

The Ormuri Resilience: A Typical Case of Small-scale Multilingualism in Waziristan Agency of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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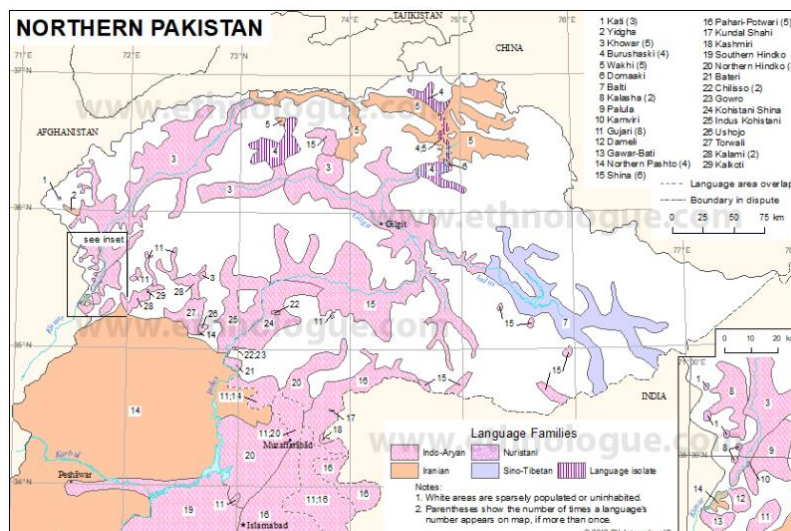
Pakistan, being the part of the rich linguistic landscape of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region, is home to 74 languages (Ethnologue, 2018). Northern Pakistan particularly presents an interesting case of small-scale multilingualism (see Map 1 on page 2) as most of the communities allow additional languages spoken for different purposes [native language (e.g., Ormuri) at home with family for everyday business, regional lingua franca (e.g., Pashto) for trade and broader social activities and national lingua franca (e.g., Urdu) for print and electronic media and education etc.]. The present study presents the case of Ormuri (a West-Iranian language with ISO code *oru* and Glottocode *ormu 1247* and spoken by approximately 15000 people in Kanigoram, Waziristan Agency, Pakistan and Logar, Afghanistan) as a representative of small-scale multilingualism showing a significant level of resilience to survive in the face of many other languages in the area. The Ormuri speakers recently experienced the hardest times of their existing when they remained IDPs (Internally Displaced People) for more than ten years due to the ongoing war-on-terror in the area.

Ormuri has hardly been explored (with only two mentionable studies) at initial level so far. The first study was a very brief introductory note to its grammar by Ghulam Muhammad (written somewhere in 1930s) as commanded by an officer of the colonial British administration. The second study was conducted by a Russian linguist Efimov in 1986 (Baart, 2011) about the sounds of the language. The present study shows that how as an epitome of small-scale multilingualism, the language survived. Based on the analysis of the historical events, the finding shows that (1) the resilience of the Ormuri linguistic community, (2) the egalitarian policy of the pre-colonial, colonial and even post-colonial governments and (3) the socio-political equality in the region were the possible reasons for the survival of the language so far. The study also highlights important points for further research on the topic.

Keywords: Ormuri, small-scale multilingualism, socio-political equality, West-Iranian

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Map 1: The Linguistic Map of Northern Pakistan

Source: Ethnologue (<https://www.ethnologue.com/map/PK> accessed December 16, 2018)