Language Policy as an Instrument of National Integration: The Role of Pashtun Elite

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ABSTRACT

This paper overviews the historical development of the Pashtun elite driven language policy and therein identifies the aspects of national integration in Afghanistan. Along the integrative aspects it also finds the disintegrative aspects of language policy. The accommodative approach to languages and their speakers in language policy is interpreted as an effort in promoting integration whereas the approach to suppress and impose assimilation is considered an indication of disintegration. The overview of language policy undertaken by the Pashtun elite after the establishment of the Pashtun led Afghanistan State in 1747 reveals that efforts of consolidation of the vast empire were integrative in early days. However, the elite in their effort to make the Afghan nation a reflection of Pashtun identity, suppressed Persian (Dari). The acceleration of modernization in the beginning of the Twentieth Century is reflected in the urgency to promote the Pashto language. A Pashto language policy was the epitome of such efforts. The Pashto only policy was a project of forced

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assimilation; therefore, it represents the disintegrative aspect of the language policy shaped by the Pashtun elite.

Introduction

Modern Afghanistan came into existence in 1747. At its peak it spanned a vast area, covering parts of contemporary Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and India. In its composition it had always remained a multilingual and multi-ethnic state. Its geography (of hill, deserts and riverbeds) and a long history (of migration, conquests and trade) made it home to the arrival of different ethno-linguistic groups, who settled there and consequently became part of the Afghan nation. However, Pashtuns in the past few centuries, remained the dominant group in terms of number and political influence. After the establishment of Afghanistan, the Pashtun elite ruled and controlled Afghanistan. In the early days, they allowed maximum autonomy in language policy to other local ethnolinguistic groups. However, in the Nineteenth Century, they felt a need to modernize the state and consolidate it further. Amir Abdur Rahman started these efforts in earnest. He deliberately increased domination of the Pashtuns. This attempt sowed the seeds of grievances among other ethnolinguistic groups. They used allegiance and preference as a tool of resistance to this domination. The Pashtun elite also patronized Persian (that was called Dari in Afghanistan) as a matter of convenience. In the Twentieth Century, the Pashtun elite was imbued with the spirit of nationalism. They started to promote the Pashto language as a suitable representation of Afghan nationalism as they associated Persian (Dari) with the domination of Iran.

Language Policy can be interpreted as an attempt to interfere with language related choices and mechanisms of associating it with promotion of political ends.[1] This work considers accommodation, inclusion and removal of barriers as

1 Tariq Rahman, *Language and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998); Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1992); Bernard Spolsky, *Language Policy*, Key Topics in Sociolinguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

instances of integration while marginalization, conflict, exclusion and presence of barriers as instances of disintegration.[2]

Historical Review of the Afghan Language Policy

According to Nawid, a historian of Afghan language policy, "Afghanistan's turbulent history in the Twentieth Century occasioned frequent changes in Afghan language policy."[3] The following discussion explores language policy in two stages. First, language policy before the Twentieth Century is explored. This stage focuses on inscriptions and coins etc. as expressions of language policy. The second stage traces language policy in Afghanistan in the first half of Twentieth Century. Education and status allocations are treated as the major forces of language policy.

History before the 20th Century

Historical accounts of Afghanistan are meagre in terms of direct reporting of language related facts. Therefore, political events directly or indirectly related to language policy are discussed in this section to infer language policy related features, and thereby develop an understanding as to how national integration related to language policy in earlier times. Linguistic attributes of elites (royalty) and political power of language groups are rationalized in this section as indicators of the status, function and domination of languages, their speakers and the role they played in shaping Afghanistan as a national state.

Before the formation of modern state of Afghanistan, Ghilzai and Abdals, the two leading Pashtun tribes competed for

2 Ayaz Ahmad, "Role of English in Afghan Language Policy Planning with its Impact on National Integration (2001-2010)," (Ph. D. Thesis, University of Peshawar, 2016).

3 Senzil K. Nawid, "Language Policy in Afghanistan: Language Diversity and National Unity," in *Language Policy and Language Conflict in Afghanistan and its Neighbors: The Changing Politics of Language Choice*, ed., Harold F. Schiffman, Brill's Studies in South and Southwest Asian Languages (Leiden, The Netherlands: BRILL, 2011), 31.

domination.[4] When the Ghilzai leader Mir Wais maintained independence during 1722-1730,[5] and Daulat Khan, the forefather of Ahmad Shah defeated Persian expeditions and broke the myth of Persian invincibility,[6] both these events show the national awakening of Pashto speakers. However, this national sentiment in early times did not automatically translate into acceptance of Pashto as the official language as indicated by the comment of Khushkhal Khan:

که تازی ژبه هر گوره بنه ده
پارسی هم ډیره په خوند خوږه ده
چا یه پلو د جما ل وانه خیست
پښتو لا هسی بیکاره پرته ده[7]

Translation: Arabic language may have its own merits; Persian language is also very entertaining. No one has ever discovered the beauty of; the Pashto language which languishes in uselessness.

The sudden demise of Nadir Shah ushered in political chaos in the region. For Pashtuns it proved a blessing in disguise as Ahmad Shah Durrani successfully established an expanded empire as he united the Pashto speaking tribes under his command. Ahmad Shah's unanimous election by Pashtun tribes[8] in 1747, shows the dominant position of Pashtuns in the inception of Afghanistan as a modern state. Pashtuns became the main source of political and military leadership in this newly formed state. Ahmad Shah Durrani treated Pashtun tribal chiefs as his equals, respected their say in military and state affairs and gave them a liberal share in war booty.[9] Ahmad Shah Durrani was a Pashto language poet and also knew Persian well. He has expressed love for homeland

4 Ganda Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani, Father of Modern Afghanistan* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1959), 7.

5 Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani*, 6-7.

6 Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani*, 3.

7 Abdul Samad Achakzai, *Pashto Zhaba Aw Leekdod* [Pashto*: Pashto Language and Writing*] (Quetta: Pakhtunkhwa Adabi Sanga, 2008 1956), 2.

8 Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani,* 25.

9 Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani,* 25, 26-29.

(Afghanistan) in his poetry.[10] Ahmad Shah Durrani is presented by Habibi as a Pashtun nationalist, nation builder and unifier who wanted to emancipate them. He was against their assimilation in India like Lodhi, Suri and Hilji dynasties earlier, so he advised them to stay in Afghanistan and not to lose their national power.[11] Ahmad Shah defined Afghans on a linguistic basis and included all Pashto speaking people in Afghan nationality, including people of Aimak and Baluch origin. He initiated the policy of settling Pashto speaking people in different parts of Afghanistan such as Helmand and Farrah.[12] His nationalist sentiments are reflected in the following poem.

ستا د عشق له وينو ډک شو ځيګرونهستا په لاره کي بايلي زلمي سرونه
تا ته راشمه زړګی زما فارغ شيبي له تا مي انديښني د زړه مارونه
که هر څو مي د دنيا ملکونه ډير شي زما به هير نه شي دا ستا ښکلي باغونه
د ډهلي تخت هيرومه چي راياد کړم زما د ښکلي پښتونخوا د غرو سرونه
د رقيب د ژوند متاع به تارتار په کړم چي زه وکاندم په هر لوري تاختونه
د فريد او د حميد دور به بيا شي چي په تورو پښتانه کړي ګذارونه
که تمامه دنيا يو خوا ته بل خوا شي زما خوښ دي ستا خالي تش د ګرونه
احمد شاه به دغه ستا قدر هير نه کا که وه نيسي د تمام جهان ملکونه[13]

Translation: Your love has become the passion. Young men have lost their lives for you. When I come to you my heart becomes carefree. Without you my heart is troubled by fears. Even as I expand my empire. Your bewitching gardens would be ever remembered by me. I forget how beautiful the throne of Delhi is, when I remember the beautiful summits in Pashtunkhwa. I would defile the treasures of enemies, as I would conquer thrones all around. The age of Fareed and Hameed (Pashto

10 Allama Abdul Hai Habibi, *Da Afghanistan Land Tarekh* [Pashto: The Land History of Afghanistan] (Qandahar: Rashad Publishing Society, 2012), 418; Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani,* 332; Annemarie Schimmel, *Pain and Grace: A Study of Two Mystical Writers of Eighteenth-Century Muslim India*, Studies in the History of Religions (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 12; Henry George Raverty, *Selections from the Poetry of the Afghāns: From the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (Williams and Norgate, 1862), 289.

11 Habibi, *Da Afghanistan Land Tarekh,* 421.

12 Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani,* 341.

13 Momin Mu'ahhid, ed., *Da Ahmad Shah Baba Dewan* [Pashto: Poetic Collection of Ahmad Shah Baba] (Peshawar: Danish Kitabkhana Publishers, 1999), 191-92.

> language sophists and mystics) would be revived when Pashtuns will strike with their swords. If the world is to weigh against you, I will choose your deserted landmarks. Ahmad Shah will never forget your value even if he occupies all countries of this world.

Some of Ahmad Shah's poetry is in Persian.[14] As noted earlier, Ahmad Shah expressed his nationalist sentiments in his Pashto poetry, but general communication between the king and local administrators in different parts of Afghanistan took place in Persian language as quoted by Habibi.[15] Habibi mentions a number of kings and princes who were good poets of Dari.[16] Ahmad Shah officially supported production of works in Dari, Arabic and Pashto on topics of law and religion.[17] After coronations, coins with Persian inscription were minted in the name of Ahmad Shah Durrani bearing the inscription:

حکم شد از قادر بیچون به احمد بادشاه
سکه زن بر سیم و زر از اوج ماهی تا بماه

Translation: Command came from God to Ahmad the King; Strike coin on silver and gold from bottom of the sea to the moon.

Similarly we find the official seal of Ahmad Shah a mix of Arabic and Persian languages.[18] During the reign of Ahmad Shah Durrani, Persian and Arabic terminologies were used for military, administrative and financial functions and designations.[19] While Pashtuns were dominant, they allowed to continue Persian as the official language of previously dominant Mughal and Iranian empires.

"Pata Khazana" [Pashto: The Hidden Treasure], an anthology of Pashto poetry was compiled by Mullah Yar Muhammad Hotak, a courtier of Shah Hussain Hotak, including poetry by

14 Kazim Beemar Nangarhari, "Loy Ahmad Shah Baba Yaw Milli Shayar," [Pashto: Great Ahmad Shah Baba: A National Poet], Benawa, http://www.benawa.com/fullstory.php?id=48364.

15 Habibi, *Da Afghanistan Land Tareekh* Vol. 2, 412.

16 Habibi, *Da Afghanistan Land Tareekh* Vol. 2, 465.

17 Habibi, *Da Afghanistan Land Tareekh* Vol. 2, 467.

18 Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani,* 32.

19 Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani,* 348-60.

Afghan royalty.[20] By limiting Pashto language to expression of personal feelings, Pashto functioned as the language of informal settings whereas in formal settings Persian language was dominant. The use of Persian language in formal settings has a number of examples such as the epitaph on the mausoleum of Mirwais Khan[21], and then Ahmad Shah Durrani's Persian epitaph that was inscribed on the command of his son Taimur Shah are in Persian language:

مزار شاه فردوس برین گو فیض آباد عالی مقام بگو[22]

Translation: Tomb of Shah Ferdows says; Your status always be High

Taimur Shah was a learned poet and did poetry in Dari. [23] He shifted the capital to Kabul to liberate his reign from Pashtun tribal restrictions.[24] Coins in the Taimur Shah reign were minted bearing Persian inscriptions. The stamp of Taimur Shah bore the following Persian inscription:

علم شد از عنایات الهی بعالم دولت تیمور شاهی[25]

Translation: It was learned from the Divine Blessings; Timur is ruling the whole world.

The coins and stamps in earlier times were reliable indicators of the domination of a language in the domains of power, and the official status of the language. Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk used

20 Habibi, *Da Afghanistan Land Tarekh,* 396.

21 Habibi, *Da Afghanistan Land Tarekh*, 390.

22 Habibi, *Da Afghanistan Land Tarekh,* 418; Faiz Muhammad Katib, *Siraj Altawarikh*, [Pashto: A Short History of Afghanistgan] Vol. 1 (Kabul: Matba'a Khuruf Darul Sultanah, 1952 (1331 HS)), 10.

23 Allama Abdul Haq Mujaddidi and Fazlullah Mujaddidi, *Haqiqat Tut Twarih Az Amir-E Kabir Ta Rahbabar-E Kabir* [Pashto: The Facts of History: From Amir-i-Kabir to Rahbar-i-Kabir] (Kabul Intisharat-e Mewand, 2000), 61; Hamid Mehroz and Abdul Ghaffar, *Afghanistan Az Abdaliha Ta Aghaz Qarni Beestam* [Pashto: Afghanistan: From Abdullah to Qarni Beestam], ed., Pohand Jalaluddin Siddiqui (Kabul Matba Aryana, 1369 AH. 1990 AD), 4.

24 Pohand Jalaluddin Siddiqui, *Afghanistan Az Abdali Ha Ta Aghaz Qarn Bist* [Pashto: Afghanistan: From Abdullah to Qarni Bist], ed. Hamid Mehroz and Abdul Ghafar (Kabul: Marba Aryana, 1989), 5.

25 Katib, *Siraj Altawarikh*, 36, 1.

the following Persian inscription on the minted coins in his reign:

سکه زد بر سیم و زر روشن تر از خورشید و ماه
نور چشم در دران شه شجاالملک شاه[26]

Translation: Coins hit the wire and the gold is brighter than the sun and the moon; The light be in the eyes of Shah Shuja Malik Shah

Amir Dost Mohammad Khan inscribed Persian on the minted coins of his time.

سیم و طلا شمس و قمر میدهد
نوید وقت رواج سکه پاینده خان رسید

Translation: The wire and the gold are the sun and the moon; Pleasure arrived at the time of the tradition of Payenda Khan

Amir Dost Muhammad Khan had his experience in India and Bukhara had knowledge of Turkish, Urdu, Punjabi and Kashmiri besides Pashto and Persian.[27]

Similarly, Amir Sher Ali Khan also used Persian for inscription on coins of his time

جمال دولت پائنده قسمت ازیست
وصی دوست محمد امیر شیر علیست[28]

Translation: The beauty of the government is the lasting of it; True is the friendship of Ali with Mohammad

Sher Ali Khan established a few Madrassahs in Kabul and issued the first periodical “Shams un Nahar”.[29] This was a fortnightly publication in Persian language. The printing of these periodicals took place in Delhi. In its issue of February

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26 Sayyid Qasim Rishtiya, *Afghanistan Dr. Qarni Nizda* [Pashto: Afghanistan: Dr. Qarni Nizda] (Peshawar: Markazi Nashriati Mewand-Saba Kutubkhana, 1377 AH. 1999 AD), 112.

27 Rishtiya, *Afghanistan Dr. Qarni Nizda*, 208.

28 Habibi, *Da Afghanistan Land Tarekh,* 448; Rishtiya, *Afghanistan Dr. Qarni Nizda*, 217.

29 Muneeb, *Waqaye Mukhtasar Afghanistan* [Pashto: Afghanistan: A Short History] (Peshawar: Muassissaye Intisharat Al-Azhar, 2002), 21.

3, 1874 we find an advertisement of a book that teaches English.

"Pand Nama" and "Siruj Tawarikh" in Dari was completed under the guidance of Amir Abdur Rahman, and opened "Madrassahs" [Pashto: religious schools] in Afghanistan[30] where Persian and Arabic were dominant. The attitude of Amir Abdur Rahman about the status of languages is clear from his statement:

> پشتو زبان قدیم است، فارسی زبان علمی است، روسی، عربی و هندوستانی هم میدانم، اما عربی و هندوستانی را کامل نمی توان، ولی می فهم .
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> **Translation**: Pashto is the old language of Afghanistan; Persian is the language of learning. I know Russian, Arabic and Hindustani (Urdu), but am not proficient in Hindustani and Arabic but can only understand them.[31]

Amir Abdur Rahman's rule, after Ahmad Khan Durrani was vital in integrating the crumbling empire by successfully extending his rule to all parts of Afghanistan[32] and by fixing his borders with the British and Russian empires he integrated Afghanistan.[33] In his reign the strategic settlement of Pashtuns as allies of centre in the territory of other ethnic minorities was pursued that gave Pashtuns privileges and domination in areas beyond their territoriality which made them elite at the cost of minorities such as Uzbeks and Hazaras.[34] After Amir Abdur Rahman the persecution slackened but the discrimination of placing Pashtun on the top

30 Habibi, *Da Afghanistan Land Tarekh,* 456.

31 Mujaddidi and Mujaddidi, *Haqiqat Tut Twarih Az Amir-E Kabir Ta Rahbabar-E Kabir*, 193. & Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, *Taj Al Tawareekh* [Pashto: Crown of Histories] (Peshawar: Markaz-e-Nashrati Mewand, 1997 (1375 HS)), 376.

32 Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1981), 135; Anthony Hyman, "Nationalism in Afghanistan," *International Journal Middle East Studies,* 34 (2002): 302.

33 Hyman, "Nationalism in Afghanistan," 302.

34 Nancy Tapper, "Abd-Al-Rahman's North-West Fronteir: The Pashtun Colonisation of Afghanistan Turkistan," in *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Afghanistan*, ed. Richard Tapper (London: 1983), 44.

continued.[35] This domination later emerged in the assimilation project of 1930s when Pashto was declared as the only official language of Afghanistan.

Amir Abdur Rahman states that in his reign aristocrats were getting modern education including English language (his son being the prime example).[36] Seema writes that Amir Abdur Rahman had a command of Pashto, Dari, Russian, Hindi, Arabic and Uzbek. His officials had learnt foreign languages.[37] As foreign language teaching (apart from Arabic in Madrassahs) was a rare commodity for non-royal Afghans, English language learning was possible only for those living in exile in India and the Anglophone sphere. Acquisition of English language in the missionary schools in India by the exiled Afghans was common in the 19th Century.[38]

Official correspondence in the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman took place in the Persian language. Seema[39] cites various formal letters in Persian written by members of royalty. The correspondence between Amir Abdur Rahman and the British India is quoted in Dari in his autobiography[40] which implies that Persian was a regional *lingua franca*.

Amir Abdur Rahman recognized the importance of foreign languages as he narrates to make sure the officials of the foreign office knew the foreign language, especially those serving in India (as Afghanistan was barred at this time to had diplomatic relations only with India). He recognizes the

35 Jan-Hereen Grevemeyer, *Afghanistan: Sozialer Wandel Und Staat Im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: 1987), 39; Giorgio Vercellin, "Lefait Ethnique Dans Les Politues Des Etats Iraneien Et Afghan," in *Le Fait Ethnique En Tran Et En Afghanistan*, ed. J.P. Digard (Paris: 1988), 223.

36 Khan, *Taj Al Tawareekh*, 348.

37 Rasouli Seema, *Afghanistan Dar Sultanate-e-Amir Habibullah Khan: 1901-1919* [Pashto: Afghanistan: From the Kingdom of Amir Habibullah Khan] (Kabul: Matab-e-Azadi, 2011 (1390 HS)), 86.

38 Robert D. Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation* (Harvard: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015), 64.

39 Seema, *Afghanistan Dar Sultanate-e-Amir Habibullah Khan:* 68, 82 & 83.

40 Khan, *Taj Al Tawareekh*, 197-203 & 04-05. (external official communication 197-203, and internal official communication 197-203 is in Persian language)

importance of foreign teachers to serve in Afghanistan but they shall deliver education in the local languages. He also supported translation of books from foreign languages into Persian.[41]

Later Language Policy

This section explores the first quarter of 20th Century language policy in Afghanistan, beginning with the coronation of Amir Habibullah Khan and traces it to adopting a "Pashto Only" language policy. This section explores the historical evolution of language management in various domains—paying special attention to education and government. An assortment of events connected to Afghan language policy in the context of national integration are viewed, while the Pashtun elite attempted to modernize Afghanistan as a state. Effects of national, regional and international events and actors on Afghanistan's transformation are explored as an instrument of language policy for autochthonous [Pashto: indigenous] languages. Intervention became an important instrument of reinventing the national identity and thereby experimenting with national unity.

Crews states that Afghanistan in the 20th Century was a new state in the modern sense. The diverse population had different linguistic and social backgrounds. All of them needed to be assimilated and a new national identity had to be constructed.[42] After Amir Abdur Rahman we find his son Amir Habibullah Khan (1901-1918) and his grandson King Amanullah Khan (1919-1929) easily succeeding in getting the throne. Three great events shaped their rule which lasted till 1929. First was the start of First World War, which provided the nationalists, Pan-Islamists an opportunity to work on national awakening and forge solidarity with the Islamic world.[43] The second important event of this time in the perspective of national integration was the beginning of the

41 Khan, *Taj Al Tawareekh*, 301-02.

42 Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation*, 73.

43 Vercellin, "Lefait Ethnique Dans Les Politues Des Etats Iraneien Et Afghan," 128.

Third Anglo-Afghan war.[44] The third event was the initiation of modernization of Afghanistan along western lines.[45] At national level the movement of Constitutionalism and Pashtunistan can be considered an outcome of these events, as in the constitution we find formal statements about the status and function of Afghan languages, besides statements about rights, responsibilities and education also implied language policy.

Tajut Tawarikh, in the Persian language, was written on the direction of Amir Habibullah Khan, who thought it fit to have an official account of Afghan history.[46] Seema states that Amir Habibullah Khan on the invitation of Britain visited India, and during his stay he became a member of the English Free Masons Society and remained a loyal friend of the English.[47] Amir Habibullah Khan's inauguration of the modern school created space for teachers belonging to Turkey and India in Afghanistan. Besides teaching academic courses they also introduced students to the modern aspects of nationalism and democracy. Their influence resulted in the political awareness of the youth who became part of the movement for constitutional reforms. In this way Afghanistan was introduced to modernism and initiated the contest for power between the modernist educated class and traditionalist educated class.[48]

Mugaddedi reports King Amanullah Khan's excellent competence in French language that made him different from earlier rulers of Afghanistan. His affinity for the French language explains why he promoted the learning of the French language and French system of education. He established "Madrassah Amaniya" where a number of French teachers along 12 Indian teachers were engaged. Education

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44 Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, 256.

45 Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, 283-5.

46 Katib, *Siraj Altawarikh*, 1, 1.

47 Seema, *Afghanistan Dar Sultanate-e-Amir Habibullah Khan: 1901-1919*, 129.

48 Fazal Ghani Mugaddedi, *Afghanistan Dar Ehd-e Alikhazrat Amanullah Khan 1919-1929* [Pashto: Afghanistan: From the Period of Amir Amanullah Khan 1010-1929] (California: Folgergraphics Inc., 1997), 18.

here was in the French language. In 1923 King Amanullah Khan ordered upgrading Habibiya School, where medium of instruction was the English language. As for the Afghan elite he continued to promote Western education and languages; for common Afghans he had different vision. For common Afghans King Amanullah Khan continued with the practice of sponsoring traditional seminaries or "Madrassahs" where Arabic was the medium of textbooks and excellence in this language along the promotion of traditional Islamic and Afghan norms were aimed at.[49] However, in the government schools he attempted to gradually decrease contents in Arabic, and balance them with learning of European languages.[50] It implies that King Amanullah Khan's modernization effort was Eurocentric, and in the promotion of European languages he saw an upgrade of Afghan education and subsequently the social and material progress of Afghanistan. In the efforts of modernization Amanullah Khan had the fortune of having Mahmud Tarzi, a gifted Afghan educationist, modernist and nationalist. Mahmud Tarzi may be considered as the first modern education reformer in Afghanistan. His Persian writings specially "Mu'allim-i Hikmat" [Pashto: Teacher of Wisdom] contains glimpses of a student cantered approach and emphasis on discovery.[51] Professor Ushi and other scholars also wrote on principles of teaching along modern lines in Persian language.[52] Preference for writing opinion making and instructional books in Persian language indicate the *de-facto* official status of Persian

49 Mugaddedi, *Afghanistan Dar Ehd-e Alikhazrat Amanullah Khan 1919-1929*, 151 & 55.

50 M. Halim Tanwir, *Afghanistan: History, Diplomacy and Journalism* (UK: Xlibris UK, 2013), 110.

51 Mahmud Tarzi, *Mu'uallim-I Hikmat Asar-i Mahmud Tarzi* [Pashto: Mentor of Knowledge: Reminants of Mahmood Tarzi] (Kabul: Matba'ah-i Hurufi, 1334 AH).

52 Professor Ushi, Muhammad Husayn Khan, and Fayz Muhammad Khan, *Masa'il-i Har'ruzah-i Tadris: Bara-Yi Istifidah-I Mu'allimin-i Makatib* [Pashto: Teaching Routine Issues: For the Benefits of School Teachers] (Lahore: Matba' Mufid-i Amm, 1927).

language, and it was the dominant medium of instruction during the reign of King Amanullah Khan.

King Amanullah Khan established Ghazi school in 1924 where the Indian model of education was followed and English was the medium of instruction. Foreign schools with foreign languages e.g. English, French, German, Turkish, and Arabic as medium of instruction were established in his reign.[53]

Nadir Shah introduced reforms to please the reformists but the pace was kept so slow that it did not alarm the conservatives. Politically this game of hide and seek with reformists and conservatives bore fruit in the gradual conversion of Afghanistan from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy, and relative peace and opportunity for gradual integration of the state.[54] King Zahir Shah with an extensive Western experience aimed at modernization and reforms of Afghanistan, by supporting constitutionalism.[55]

The regulations enforced during 1921-8 besides ensuring the teaching of foreign languages[56] specified that all official documents had to be translated in Pashto for maintenance of archives.[57] Pashto Tolana [Pashto: The Society for Pashto], established for the promotion of language policy was brought under the ministry of education and was mandated to translate books from foreign languages into Pashto to enrich and standardize it for use as official language.[58] Enhanced level of language policy initiatives after declaration of independence from the suzerainty of Britain can be linked to conscious efforts for modernization of the state and promoting national unity based

53 Mugaddedi, *Afghanistan Dar Ehd-e Alikhazrat Amanullah Khan 1919-1929*, 156.

54 Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid* (Colorodo: Westview Press, 1998), 44.

55 Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, 318-29.

56 Government of Afghanistan, *Nizamnamah-i Vizarat Jalilah-i Ma'arif Afghanistan* [Pashto: Statute of the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan] (Kabul: Matb'ah-i Tipugraphi, 1921); *Nizamnamah Da Asasi Da Wazarat Mu'arif (Pashto: Law Governining the Fundamental of Ministry of Education)* (Kabul: Matba'ah-i-Shrikat-i-Rafiq, 1928), 13.

57 *Nizamnamah Da Asasi Da Wazarat Mu'arif*, 4-11.

58 *Nizamnamah Da Asasi Da Wazarat Mu'arif*, 16-17.

on Pashtun identity. The Pashto language, therefore, became an instrument of this reshaping of Afghan identity. Afghan national identity that was earlier accommodative for pluralism, increasingly became intolerant to it. Patronization of the Pashtun elite steadily expanded the status of Pashto.[59] The rise of Pashto had negative effect on the Dari language. The elite aimed to phase out Dari and use Pashto as the symbol of a new Afghan identity based on Pashtun identity.[60] This policy for a national ideology became clear when Pashtu was made the official language of the country and a program to teach Pashtu to all government officials was launched. The Pashto only policy was launched with great ambition. Afghan Prime Minister, Sardar Hashim Khan told Ellat Maillart, in an interview that took place in 1937, "from next year it [Pashtu] is to become the language of our officials, doing away with Persian. Our legends and our poems will then be understood by everyone. We shall draw from them a pride in our culture of the past which will unite us".[61]

Conclusion

The Pashtun elite established an empire that span a vast territory that included parts of present day Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, India, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. As they attempted consolidating the state, they explored this potential in Pashto language. Therefore, they attempted to develop Pashto language first and then attempted to replace Persian (Dari) by Pashto in an attempt to transform Afghanistan into a modern state, where national identity would be represented through Pashto language. This effort culminated in declaring Pashto as the only official and national language.

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59 M.A. Miran, "The Function of National Lanuages in Afghanistan," *Afghanistan Council of the Asia Society* 11 (1977): 1.

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