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Language Maintenance or Shift: A Case Study of Sketches Soulful Sindhi Songs

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ABSTRACT

Sindhi language belongs to the ancient culture of Indus civilization and music by Sufi poets which encompasses the rich cultural heritage and folktales of Sindh. Previous empirical studies have reported that Sindhi language is shifting to the mainstream languages in urbanized cities among the youth. However, the culture and identity as an ethnic symbol is maintained by the Sindhi families and youth in multilingual city. Therefore, the present study explored whether the contemporary Sindhi music by Sketches band is contributing to language maintenance or shift of Sindhi among the educated Sindhi youth in Karachi. Furthermore, the study inquired what kind of emotional, cultural, social and individual values are acquired by listening to the music by Sketches band. For this purpose, the study collected data using purposive and snowball sampling from twenty participants. The data collected semi-structured interviews, observation and sociolinguistic analysis of the selected songs by Sketches band. The findings of the study showed that the music by Sketches band serves as a source of emotional connectivity, cultural preservation, social awareness and linguistic revival among youth in cities. Moreover, the sociolinguistic analysis of the Sindhi songs showed that the music promotes Sindhi values and culture, and the music serves as a strategy of language maintenance among the educated youth. Hence, language can be maintained by listening to traditional music which acts as a new domain (music) of language use despite language shift process in urban cities.

Keywords: Language Maintenance, Language Shift, Sketches Song, Sociolinguistic Analysis.

Introduction

Language maintenance and language shift are fundamental concepts in sociolinguistics. Fishman (1991) defines language maintenance as the process by which a community continues to use its ancestral language in the face of societal pressures, whereas language shift refers to the gradual replacement of a heritage language by a dominant one. Globalization, migration, educational systems, and media exposure all have an impact on these processes (Crystal, 2000). Language is more than just a tool for communication; it also represents identity, culture, and worldview (Edwards, 2009). Language serves as a symbol of cultural identity, legacy, and collective memory in addition to being a means of communication (Aggarwal, 2020). It is a vital link between generations for communities all over the world, acting as a medium for the transmission and preservation of customs, values,

and histories. However, minority as well as majority ethnic languages in multilingual cultures are frequently at risk of attrition or shift, particularly when dominant linguistic and cultural forces put pressure on them (Ali, et al, 2021; Alizai, 2021; Chalise, 2022; Haider et al, Kiani et al, 2019 & Komal et al, 2022). Sindhi language is also shifting in the external and internal diaspora (Abbasi et al, 2020; David 2000, David 2001a & 2001b).

For Sindhi speakers, the issue of language shift versus language maintenance is very pertinent in the present time in multilingual Pakistan, especially for younger generations who are being exposed to and impacted by dominant languages like English, Urdu, and other foreign and regional languages or local dialects in multilingual Karachi. Usual communication patterns, media, education, and popular culture; all of these mediums frequently reflect this linguistic shift (Abbasi et al, 2020). However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable surge in attempts to conserve and revive local languages in Pakistan through a variety of mediums, such as social networking sites, music, art, and digital media (Abbasi et al, 2021). Meanwhile, the rise of a Sindhi fusion folk music band The Sketches' musical endeavor is notable among these initiatives. The group has gained recognition for both its musical skill and its overt dedication to using music to preserve and advance Sindhi language and culture (Abrar, & Abbasi, 2025).

The justification for this study is based on the concept that language maintenance and revitalization are multidimensional processes that include not only formal domains such as education and media, but also informal, symbolic, and affective ones. Music, being one of the most powerful means for emotional expression and collective identity creation, has immense potential in this regard. Furthermore, by focusing on the linguistic features of music, this study extends beyond traditional educational or policy-oriented approaches to explore the emotive and creative aspects of language use. These are sometimes overlooked in more formal sociolinguistic studies, yet they are critical to understanding how people interact with their languages on a personal and communal level.

When younger generations believe their heritage language is demeaning to their contemporary lives, language shift frequently begins there (Dorian, 1981). Nonetheless, music provides a kind of cultural resonance that transcends experiences. The Sketches use contemporary instruments and aesthetics to overcome the stereotype of Sindhi as a traditional or rural language. This supports the findings of Jaffe (2007), who found that young people are more likely to stick with their language if they are emotionally and culturally invested in it. Thus, this study investigates how such musical activities help maintain language and signal a linguistic transition based on how listeners perceive, consume, and absorb them. More particularly, this study looks at how The Sketches' soulful Sindhi songs serve as a repository for Sindhi language preservation, the function they play in establishing linguistic ideas, and how much they impact or reflect the views of younger Sindhi speakers toward their native language.

Research Objectives

- To investigate whether contemporary Sindhi music produced by the Sketches band contributes to the maintenance or shift of the Sindhi language
- To examine the emotional, cultural, social, and individual values that educated Sindhi youth associate with listening to the Sketches band's music.

Research Questions

- Does listening to the Sketches band influence language maintenance or language shift among educated Sindhi youth in Karachi?
- What emotional, cultural, social, and individual values do Sindhi youth derive from listening to the Sketches band?

Literature Review

While there is extensive research on language shift, language maintenance, and the role of media in linguistic practices, little scholarly attention has been paid to the intersection of music and minority language maintenance in South Asia, particularly in the context of Sindhi. According to the literature, music can be very important for language maintenance, particularly when it appeals to younger listeners' cultural and emotional sensibilities (Pennycook, 2007). Furthermore, most sociolinguistic studies on Sindhi focus on more traditional aspects, such as family language transmission, formal education, and governmental language policies (Abbasi, et al., 2021; Basheeran, & Soomro, 2025), rather than delving deeply into cultural and artistic expressions, which are also important domains of language use and preservation.

Ansah et al. (2022) pointed out a crucial need in the use of music to revitalize understudied minority languages, particularly Ghana's South Guan languages. The researchers used a qualitative approach that included observations and interviews to get opinions from composers, educators, and community people. The main emphasis of this study was the dearth of music in these languages, but they also showed the high levels of positivity and the great potential of music as a tool for language revitalization by encouraging speakers, particularly younger ones, and creating a favorable learning environment. The study promoted the writing and translation of songs in these languages as well as the inclusion of music in revitalization initiatives. In another study, Huang (2023) primarily focused on the influence of music on non-Indigenous cultures. Using information gathered via keyword searches and social media tracking, the research examined the public discourse of two Taiwanese indigenous singer-songwriters, *Abao* and *Suming*, through their published interviews and media appearances. The results show that these musicians purposefully use popular music to build confidence, support indigenous youngsters, and change the perception of people using indigenous languages. In order to create a welcoming social atmosphere for language revitalization, they also establish connections with non-Indigenous Taiwanese. This strategy encourages indigenous people to revive their languages by starting a sustainable cycle.

Moreover, Dhakal (2025) pointed out concerns about the unexplored use of rustic and colloquial language in Nepali folk and 'Dohori' songs. While other studies looked at colloquial language in a variety of fields, none of them concentrated on this particular one, specifically by a particular singer, *Pashupati Sharma*. Informal interviews were used as data gathering methods in this qualitative descriptive study. In addition to that, the data were collected using interviews with the singer, a Nepali language instructor, and two admirers; including that, nine of Pashupati Sharma's "Dohori" songs were examined. According to the results, the main goal of employing colloquial language in these songs was to appeal to rural listeners, who favor these expressions because they convey a sense of "ownness" and kinship with their place of origin. Although there are worries that it could substitute the official Nepali language,

this practice also aids in the preservation of folk culture. In addition to that, Sirait et al. (2025) investigated how traditional and contemporary music, particularly Batak songs, can demonstrate the harmony between the preservation of the local language and the capacity for language shift. The researcher seeks to find out the ways in which these songs support Batak language preservation while simultaneously pointing to linguistic shifts through phenomena such as code-mixing. In order to interpret the meaning and linguistic characteristics of Batak song lyrics as cultural texts, the study used a qualitative descriptive design. Lyrics of three Batak songs were analyzed as the main method of data collection. Library research on shift theories and language maintenance provided secondary data. Using the Ethnolinguistic Vitality framework and Fishman's Sociolinguistic Domain Theory, content analysis was utilized to find markers of language transition or maintenance. According to the study, Batak songs indicate cultural preservation and changing linguistic preferences by preserving traditional language while also exposing youth-driven language shifts through code-mixing.

Recently, Yang et al. (2025) studied the issue of Ebian Yi wedding songs, which are essential for Chinese folk music literacy, being transmitted and preserved less frequently. Their survival is threatened by modernization, linguistic deterioration, and a decline in traditional performers. Using a qualitative ethnographic technique, fieldwork was conducted in the Ebian Yi Autonomous County. Participant observation, semi-structured interviews with seven key informants (community members, educators, and cultural transmitters), and archival research were all used in the data gathering process. Thematic analysis was used to examine the data. Through community involvement, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and incorporation into educational initiatives, Ebian Yi wedding songs are essential for promoting folk music literacy. Their survival is hampered by issues including the reduction in traditional performers, decreased fluency in Yi, and contemporary wedding customs. Through this study, it is understood that traditional compositions do not attract youngsters. Thus, it is crucial to improvise traditional songs into modern music, which is what The Sketches has also done. Today's generation will not listen to Shah Abdul Latif's Waai or songs composed on Sheikh Ayaz's poetry years ago. They want contemporary compositions and modern music to feel connected.

There are a few studies conducted to show the impact of songs on preservation of indigenous language in the local context as well. For instance, Torwali (2019) explained the efforts in language preservation in the local context. The approach included establishing schools, forming an orthography for Torwali, and actively promoting its poetry and music. Producing contemporary DVD albums like Manjoora that blend traditional and modern forms, financing local cable TV spots, and planning cultural festivals like 'Simam' to engage youngsters and elders are important interventions. Torwali poetry and music have seen a rise in popularity as a result of these initiatives. Traditional performances were brought back by the 'Simam' festival, which sparked a revival of interest among the younger generation and the revival of musical traditions that had been neglected. In addition to that, Anwar and Zaidi (2024) conducted an anthropological linguistic study that filled an important gap by examining how music adaptations at Coke Studio Pakistan function as a contemporary modification of historical accounts and cultural legacies. The relationship between language and culture has been questioned by academics, but this study explicitly explored how the Sapir-Whorf

hypothesis relates to the occurrence of musical fusion in Coke Studio. Songs from Coke Studio Season 15 served as the study's main source of data. In order to comprehend how these productions, create broader artistic narrative, the analysis took into account their aural, visual, and spatial components. The results celebrated Pakistan's legacy and international appeal while highlighting the cultural effect of music, which combined history and modernity and validated linguistic relativity.

Most recently, Abrar and Abbasi (2025) investigated the ways through which Pakistani Sindhi fusion and folk band The Sketches, have helped to revive the High Variety (HV) of the Sindhi language by modernizing Bhitai's traditional poetry musically. Ten participants, ages 16 to 30, from urban Sindh participated in semi-structured interviews for this case study, which is based on a qualitative research methodology. Purposive and convenience sampling methods were used to select the participants. The findings indicate that The Sketches' musical versions have played a significant role in introducing urban Sindhi children to the classical High variety (HV) of their language.

The connection between music and minority language preservation continues to require thorough scholarly attention, despite the fact that some local studies such as those concentrating on Torwali initiatives, Coke Studio adaptations, and The Sketches' musical revival of classical Sindhi have started to illuminate the role of music in language maintenance. This disparity is especially noticeable when it comes to methodical research on the ways that modern music affects linguistic attitudes, revitalization initiatives, and young people's use of endangered languages. Since Sindhi music provides a viable and culturally grounded means of ensuring the survival and relevance of the Sindhi language in a world growing more modern and interconnected by the day. This study fills this gap by understanding its function in language maintenance is both required and timely.

Methodology

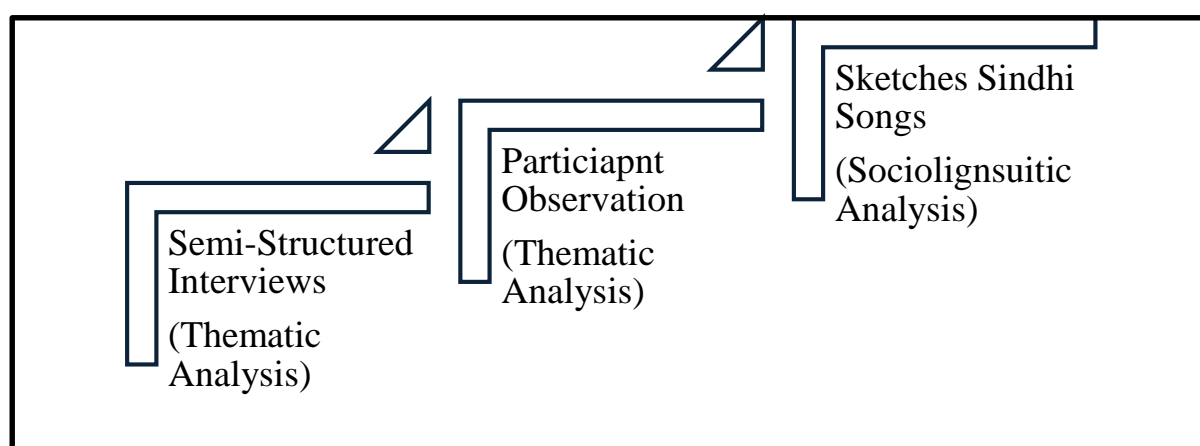
The study utilized qualitative case study approach (Creswell, 2014) as it explored whether the contemporary Sindhi music played by Sketches band sustains Sindhi language or promotes its abundance by the Sindhi youth in Karachi. Purposive and snowball sampling enabled the researcher to gather the data. The sample size of the study included twenty Sindh youth enrolled in public sector universities as shown in Table 1. The criteria for selecting the participants included a) Sindh youth aged eighteen to twenty years b) residing in Karachi for more than five years c) listens to Sindhi music by Sketches band d) enrolled in Social Sciences degree program. The sample size of twenty for the study was enough as it reached the situation point. Moreover, Sindhi youth from social sciences disciple were selected because of their interest in literature, history, culture, poetry and music.

Table 1**Participant's Profile**

S. No	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Time in Karachi
1	LMSMS01	18 years	Male	05 years
2	LMSMS02	19 years	Female	By birth
3	LMSMS03	20 years	Male	12 years
4	LMSMS04	18 years	Female	10 years
5	LMSMS05	18 years	Male	By birth
6	LMSMS06	18 years	Female	By birth
7	LMSMS07	19 years	Male	10 years
8	LMSMS08	19 years	Female	07 years
9	LMSMS09	19 years	Male	05 years
10	LMSMS10	20 years	Female	By Birth
11	LMSMS11	20 years	Male	12 years
12	LMSMS12	18 years	Female	By birth
13	LMSMS13	19 years	Male	05 years
14	LMSMS14	18 years	Female	05 years
15	LMSMS15	20 years	Male	By birth
16	LMSMS16	18 years	Female	By birth
17	LMSMS17	18 years	Male	05 years
18	LMSMS18	19 years	Female	05 years
19	LMSMS19	20 years	Male	07 years
20	LMSMS20	19 years	Female	10 years

Note: LMSMS01-20 represents Language Maintenance & Shift and Music by Sketches 01-20 (participants)

The data for the present study was collected using interviews, observation and sociolinguistic analysis of selected songs as shown in figure 1. The three tools were selected to have a detailed insight about whether the contemporary songs being sung by the Sketches band provides meaningful Sindhi content or not, whether or not the participants enjoyed listening to the music and what emotional, cultural and social values are transmitted for the ethnic Sindhi identity. Overall, whether this process leads to language maintenance or shifts among the Sindhi youth.

**Figure 1 Data Collection Tools**

The data for the present study was collected using interviews, observation and sociolinguistic analysis of selected songs by Sketches band. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. The interviews were recorded after formal consent, transcribed and analyzed for thematic analysis. The interview with each participant lasted for twenty to thirty minutes. Hence, the total time of the interview was 400 minutes.

Furthermore, participant observation was done to have the first-hand cultural experience of attending the musical performance by Sketches band. For this purpose, two social events were observed which were open to the general audience. The first was the performance of the Sketches band at an International Conference in the closing ceremony and the second included a musical performance in a literary festival. Both the events were selected as narrated by the participants. The reliability and validity of the data collected was ensured and the researcher bias was minimized as the events were open to the general public and the researcher observed the event, participants and musical performance from a distance. The researcher being a native Sindhi speaker can easily understand the music and the social messages. However, the researcher's personal views and experience did not influence the participants. Interviews and observation data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Codes, categories, themes and sub-themes were generated based on the responses of the participants.

Similarly, the lyrics of three songs sung by Sketches Band were selected for sociolinguistic analysis and whether the songs promote Sindhi language or not. The researcher prepared a list of famous and most rated songs by the band and asked the participants to select three best musical performances. Hence, the three songs were selected based on the participants' consent. The songs were analyzed for sociolinguistic language use whether it promotes the Sindhi language discourse or not. The researcher focused on Sindhi discourse and whether the songs involved code-mixing or code-switching or not.

Findings

In cities, participants prefer urbanized pop music or dominant music in Urdu and English, however, the findings of the present study showed that the participants listened to their traditional heritage language music by Sketches during 'morning' (LMSMS03,06,13), 'in university during free time' (LMSMS01,6,10) 'night' (LMSMS05,8,18,15), 'during weekends' (LMSMS02,4,10,18) and 'social events' (LMSMS07,12,16,19). Hence, it shows that the Sindhi music is also a domain of language use as well where the interlocutors participants and The Sketches are interacting through music in Sindh during different times of the day. Consequently, the analysis of the interviews and observation showed that the young Sindhi speakers had emotional bond, felt cultural sensitivity and got interethnic awareness by listening to the Sindhi music by Sketches band in Karachi.

Emotional Connectivity

The participants narrated their beliefs about listening to the Sindhi music which showed that the music develops an emotional attachment and sense of belonging to the historical roots. The participants said, "*We listen to the music by Sketches band because it connects us with Sindhi music.*" (LMSMS07) Another participant remarked "*the songs provoke emotional feelings towards Sindhi language.*" (LMSMS13) Similarly, LMSMS06 expressed "*the songs give you a feeling of the Indus, its civilization, musical instruments, voice and the lyrics.*" In the same manner LMSMS20 said, "*the songs by Saif and his band are recreating the Sindhi music*

in the contemporary conditions". Similarly, LMSMS11 said, *"I love listening to the music by Sketches because it connects with Sindhi identity."* LMSM09 also said that *"listening to Sketches music connects you with Sindhi identity in cities because the music depicts the emotions of the current generation."* LMSMS14 also said *"the voice echoes in our ear and the lyrics connects us with Sindhi language and its rich heritage."* In the same manner, LMSMS17 said *"listening to Sindhi music in city creates an emotional bond and attachment with your language."* LMSMS04 says *"the song maujoon brings emotional connectivity and self-realization."* LMSMS01 said *"Taara wo Sindh is my favorite song because it promotes ethnic identity and brings us closer to Sindh as our motherland."* LMSMS03 narrated that *"Asaan Sindhi ahyoon manhoon (We Sindhis are people) represents what it meant to be a Sindhi."* In the same manner, LMSM07 said *"Asaan Sindhi ahyoon song reflects the true essence of a Sindhi, who are Sufi, peaceful, tolerant and believes in peace and not war."* LMSMS20 said, *"the song reflects the true feelings, religious sentiments and true feelings of a Sindhi."* LMSMS18 said, *"the song is a cultural anthem for Sindhis."*

Cultural Sensitivity

The participants narrated that the music band is recreating Sindhi Identity as an urbanized culture. Moreover, the music narrates the famous folktale and the musical instruments (*sarangi, dholak, chang, alghoza, kamach, damboro, borrendo and narr*) are used which are indeed representing the true symbols of Sindhi Identity. LMSMS03 said, *"the sounds of the traditional music cease to captivate one's senses, once the first chords of sitar are struck, a surreal and dreamlike calm takes over which seems to be missing in all the other Sindhi songs."* In the same manner, LMSMS01 said, *"the songs by Sketches band connects us with the Sindhi culture depicted through the folktales and musical instruments."* LMSM16 said that *"listening to the Maand song on mainstream media brought us closer to Sindhi language and sense of pride in being a Sindhi speaker."*

Sindhi Folklore and Sufism

The findings showed that participants believed that the Sindhi music by Sketches brings them closer to folk stories, Sufiism and poetry of Latif. In an age of multicultural society, participants expressed that Sindhi music is indeed gathering the lost essence of Sindhi identity, music and culture among Sindhi youth. LMSMS11 said, *"the music narrates famous Sindhi folktales like the song Rano which shows mystic love story"*. Similarly, LMSMS14 said, *"~Ishq Da kalma narrated about the Sufi love and sacrifice based on folktales."* LMSMS12 expressed that *"the musical performance by Sketches in Coke Studio 11 Dastaan-e-Moomal Rano narrates the Sufi tale and love story of Moomal in the words of Bhitai."*

Similarly, LMSMS15 expressed *"the music instils Latif's poetry in our souls and connects us with Sufism."* LMSMS10 said, *"the music connects us to the voices of Latif, Sachal Sarmast and other Sufi giants in Sindh."* LMSMS02 said, *"the music brings us closer to the Waai's of Latif and the message it conveys for the Sindhi people."* LMSMS07 said *"the song Main Sufi hoon connects us to the Sufi beliefs, feeling of spirituality and peaceful soul."* In the same manner, LMSMS14 says *"Main Sufi hon songs promote the Sindhi identity and focuses on diminishing the ethnic, cultural and religious divisions among each other."* Furthermore, LMSMS12 expressed that *"the music pays tribute to Latif and his poetry through the mystical voice of Sketches Band."* LMSMS14 said, *"it brings us closer to the teaching and sayings of Latif and the roadmap of a Sufi life and social practices."*

Intercultural Awareness

Sindhi music represents urban culture as well. The participant expressed that *“Maand Wai in Coke Studio 4 showcased the fading Sindhi traditions through the music of Sketches on mainstream media.”* (LMSMS04). Similarly, LMSMS11 expressed that *“Sindhi music/song was promoted in an Urdu drama as well which glorified the Sindhi culture and its rich music.”* LMSMS18 also said *“the song sapna sapna tohja sapna by Sketches depicted Sindhi culture, its civilization, Indus and its traditions”*. LMSMS12 also said, *“the song promoted Sindhi music and culture on the mainstream media”*. LMSMS04 also said, *“the Sindhi song became popular among the non-native speakers as well, as a result a translated Urdu version was also released”*. LMSMS03 said *“the songs depict the rich Sindhi musica and the cultural values”* In the same manner, LMSMS16 expressed that *“the song by Sketches depicts the cultural values, folktales and poetry of Latif which connects us to our ancestral roots.”* the music promotes cultural assimilation and overcomes ethnic and linguistic biases in the society. As LMSMS13 said, *“I listen to the song Saanu Gal Wakhri Samajhay which resists societal stereotypes and promote ethnic identity.”*

The Sindhi music by Sketches band has been a source of motivation and sense of awareness towards social issues being faced by the society particularly Sindhi community. The music instils Sindhi values and message of peace and harmony being conveyed through Sufi poetry in a new way among the youth. The songs have various themes among them folk culture is the key one.

Sindhi Music by The Sketches in Social Events in Karachi

The participants were observed attending the musical performance by Sketches band in two social events. The two events were International Sindhi Conference and Adab Literary Festival. Four participants LMSMS07, LMSMS12, LMSMS16 and LMSMS19 attended both the events and agreed for participant observation. The participants listened to the musical performance and enjoyed every song being played by the Sketches Band. LMSMS07 and LMSMS16 recorded the music and even started singing with the Sindhi singer as well. The observation showed that the participants had emotional, cultural and social attachment with the Sindhi music, its lyrics and musical instruments. Figure 2 shows the musical performance by Sketches in two social events as shared by the participants.



Figure 2 Observation of Sketches Music

Sociolinguistic Analysis of Sindhi Songs by Sketches

The analysis of the thematic interviews and observation showed that the sketches band is promoting emotional connectivity, cultural preservation and linguistic revival through Sufism, readings of Latif and folktales. The participants were asked to select three songs for sociolinguistic analysis by the researcher for analysis of the Sketches songs for language maintenance or shift. The three songs selected by the participants included "*Asaah Sindhi Ahyoon Mahro*", *Sapna Sapna* and *Zarori ta nahay*.

The participants narrated that 'Asah Sindhi ahyon mahro' is a cultural anthem for the young Sindhis because it depicts the true feelings of Sindhis in the modern times. The sociolinguistic analysis of the song showed that Sindhis take pride in their linguistic identity, have high sense of ethnolinguistic vitality, being Sindhi means peace loving and resistance against the odds in the society and promotes intergenerational transmission among Sindhis. The starting lyrics of the song "Asah Sindhi Ahyon (We are Sindhis) affirms the Sindhi identity and the pride of being Sindhi which is an identity marker. The emphasis on "Asah" (We) ensures group solidarity and sense of association among Sindhis. The song overcomes the social stereotypes in the society that Sindhis are greedy and warriors. It emphasis the Sindhis are peace loving and beliefs in the teachings of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (Sufi Saint).

In the same manner, the song "*Sapna Sapna*" which became popular on the mainstream media is an emotional commentary of dream, love for personal voice and promotion of popular Sindhi culture among youth. The song promotes ethnolinguistic vitality, cultural pride and use music and art as resistance to social-political realities and dominance of Urdu and English. The song enshrines that songs should be sung and promoted which emphasis on the mainstream media that Sindhi has a rich cultural history and power denoted through dream. The song uses metaphors and imagery of moon, sun, sea, kindle and flame to emphasis one's imaginative powers in the native language.

Another popular song of the band are '*Zarori ta nahay*' which illustrates the emotional, philosophical, and introspective functions. An expressive attribute of Sindhi language is demonstrated by the use of figurative language, which increases its symbolic capital and encourages its preservation among youth. For instance, a calm, unconventional tone is established by the repeated refrain, *Zarori ta nahay* (it's not necessary, not necessary). establishes a serene, nontraditional tone. It makes one realize that they don't have to adhere to social norms. This illustrates emotional freedom as well. Furthermore, this song portrays loneliness, evening solitudes and emotional landscapes. The use of symbolic imagery such as suggesting a thoughtful mood or expression in the time of sunset delivered in Sindhi reinforces emotional expressiveness tied to cultural identity. Additionally, the song is rooted in rural Sindh and ordinary sensory life through verses that mention things like breezes, fragrances, and hair which serves as a site for symbolizing the local environment. The emotional and environmental lexicon strengthens youth associations to Sindhi heritage while resisting transfer into dominant urban languages.

Discussion & Conclusion

The present study contributes to the available literature on language maintenance and shift among young Sindhi speakers in the internal and external diaspora (David, 2023, David 2000, David 2001a & David, 2001b). It fills the gap in literature by exploring and identifying that music can be utilized as a resource, strategy and domain to promote heritage language among

the new generation in cities (Abbasi et al, 2021 & Abbasi et al 2020). Moreover, how classical Sindhi music can be promoted among its generation by adopting to the changing musical realities, social life and perceptions about music among the native population. The findings of the study showed that the Sindhi music by Sketches was listened by young Sindhi speakers in cities. Music has been a source of cultural preservation, social awareness and linguistic revival among youth in cities.

The music has become one of the domains of language use where music communicates through the voice of Sketches as interlocuter with the young Sindhi participants. Hence, beside the home domain where they try to interact in Sindhi, Sindhi music has been another domain where Sindhi is being maintained through music. Moreover, the participants showed that Sindhi music creates emotional bond, promotes cultural sensitivity and interethnic awareness for different social issues. The finding of the interviews was validated by observation of two social events where the participants enjoyed Sindhi music and sociolinguistic analysis of three songs by Sketches as selected by the participants. Overall, the findings showed that the young Sindhi speakers by listening to native Sindhi music by Sketches are maintaining the heritage language Sindhi. Hence, they are maintaining ethnic identity and their culture through music. Young Sindhi speakers did not report language shift in the domain of Sindhi music as they preferred Sindhi music by Sketches over dominant music culture in Urdu and English. Therefore, music in the heritage language can be an essential medium, domain and language revitalization technique among the young generation who shift to the mainstream languages.

The findings of the present study are limited as they focus on young generation from one public sector university, one musical band 'The Sketches' and participants from social sciences discipline only. Future studies can be conducted by exploring the language maintenance and shift among the older and younger generation, a comparative study of participants among different urbanized cities of Sindh province and Sindhi music by classical singers and different bands. The same study can be conducted among the participants of different indigenous language speakers as well.

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