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Determinants of Language preferences and attitudes among Sheikha gal speakers of Kashmir: A case of Linguistic suicide

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ABSTRACT

In this paper the term "linguistic suicide" is used to describe a situation where parents who are speakers of a minority language deliberately choose not to teach this language to their children and instead adopt a majority language in their personal domains.The focus of this research are language preferences and attitudes among Sheikha gal speakers in Kashmir. Sheikha gal is a language spoken by a community called shupriwatals in Kashmir. This language has neither literature nor a writing system, and is only spoken by the community members in confined domains. A total number of 60 informants from different age groups participated in this study. As it was hypothesized that social class, age and gender would be related to attitudes towards Sheikha gal, they were considered as independent variables in the study. The results indicated that, younger generation is losing their language, as the people of this community do not prefer to talk to their children in Sheikha gal and its prevalence is fading, as we go from the older to the younger generation.

Key words: language attitude, language identity, language loss, language preference