

3 APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT

Language shift involves the gradual replacement of one's mother tongue (native language), referred to as L1 by another language, often labelled as L2 in all domains of usage. The process of language shift occurs when the speakers in contact settings (consisting of bilingual/multilingual speakers) start abandoning their own language for the dominant regional (indigenous setting) or host language (immigrant situation). Thus, language shift is both a process as well as an outcome of a contact situation. Furthermore, the shift happens gradually, which means that it usually takes one or more generations to shift from L1 to L2. On the contrary, language maintenance (LM) is defined as retaining one's language use and language proficiency in a multilingual society (Fishman, 1964; Fase et al., 1992; Baker & Jones, 1998; Pauwel, 2016).

The field of language maintenance (LM) and shift (LS) is shaped and influenced by two different research traditions. The first tradition is influenced by Weinrich's (1953) work, which is concerned with the phenomena of 'linguistic interference' in a contact situation. According to Weinrich (1953), language shift and language maintenance are purely a contact phenomenon. The shift of minority language to the dominant language in a bilingual or multilingual setting results in code-mixing or code-switching, which eventually causes language shift in the case of minority languages. Later, Fergusson (1959) and Fishman (1967; 1997) extended the work of Weinrich by introducing the concepts of 'diglossia' and 'domains of language use', respectively. Fishman's concept of language shift and maintenance has been used as a theoretical underpinning in various subfields of linguistics, such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and language endangerment. Therefore, the primary focus of the field of LMLS, is not interference phenomena but the shift and

maintenance of language behaviour in various domains. It studies the functional differentiation of languages in the bilingual speech community, which is essential to ascertain the degree of bilingualism in contact settings. According to Fishman (1964), the field of language shift and maintenance can be defined as:

“The study of language maintenance and language shift is concerned with the relationship between change or stability in habitual language use, on the one hand, and ongoing psychological, social or cultural processes, on the other hand, when populations differing in language are in contact with each other”. (p. 32)

The second tradition in language shift and maintenance study was concerned with the individual bilingual use of language and the language change over time (Gal, 1979). Gal's study was also based on Fishman's (1965) domains questions, '*who speaks what language to whom and when*'. The variationist approach influences Susan Gal's (1979) study. The variationist approach mainly concerns with linguistic change that arises from synchronic variation in the speech community. The variation here is mainly used in the context of speakers' language choices in daily communication. She conducted her study using ethnographic method on a group of Hungarian-German bilinguals in Austria village, to investigate their language shift towards German. She used the language choice of the bilingual speakers rather than the variation in the linguistic structure in the case of monolingual speakers.

This chapter overviews the phenomena of language shift (LS) and language maintenance (LM) in an indigenous setting. The main focus of the present study is to investigate the vitality of the Maithili language after its inclusion in the ES; the study has used Fishman's theoretical concept of language shift. It studies language shift by assessing transmission of language between generations, which mainly involves language acquisition. The present study aims to evaluate the

Maithili language's overall vitality and explore the factors that contribute to the shift or maintenance of the Maithili language in the Darbhanga and Madhubani districts of Bihar.

As mentioned above, the present study draws theory and methods from both the fields of language endangerment and sociolinguistics. First, the study will be situated in the broader context of language contact, leading to language shift. Next, Fishman's concept of language shift in the context of endangered languages research will be explained. The language endangerment field has established intergenerational transmission as an essential factor in the maintenance of a language. A variety of scales have been developed to assess and classify the state of language endangerment, namely, GIDS, LVE and EGIDS. Fishman (1991) GIDS (Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) has influenced the subsequent scales such as UNESCO's (2003) LVE (Language Vitality and Endangerment scale) and Lewis & Simon's (2010) EGIDS (Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale). In the present study, UNESCO's (2003) LVE theoretical fram

3.1 SHIFT AS AN OUTCOME OF LANGUAGE CONTACT

Language contact is a phenomenon where two or more language groups come into contact with each other. Language shift and language maintenance are two possible outcomes of language contact. Language shift happens when a group of speakers abandon using their language and instead use the dominant language. In contrast, language maintenance happens when a group of speakers uses their language alongside the dominant language. The process of language maintenance requires speakers to have some degree of bilingualism. The contact situation can lead to either stable or unstable bilingualism (Thomson, 2001). Stable bilingualism refers to any contact situation in which there is not much change in the language proficiency of the speakers for more than three or four generations. The opposite of this is unstable bilingualism which eventually

results in language shift. In stable bilingualism, speakers are proficient in both languages and use them in wider settings. There is a lack of intergenerational transmission in unstable bilingualism, and the usage shrinks to the home domain.

Language shift and maintenance phenomena are primarily linked with two contact settings, i.e., migrant and indigenous contact settings. Much research in the LMLS context has been done on the immigrant context (Fishman, 1966; Skrabanek, 1970; Lopez, 1978; Veltman, 1983; Clyne, 1992; Loriato, 2019). Also, various studies have been conducted on indigenous minority languages in bi-multilingual communities (Gal, 1979, Boopathy, 1992; Pandharipande, 2002; Bhatt & Mahboob, 2008; Anderbeck, 2015; Ravindranath, 2014; Rosendal, 2016 and Puthuval, 2017).

3.1.1 Broken Transmission of Mother Tongue (L1)

Intergenerational transmission is considered an important measure of language vitality in endangerment and revitalization study. Intergenerational transmission can be analysed in terms of the language proficiency of the speakers across generations. The study of language shift is approached differently in different disciplines. For example, psycholinguistics research focuses primarily on the effect of language contact on the individual's cognitive capacity. In contrast, the linguistic approach emphasises mainly on the implications of contact on the structural patterns of languages (Le Wei, 2013).

The psycholinguistic approach in language shift research has been mainly used in the immigrant population, where researchers have focused on the speakers' bilingual proficiency and language acquisition. In psycholinguistics, a language community undergoing a shift comprises individuals who manifest different proficiency levels in each language involved. The present study has not used the experimental psycholinguistic methods for assessment. Instead, the study has used the concept of bilingual competence from first and second language acquisition to assess

intergenerational transmission in this case. The following section discusses some of the basic concepts and definitions used in psycholinguistics.

Bilinguals are categorised into early and late bilinguals based on age and order of acquisition. Early bilinguals acquire both languages in their childhood, i.e., before puberty. Late bilinguals acquire one of the languages in their childhood while the other in adulthood, i.e, after puberty. Further, early bilinguals are categorized into simultaneous bilinguals and sequential bilinguals based on the order of acquisition of languages (see, Montrul, 2008 for details). Simultaneous bilinguals acquire two languages simultaneously, whereas sequential bilinguals acquire the basic grammar of one language before they begin to acquire the other (Montrul, 2008).

Based on the order of acquisition, most of the Maithili speakers are sequential bilinguals as they are exposed to Hindi and English through formal education in schools and because Hindi and English are the medium of education in government and private schools in Bihar. The speakers do not acquire Maithili through formal education. However, Maithili is introduced as a subject in High school; and the speakers can be categorised as late bilinguals. It should be noted that the order of acquisition of Maithili speakers is not taken into the study as there is no formal training given in Maithili. The language is passed down to the successive generation in the oral form only for most of the population. Discussing the second factor, the level of proficiency and competence in the languages used, every speaker has one stronger and one weaker language. It is not very common that a bilingual will have full proficiency in both languages. Often speaker's stronger language is the community's dominant language.

The present study draws the concepts of bilingualism and language acquisition from psycholinguistics in order to assess the intergenerational transmission of Maithili speakers. Here, the speakers' self-evaluated language proficiency data has been used to assess language

transmission (see chapter 5 for details). According to Le Wei (2013), "at the moment, there is very little systematic research linking the process of language contact with the outcome of bilingualism or multilingualism at the individual level" (p. 31). The field data acquired in due course of the study explores the bilingual proficiency of the speakers in a contact setting which will be useful to gain insight into the state of bilingualism of the language community. The language acquisition environment of Maithili speakers can be compared with the minority language speakers of North America. A parallel can be drawn between the linguistic characteristics of heritage language speakers with Maithili speakers.

A large volume of language shift research in psycholinguistics has been done in the context of heritage language⁴ among the immigrant population in North America. Language shift is studied based on language acquisition by successive generations after immigration. The first-generation immigrant speakers, primarily adult immigrants, are mostly fluent in their home country's native language, and English is their second language. Their children, i.e., the second generation, will be bilingual from a young age, where they may have oral proficiencies in both languages but literacy proficiency only in English. The third generation will have English as their dominant language, and there is a high chance they might not speak their heritage language. The fourth-generation will be mostly monolingual in English.

⁴ In Canada and the United States, the term heritage language is associated with the native language of the immigrants and their children. The children of the immigrant parents, those are born in the host country or the children who immigrated in the host country some time in their childhood are called heritage speakers.

Based on linguistic characteristics of immigrants' speakers in successive generations, Montrul (2013) has developed a three generations language shift based on the linguistic characteristics of the speakers in successive generations (p.171). According to the predicting model of language shift, the linguistic characteristic of heritage speakers can be seen from Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Language Characteristics of Heritage Speakers

Generation	Range of possible language characteristics	
	From:	To:
First generation (parents)	Monolingual in the heritage language	Incipient L2 learner of the majority language
Second generation (children)	Dominant in the heritage language	Dominant in the majority language
Third generation (grandchildren)	Dominant in the majority language	Monolingual in the majority language

Source: (Montrul, 2013, p. 171)

The linguistic characteristics of heritage speakers can be compared with that of indigenous speakers. However, there should be flexibility in the stages since the shift of indigenous languages cannot occur in the same trajectory as in heritage language research. There is a need to understand the stages of bilingualism in the indigenous context, as it varies from one community to another. Montrul (2013) proposes the linguistic characteristics of heritage speakers in three stages. The linguistic characteristics of Maithili speakers can be compared to Montrul's model with some modification to understand the direction of shift in this case. For instance, the trajectory of shift will be affected by factors such as, caste, religion, level of education and so on.

LMLS research is heavily influenced by Fishman's sociological approach of exploring language use in various domains (see, e.g., Garcia & Diaz, 1992; Ninnes, 1996; Shin, 2002; Gibbons & Ramirez, 2004; Starks, 2005). Fishman (1965) approached the study of LMLS in two ways. First, based on the question of "*who speaks what language to whom and when*" and second, by investigating the exploration of the differential rates of change in language use across age groups. Fishman (1997) was keener in understanding the relationship between language and society, which is reflected in the definition of this approach, "focuses on the entire gamut of topic related to the social organization of language behaviour, including not only language usage per se but also language attitudes and overt behaviour towards language and users" (p.25). In sociolinguistics, the degree of bilingualism is ascertained through the frequency of language use in different settings, unlike other fields of study.

Fishman explains how reduced functional differentiation between minority and majority languages gradually hinders the intergenerational transmission of a language. He emphasised the family domain for the protection and maintenance of a language. Fishman (1965) says, "Bi-/multilingualism often begins in the family and depends upon it for encouragement if not for protection" (p. 76). The loss of intergenerational transmission and reduced language domains are considered two major factors leading to language shift. Often parents do not pass the language to their children as they do not consider it instrumental in gaining economic mobility due to its low status. Karan (2011) observes that people choose to associate themselves with the language of economic growth. Prestige influences the choice of the speakers greatly. His model explains the motivations of the language speakers, which are instrumental in language choice.

3.2 ATTITUDE TOWARDS LANGUAGE

The ethnolinguistic vitality approach concerns how speakers' attitude and beliefs influence their language choice in daily interaction. The social psychology approach to language shift focuses on speakers' attitudes towards language. Language attitude has been explored in several works in sociolinguistics (Labov, 1969; 1972; Fishman, 1971; Sridhar, 1988; Yagmur, 2010; 2011; Rasinger, 2013; Beinhoff, 2013). Labov (1969) noted that the language behaviours of the speakers could be categorised based on a set of social norms, beliefs, and attitudes of the speakers towards their language.

Language beliefs, ideologies and stereotypes can shape and strengthen speakers' attitudes towards their language (Garrett, 2010). This implies that the speakers' attitude towards their language is affected by what the speakers think about their language themselves, and the people outside their language group. Due to such notions, the speakers may get positively or negatively influenced, which could either encourage them to learn their language or shift to the dominant language for their own or their community's sake. For example, in research conducted on the Polish immigrants living in Australia, it is observed that the Polish speakers maintain their language as they consider it as an important symbol of their identity (Smolicz, 1981). On the other hand, a study conducted by Khemlani-David (1998) on Sindhis living in Malaysia shows that the Sindhi language speakers are shifting to English, as they do not see their language as a symbol of their identity.

The question about what makes the speakers of a language attracted towards their language or drives them away from it (Fishman, 1964) has been a matter of discussion for a long time. The attitude of the speakers towards their language affects their language behaviour. This idea has been explored by several researchers (Trudgill, 1972; Milroy, 1980; Bourhis & Sachdev, 1984), and

various models have been proposed to understand the relationship between language attitude and language behaviour of the speakers (Trudgil, 1972; Giles & Taylor et al., 1973; Giles & Bourhis et al., 1977; Milroy, 1980; Bourhis et al., 1981).

Attitudes towards language are acceptable yardsticks for the behaviour of speakers towards their language. However, a generalised perspective such as a positive attitude favouring maintenance and a negative attitude favouring shift may be of limited relevance here. One's thought about one language may not always be the source of a particular language behaviour (Maitz, 2011). Sometimes despite the positive attitude of the speakers, a language can suffer language shift due to political situations such as genocide or ethnic cleansing. For instance, in the case of Lenca speakers in El Salvador, the speakers stopped using their language as part of a survival strategy, which finally led to their language's death (Campbell, 1994). Also, in the case of Tamil speakers in Sri Lanka, the speakers refrained from using their language due to frequent clashes between the state and the rebels (Fernandez & Clyne, 2007; Canagarajah, 2008).

Another interesting outlook towards language is presented by Paulston (1994), where he looks at language as a resource. She says that language is used to achieve the desired result; once the result is achieved, language is not such an important ethnic symbol. To explain this, she cites the example from the separation of Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) from Pakistan, where the Bangla-speaking Hindus and Muslims got together in the separatist demands. However, once the desired result was attained, there were no efforts for unification from either side. Paulston (1994, p.23) asserted that 'people act in their own best and vested interests'. This manifests that the attitude of speakers towards their language can alter over time, depending on different factors. Thus, only the language attitude may not be the adequate criteria for generalising speakers'

behaviour towards language. However, it is useful to explain the situations arising from the widespread social, political and economic changes on collective and individual levels.

Prestige is another component that affects the language choice of the speakers. Karan (2011) noted that people's choice to learn and use a particular language or language variety is motivated by their desire to associate themselves with the groups that they perceive to be prestigious. This so-called prestige group could be the dominant language group in the case of the same country or the language group of the host country. Usually, the prestige language is related to the personal and economic growth of the speaker. For example, in case of immigrants in the UK, English is held more prestigious than the rest of the immigrant languages (Garrett, 2010). The tendency to associate with a language or a language variety that is refined and the standard is called *Overt Prestige* (Trudgill, 1972; Eckert, 1989). However, this is not always the case. Sometimes the speakers associate with a language or a language variety are not standard and refined, referred to as the *Covert Prestige*. Covert prestige may be a preferred choice to render group solidarity and inclusion (Milroy, 1987).

Pandharipande (1992, p. 262) studied the immigrant situation in the Indian context, where she studied the shift of migrant languages in Gujarat, India. In her study, she observed that the chance for maintenance of Tamil in Gujarat, which has Gujarati as its official language, is lower than Hindi, which is the official language of India. Concurrently, English a minority language in India regarding the number of speakers, is being maintained due to its high prestige.

3.2.1 Ethnolinguistic Vitality Framework

The ethnolinguistic vitality (EV) provides a conceptual tool using the socio-structural variables (status, institutional support and demography) that lead to language shift. Much of the factors are used in GIDS and UNESCO language vitality assessment framework. The vitality of

an ethnolinguistic group is elucidated as that 'which makes a group likely to behave as a distinct and active collective entity in intergroup situation' (Giles et al., 1977, p. 308). From this, it is argued that ethnolinguistic minorities that have little or no group vitality would eventually cease to exist as distinctive groups. Giles et al. (1977) developed the ethnolinguistic vitality framework, which was further developed to include a subjective vitality questionnaire (Bourhis, Giles et al., 1981; Bourhis & Sachdev, 1984; Allard & Landry, 1994). Giles et al. (1977) proposed that an ethnolinguistic group's vitality could be assessed by three socio-structural factors: status, demography, and institutional support. A linguistic group whose demographic trends are favourable than those whose demographic trends are unfavourable is more conducive to survive as a collective entity. In addition to this, the vitality of a linguistic community is also dependent on the degree of its use in various formal and informal institutions and domains.

The status variable, also known as the prestige variable, is associated with an ethnolinguistic community's social status, its socio-historical prestige, economic wealth, and the status of a language used by its speakers. The more status a language acquires on these dimensions, the more vitality the language will have. Coming to socio-historical prestige, is related to the history of the ethnolinguistic group, including the struggles, suppressions, dominance, defeats, etc. The group might have experienced together in their past. For example, in the case of Polish immigrants in Australia, they are sensitive towards the maintenance of their language, as they associate their identity with it, and the Polish language is part of their 'cultural core value' (Smolicz, 1981). Poland has a long history of suffering under the controlling regime of Prussia, followed by Russia during a large part of the 19th century, which lead to their long struggle for political independence and maintaining their identity, of which their language is also a part. However, one cannot generalise such behaviours of a language community for all communities

and settings. There is a study by Clyne (1985), which presents the case of the language shift of the Polish language in certain parts of Australia. Thus, it is not adequate to hold socio-historical factors, alone, responsible for language maintenance.

The economic status variable of the status factor is related to economic prosperity of an ethnolinguistic group. The groups that are stronger economically are more likely to maintain their language, as compared to the less prosperous groups. For instance, in a study by Appel & Muysken (1987), they observe that the Spanish speaking population in the US, which have a relatively lower economic status than the English-speaking population, gradually shifts towards English as their language. However, in another study by Hamid (2011), he observes the maintenance of the Sylheti language in the UK. He argues that the marginalisation of the Sylheti community which had economically lower status, led to their ghettoisation that aided the maintenance of their language. Thus, the economic status can function ambivalently, i.e., it can favour either language maintenance or shift (Kloss, 1966).

Similarly, the social status factor is related to people's perception of high-status language in society. It is believed that a group that considers its language to be of lower status is more likely to shift to a language that they perceive to be of a higher status. In the context of immigrants, the language of the host countries, which is also the dominant language, is often perceived to be a language of higher economic and social status. For example, in the case of Quechua speakers in South America, it has been observed that the speakers are shifting towards the Spanish language, which they perceive to be of higher social status (Thomson, 2001). This contrasts with the case of Spanish speakers in the US mentioned before, where Spanish is considered to have a lower economic status (Appel & Muysken, 1987). Thus, the social status assigned to a group depends on several other factors and is a relative entity.

The status of a language refers to how its speakers perceive their language when compared with another language. The relatively higher language status is usually assigned to lingua franca at local, national and international levels, compared with other languages in a region. However, this does not guarantee that a language with high status in a particular setting will have the same high status in a different setting.

The demographic variable is related to the population of a language community and their spread across a region. It also involves the absolute number of speakers in a particular language group taking into account various factors such as the rate of birth and mortality, age, marriage patterns (exogamy or endogamy), and the pattern of their migration. The population strength of a community is thought to be one of the important factors that support language maintenance. Languages with a large speaker population are more likely to be maintained when compared to languages that have comparatively less speaker strength, as they have a better contact network linguistically. For a language group with a large speaking population, the vitality can be high when the group is concentrated in a small region compared to the case where the group is sparsely distributed across a region. For example, the political influence of French speaking community in Canada is higher in the Quebec region compared to the Francophone communities in other areas (Bourhis, 1984; Johnson & Douchet, 2006; as cited in Bourhis & Landry, 2008). However, a few exceptions have been noted, where languages despite their small speaker population have been maintained, for example, in case of Tamils in Singapore (Schiffman, 2003), where the Tamil speakers form merely 4% of the total population. Even though it is a small fraction of the total population, they have succeeded in garnering institutional support for their language. The role of this institutional support is debatable in the maintenance of the language. However, it is interesting

to note that, even languages with a small speaker population succeed to score institutional support (Schiffman, 2003).

Another factor in a demographic variable is endogamy (marrying within the ethnic group) and exogamy (marrying outside ethnic group), which are essential for assessing the language vitality of minority languages. The common notion is that endogamy supports language maintenance. In contrast, exogamy might result in shift of a language as the parents mostly use the language dominant in the region with their children to interact and educate them. For example, it has been found in the case of marriages between native English speakers and ethnic speakers in English speaking countries such as the UK, the US, etc., the speakers of ethnic groups tend to shift towards English, the dominant language (Appel & Muyskin, 1987; Clyne, 2003, p. 28).

In the Indian scenario, endogamy, especially the 'caste endogamy', is the prevalent practice for most of the population with about 90% of the marriages being of the arranged type (Uberoi, 2000; Harris et al., 2020). Various facets such as caste (sub-caste), *gotra* (lineage), religion, native backgrounds, language, family, astrological compatibility etc., are taken into consideration for marital union (Audinarayana, 1990; De Fouw & Svoboda, 2000; Myers et al., 2005). Thus, endogamy is one of the prominent features of the demographic variable when one considers the case of India. However, the changing socio-economic conditions due to education and reformation in the socio-structural aspects, lead to a decline in such categorisations (Bhaskar & Bhat, 2007).

Institutional support is related to the degree of formal and informal support a language enjoys in a contact situation. It is proposed that the vitality of a language depends on the degree of usage of a language by its speakers in different social domains such as home, government, mass media, and school education. The institutional support may come from policy planning or through the institutions formed by the language group itself. It also concerns with the degree of support a

language gets through language planning in education. Based on these factors, the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language community can be grouped under low, medium, or high vitality.

The vitality of a language group can be measured both objectively and subjectively. The objective vitality can be measured using secondary sources such as census and government reports with careful analysis and evaluation of the combined three factors of group vitality (demographic, institutional and status). The objective vitality is used as a tool to assess the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups in cross-cultural research (Bourhis et al., 1981). Giles et al. (1977) used data gathered from various sources of five ethnolinguistic groups in America on a continuum of vitality ranging from very high to very low. In contrast, subjective vitality is measured by investigating a group's perceptions and attitudes towards its own group's vitality.

Many linguists have used this model for assessing the linguistic vitality of different language communities (Giles & Rosenthal, 1985; Cenoz & Valencia, 1993; Currie & Hogg, 1994; Rasinger, 2007). However, both objective and subjective EVM have shortcomings. Talking of objective framework, it covers external factors, based on three socio-structure factors, which would not have given a more in-depth insight into the indicator and cause of language shift, as pointed out by Allard & Landry (1994), for its shortcomings. Also, there is no correlation between the size and vitality of a language (Anderbeck, 2015; Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014). Similarly, institutional support does not always guarantee the maintenance of a language (Baker, 1992), especially in triglossia, where language hierarchy works at different levels, i.e., English as a global language, Hindi functions as a lingua franca and then comes regional languages. Therefore, a general assessment can be misleading in this case, as Hindi appears to be a major threat to local languages in North India than English (Chand, 2011; LaDousa, 2014). The subjective EVM questionnaire is more relevant for assessing urban populations' attitude compared to rural

population. The framework is widely used in developed nations' case studies, especially Francophones Canada, Europe, the United States, and Australia (see Abrams et al., 2009; Yagmur & Ehala, 2011).

To conclude, the social-psychological approach focuses on the effect of external factors on the individual's behaviours. In contrast, sociological research focuses on the external factors such as social, political and cultural which affects the choice of the language use of the language community. The social-psychological approach studies the attitude of the speakers towards their language. There is a need for a fuller understanding of local patterns of use that will help understand the nuance of factors that contribute to language vitality or shift (Cohn & Ravindranath,

3.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OFFICIAL RECOGNITION AND VITALITY

Research in language endangerment study is mainly influenced by Krauss's (1992) prediction that out of 6000 languages of the world, and only 600 languages could be considered safe. Languages that have speakers' population size of less than 10,000, is at risk. He included the languages in the list of safe category which either had one hundred thousand speakers or any language who had an official recognition in their nations. A volume of existing literature in the language endangerment field correlates vitality with language size (Krauss, 1992; Abbi, 2009; UNESCO, 2003; Austin 2008). However, this is not always true, on the contrary, there are languages with large population size such as Maori and Quechua, which are undergoing shift despite their large speaker size (Spolsky, 2003; Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004). Ravindranath (2014) argues that languages with millions of speakers can also face endangerment due to loss of rapid intergenerational transmission of languages. He discusses the case of Javanese language, which is a widely spoken language in Indonesia with about 80 million speakers'

strength. Ravindranath reiterates Himmelman (2010), “that a small speaker size is a symptom, not a cause, of language shift”. He reinforces a need for better language vitality measures, which can be enhanced only by having a clear understanding of the factors that cause language shift.

Volumes of work on language shift have mainly focused on minority⁵ languages i.e., languages which are unofficial and have small speaker population size (Haugen, 1953; Fishman, 1991; Fasold, 1984; Gal, 1979; 1979; Dorian, 1982; Sridhar, 1985; Annamalai, 2003). In contrast, Anderbeck’s (2015) case study on Indonesian languages shows that languages like Gorontalo, which has nearly a million speakers, are heading towards endangerment. He raises the question, whether languages with a large speaker population are ‘too big to fail’? Gorontalo is on the verge of endangerment as the majority of the domains are being taken away by the Indonesian language. According to him, the size and the vitality of a language are not correlated. In another study by Cohn & Ravindranath’s (2014), Javanese language with more than 80 million speakers is on the verge of endangerment, as most of its usage domains are being taken away by the Indonesian language which has eventually led to broken intergenerational transmission. They suggest that size alone cannot act as a predictor of intergenerational transmission and based their argument on Himmelman’s proposition that intergenerational transmission of language should be considered a symptom, not as the cause of the shift. The diagnostic models such as GIDS 1991 and EGIDS 2010 assume that languages with a small population size are more prone to the risk of endangerment than languages with a large speakers’ population. Instead, there is a need to

⁵ Minority languages are referred here in context of unofficial and small size population.

understand the multitude of factors such as demographic, status and attitude of the speakers that influences the individual and community decisions of language transmission, which is reflected in the studies of Anderbeck (2015) and Ravindranath & Cohn (2014). However, their studies did not comment on the correlation between vitality and languages with official status. Also, there is a need to understand the language use patterns to determine the factors contributing to language shift or vitality. This study undertakes the case of Maithili, which is both a demographically populated and officially recognised language in the Indian context.

Much of the discussion on language endangerment suggests that only minority languages are in the state of endangerment. Florey (2005) says, "restricting the definition of 'endangered language' to those languages with small speaker populations disguises the extent of the problem." (p. 59). To note, the phenomenon of language shift is the precursor of language endangerment. Adelaar (2010, p.25) states how the top three languages (Javanese, Sudanese, and Madurese) of Indonesia that account for half of Indonesia's population is endangered. In case of these language, the domains of language use are being taken over by Indonesian (the official language of Indonesia) that hinders the intergenerational transmission of languages. The shift of large regional languages is understudied. Therefore, the present study has used the conceptual framework of intergenerational transmission of mother tongue from endangerment study to assess the vitality of Maithili language. The study will depend on existing literature for the comparison of the status of the

3.4 GRADED INTERGENERATIONAL DISRUPTION SCALE

Fishman (1991), in his book, *Reversing Language Shift*, proposed the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) model for the study of language endangerment. In this model, he emphasised the intergenerational transmission of mother tongue and domains of

language usage. He says, "without inter-generational mother tongue transmission, no language maintenance is possible. That which is not transmitted cannot be maintained" (p. 113). Thus, intergenerational language transmission is considered an important factor for language maintenance (Legere, 2007; Austin, 2008; Norris, 2010; Grenoble, 2011). As a result of this, the language loses its speakers as well. Hence, the GIDS framework helps evaluate the position of a language on the scale of disruption from complete use of a language by most speakers to no use of the language by any of the speakers. Table 1.2 below describe the GIDS scale.

The intergenerational transmission of a language is a matter of individual decisions taken by parents. However, there are many social and institutional factors, which affect the language behaviour of an individual. These societal factors create social spaces, which Fishman (1991) referred to as 'domains of use', each containing a group of participants, locations, and topics related to a particular language. The main focus of GIDS is more on disruption than on maintenance. The minority languages have a downward trend on the language scale, and are described by the loss of domains, functions, and speakers. The disruption is evaluated through the transmission of the language across generations. If a particular language is not passed down from the parents to their children, it is doubtful that language will be maintained for a long time. Also, there is a high chance that language will gradually shift to language endangerment. The discourse of language endangerment is focused primarily on languages with small speakers' strengths.

Table 3.2 Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS)

Stage	Criteria
Stage 8	Most vestigial users of X-ish are socially isolated old folks and X-ish needs to be re-assembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically unconcentrated adults.

Stage 7	Most users of X-ish are a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child-bearing age.
Stage 6	The attainment of intergenerational informal oracy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement.
Stage 5	X-ish literacy in home, school and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy.
Stage 4	X-ish in lower education (types a and b) that meets the requirements of compulsory education laws.
Stage 3	Use of X-ish in the lower work sphere (outside of the X-ish neighborhood/community) involving interaction between X-men and Y-men.
Stage 2	X-ish in lower governmental services and mass media but not in the higher spheres of either.
Stage 1	Some use of X-ish in higher level educational, occupational, governmental and media efforts (but without the additional safety provided by political independence).

Source: Fishman (1991, pp. 87-109)

GIDS identifies intergenerational transmission as the most important factor in language shift. It asserts that the effort should be concentrated more in the home domain for the maintenance and revitalisation of a language. This case belongs to languages at Level 6 and below. For the languages above Level 6, the role of institutions besides home becomes vital. Although Levels 7 and below are concerned with the disruption of intergenerational transmission, Levels 5 and above emphasise on the development of institutions to act as drivers for gaining extensive transmission. Though the GIDS is mainly concerned with the level of disruption. It is least nuanced at the lowest end of the scale, where the levels of disruption are maximum.

EXPANDED INTERGENERATIONAL DISRUPTION SCALE (EGIDS)

The Ethnologue is an online database about the languages of the world that is maintained by SIL international.⁶ EGIDS is the expanded version of GIDS given by Lewis & Simons, 2010. As opposed to GIDS's eight levels, EGIDS has 13 levels that provide a more nuanced detail about language conditions. Table 1.3 below provides the EGIDS scale. EGIDS does not delve deep into the cause of language shift but mainly assign the level of disruption to languages on its scale.

One of the major problems with GIDS and EGIDS scales is that many researchers have criticised them for being one-dimensional. For example, Bradley & Bradley (2017) noted that, "Levels 1 to 4 [of GIDS] are actually incommensurable with Levels 5 to 8". Puthuval (2017) points out that both in GIDS and EGIDS, "a language can be simultaneously at several different stages on the GIDS, because the GIDS collapses multiple factors into a single scale" (p.36). She gives an example of Mongolian language in China, rated at stage 2 in Ethnologue, 2013 edition (Lewis et al., 2013), and was updated to stage 6a in Ethnologue, 2016 edition (Lewis et al., 2016). She states the discrepancy was due to the over-optimistic evaluation guided by the fact that Mongolian is the co-official language in Inner Mongolia. Furthermore, the notion that the Mongolian has some form of institutional support mislead the evaluators to believe that the Mongolian language has a stable intergenerational transmission which is not the case.

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Similarly, in the case of Maithili, it has been graded at stage 2 of the Ethnologue database (Eberhard et al., 2020) because of its official status due to its ES inclusion, qualifying it to the provincial, regional status. However, the intergenerational transmission for Maithili is declining. Thus, the position of Maithili at stage 2 that has not considered the intergenerational transmission data could be challenged. Also, the Ethnologue database fails to reflect that Maithili is not used as a medium of instruction and has a limited presence in mass media. Thus, GIDS and EGIDS are inadequate in assessing the actual status of the Maithili language, and a more nuanced scale is required to evaluate the actual situation of the Maithili language. Therefore, the present study has employed UNESCO's (2003) LVE scale, as it provides a more comprehensive evaluation, where each factor has been taken into account individually.

The shift of large regional languages is understudied. Language size is not an accurate predictor. Similarly, official recognition is also not a predictor. Thus, Pandharipande's (2002) concept of functional load and functional transparency has been used to give a comprehensive picture of Maithili (discussed in chapter 5). There is a need to understand how inclusion helps ES languages in their maintenance and growth. Also, the present study suggests that the speaker size and official status do not guarantee the maintenance of a language.

Table 3.3 Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS)

	Label	Description
0	International	The language is widely used between nations in trade, knowledge exchange, and policy.
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the national level.

2	Provincial	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government within major administrative subdivisions of a nation.
3	Wider Communication	Used in work and mass media without official status to transcend language differences across a region.
4	Educational	The language is in vigorous use, with standardization and literature being sustained through a widespread system of institutionally supported education.
5	Developing	The language is in vigorous use, with the standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
6a	Vigorous	The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable.
6b	Threatened	The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but losing users.
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation can use the language among themselves, but it is not being transmitted to children.
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older.
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining users of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community, but no one has more than symbolic proficiency.
10	Extinct	The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Source: Lewis et al., (2010)

3.6 LANGUAGE VITALITY AND ENDANGERMENT SCALE

UNESCO panel of experts (Brenzinger et al., 2003) developed the framework to assess the degree of endangerment and vitality of languages. This framework consists of nine factors for evaluating both vitality and attitudes (of institutions and speakers) towards the language. Each factor is evaluated on a scale of six, except factor 2, the absolute number of speakers. The intergenerational transmission of languages is the most salient factor of this framework. The present work will use UNESCO'S framework, as it is most relevant and suitable in the context of Maithili. However, linguists worldwide have suggested some modifications in the UNESCO framework, which have been used for the present study (AIATSIS, 2005).

One of the distinct characteristics of the UNESCO scale is that it allows to conceptually distinguish between cause and effect of language shift or maintenance. Furthermore, it allows for segregating individual factors such as intergenerational transmission, the speakers' attitude as a marker of language vitality which can be used to study the relationship between various factors and the possible aspects that influence these factors (either from remaining factors of UNESCO or elsewhere). Although, the UNESCO Ad hoc group of experts (2003) have cautioned, "no single factors can be used alone to assess a language's vitality or its needs for documentation" (p. 7). Moreover, a language that is graded high on one factor might need urgent attention on other factor or factors. Therefore, the first six factors of the framework assess the vitality of a language.

In contrast, factors 7 and 8 examine the attitudes both at institutional and community levels, and the last factor evaluates the need for documentation. These nine factors collectively can give an overall sociolinguistic situation of any language. The proposed nine factors are as follows:

Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission
Factor 2: Absolute Number of Speaker
Factor 3: Proportion of Speakers within the total Population
Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains
Factor 5: Response to New Domains and Media
Factor 6: Materials for Language Education and Literacy
Factor 7: Official status and Use: Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies
Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes towards their language
Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation

Source: UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003)

The LVE framework has been used extensively by the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, 2010. Besides, it has been used by several researchers worldwide in the context of endangered languages such as Vidunda (Legère, 2007), Mongghul (Limusishiden & Dede, 2012), Sihan (Mohamed & Hashim, 2012), Ngoni (Rosendal, 2016), Mongolian (Puthuval, 2017a), Pumi (An et al., 2018). In the Indian context, the framework has been adopted to assess the vitality of the Deori language (Acharyya & Mahanta, 2019).

The central question in the present research context is how ES inclusion has impacted the vitality of the Maithili language in Bihar, India. The most widely used factor in assessing the vitality of a language is the intergenerational transmission of a language. It is concerned with, whether or not a language is being passed on to successive generations? Language hierarchy in

Indian context can be visualized as English at the top, Hindi at the second position and regional languages. In a more local context, the situation is more of a triglossia. A fine-grained framework is required that can be adapted to the local context of Indian languages to give a holistic and in-depth understanding of the process of shift and maintenance.

The results and findings of this study can add to the current understanding of the sociolinguistic situation of the Maithili language in north Bihar. To the best of my knowledge, currently, there is no study that examines the impact of inclusion on a language's vitality in terms of its use in different domains, transmission across generations, and speakers' attitudes. It should be noted that issues such as the influence of contact-induced change on the structure of Maithili is beyond the scope of the study. Nevertheless, the study can be used to develop a predictive model for language shift in multilingual societies and give a new paradigm to the field of LSLM in the 21st century.