

## LINGUISTIC HEGEMONY AND THE SILENCING OF DAWOODI: POWER, STIGMA, AND STRUCTURAL MARGINALIZATION

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the intersection of language, power, and social marginalization within the Dawoodi-speaking community through a critical sociolinguistic framework. Drawing on qualitative data from interviews, community narratives, and institutional discourse analysis, the research examines how dominant languages exert symbolic and material power over minority linguistic systems, leading to the systematic devaluation of Dawoodi. Building on a longitudinal body of research that has documented language shift, lexical attrition, and structural collapse in the Dawoodi-speaking community (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2019; 2020; 2021), this study extends the analytical lens to examine the ideological and structural conditions that sustain and accelerate these processes. The findings reveal that language shift within this community is not a neutral communicative choice but is deeply embedded in socio-economic hierarchies, institutional exclusion, and internalized stigma. Dawoodi speakers, particularly younger generations, experience their language as a marker of lower social status and limited economic opportunity, driving them toward dominant languages in pursuit of social mobility. Institutional practices, including education policy and administrative frameworks, further reinforce this marginalization by systematically excluding Dawoodi from formal domains. The study situates these dynamics within broader theoretical frameworks of linguistic hegemony, symbolic violence, and language ideology, arguing that the loss of Dawoodi is both a consequence and a mechanism of structural marginalization. It concludes by calling for policy-level interventions and community-driven initiatives that address not only documentation but also the dismantling of the power structures that sustain linguistic inequality.*

**Keywords:** linguistic hegemony, language marginalization, symbolic violence, Dawoodi language, language ideology, critical sociolinguistics, linguistic stigma, language power, institutional exclusion, language policy

### 1.1 Introduction

Language is never politically neutral. It operates within social structures that assign value, prestige, and legitimacy unevenly across linguistic communities. In multilingual societies, the dominance of certain languages over others is not a natural or inevitable outcome but a historically produced and ideologically sustained phenomenon. The silencing of minority languages is therefore not merely a linguistic event but a social and political one, rooted in systems of power that determine whose voices are heard, whose knowledge is valued, and whose identity is recognized.

The Dawoodi language, spoken primarily by a small community in the Mominabad area of the Hunza region in northern Pakistan, represents a compelling case study in the intersection of language, power, and marginalization. Previous research has established that Dawoodi is undergoing advanced language shift, characterized by the breakdown of intergenerational transmission and the erosion of active speaker communities (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2019). Subsequent research has further documented systematic lexical attrition, where vocabulary loss is not merely quantitative but involves the qualitative erosion of culturally embedded meaning systems (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2020). Most recently, these processes have been theorized within the concept of post-creole collapse, describing the structural disintegration of a once-stabilized

contact language under conditions of sustained sociopolitical and economic pressure (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2021).

What remains insufficiently explored in this body of research, however, is the ideological and structural dimension of Dawoodi's decline. Why does language shift occur? What forces determine which languages are valued and which are abandoned? How do speakers themselves experience and internalize the social meanings attached to their language? These questions require a critical sociolinguistic lens that moves beyond description toward analysis of power, ideology, and inequality.

This study addresses these questions by examining how linguistic hegemony operates within the Dawoodi community, how institutional structures reproduce linguistic inequality, and how Dawoodi speakers negotiate identity and dignity within these constraints. In doing so, it contributes to both the empirical documentation of Dawoodi's situation and the broader theoretical understanding of language as a site of power.

### **1.2 Background of the Study**

The Dawoodi-speaking community exists within a multilingual ecology characterized by deep linguistic hierarchies. Dominant languages such as Urdu, which functions as Pakistan's national language, and English, which holds prestige in educational and professional contexts, occupy the upper registers of this hierarchy. Regional lingua francas such as Burushaski and Shina occupy intermediate positions, while Dawoodi, as a micro-community language without institutional recognition or formal support, occupies the lowest position in this stratified system.

This hierarchy is not merely symbolic. It has material consequences. Access to education, employment, government services, and upward social mobility is mediated through dominant languages. Speakers who are proficient in Urdu and English are better positioned to navigate institutional structures and access economic opportunities. Speakers whose primary linguistic repertoire is grounded in Dawoodi face systemic disadvantage. Language choice therefore becomes inseparable from life chances, and the abandonment of Dawoodi becomes not simply a matter of preference but of survival within an unequal social system.

The sociolinguistic literature has long recognized this dynamic. Bourdieu's (1991) theory of linguistic capital conceptualizes language as a form of symbolic capital whose value is determined by social markets. Languages that are recognized and legitimated by dominant institutions accumulate capital, while those that are excluded from institutional recognition are devalued. In the Pakistani context, Urdu and English carry the highest symbolic capital, while minority languages like Dawoodi are rendered economically and socially invisible.

This structural devaluation is compounded by ideological forces. Language ideologies, defined by Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) as representations and perceptions of language and its speakers, shape how communities understand the value of their own linguistic practices. When dominant language ideologies frame minority languages as backward, limited, or inferior, speakers may internalize these evaluations and distance themselves from their heritage language. This process, described by Bourdieu (1991) as symbolic violence, operates subtly and pervasively, producing consent to inequality by making it appear natural and inevitable.

Understanding the decline of Dawoodi therefore requires not only documentation of linguistic change but analysis of the ideological and structural conditions that produce and sustain that change. This is the task the present study undertakes.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Despite growing documentation of Dawoodi's linguistic decline, the socio-structural and ideological dimensions of this decline remain under analyzed. Existing research has focused primarily on observable patterns of language shift and lexical attrition (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2019;

2020) and on theorizing the trajectory of structural collapse (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2021). While these contributions are foundational, they do not sufficiently address the question of why these processes unfold as they do. Specifically, there is limited research examining how power relations, institutional practices, and language ideologies shape speaker behavior and community language choices within the Dawoodi context. This absence represents a significant gap. Without understanding the structural and ideological conditions that drive language shift, preservation and revitalization efforts risk addressing symptoms rather than causes. Interventions that focus solely on documentation or pedagogy, without challenging the power dynamics that devalue Dawoodi, are unlikely to produce lasting change. The problem this study addresses is therefore both analytical and practical: it seeks to illuminate the mechanisms of linguistic marginalization in order to inform more effective and equitable responses.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To examine how linguistic hegemony operates within the multilingual ecology of the Dawoodi community.
2. To analyze how institutional structures and language policies contribute to the marginalization of Dawoodi.
3. To investigate how Dawoodi speakers experience and respond to linguistic stigma and devaluation.
4. To situate the decline of Dawoodi within theoretical frameworks of power, ideology, and inequality.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. How do dominant language ideologies shape the perceptions and practices of Dawoodi speakers?
2. In what ways do institutional structures reproduce and reinforce the marginalization of Dawoodi?
3. How do Dawoodi speakers negotiate linguistic identity and dignity within conditions of structural inequality?
4. What theoretical frameworks best explain the relationship between language, power, and marginalization in the Dawoodi context?

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant at multiple levels. Theoretically, it extends the existing body of research on Dawoodi by introducing a critical sociolinguistic perspective that foregrounds power and ideology. It bridges the gap between descriptive accounts of language shift and structural analyses of why such shifts occur, contributing to broader debates in critical sociolinguistics and language endangerment studies.

Empirically, it adds new qualitative data to the existing longitudinal research on Dawoodi, enriching understanding of how speakers themselves experience and make sense of linguistic decline. By centering the voices of community members, the study produces knowledge that is grounded in lived experience rather than abstracted from it.

From a practical standpoint, the study has important implications for language policy and revitalization. By identifying the structural and ideological mechanisms of marginalization, it provides a more complete picture of what effective intervention requires, moving beyond documentation toward structural change.

#### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the socio-structural and ideological dimensions of language decline in the Dawoodi-speaking community. It examines how power, stigma, and institutional exclusion operate at the community level, drawing on qualitative data from interviews and community narratives. While the study engages with linguistic data where relevant, its primary analytical

focus is sociological and ideological rather than structural or lexical. Its implications extend to broader discussions of linguistic human rights, minority language policy, and the politics of language preservation.

## 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The relationship between language and power has been a central preoccupation of critical sociolinguistics since at least the late twentieth century. Scholars across linguistics, sociology, and political theory have demonstrated that language is not simply a tool for communication but a medium through which social hierarchies are constructed, maintained, and reproduced. This chapter reviews the key theoretical and empirical literature relevant to understanding the marginalization of Dawoodi, situating the present study within established frameworks while identifying the specific gaps it addresses.

### 2.2 Linguistic Hegemony and Language Ideology

The concept of hegemony, developed by Gramsci (1971) in the context of political economy, has been productively applied to language by scholars such as Grillo (1989) and Phillipson (1992). Linguistic hegemony refers to the process through which certain languages come to be seen as naturally superior, legitimate, and universal, while others are positioned as inferior, limited, or parochial. This process is not maintained through force alone but through the production of consent, whereby speakers of dominated languages come to accept and even embrace the superiority of dominant ones.

Language ideologies play a crucial role in this process. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) define language ideologies as sets of beliefs about language that are tied to social and political interests. These ideologies are never merely about language in the abstract but always about the social groups who speak them. When a language is devalued, its speakers are devalued with it. Conversely, when speakers internalize dominant language ideologies, they may come to see their own linguistic practices as inadequate or shameful, a process that Bourdieu (1991) theorizes as symbolic violence.

In the Pakistani context, language ideology is deeply shaped by postcolonial history. The privileging of Urdu as the national language and English as the language of prestige and modernity has produced an ideological framework in which minority languages are systematically positioned as obstacles to national unity and individual advancement. This framework has material consequences for communities like Dawoodi, whose language lacks the institutional recognition and symbolic capital required for social legitimacy.

### 2.3 Bourdieu's Theory of Linguistic Capital

Bourdieu's (1991) theoretical framework is particularly valuable for understanding the dynamics of language marginalization. Bourdieu argues that language operates within linguistic markets, where certain varieties of language are recognized as legitimate and others are not. The value of a language is not intrinsic but is determined by its relationship to dominant social institutions, particularly education and the state.

Linguistic capital, like other forms of cultural capital, is unevenly distributed across social groups. Speakers who possess the dominant variety of language have access to the institutional rewards that flow from that possession, while speakers of non-dominant varieties are symbolically and materially disadvantaged. The school, Bourdieu argues, plays a particularly important role in this process, functioning as a site where legitimate language is defined, taught, and evaluated, and where non-dominant varieties are implicitly or explicitly devalued.

In the Dawoodi context, the relevance of this framework is evident. The absence of Dawoodi from educational institutions means that speakers of the language are denied the institutional recognition that would confer legitimacy and value on their linguistic practices. As documented

in earlier research, the community's language is increasingly confined to informal and domestic domains, a pattern consistent with Bourdieu's analysis of how dominated languages are excluded from the markets that produce symbolic capital (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2021).

#### **2.4 Linguistic Stigma and Internalized Devaluation**

Linguistic stigma refers to the negative social evaluations attached to particular languages or language varieties and their speakers. Labov's (1972) foundational work on social stratification and language demonstrated that speakers are acutely aware of the social values attached to different linguistic forms and that this awareness shapes their linguistic behavior. In contexts of language contact and inequality, stigmatized varieties are often associated with poverty, lack of education, and social backwardness.

The internalization of stigma is particularly damaging to minority language communities. When speakers come to see their own language as inferior, they may actively discourage its transmission to younger generations, reasoning that fluency in the dominant language will serve their children better than proficiency in a language associated with disadvantage. This dynamic has been documented extensively in the context of language shift, where parental decisions to switch to dominant languages in the home are often motivated by a desire to protect children from the social penalties associated with minority language use (Gal, 1979; Fishman, 1991).

Within the Dawoodi community, this pattern is clearly observable. Research on language shift has documented how younger generations have progressively distanced themselves from the language, not only due to reduced exposure but also due to changing perceptions of its value and relevance (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2019). The internalization of dominant language ideologies has produced a situation in which Dawoodi is increasingly associated with the past and with social limitation, rather than with pride, identity, and cultural richness.

#### **2.5 Institutional Exclusion and Language Policy**

Institutional exclusion is one of the most powerful mechanisms through which linguistic marginalization is reproduced. When languages are absent from education, government, media, and other formal domains, they are effectively denied the conditions necessary for vitality and growth. This exclusion sends a powerful ideological message: that these languages do not belong in the public sphere and that speakers who use them in formal contexts are out of place. Language policy, both explicit and implicit, plays a central role in this exclusion. In Pakistan, language policy has historically prioritized Urdu and English, leaving the majority of the country's linguistic communities without institutional support for their languages (Annamalai, 2001). Minority language communities like Dawoodi are effectively invisible within this framework, receiving neither recognition nor resources.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) has argued forcefully that the exclusion of minority languages from education constitutes a form of linguistic genocide, a term that highlights the existential stakes of language policy for minority communities. While this framing may be contested, it draws attention to the profound cultural and human consequences of institutional neglect. The research on lexical attrition in Dawoodi has demonstrated precisely these consequences, showing how the exclusion of the language from educational domains accelerates the erosion of vocabulary and cultural knowledge (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2020).

#### **2.6 Language, Identity, and Resistance**

Despite the weight of structural marginalization, minority language communities are not passive victims. Speakers negotiate, resist, and sometimes reclaim their linguistic identities in creative and resourceful ways. Research on language revitalization has documented numerous cases where communities have mobilized around their languages as symbols of cultural survival and political assertion (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006).

Identity theory in sociolinguistics emphasizes that language is a central resource for the construction and expression of social identity (Edwards, 2009). For minority language communities, the heritage language may carry powerful symbolic associations with community, history, and dignity, even when its communicative functions have diminished. This symbolic value can serve as a basis for revitalization efforts, providing the motivational foundation on which new patterns of language use can be built.

In the Dawoodi context, older speakers in particular maintain strong affective bonds with their language, viewing it as an irreplaceable component of cultural identity. As documented in research on intergenerational transmission within the community, this attachment represents a potential resource for revitalization, even as the structural conditions of marginalization continue to erode active language use (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2019).

### 2.7 Research Gap

The existing literature on Dawoodi provides a detailed empirical account of the language's decline but has not yet systematically analyzed the ideological and structural mechanisms that drive this decline. Previous studies have documented what is happening to Dawoodi in terms of language shift, lexical loss, and structural disintegration (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2019; 2020; 2021). The present study addresses the gap of why these processes unfold as they do, by examining the role of linguistic hegemony, symbolic violence, and institutional exclusion in producing and sustaining the marginalization of Dawoodi.

## 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This study adopts a critical qualitative methodology grounded in critical sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. The choice of methodology reflects the study's theoretical orientation: if the central argument is that language shift is shaped by ideology, power, and structural inequality, then the appropriate methods are those that can illuminate how these forces operate in the lived experience and discursive practices of community members.

### 3.2 Research Design and Philosophical Orientation

The study is situated within a critical research paradigm, which holds that social research has both a descriptive and an emancipatory function. Critical research not only seeks to understand social reality but to challenge the power relations that produce inequality and to contribute to the conditions for social change (Fairclough, 1992). This orientation shapes both the questions the study asks and the way it interprets and presents its findings.

The research design is qualitative and interpretive, drawing on in-depth interviews, community narratives, and analysis of institutional discourse. Qualitative methods are particularly suited to this study because they enable the capture of meaning, experience, and perspective in ways that quantitative approaches cannot. The complexity of how speakers experience and respond to linguistic marginalization requires methods that can access depth and nuance rather than frequency and distribution.

### 3.3 Data Collection Methods

**In-Depth Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with community members representing different generations, genders, and levels of linguistic competence. Interview questions explored participants' perceptions of Dawoodi in relation to dominant languages, their experiences of linguistic stigma and exclusion, their language choices in different social domains, and their views on the future of the language. Interviews were conducted in participants' preferred languages to ensure accessibility and comfort.

**Community Narratives:** Extended narrative accounts were collected from elder speakers, focusing on their memories of how language use within the community had changed over time. These narratives provide a diachronic perspective on the ideological and structural changes that

have accompanied linguistic decline, complementing the synchronic analysis of current language attitudes and practices.

**Institutional Discourse Analysis:** Publicly available policy documents, educational materials, and administrative guidelines relevant to language use in the region were examined to identify how dominant language ideologies are encoded in institutional practices. This analysis provides evidence of how structural exclusion operates at the policy level.

### 3.4 Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation across generational groups, levels of linguistic competence, and community roles. The sample included elder fluent speakers, middle-generation partial speakers, and younger semi-speakers or non-speakers. Community leaders, educators, and parents were specifically included to capture perspectives from those who play active roles in language transmission and community decision-making.

Snowball sampling was additionally employed to identify participants with particularly relevant knowledge or experience, consistent with established practices in sociolinguistic research with small communities (Milroy & Gordon, 2003).

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Interview and narrative data were analyzed using critical discourse analysis (CDA), a framework developed by Fairclough (1992) and van Dijk (1993) that examines the relationship between language use and power. CDA attends not only to what is said but to how it is said, who says it, and what ideological assumptions are embedded in discursive practices. This framework is particularly well-suited to the present study because it treats discourse as a site where power relations are both expressed and reproduced.

Thematic analysis was additionally employed to identify recurring patterns across interview data, organized around key themes including linguistic stigma, institutional exclusion, identity negotiation, and language attitudes. NVivo software was used to facilitate systematic coding and organization of qualitative data.

### 3.6 Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations

Validity was enhanced through triangulation across multiple data sources and analytical frameworks. The consistency of patterns across interview data, community narratives, and institutional discourse analysis strengthens confidence in the findings.

Ethical considerations are paramount in research with endangered and marginalized language communities. The study adhered strictly to principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for community ownership of linguistic and cultural knowledge. Participants were fully informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. The research is conducted with awareness that the community's linguistic and cultural situation is a sensitive matter, and findings are presented with sensitivity to community dignity and agency.

## 4: Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study, organized around the key analytical themes that emerged from the data. The analysis draws on interview excerpts, narrative accounts, and institutional discourse to illuminate how linguistic hegemony, stigma, and structural exclusion operate within the Dawoodi community. The findings are interpreted within the theoretical frameworks outlined in the literature review, with particular attention to how speakers experience and respond to the conditions of marginalization.

### 4.2 Linguistic Hegemony in the Multilingual Ecology

The data reveals a clearly stratified linguistic ecology in which Dawoodi occupies the lowest position. Participants across all generations consistently identified Urdu and English as the

languages of power, opportunity, and advancement, while Dawoodi was associated with the domestic sphere, older generations, and limited social utility. This stratification is not merely perceived but is materially enforced through the structure of social institutions.

Elder speakers frequently recalled a time when Dawoodi functioned as the primary medium of community life, carrying cultural knowledge, social organization, and collective identity. However, they also noted that this functional centrality eroded rapidly as the community became increasingly integrated into broader economic and educational systems in which Dawoodi held no currency. This trajectory aligns closely with Bourdieu's (1991) account of how languages lose value within linguistic markets dominated by state and institutional power. The younger generation's relationship to Dawoodi is shaped from the outset by an awareness of its low symbolic capital. Participants in the younger cohort consistently described Dawoodi as a language associated with their grandparents' world, a world they felt increasingly distant from. This perception is not simply a matter of generational change but reflects the systematic devaluation of the language through institutional exclusion and ideological reproduction.

#### **4.3 Linguistic Stigma and Internalized Marginalization**

One of the most striking findings of the study is the extent to which Dawoodi speakers, particularly those in the middle and younger generations, have internalized the dominant society's negative evaluation of their language. Participants described experiences of embarrassment or shame when using Dawoodi outside the community, and several reported actively discouraging their children from using it in school contexts out of concern for the social consequences.

This internalization of stigma is a classic manifestation of what Bourdieu (1991) calls symbolic violence, the imposition of categories of perception that serve the interests of dominant groups while appearing natural and inevitable to those who are dominated. When Dawoodi speakers come to see their own language as a liability, they become agents of its marginalization, reproducing the conditions of exclusion from within the community itself.

This pattern is consistent with broader findings on minority language communities, where the internalization of dominant language ideologies often proves as damaging as external structural pressures (Gal, 1979; Fishman, 1991). In the Dawoodi context, it provides an important explanatory link between the structural conditions documented in earlier research and the rapid pace of language shift and attrition observed across generations (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2019; 2020).

#### **4.4 Institutional Exclusion and the Reproduction of Inequality**

The analysis of institutional discourse reveals a systematic pattern of exclusion that reinforces the marginalization of Dawoodi at the structural level. Educational policies in the region make no provision for minority languages, either as media of instruction or as subjects of study. Administrative and government services are conducted exclusively in Urdu. Media, including both broadcast and digital forms, offers no content in Dawoodi.

This institutional invisibility has profound consequences. It signals to Dawoodi speakers that their language does not belong in the public sphere and that its use is inappropriate in contexts that matter socially and economically. It also deprives the language of the conditions necessary for vitality, including intergenerational transmission through formal education, standardization, and the development of a written literary tradition.

Participants in the study were acutely aware of this exclusion. Teachers within the community described the challenge of serving students whose home language was Dawoodi within an educational system that recognized only Urdu, and several noted the psychological impact on children of having their linguistic background rendered invisible within the school. This finding resonates with Skutnabb-Kangas's (2000) argument that the exclusion of minority languages

from education is not a neutral policy choice but an act of structural violence that damages both linguistic vitality and community well-being.

The relationship between institutional exclusion and lexical attrition is particularly significant in light of earlier research findings. The systematic erosion of domain-specific vocabulary documented among younger Dawoodi speakers (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2020) can be understood in part as a direct consequence of the language's absence from institutional domains, where vocabulary is developed, tested, and renewed.

#### **4.5 Language, Power, and Social Mobility**

A recurring theme across interviews was the relationship between language choice and social mobility. Participants across generations consistently described dominant language proficiency as a prerequisite for access to education, employment, and upward social mobility, and Dawoodi as a language that offered none of these pathways. This perception drives language shift at the most fundamental level of individual decision-making.

The logic articulated by community members reflects precisely the dynamics Bourdieu (1991) describes in his analysis of linguistic markets. Speakers rationally invest in the language forms that offer the greatest return within the dominant social order. In contexts where minority languages have been systematically excluded from the institutions that distribute social rewards, the decision to prioritize dominant languages over heritage languages is not irrational but is a reasonable response to structural incentives.

What this analysis reveals, however, is that these structural incentives are themselves the product of power relations rather than natural necessities. The association of Dawoodi with social limitation is not inherent to the language but is produced by policies and practices that deny it institutional recognition and support. Understanding language shift as a response to structural incentives rather than as a free choice illuminates the political dimensions of language loss and the kinds of interventions that are required to address it.

#### **4.6 Identity Negotiation and Linguistic Dignity**

Despite the weight of marginalization, the data also reveals important instances of resistance and identity negotiation. Elder speakers in particular expressed strong pride in Dawoodi and articulated its loss as a profound cultural injury. Several described efforts to maintain the language within their households and to transmit cultural knowledge to grandchildren, even in the face of children's and grandchildren's disengagement.

These expressions of attachment and resistance are significant not only as evidence of community resilience but as resources for revitalization. Revitalization efforts that can connect with the affective bonds that elder speakers maintain with Dawoodi, and that can help younger speakers understand the cultural and intellectual richness encoded in the language, may be able to build a foundation for renewed engagement.

The concept of linguistic dignity, the right of speakers to use and transmit their language without shame or penalty, is central to this dimension of the analysis. The experiences of stigma and internalized devaluation documented in this study represent violations of linguistic dignity that have both individual and collective consequences. Addressing these violations requires not only structural change but the active affirmation of the value of linguistic diversity.

#### **4.7 The Structural Roots of Post-Creole Collapse**

The findings of this study provide important contextual grounding for the theoretical concept introduced in earlier research. The concept of post-creole collapse, developed to describe the structural disintegration of Dawoodi under conditions of sustained marginalization (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2021), gains additional explanatory depth when situated within the analysis of power and ideology developed here. Structural collapse does not occur in a vacuum; it is produced by

the ideological devaluation, institutional exclusion, and internalized stigma that have been documented in this study.

The relationship between these dimensions is cumulative and mutually reinforcing. Institutional exclusion reduces the functional domains of the language, accelerating lexical attrition. Lexical attrition reduces the language's expressive capacity, making it less functional and less attractive to younger speakers. The internalization of stigma reduces motivation for transmission, accelerating shift. And the progressive loss of speakers further reduces the language's social visibility, deepening its marginalization. Together, these processes constitute a system of structural violence directed at the language and its speakers.

## **5: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter synthesizes the findings of the study and situates them within the broader theoretical and policy landscape. It reflects on the implications of the analysis for understanding linguistic marginalization, for language policy, and for community-driven revitalization efforts. It also acknowledges the limitations of the study and proposes directions for future research.

### **5.2 Linguistic Hegemony as a System**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the marginalization of Dawoodi is not the result of individual choices or natural linguistic processes but is produced and sustained by a system of linguistic hegemony that operates across ideological, institutional, and interactional dimensions. At the ideological level, dominant language ideologies position Urdu and English as languages of civilization, progress, and opportunity, while framing Dawoodi as a relic of a pre-modern past. At the institutional level, language policies and educational practices systematically exclude Dawoodi from the domains that confer social legitimacy. At the interactional level, stigma and shame discourage speakers from using and transmitting the language in everyday contexts.

Understanding marginalization as a system rather than as a collection of individual factors has important implications for how intervention is conceived. Addressing any single dimension of the system, for example by developing educational materials in Dawoodi, without addressing the ideological and structural conditions that devalue the language, is unlikely to produce lasting change. Effective intervention requires a multi-level approach that challenges hegemonic ideologies, reforms institutional practices, and supports the recovery of linguistic dignity within the community.

### **5.3 The Politics of Language Loss**

The findings of this study invite a reconsideration of how language loss is understood and framed. The discourse of language endangerment often centers on languages as objects of loss, focusing on the number of speakers remaining, the domains of use still active, or the structural features still preserved. While this documentation work is important, it can inadvertently depoliticize language loss by framing it as a natural process of extinction rather than as a consequence of power and inequality.

The Dawoodi case demonstrates that language loss is a political phenomenon. It is produced by policies that privilege dominant languages, by economic systems that reward fluency in those languages, and by ideological frameworks that naturalize these inequalities. Recognizing this political dimension is essential not only for analytical accuracy but for developing effective responses. Communities and advocates who understand language loss as a consequence of structural inequality are better positioned to advocate for the policy changes and institutional reforms that are required.

This political framing is consistent with and extends the longitudinal research program on Dawoodi. Where earlier studies documented what was happening to the language in terms of shift, attrition, and structural collapse (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2019; 2020; 2021), the present study explains why these processes are occurring by tracing them to their roots in power, ideology, and institutional exclusion.

#### **5.4 Implications for Language Policy**

The findings of this study have clear and urgent implications for language policy at multiple levels. At the national level, Pakistan's language policy needs to move beyond the exclusive privileging of Urdu and English toward a framework that recognizes and supports the country's extraordinary linguistic diversity. This requires not only symbolic recognition but practical investment in multilingual education, language documentation, and institutional support for minority languages.

At the regional and community level, there is a need for policies that explicitly address the marginalization of languages like Dawoodi. This includes the development of educational materials in Dawoodi, the training of teachers who can provide instruction in or about the language, and the creation of institutional spaces where Dawoodi can be used, celebrated, and transmitted to younger generations.

Revitalization efforts must also address the ideological dimensions of marginalization. Community awareness programs that challenge the internalized stigma associated with Dawoodi and that reframe the language as a source of cultural pride and intellectual richness can help create the motivational conditions for renewed language use and transmission.

#### **5.5 Community-Driven Approaches to Revitalization**

The literature on language revitalization consistently emphasizes that the most effective and sustainable efforts are those that are driven by communities themselves rather than imposed from outside (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). The present study reinforces this finding. The affective bonds that Dawoodi speakers maintain with their language, and the cultural knowledge that elder speakers continue to carry, represent resources that community-driven revitalization can build on.

Programs that create intergenerational spaces for language use and transmission, that document and celebrate the oral traditions and cultural knowledge encoded in Dawoodi, and that connect younger speakers with the richness of their linguistic heritage can contribute to a recovery of linguistic dignity that structural change alone cannot achieve. These efforts must be sensitive to the community's own priorities and understandings, avoiding the imposition of external frameworks that may not resonate with local values and realities.

#### **5.6 Limitations of the Study**

This study's findings are grounded in qualitative data from a specific community context, and their generalizability to other settings requires careful consideration. The sample, while purposively designed to capture key perspectives, is necessarily limited by the small size of the Dawoodi-speaking population and the challenges of accessing community members across all relevant groups.

Additionally, the study's focus on the socio-structural and ideological dimensions of marginalization means that certain other dimensions, including the phonological and grammatical aspects of language change, are not examined in detail. Future research should integrate the findings of this study with more detailed linguistic analysis to produce a fully comprehensive account of Dawoodi's situation.

#### **5.7 Directions for Future Research**

This study opens several important avenues for future research. Comparative studies examining the experiences of other minority language communities in Pakistan and South Asia could help

to identify the extent to which the patterns documented here are specific to Dawoodi or reflect broader regional dynamics of linguistic marginalization.

Research on the specific mechanisms through which language ideologies are transmitted and reproduced, including through educational materials, media, and everyday interaction, would deepen understanding of how hegemony operates at the micro-level. Research on successful revitalization efforts in comparable contexts could provide practical guidance for interventions in the Dawoodi case.

Finally, longitudinal research that tracks changes in language attitudes and practices over time, building on the diachronic research tradition established in earlier work on Dawoodi (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2019; 2021), would provide insight into whether and how the conditions of marginalization are changing, and whether revitalization efforts are having measurable impact.

### 5.8 Conclusion

The silencing of Dawoodi is not an accident of history or an inevitable outcome of linguistic evolution. It is a product of power. The systematic devaluation of the language through dominant language ideologies, the exclusion of Dawoodi from institutional domains, and the internalization of stigma by community members are not neutral processes but are manifestations of a broader system of linguistic hegemony that reproduces social inequality through language.

This study has argued that understanding and addressing the decline of Dawoodi requires moving beyond documentation of linguistic change toward analysis of the structural and ideological conditions that produce that change. Building on a longitudinal body of research that has traced Dawoodi's trajectory from language shift through lexical attrition to post-creole collapse (Ishfaq & Bhatti, 2019; 2020; 2021), it has illuminated the forces that drive these processes and the experiences of the community members who live within them.

What is at stake is not only a language but a community's right to its own history, identity, and ways of knowing. The preservation of Dawoodi is therefore not merely a linguistic endeavor but a matter of social justice, requiring not only the tools of documentation but the courage of structural transformation. The voices of Dawoodi speakers, so long marginalized by the hierarchies that surround them, deserve to be heard, supported, and sustained.

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