# The Changing Language Roles and Linguistic Identities of the Kashmiri Speech Community

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By

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This book first published 2017

*Identity is a concept of our age that should be used very carefully. All types of identities, ethnic, national, religious, sexual or whatever else can become your prison after a while. The identity that you stand up for can enslave you and close you to the rest of the world.*
*—Murathan Mungan [Turkish poet]*


*So, if you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself.*
*—Anzaldúa*

*Speakers construct their identities by careful choice of the appropriate linguistic features that will convey the specific social information that identifies them as part of a particular speech community.*
*—Joseph John*

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# PREFACE

Implicitly or explicitly, every individual is associated with a repertoire of identities, which include the personal, gender, social, linguistic, regional, national, racial, cultural, ethnic, and religious identities. These multiple categories form a person's 'repertoire of social identities'. Within this, some identity assertions are more prominently observable and effective than others. For instance, linguistic identity is the most overtly observable phenomenon, and various other identities are articulated and positioned through it. From a linguistic perspective, identity does not emerge at a single analytical level of language (vowel quality, code choice, ideological structure) but simultaneously operates at multiple levels. When associated with other forms of discourse, such as religion, culture, nation, ethnicity, and race, language-identity statements become stronger. For many researchers, the study of language as an interactional discourse demonstrates that parameters such as gender, ethnicity, religion, and class are not constants that can be taken for granted; rather, they are communicatively produced. In other words, language mediates individual and social identities. In our everyday life, if we observe carefully, most of our roles and statements are conscious or unconscious assertions of identity statements. Each identity a person takes on is associated with a number of approximate verbal and non-verbal forms of expression. Identity, in terms of time, space, and context, is always in multiplicity. For instance, a resident of India can simultaneously be Indian, Punjabi, male, Hindu, a doctor, and so on.

In multilingual spaces like India—with 1652 mother tongues—where the identity assertion of an individual is mostly dominated by linguistic discourses, the significance of linguistic identities has not been studied thoroughly. Apart from several grand narratives of linguistic-identity statements, I have come across several such contexts that helped me contemplate the essence of correlation between our daily lives and linguistic-identity statements. I recall four such incidents that illustrate a strong language-identity correlation. First, in April 2003, I boarded a train from Aligarh (a small town in Uttar Pradesh, India), where I was a student of linguistics at Aligarh Muslim University. The ticket checker asked me for my ticket; after looking at it, he asked me to pay a fine, for I had boarded the wrong train. However, I argued (in English), "It's night

time—I didn't realise I'd boarded the wrong train". He abruptly retorted in Hindi, "*Agar angrez ho to* AC (air-conditioned) coach *mein kyon nahin ho*" (if you are an Englishman, why don't you travel in an air-conditioned coach), as I was travelling in a non-AC sleeper coach, which is cheaper than an AC coach. His argument was a clear example of a linguistic-identity statement. What he (implicitly) meant is that those who speak English belong to the upper-middle-class and can thus afford to travel in AC coaches. This made me think about the importance of the assertion of linguistic identities in the making and unmaking of groups, and about the categorization of people into different socioeconomic categories on the basis of their linguistic assertions. Second, a friend of mine from Delhi (the capital of India) once jokingly told me, *"Aap Kashmiri log na dil se bhaarat bolte ho na zuban se bolte ho"*, which meant, 'you Kashmiris say the word *bhaarat* (India) neither properly nor sincerely', drawing attention to the word's initial aspirated sound [bʰ] that native Kashmiri speakers cannot pronounce properly. Instead of *bʰarat*, Kashmiri speakers pronounce it *barat*. Nonetheless, the issue of such identity assertion is confined not just to an anecdote but is sometimes more intricate than we imagine it to be. Third, in June 2008, my friend and I visited the Srinagar campus of the University of Kashmir. Throughout the way, we spoke in Kashmiri. However, as soon as we entered the gate, he switched to Urdu. Surprised, I asked him why he had done so, to which he replied, "The people here will treat us as illiterate villagers if we continue in Kashmiri". Fourth, while waiting with his mother for his school bus, a child kept insisting on eating chocolate. His mother refused as he had asked for it in Kashmiri and told him to make the request in Urdu, instead. These instances, along with many other overt and covert linguistic-identity articulations, forcefully drew my attention to the importance of understanding the notion of linguistic identities in multilingual contexts.

National language development studies have shown an intricate relationship between national and sub-national identities. This debate is of particularly high relevance in the Indian context because the states were reconstructed, after gaining independence, mainly on a linguistic basis. Globally, national languages have played a foundational role in the formation of national identities. For example, Germany is not only the name of a territory—the people who live there are supposed to speak the language as well. There have been different approaches to understanding the historical relationship and roles of language(s) in the process of national identity formation. Some nationalists believe that if people do not know their language, they cannot understand their nation, which they claim is a state of 'national unconsciousness'. Joseph's description of standard languages and

non-standard languages (notions of correct and incorrect ways of using language) shows how these arise in connection with national identity and go on to play an important role in the lives of individuals by formalising hierarchies of class-based and education-based norms of usage, on the basis of which each of us is judged. Similarly, the link between language and ethnic identity is also obvious, as language is considered the main symbolic system of the human species. Language is used both as a symbolic system and as a basis for grouping individuals. Some people consider language the primary indicator and expression of ethnicity.

The assertion and articulation of linguistic-identity statements, and their consequent language-identity conflicts, can lead to confrontations between individuals, groups, or communities. The history of linguistic conflicts, particularly in multilingual and multicultural nations, has shown how strong language-identity statements are and how they can be a basis for extreme discord between diverse linguistic groups. The conflict within varieties of the same language—such as standard versus non-standard, dialect versus language, where the argument continues as to whose variety is standard and/or non-standard, and whose variety is a language and whose is a dialect of the same language—is purely an identity statement. Similarly, within multilingual spaces, conflicts among speakers of different languages underlie identity assertion statements. Sometimes, language-identity differences are combined with other group markers, such as religion, which intensifies the conflict among speakers of different languages as they assert their diverse identities. In extreme cases, it can lead to division, separatism, and the formation of new groups and nations. For example, the language-based conflicts in multilingual societies like India, or the separation and formation of Bangladesh, are partly based on linguistic conflict. Thus, this clearly shows how strong and sensitive the language-identity linkage is and how it can contribute to peace and war among groups, communities, and nations.

Several researchers have expounded a number of important theoretical positions and have made it possible to see the various positions adopted by individual authors towards understanding linguistic identities. The aim of this volume is to underline some of the parameters of inquiry, which must motivate the next wave of empirical studies to understand the role of linguistic identities in multilingual contexts.

The present work, 'The Changing Language Roles and Linguistic Identities of the Kashmiri Speech Community', is based on the premise that linguistic identities are important because they make sense to people, are meaningful, and have due impact on the thinking and behaviour of individuals and groups, overtly and covertly, by responding to the various

forms of discourse—socio-political, economic, religious, and cultural—in a speech community. The book takes into account all discourses and those contexts that provide any space for the assertion of linguistic identities. It provides an overview of the various theoretical positions of identity, and it draws together insights from interdisciplinary positions, such as Sociolinguistics, Linguistic Anthropology, Discourse Analysis, Cognitive Sciences, and Social Psychology. The framework outlined in the book synthesises key works on linguistic identity to offer a general socio-cultural, cognitive, and linguistic perspective on identity. It tenders a thorough treatment of various crucial and significant issues concerning linguistic identity.

It is important to note that among the repertoire of identities, linguistic identity is the most overtly observable attribute through which various identifications—such as geographical background, social origin, level of education, gender, intelligence, ethnicity, age, and affability—are positioned and articulated. As noted by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, every speech act is perceived as an 'act of identity' and a single phonemic feature may be sufficient to include or exclude somebody from any social group. Accordingly, this book primarily aims at investigating the linguistic assertions of community identity in the multilingual context of the Kashmiri speech community. It does so by focusing on the dimensions of changing language roles and linguistic practices. It employs the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and multiple sources of data, which provide space for the implicit/explicit assertion of linguistic identities. The book explicates the crucial factors—script uncertainty, interlingual diglossia, language policies of the state, collective attitudes, the separatist movement, intergenerational transmission, attrition, and literary, religious, and media discourse—that are accountable for reshaping the roles of different languages and that subsequently result in the transition of linguistic identities. The book also illustrates how instrumental orientation and integrative motivation are engaged for Urdu, in terms of prestige, identity, mobility, and advancement, whereas for English, the acceptability is largely instrumental in nature, and for Kashmiri, it is merely that of symbolic reification. Within this framework, the book measures the nature and extent of Kashmiri language attrition among a non-pathological population. Finally, it demonstrates that attrition, loss, changes in role, and shift of language are principally motivated by various linguistic and extra-linguistic factors, which may lead to the demise of the distinct symbol and last roots of *Kashmiryat*—the Kashmiri linguistic-cultural identity—in favour of the non-native code, Urdu, which might emerge as the primary linguistic identity in the near future.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# AUTHOR'S NOTE ON DOCUMENTATION

- This manuscript (including the main text referencing and bibliography) is closely formatted in adherence to Joseph Gibaldi's MLA Handbook: Sixth Edition, New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press, 2004.

- Standard British spelling is followed throughout the main text. However, American spellings are retained inside quotations or references.

- The phonetic symbols used in the book are on par with the IPA.

- In order to view the figures/tables in a full form on a single page and to avoid breaking a single figure/table into two different pages, parts of some of the pages have been left blank.

# INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Language is a great force of socialisation, a symbol of social solidarity, and is inherently involved in the process of socialisation itself. The relationship between language and identity is an intriguing one, partly because debates on theories of language are as inconclusive and indeterminate as debates on theories of identity. Tabouret-Keller (1997) eloquently stresses that war and peace cannot be understood if the powerful role of identities is ignored and that identities have a part to play in the continuation of war and peace. Sometimes, in the identification of enemies, certain identity markers are attributed to an entire population. Social identity is present in language itself. Language and social identity studies are indeed aimed at solving broad social problems by identifying obstacles to communication that occur among people whose social identities differ.

Language is the only medium through which individuals and groups conceptualise the 'grammar of culture'. For example, a child learns to be male or female, an English or Hindi speaker, Muslim or Christian, and to alienate himself/herself from the roles that he/she is not supposed to perform within a certain culture and context. During the complex process of socialisation, a child not only learns the lexicon but also the communicative competence and articulation of identities. Thus, acquiring a language not only comprises learning lexical items but also one's identity in varying social environments.

The name of a language itself identifies and relates it to other features of the group who speak that language. The historical identification of languages such as Chinese, English, Arabic, and Hindi has always been closely connected with the establishment of a national, ethnic, or religious identity. In fact, linguistic-identity statements become more powerful when combined with ethnic, social, and religious groups. The relationship between language and identity becomes more visible in the presence of resistance and discrimination. In an intra-group language contact situation, language-identity issues become more significant for examination.

Linguistic identity, within the aggregation of identities, is the most evidently observable characteristic through which various identifications are articulated and positioned. There is an impressive body of literature that points to the central importance of the language-identity nexus and

that holds that language and identity are ultimately inseparable. The language-identity nexus, as remarked by Tabouret-Keller (1997), is often so strong that a single phonemic feature may be substantial enough to include/exclude somebody from any social group or to identify someone's membership in a given group. Therefore, it has become imperative to conceptualise the role and dynamics of identities. It may be argued that identity, whether religious, state, cultural, or linguistic, has always been used as a means of classification in the construction of hierarchy. Hence, one of the important dimensions of identification is social stratification; and, thereby, the making and unmaking of groups.

The present volume is based on the premise that linguistic identities are important as they make sense to people, are meaningful, and have due impact on the thinking and behaviour of individuals and groups, overtly and covertly. Debates on theories and issues of language are as inconclusive and indeterminate as those on theories and issues of identity. Within this context, in recent years, linguistic identity research has become increasingly significant among various disciplines, including Sociolinguistics, Linguistic Anthropology, Discourse Analysis, Cognitive Sciences, and Social Psychology. Language per se has been considered an important constituent of cultural, socio-economic, religious, and national-identity projects. Significantly, literary movements, modernisation processes, religious movements, democratisation, state-formation processes, and cultural autonomy movements have all engaged language as an intrinsic tool and as a marker of identity to achieve certain goals.

Linguistic identities cannot be studied in isolation, nor can they be abstracted from wider socio-economic, political, religious, and cultural contexts and discourse. Therefore, the book takes into account all those contexts that provide space for the implicit or explicit assertion of linguistic identities. It examines the nature of changing language roles in the Kashmiri speech community—not as a single independent variable but as a combination of several factors. These include script uncertainty, interlingual diglossia, language attrition, language policies of the state, collective attitudes towards language(s), corresponding speech communities, the separatist movement, intergenerational transmission, instrumental orientation and integrative motivation, and literary, religious, and media discourse.

Primarily, it aims at understanding linguistic assertions of community identity in the multilingual context of the Kashmir region in India, by studying the dimensions of changing language roles and linguistic practices in relation to the process of creating and maintaining new linguistic identities under different circumstances.

All research on language and identity starts from the position that identities make sense and that they are meaningful. Language-identity research is not a single entity or even just a correlation between linguistic identity and an individual/group. Rather, it is a complex link that takes into account other related features too. Joseph has rightly pointed out that language-identity research takes into account all those features of verbalisations that listeners use in order to discern a speaker's characteristics, including geographical background, social origin, and level of education, gender, intelligence, ethnicity, age, and affability. The study of the changing roles of different languages and the impact of this on identity in a speech community cannot be separated from other important social factors; it should not be seen as a single dependent variable influenced by a combination of other features that are seen as independent variables. In other words, attempts to intervene on behalf of a single feature are not likely to succeed. Thus, the book discusses the nature of changing language roles in the Kashmiri speech community, not as a single independent variable but as the combination of other relevant factors without which any kind of language-identity study would not only be incomplete but impossible.

This book assesses transitional linguistic identities and changing language roles in the Kashmiri speech community, as well as the process of creating and maintaining new linguistic identities under different circumstances. Changing language roles and its impact on linguistic identity cannot be assessed if treated in isolation and without studying all the related factors that have contributed to contemporary conditions in the Kashmiri speech community. Thus, the book examines various factors that are triggering changes in the language roles of the Kashmiri speech community and the impact of these changes on linguistic identities.

Language contact situations are interesting cases to study linguistic identities. Moreover, most language-related problems occur because of language contact. Language contact is an outcome of various macro-level factors (economic, social, political, religious, cultural, and environmental) and micro-level factors (age, gender, education, occupation, and residence). The Urdu-Kashmiri language contact situation has existed for a long time; thus, studying linguistic identities in contemporary Kashmir is ideal. There are a few studies on language attitudes and language shift in the Kashmiri speech community, but no serious attempt has been made to study the consequences of the language contact situation on the identity of the Kashmiri speech community.

In a speech community, language contact situations result in changing languages roles, which eventually leads to code-switching, code-mixing,

bi-/multi-lingualism, and ultimately, language shift and linguistic identity transition. In language contact situations, even bilingualism is sometimes replaced with dominant language monolingualism. When a language ceases to have monoglots, the process of decline has often occurred. The book also examines the nature, rate, and extent of code-alternation and bi-/multi-lingualism in the Kashmiri speech community and their impact on the social and linguistic identities of the people.

Age is considered an important sociolinguistic variable. It is argued that older people usually resist change and thus retain older varieties of language, as compared to younger generations. The book tries to explore the nature of language use, language shift, language attitudes, and their correlations with different age groups among the Kashmiri speech community. The most familiar process through which language roles change and ultimately lead to a shift is the lack of transmission of a given language from parents to children. That is precisely what happened in the linguistic context of Ireland. The book takes into account such paradigms and attempts to find out if such a situation prevails in the contemporary Kashmiri speech community.

Sociolinguistic approaches have also been employed in language and gender research in an attempt to identify systematic differences between men and women's use of language. General linguistic evidence suggests that women are more likely to be favourably disposed towards prestigious varieties. Given women's traditionally close role with children, this can be an important factor in language decline due to contact with languages of higher status. The book also discusses the nature of language behaviour of the women in the Kashmiri speech community and attempts to understand how this has affected the language behaviour of younger generations.

Similarly, available literature shows that differences exist in the communication patterns, language behaviour, language usage, and attitudes of people from different backgrounds (rural versus urban), different income groups, and different occupations. Thus, this volume attempts to examine the differences and correlations in the language patterns, behaviour, and usage of people from rural and urban settings, various income groups, and occupations.

In most cases, education systems and schooling patterns have been observed to be less favourable to linguistic pluralism and linguistic diversity, while giving some varieties more preference over others. In some language contact situations, the decline of the first language is most affected by the educational system and schools, where the emphasis is on a language that is not the mother tongue or the first language, by using it as the medium of both education and instruction.

In fact, in any education system, less powerful languages are not supported, encouraged, or saved. However, powerful languages used in schools threaten these less powerful languages. For example, in the case of the Irish language, the Catholic clergy and the national schools killed it. The language employed as the medium of education and instruction is often associated with prestige and with the promise of prosperity and economic growth. The book investigates the statuses of Urdu, English, and Kashmiri as mediums of instruction and education. It also examines the impact and correlation of the medium of instruction and education with the maintenance, shift, and attitudinal patterns of various languages. Further, it investigates the role of education and of the schooling system in the maintenance or shift of languages, and the consequent impact on identity.

According to Spolsky's (1989) sociolinguistic theory of second language learning, the social context is relevant to language learning in terms of: identifying the attitudes and goals of the learner that lead to motivation; and, determining the learning opportunities, whether formal (e.g., educational) or informal, provided by those who interact linguistically with the learner. The home provides a rich environment for language learning, and it is considered a relatively more suitable context for language acquisition and usage. In the matter of language maintenance or shift, the home context can promote or impede language maintenance. In a multilingual setting, changes in the language acquisition contexts explicitly indicate changing language roles of a speech community in accordance with the prestige associated with a specific code. Thus, the book specifically studies the nature of the changing acquisition contexts of the spoken and written forms of communication of the speech community. Language roles and the functional perspective of language usage illustrate that in practice, people use diverse codes for different requirements— counting, thinking, story-telling, arguing, praying, kinship-calling, and dreaming. The book evaluates the roles played by different codes for such functional aspects.

In addition to other factors, script and literacy can also play an important role in changing the language roles (oral practices) from indigenous varieties to other standard varieties. Therefore, the present volume explores the nature of exo (or interlingual) diglossia (or biglossia) between the written and spoken varieties of language in the Kashmiri speech community. Further, the study focuses on the role of literacy and on the impact of reading and writing on the language roles in the Kashmiri speech community and the consequent effect of this on linguistic identities.

Communicative and symbolic (enacted) aspects of language are separable, which has been observed in the case of the Irish language, where most people valued the language as a 'symbol of national or ethnic identity' or as a 'symbol of cultural distinctiveness'. However, in terms of actual language practice, they were using a different language. When it comes to symbolic reification, actual language behaviour and practices are different from reported behaviour, where one language is used for actual communicative, instrumental, and integrative purposes, while the other is employed for symbolic or integrative purposes only. There is a distinction between language being used for identity in a representative sense and in a symbolic sense. The book makes an effort to gauge whether a similar situation prevails in the contemporary Kashmiri speech community.

The shift from one variety to another becomes more problematic when one variety is associated with positive attitudes, while the other is perceived as inadequate and has negative connotations. This kind of linguistic scenario further strengthens the use of the variety that is associated with positive attitudes, and weakens the position and discourages the use of the variety linked with negative attitudes and stereotypes. Attitudes and the consequent motivation (integrative and instrumental) play significant roles in the maintenance and shift of language(s). The perception of and attitude towards a language have practical implications for motivating speakers to maintain or shift from one code to another. Positive attitudes (both integrative and instrumental) towards a language and the speakers of it significantly motivate speakers to accommodate such languages. Similarly, negative attitudes towards a language or its speakers discourage people to use it, which ultimately lead to language shift/loss and linguistic divergence or convergence.

The book takes into account the hypothesis that in the Kashmiri speech community, language roles do not change merely because of the negative connotations and stereotypes associated with the Kashmiri language but also because of the status and prestige associated with Urdu, which attracts people to use it for various integrative and instrumental purposes.

Intergenerational transmission may be viewed as the key component of and/or primary reason for the maintenance of a language. In other words, for the survival of any language, its transmission to future generations is essential. Nevertheless, transmission depends mainly on the attitudes, motivation, and promise for growth and prosperity. This work also explores the attitudes and willingness of the Kashmiri speech community towards the intergenerational transmission of the Kashmiri language.

The media plays a significant role in the maintenance of a language, and it helps shape and re-shape people's world-views and attitudes

towards specific codes. The language of the mass media is considered a superior, standard, and formal variety that shapes and reshapes the attitudes of the masses. The language used by the media has its due impact on the minds of the audience. Thus, from a sociolinguistic position, one would ask: in which languages do the people choose to listen to/watch radio/TV programmes and read newspapers? The book also investigates the role of media (print and electronic) discourse and its effect on the language use and changing language roles of the Kashmiri speech community.

Attrition, which is the process of language loss, is considered the first step towards language shift, loss, and its impact on the language ecology of a speech community. This volume examines language attrition—mainly, the loss of words for objects that are not culturally relevant anymore, and the consequent compensation for the loss of the native lexicon by borrowing from the dominant language. The book focuses mainly on L1 attrition in an L1 environment and on the role of some significant factors responsible for it, particularly, the influence of L2 (Urdu/English). It measures the extent of lexical attrition and reduction of basic vocabulary, as well as the attrition of Kashmiri idiomatic expressions and proverbs.

This work is the first of its kind to establish such a link between language contact, language shift, attrition, and identity, substantiated with data. It discusses the nature and extent of attrition in (the non-pathological population of) the Kashmiri speech community. In addition, it investigates the resultant language shift and loss, which may eventually trigger the complete deterioration and loss of the Kashmiri language and of the identity associated with it. The discussion on language attrition in this book gains even more significance because of the nature of the existing studies on language attrition, wherein most of them have been carried out on immigrants and in the immigrant context alone.

Since the focus of this research is the study of the linguistic identities of the Kashmiri speech community, it briefly discusses the historical and linguistic scenario of the speech community, the state's language policies, and the methodology adopted to explore all of this. It explains how the people of Kashmir recognise Urdu as the language of economic opportunity and power. It analyses the factors that led to the acceptance of Urdu, a non-native language, as the dominant language of education, media, religion, administration, and politics. Moreover, the present effort also takes into account the influence of script and literacy in other important discourse, such as signboards, the judiciary, and police and revenue records. The other major factors—including religious discourse,

the state's language policies, and the role of the separatist movement— in the promotion and growth of Urdu in Kashmir are also significantly illustrated.

The book focuses mainly on the crucial issue of how the roles of different languages are changing under several influences, which is ultimately leading to a transition of linguistic identities in contemporary Kashmir. The assumption is that the roles of different languages are changing in all contexts and spheres of life in the Kashmiri speech community, and the book thus addresses the major question: "Can Urdu emerge as the locus of people's primary identity in the years ahead?" Other assertions the book seeks to comprehend are: (i) to explore the role of background characteristics and of various socio-economic, political, and religious factors in changing the roles of languages among the Kashmiri speech community; (ii) to analyse the reasons that motivated the acceptance and recognition of Urdu, a non-native language, as the dominant language of education, media, administration, politics, economic opportunity, power, and religious discourse; (iii) to study the nature and extent of exo (interlingual) diglossia or biglossia in the Kashmiri speech community by discussing the impact of Urdu education, writing/orthography, and literacy; (iv) to study the impact of language shift on the linguistic, cultural, and social identities of Kashmiris; (v) to examine changes in the language behaviour and language practices of the speech community in various domains; which includes exploring the knowledge of self-reported language skills and self-asserted linguistic identities of the speech community, as well as measuring the nature and extent of language attrition among the speech community, specifically with respect to vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions and proverbs; (vi) to understand the role of language loyalty, identity formation, attitudes, and motivation for convergence and divergence; and, (viii) to estimate the future of language(s) by examining the attitudes and motivation to transfer the given languages to future generations, which includes surmising the fate of Kashmiri identity; (ix) to assess if Urdu can emerge as the primary identity of the people in the future, and (x) what consequences can it have for Kashmiri society and culture.

The book comprises six chapters. **The first chapter, 'Identity: Significance of Linguistic Identities'**, provides an overview of various theoretical positions on identity, and draws together insights from interdisciplinary positions to thoroughly comprehend the issue of linguistic identity. The framework outlined in this chapter synthesises key works on linguistic-identity research to offer a general socio-cultural, cognitive, and linguistic perspective on identity. The chapter offers a

comprehensive treatment of various significant questions, such as the nature of language-identity linkage, the process of socialisation of linguistic identities, and the essentialist and constructionist approaches to identity. It examines linguistic nationalism, first language identity, and identity assertion at different levels, interlingual diglossia, linguicide, linguistic human rights, and some of the significant concerns of language attitude studies. The dimensions of language attrition, its causes, and its role in language and identity shift have been debated systematically and eloquently. Finally, the chapter highlights the methodology, nature, and scope of the present study, followed by a brief summary of the main objectives of the study.

The second chapter, **'The Kashmiri Speech Community: Linguistic Perspective'**, conceptualises the socio-historical and linguistic backgrounds of the speech community under investigation. It focuses mainly on the diverse theoretical and controversial positions pertaining to the origin of the Kashmiri people and of their language. The chapter conscientiously summarises several important aspects of the Kashmiri language, especially, its historical development, evolution, and some exceptionally debated controversial issues, such as genealogical classification and script uncertainty. Further, it delineates the nature of the dialectal survey of the Kashmiri language. It further attempts to provide an explanation for the various factors (including the social, cultural, attitudinal, literary, religious, and media discourse) responsible for creating a persuasive space for the acceptance, growth, and maintenance of Urdu—not only as the language of the masses but also as the state's official language, devoid of any resistance.

The third chapter, **'Changing Linguistic Practices: A Functional Perspective'** explores the dimensions of changing language roles, linguistic behaviour, and language practices in the multilingual context of the Kashmiri speech community from various functional perspectives, and subsequently investigates their impact on linguistic identities. The usage of language varieties or codes varies according to the context and primary group affiliation of the speaker with respect to crucial reference points such as class, region, religion, gender, age, socio-economic background, and education. These reference points heavily shape speech such that speakers inevitably signal much about their social identity, even when verbalizing common expressions. In this framework, the chapter examines the nature of interchanging acquisition contexts of the spoken and written forms of communication; the usage of language(s) in different domains, such as educational and religious discourse; and, the use of codes for different requirements, such as counting, thinking, story-telling, arguing,

kinship-calling, and intrapersonal functional activities like thinking, praying, and dreaming. Thus, the chapter substantiates the argument that crucial roles have been played by literacy practices, interlingual diglossia, and orthography in changing language roles and in the consequent divergence and shift of language, which ultimately led to the transition of linguistic identities in Kashmir with a spillover effect on other identities.

The fourth chapter, **'Language Preferences: Attitudes, Motivation, and Identity Assertion',** analyses the roles played by attitudinal and motivational factors in maintaining or shifting languages. Language shift, according to Edwards, often reflects the pragmatic desires for social mobility and an improved standard of living. In this context, the chapter discusses language attitudes, motivation, and their implications for language maintenance and language shift among the Kashmiri speech community. It also focuses on the intergenerational transmission of languages by exploring which language(s) respondents would like their children to be educated in and which one(s) they would like them to learn as their first and second languages. Finally, the chapter analyses the dimensions of linguistic identities, that is, the language with which respondents would like to identify themselves when within and when outside Kashmir.

The chapter clearly illustrates how instrumental orientation and integrative motivation are engaged in speaking Urdu, in terms of prestige, identity, mobility, and advancement; whereas with English, the acceptability is largely instrumental in nature, and with Kashmiri it is merely that of symbolic reification**.** In addition to socio-cultural factors (status, wealth, politics, and power), demographic factors (size and distribution of the group), and institutional support factors (media, education, government, etc.) also determine language preferences, attitudes, and motivation. In the Kashmir of today, all factors seem to favour the promotion of a non-native code—Urdu (and to some extent, English), which does not indicate a secure future for Kashmiri, and consequently, the associated linguistic identity.

The fifth chapter, **'Language Attrition and Linguistic Identities'** presents the dimensions of attrition of the L1 (Kashmiri, in the present case) and its impact on language shift, loss, and linguistic identity. Language attrition was primarily studied from a pathological perspective in people with aphasia, but the term was later extended to cover non-pathological cases of language loss. Within a larger framework, it includes all other phenomenon of L1/L2 acquisition, bilingualism, language use/choice, code-switching, code-mixing, and language attitudes. Nevertheless, only a limited number of studies have probed L1 attrition