order to preserve native languages, there is a need to prefer them over the foreign languages both at National and local levels. If we intend to evaluate the impact of war on terror on Pashto language and literature, we need to see the words that have entered into the literature. Pashto literature has acquired many violent words that have replaced soft and kind words especially after the 9/11 incident. The language got more corrupted since common people got involved into the ongoing conflict. In order to preserve and protect Pashto, concrete steps need to be taken. To remove violent words from Pashto language and for the progress of Pashto language policy should be developed at both Federal and Provincial government level. Pakistan government should give importance to the progression of all native languages of country to save them. Even the civil society has to play a vital role in this regard. Literary societies also have to contribute in the advancement of native languages.



Annexure

Annexure A

Glimpses of guest lecture



Ghanni Khataak (Pashto Poet)



M.R. Shafaq (Pashto Poet)



Annexure B**Program Agenda****Guest Lecture: Impacts of War on terror on Pashto language****Date:** February 20, 2014**Timings:** 10:00 AM to 01:00 PM**Venue:** FRC Conference Hall

Islamabad

Contact: 051-2112853-4, 0343-8511353**Guest Speakers**

1. **M R Shafaq (Pashto Poet)**
2. **Ghani Khattak (Pashto Poet)**

Activities	Timing
Arrival of Guests and Registration	10: 00 -10:30 AM
An Overview of FRC projects and Formal welcome to Guest speakers by <i>Mehran Ali Khan Wazir</i> , Program Manager FRC	10:30 - 10:45 AM
Opening remarks by <i>Dr. Ashraf Ali</i> , President FRC	10:45 -11:00 AM
Impact of War on terror on colloquial way of Pashto language by <i>M R Shafaq</i> , Pashto Poet	11:00- 11:25 AM
Impact of violence on formal/written way of expression of Pashto language by <i>Ghani Khattak</i> , Pashto Poet	11:25 -11:50 AM
Question and Answer	11:50-12:30 PM
Conclusion, Thanks and Adjournment by Dr Ashraf Ali , President FRC	12:30-12:45 PM
Hi-Tea	12:45-01:30 PM



Annexure C**List of Attendees**

Sr no	Name	Designation	Organization
1.	Sadiq Nawaz	Lecturer	Sina Institute
2.	M.R Shafaq	Pashto Poet	Freelance
3.	Ghani Khattak	Pashto Poet	Freelance
4.	Arshad Ali	Senior management Executive	PPAF
5.	Ansar Ullah	Data Analyst	GIZ
6.	Sumaira Banaras	Coordinator	FRC
7.	Nasra Khan	Research Associate	IBA
8.	Nawaf Khan	Researcher	FRC
9.	Muqem Ul Islam	Director	NIM
10.	Fatima	Student	BU
11.	Areeba	Student	BU
12.	Rubab Zahra	Research Associate	FRC
13.	Asghar Mardani	Social mobilize	Welfare organization
14.	Sobia Abbasi	Research Associate	FRC
15.	Taimur Ali Khan	IT Engineer	FRC
16.	Mehran Ali Khan	Programme officer	FRC
17.	Irfan Uddin	Senior Researcher	FRC
18.	Asad Kamal	Researcher	FRC
19.	Mansur Khan Mehsud	Director Research	FRC
20.	Saif Ullah Mehsud	Executive Director	FRC
21.	Umair Zahid	Admin & Finance	FRC



Annexure D

Press Release

By: Nawaf Khan

Mother language Day Observed at FRC

ISLAMABAD, Feb 21: Promotion of indigenous languages in a country can play a vital role in creating harmony among different ethnic population inhabiting a country. Patronage for the promotion, however, should come from the central government in the shape of national policies.

This was the crux of the discussion of a special session organized by FATA Research Centre on International Mother Language Day here on Friday in Conference Hall at Islamabad.

Notables including literary figures, authors, journalists, researchers and the employees of the organization were present at the occasion to mark the significance of the event.

President Fata Research Centre, Dr. Ashraf Ali, while speaking at the occasion highlighted the importance of mother tongue while referring to the Sheikh Saddy.

“One can convey his message up to seventy percent when the means of communication is mother tongue”, Dr. Ashraf said.

“Civilized nations give equal respect to the languages of other nations. This respect and tolerance leads towards harmony among people inhabiting a country”.

MehranAli Khan, Program Manager FRC, said that Pashto language is the mother language of Pashtun ethnic population in Pakistan and is an official language of neighboring Afghanistan. Pashto speaking people are mainly inhabited in Baluchistan, FATA and Khyber Paskhtunkhwa.

According to Mr. Khan, Pashtun had faced many wars in the past but the ongoing war on terror became the main cause of entrance of violent elements in Pashto language. He further added that, “The reason is the decentralized nature of the war where common man became the part of war and the line of division between combatants and civilians became blurred.

At the occasion Ghani Khattak, a well-known Pashto Poet, underlined the importance of Mother Language day observance and said, “By celebrating this day the natives gets the minimum required inspirations for the promotion of their mother tongue which is quite helpful for the survival of any language”, revealed Mr. Khattak.



While discussing the Pashto language and the influence of war on terror over it, he elaborated that though the Pashto language has been undergoing the conflict eras since many decades, in past at different intervals, still the language has maintained its shape despite the worse fallouts of the conflicts.

“It is the Pashto language internal resistive power that have kept itself intact, to a large extent, despite passing through many wars eras”, said Mr. Khattak.

Renowned Pashto Poet, M.R. Shafaq, who has worked with Radio Pakistan for more than twenty years also addressed Mr. Shafaq urged the government of Pakistan to give a comprehensive plan to its broadcasting channels that should be directed towards creating mutual understanding among the countrymen belonging to all the major native languages speakers.

“Radio Pakistan has listeners in every corner of Pakistan. It is the prime responsibility of government to give due coverage to all the major native languages in its broadcasting programs which would, in my opinion, reduce the perceived hatred among our citizens”, added Mr. Shafaq.

“Every province should be given the autonomy to promote its mother tongue in its own jurisdiction by including it in its educational curricula as a compulsory subject”, revealed further by Mr. Shafaq.

Fata Research Centre celebrates important national and international days thereby inviting well known personalities of the country at the occasion to record their insights into the important events.

