

RELIGIOSITY IN FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY : CASE STUDIES FROM URDU-SPEAKING FAMILIES IN FRANCE & FINLAND

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FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY CONFERENCE : REIMAGINING THE FIELD

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LITERATURE OVERVIEW ON LANGUAGE AND RELIGION

- Language was an important factor in religious dissemination.
- Bible was the main source of literacy in Sweden (Winsa 2005)
- Religious seminaries (madarsahs) in the Indian sub-continent imparted first literacy lessons in Qur'anic Arabic (Haque 2020)
- Spread of religion is a kind of linguistic imperialism (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997)
- Religious observances helps maintain languages after immigration (Ferguson 1982; Haque 2019)

Language Use and Islamic Practices in Multilingual Europe

Shahzaman Haque



PDF



PDF PLUS



Abstract



Full Text



Abstract

This article draws on fieldwork conducted into the linguistic practices of religious languages by three Muslim individuals in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. All informants or their ancestors in the study were born in the Muslim quarter of the Indian sub-continent, with the exception of one informant who hails from Suriname. Few works (Schor 1985; Haque 2012, 2014; Zolberg and Woon 1999) in sociolinguistics focus on the practice of Islam by immigrants in their daily lives, where a plethora of languages are used for different functions. As a field of social inquiry, there is also an attempt to understand the role or impact of religion in the immigrant's life as a practicing Muslim. The findings suggest that Arabic remains the principal liturgical language for prayers, while Urdu was rendered as a sanctified language for many believers, as literature on Islamic teaching is widely available in this language.



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RESEARCH CONTEXT OF FAMILY RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE POLICY (FRLP)

FLP studies have focused on heritage language maintenance

Gap: Few studies have taken interest in religious language policy within the family in the migratory context

Importance of studying sacred languages in diaspora

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1

Why sacred languages are generally not reported ?

2

Are there sacred languages in Urdu-speaking families ?

3

How are sacred languages maintained and transmitted in diaspora communities?

4

What is the role of Qur'anic Arabic in Urdu-speaking families' FLP?

5

How does religiosity influence language choices in multilingual families?

SACRED LANGUAGE AND WHY IT IS NOT REPORTED : FEW HYPOTHESIS

Considered as not « important language »

Language not in daily use or used for only religious function

Less competency in language – Only reading comprehension in Qur'anic Arabic

URDU AS A SACRED LANGUAGE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MUSLIMS IN EUROPE

In general

Urdu got the status of semi-sacred language from 1947 onwards in Pakistan and in India

Urdu's script borrowed from Perso-Arabic gave it image of Islamic language

Urdu learnt and reported only by Muslims in India after 1947

Urdu has double status of the mother tongues of Muslims in the North India or in Elite Pakistan and of sacred language

In France and Finland (case study)

Urdu is reported as mother tongue by Pakistanis and Indian

Urdu is not reported as a sacred language

Urdu is not much used as a sacred language

Urdu is seldom or not taught as religious text in the public schools or university

Urdu is used as religious text by some families to transmit religious education in Europe or in the country of origin

QURA'NIC ARABIC FOR URDU-SPEAKING MUSLIMS : USES AND FUNCTIONS

Holy language in which
Qur'an is written

Arabic is used in Friday
sermons, worship or
prayers, religious lectures
(Arifianto et al. 2024)

Urdu vocabulary (high
register and religious
daily register) is highly
imported from Arabic
language (Qur'anic)

Teaching of Qur'anic
Arabic in many Madrasah
(religious seminaries)
over 15000 in India and
32000 in Pakistan

Home teaching of
Qur'anic Arabic through
private tutors in urban
cities

Strengthen the idea of
identity and pride among
Muslims (Arifianto et al.
2024)

CASE STUDY ON 2 PAKISTANI INDIVIDUALS IN FRANCE

*Survey on Language practices in
Islam in France*

Both male, Age bracket 35-45,
Urdu reported mother tongue

Survey date : July 2023

Result

- Qur'anic Arabic literacy is mentioned for both participants
- Urdu is employed for reading hadith and other religious texts
- Urdu is preferred for sermons in mosques or religious podcasts
- Urdu has been considered as instrumental for religious practices

CASE STUDY ON TWO FAMILIES IN FINLAND (URDU-SPEAKING)

Family A

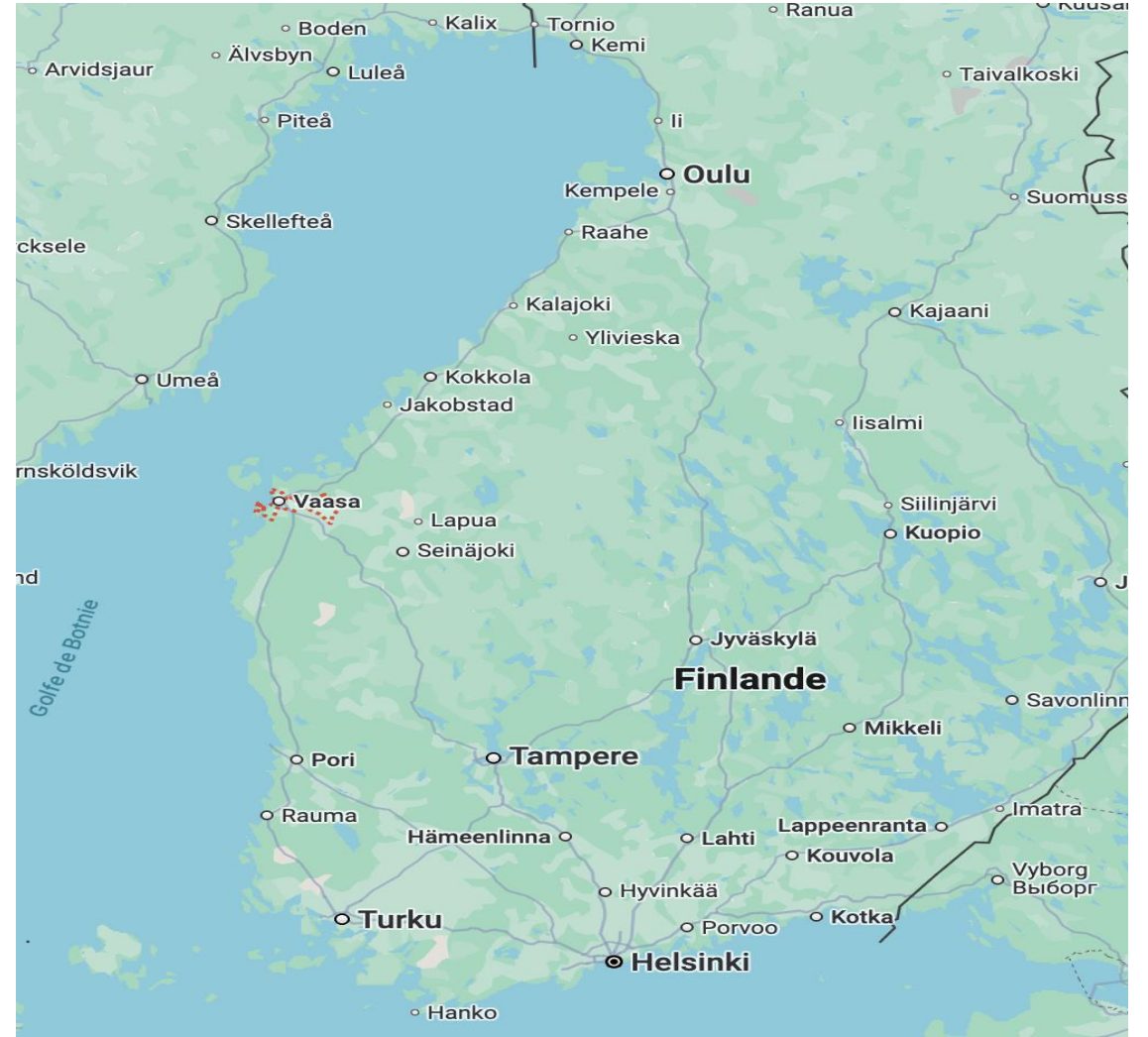
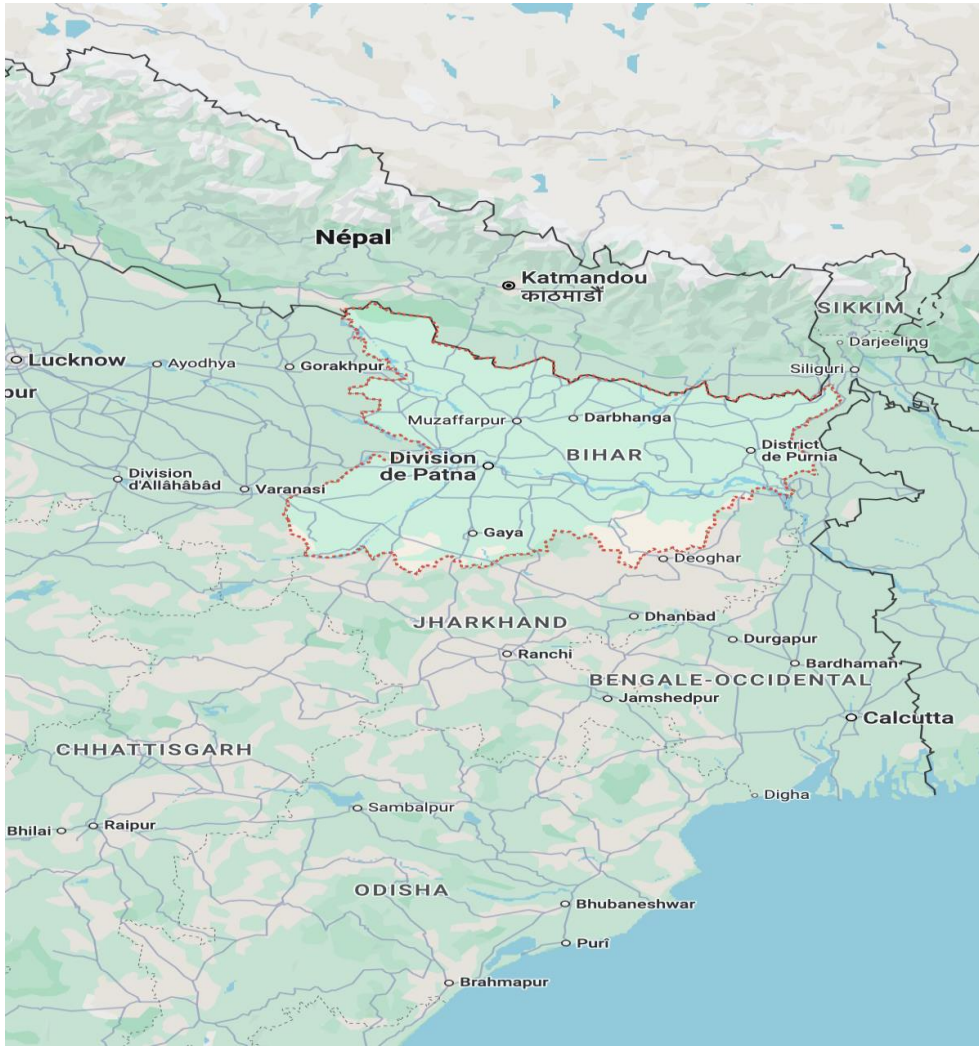
- Fieldwork started in 2007 till 2012 again from Feb 2018 till September 2018
- Indian origin couple with same mother tongue Urdu and same native town
- Father b. 1972, Mother b. 1978, Child 1 b. 1998 Child 2 b. 2004
- High Middle-class family, father engineer, mother housewife
- Few contacts with grand-parents, both children can speak Urdu to converse with them

Family B

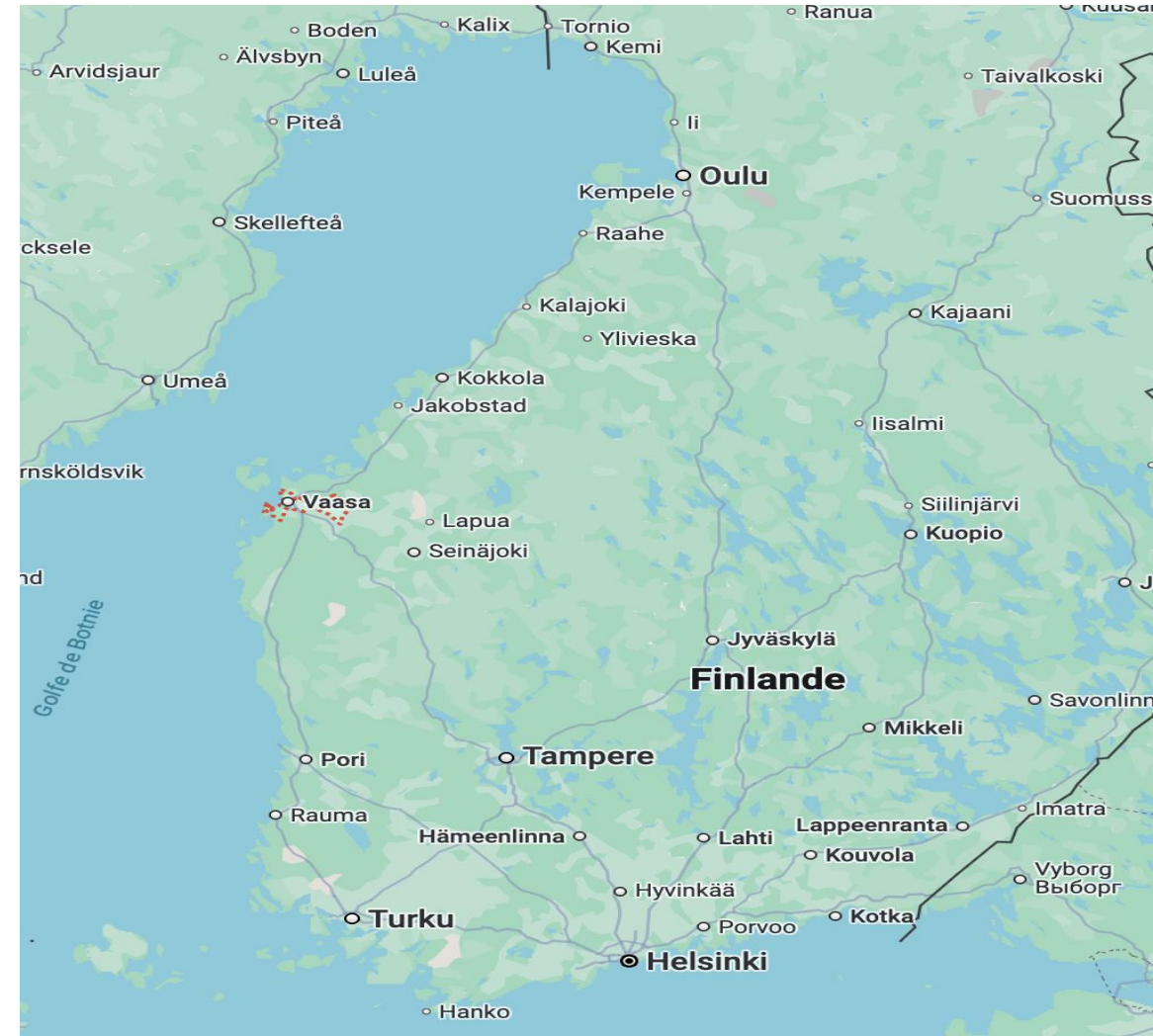
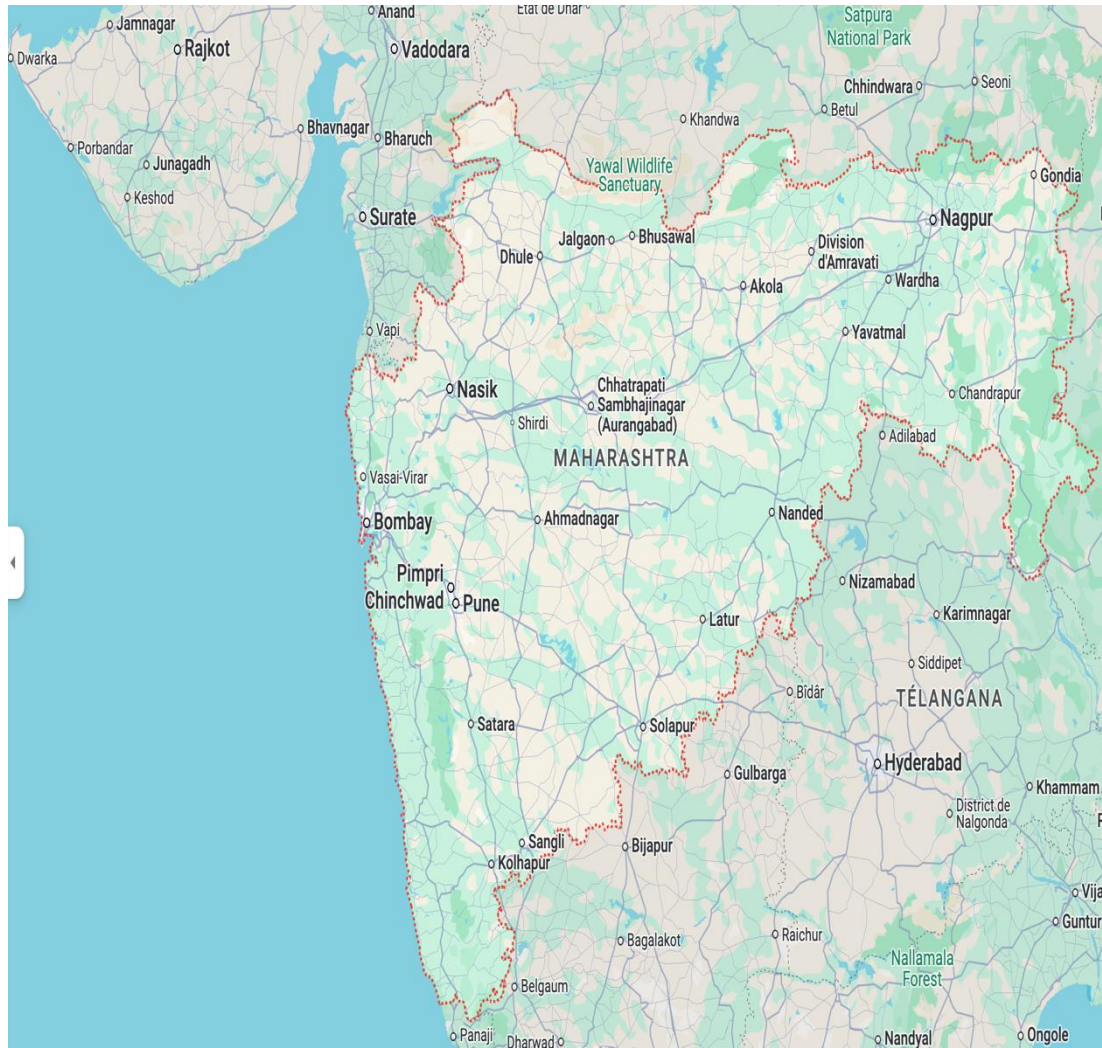
Father read my article on Internet
Questionnaires and Interview started from June 2023
Fieldwork planned in November 2024 for one day visit
Father b. 1980, Mother b. 1984, 4 Children :b .2006, 2013, 2015, 2023

High Middle-class family, father engineer, mother runs a shop
Few contacts with grand-parents for children can speak Urdu with them

FAM A - FROM BIHAR (INDIA) TO HELSINKI (FINLAND) (1ST G)



FAM B – FROM MAHARASHTRA (INDIA) TO VAASA (FINLAND) (1ST G).



FAM A, AREEB,
23 YEARS OLD
(FINLAND)

- To me, the main language of transmission of religious knowledge has been in Urdu. In the beginning, it was my mother who taught me. I read also the Hadith. I read everything in Urdu. I learned verses in Urdu, its meaning in Urdu. Take, for example, *Suarh –Al-Fatiha*, I know its meaning in Urdu.

FATHER,
FAM B,
26 NOV
2023
FINLAND

I got a question in my mind. Here the children learn very well English by the age of 10 or 11 in the school in bilingual school, so Urdu they are doing in home *alhumdulillah*, once in a week or twice a week, we read also one *hadith* too, I translate also one or two verses of Qur'an, I posed myself the question that later on they won't continue much in Urdu, so if the religious education what I give should I give it in English or should I continue it in Urdu?

IMPORTANCE OF IMPARTING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

FATHER, FAM B



FAMILY RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE POLICY IN FINLAND

FAM A

- Qur'anic Arabic was transmitted in home by the mother
- Private tuitions of Qur'anic Arabic during the holidays in India (organised by mother-in-law of the mother)
- Private tuitions on pronunciation of Qur'anic Arabic over Skype from a professor in Saudi Arabia
- The elder son uses English to resort to Islamic texts interpretation either from Internet or by books (Haque 2020)

FAM B

Three sons have been given the teachings of Qur'anic Arabic in home by father

Urdu has been used as another supplementary source for Qur'anic interpretation



CONCLUSION / INITIAL FINDINGS

(CASE STUDY)

In Finland

Religious language policy in the family is significant

Qur'anic Arabic was transmitted systematically in all children during first 10 to 15 years

Urdu and English are used for reading hadith or hearing podcasts on Internet

In France

Qur'anic Arabic skill has been reported

Urdu remains the sole language for hadith and Internet

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