

Abstract: *This paper seeks to investigate the attitudes of globalized middle class parents towards English vs. Punjabi language in Faisalabad. Language is considered as a strong tool and identity marker both at an individual and societal level. Linguistically, Pakistan is a heterogeneous country where bilingualism is a very common phenomenon. However, these languages do not share equal position, prestige, and function. So, the present study aims to identify how parents' attitudes vary from language to language and what are the reasons of this attitudinal shift. The research population for this study includes 20 different families from different locales of Faisalabad, and for data collection, close-ended questionnaire was used. The data was analyzed descriptively using SPSS, and the results were presented in visual and numerical form. The study is important as it highlights the ideological, social, and educational position of Punjabi and the English language in Faisalabad.*

Key Words: Attitudinal, Differences, English vs. Punjabi, Middle, Parents

Introduction

Background

The nations can be distinguished on the basis of their language, and it is the feature that differentiates us from other living species. There are different causes of showing a negative attitude towards a particular language. These causes vary in nature depending upon their context. In Pakistan, English language has got the status of international language while Punjabi is the local language with 44% population who use this language as their mother tongue, but attitudes towards these two languages are not the same. The socio-economic pressures by the elite class are the main factor that is compelling people to abandon the usage of Punjabi language and adopt the so-called *more prestigious* and global language i.e. English language. The media and the linguistic engineering by various governments have also triggered this attitudinal shift. Presently, the dominance of the English language has become a threat for regional languages, particularly the Punjabi language.

Linguistic Prestige

Language status is closely intertwined with language prestige and language function. According to [Kloss \[1968\]](#), the status of any language can be measured by its four qualities which include language origin, level of standardization, judicial status, and language

vitality. According to him, the tolerated language is one which is neither acknowledged nor proscribed by its speakers. The users of that language do not make efforts to promote their language, which leads that particular language to endangered status. According to the survey report by [Shah \[2010\]](#), there are twenty-six languages in Pakistan which are under threat because they are neither promoted nor discouraged by their speakers. According to the same survey, the globalized middle class is no more interested in the Punjabi language. They feel cultural shame and are not willing to own this language. Likewise, Ejaz condemns that for the speakers of the language, it is very disgraceful that they are not eager and do not prefer speaking their own mother tongue. [Zaid \[1990\]](#) has stated this as, "The Punjabis....think that Punjabi is a *vulgar* language....it is the language of illiterate or uncouth" (p. 8).

Literature Review

Many different researches have been conducted regarding the status of the Punjabi language in Pakistan. In Pakistan, language has become one of the most important symbol statuses. Nowadays, the people of Pakistan have become very much aware of the language that they speak in order to maintain

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their dignity and class. The present study highlights the attitudes of middle-class parents in Faisalabad towards Punjabi and the English language. As most of the people living in Punjab speak the Punjabi language, but as per most of the Punjabi speaking Punjabi language does not enjoy a good status. Most of the Punjabi-speaking community do not find this language as a prestigious language; on the other hand, it is considered as they think that this is a demeaning language and avoid to use it in formal situations. As per the given research, apart from a few, Punjabi speakers are themselves ignorant of their very own language. Even they are unable to write and read Punjabi language. As per Zaidi Views (1990), only 2% population can read or write the Punjabi language.

According to [Rammah \(2002\)](#) in the domestic field, 60 % of people generally use Punjabi language for communication, but this percentage is also decreasing day by day. There is a scanty of work with respect to the Punjabi language and its status. As we know that with the passage of time, the position of every language changes, but we also know that this is a very slow process. So, this paper highlights the attitudes of middle-class parents in Faisalabad towards Punjabi and the English language. From the 12th century, the Punjabi language has a very rich literature. Shah Muhammad, Sultan Bahu, Mian Muhammad Bakkash, etc., are some of the prominent figures of Punjabi literature. Presently notable work has been published in this language. According to [Rammah \(2003\)](#), a great number of Punjabi poetry and short stories were written in the Punjabi language. But regarding the position of this language, unfortunately Punjabi speakers have a unfavorable mindset towards their own language. As per the survey conducted by [Shah \(2010\)](#), in Pakistan, there are twenty-six languages that are on the verge to be extinct. The reason behind this threat is that their speakers have no more interested in using that specific language. In the same way, the Punjabi-speaking community have stopped using the Punjabi language. Rather, they feel embarrassed in using this language. In an article written by Ejaz, he disapproved that for the speakers of a language it is very disgraceful that they are ashamed of using their mother tongue. According to its speakers, Punjabi is an improper language with intensive words. Elite class, in order to maintain their social prestige and status, try to avoid the Punjabi language.

The Punjabi-speaking community is the largest population in Pakistan, and the majority of speakers reside in Punjab. But unfortunately, besides being the major language, it has limited. Despite being the

native language of the majority, Punjabi finds a limited and minor role even in the lives of its native speakers.

Various studies have also proved that no active role is played by the government to promote the Punjabi language at educational ([Rahman, 2005](#); [Asher, 2008](#)). The fact is that this language is neither taught in schools of Pakistan nor there is any Punjabi newspaper in Pakistan. According to [Zaidi \(2015\)](#), in case any newspaper project is started in the Punjabi language, then it is very brief and short term. Even its speakers have not made any contributions to stimulate this language; as a result, their native language is under threat ([Zaidi, 2010](#)). Unfortunately, a sense of shame is associated with speaking this language. The modern and literate class favors Urdu or the English language in their homes. There is a sense that this language is appropriate only for jokes and casual communication ([Zaidi, 2010](#)). Therefore, such type of negative attitude on the part of Punjabi speakers has created a threat to the Punjabi language. The most recent research of [John \(2015\)](#) regarding Punjabi speaker's linguistic attitude highlights that the Punjabi language does not have much role in the lives of the Punjabi community. Although the language is thought to be the part of their identity yet, they have mixed views regarding the status of this language.

Other related researches have also suggested that Punjabi speaking community do not own their native language. They consider it as a demeaning language rather than taking pride and avoid using it in for the official purpose. All this shows that there is a need to do research to point out this behavior of Punjabi speaking community and to highlight the actual reality, and for this purpose, the information should be collected from the bilingual speech community. Therefore this research will help to analyze the situation in a better way by pointing out the reasons that contribute to the less usage of the Punjabi language by its native speakers.

In 2013 the research was conducted to highlight the status of Punjabi language in district Sargodha and the risk factors to the development of the Punjabi language at a broader level. The research ended with the conclusion that the Punjabi community is unwilling to own this language. They are no longer interested in developing this language, which is a big reason for the decline of this language. The majority of Punjabi speakers are interested in Urdu or the English language. Another research is given by [Gilani, and Mahmood \(2014\)](#) also confirmed the above-mentioned results, which is the negative behavior of Punjabi-speaking community to their

native language. So, all this discussion highlights that there is a sense of a linguistic shift in the sense that the Punjabi language is being shifted to English or Urdu language.

As the Punjabi language has the biggest speaking community in terms of language, and most of the population belongs to Punjab. Although it has the honor of the language of the majority, the language itself has very limited use in the lives of its native speakers. This language has very wide literature along with rich linguistic impressions, but the current situation of this language is under threat.

It is important to mention here that the linguistic policies have not played any prominent role in the development of this language, and it is a big reason regarding the behavior of Punjabi speaking community towards this language.

Recently, a notice was issued by a school in the private sector to prohibit the usage of the Punjabi language in school, considering it a low prestige language. As a result, the supporters of this language fully supported it and protested against this notice. Special writings were published, and its supporters pointed out that this is the time to show support to this language and raise voice to its promotion. They highlighted that there is a need to point out the behavior of Punjabi speaking community towards this language so that the reality is exposed on social grounds, which has resulted in such a threatening situation for the Punjabi language. Therefore the purpose of this study is to highlight the attitudes of middle-class parents in district Faisalabad regarding the Punjabi language.

The globalized middle class feels that this language is indecent, and the educated elite class tries to avoid this language as it could spoil their so-called social status. That is why the Punjabi language is categorized under the label of tolerated language. [Mansoor \(1993\)](#) studies the attitudes towards English, Punjabi, and Urdu languages in Pakistan and concludes that "There is great discrimination between Urdu medium and English medium students regarding job opportunities....a highly favorable attitude to English and English-speaking community is seen....English education is preferred over all languages as a compulsory subject and a medium of instruction" (p. 140). Similarly, [Rammah \(2002\)](#) states that "Children who do not come to school with cultural and linguistic background supported in the schools are likely to experience conflict". He further adds that individuals who speak a low prestige language face more difficulties in finding suitable

employment than those who speak a standard variety.

Research Questions and Objectives

This study aims to explore the following questions:

- What are the attitudinal differences in middle-class parents towards English vs. the Punjabi language in Faisalabad?
- Which is considered more prestigious between English and Punjabi languages?
- What are the social reasons behind associating more prestige to one language over other?

The study questions are, in fact, based on certain assumptions regarding the prestige associated with English and Punjabi language. The official language of Pakistan is English, and it is also the language of modern society, the military, and the bureaucracy. It has become a symbol of social status, power and hence its privilege is passed to its speakers. English is the language of the elite class, while Punjabi is considered the language of the middle or lower class. English is a widely accepted language as it has more non-native speakers than native around the world. Moreover, in Pakistan, it has got the status of lingua franca and appears to be the language of administration, law, judiciary, and education. Even different competitive and civil service exams are conducted in this language. Another important role of the English language in Pakistani society is that it is the language that separates elite class from the rest of society. Therefore there is a feeling of prestige in the middle-class parents in Faisalabad if their child gets an 'A level' degree because it differentiates from Urdu and Punjabi medium students. Owing to this reason, the middle-class parents in Faisalabad are more inclined toward English medium schools and associate more prestige with the English language.

Methodology

Research Design

This research is based upon a quantitative approach to analyze the attitudes of globalized middle-class parents towards English and Punjabi language. Twenty middle-class families located in different locale of Faisalabad participated in the research. The sample has an equal size of male and female participants. A close-ended questionnaire was used to collect data as the questionnaire is the best choice to analyze the attitude of a particular population towards a particular concept. The questionnaire comprised 15 questions in total based upon

educational, social, and economic aspects of the problem under study. Likert scale was used to measure the range of agreement, with five options

i.e., *Agree, Strongly Agree, Not Decided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.*

Range	Interpretation
4.01 _ 5.00	Very Likely
3.01 - 4.00	Likely
2.01 - 3.00	No Opinion
1.01 - 2.00	Unlikely
0.00 - 1.00	Very Unlikely

Results and Discussions

The received data were analyzed descriptively by using SPSS, and separately the % of each question was calculated. For each response, frequency and percentage were calculated and presented in form of tables.

Everyday Communication

Table 1 indicates that almost 96% of parents agree that they want their children to use the English language for everyday communication. While only 11% of respondents favored the Punjabi language for everyday communication.

Table 1. Everyday communication

Statement	Agree on %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree%
In everyday conversation you want your child to communicate in the English language.	23.8	73.8	_____	2.4	_____
In everyday conversation, you want your child to communicate in the Punjabi language.	2.4	9.5	_____	78.6	9.5

Pride Feelings

Results in Table 2 presents that almost 84% of parents feel satisfied when their children speak the

English language fluently for everyday communication while only 33% of parents supported the use of Punjabi language by their children.

Table 2. Pride feelings

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree%
There is a feeling of satisfaction when your child communicates in the English language.	28.7	54.8	_____	11.9	4.8
There is a feeling of satisfaction when your child communicates in Punjabi language.	9.5	23.8	_____	61.9	4.8

Guarantee of a Good Job

Table 3 shows that parents feel that a secure job can be achieved through a language that is higher in

prestige and socially accepted, which is only the English language.

Table 3. Guarantee of good job

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree%
You want your child to learn the English language as it is a guarantee of good job.	57	40.5	_____	2.4	_____

You want your child to learn the Punjabi language as it is a guarantee of good job.	3.1	15.7	—	82	3.4
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New Friends

Table 4 shows the ratio of parents who agree that in comparison to the Punjabi language English

language will help their children to make new friends. This shows that English is a socially accepted language.

Table 4. *New friends*

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree%
Communicating in English aids your child in building new friends.	33.3	45.2	—	16.7	4.8
Communicating in Punjabi aids your child in building new friends.	11.9	28.6	—	57.1	2.4

Behavior

Table 5 shows that 73% of parents want their child to learn English to act like English speaking people,

whereas 33 % of parents wish their children to behave like Punjabi people.

Table 5. *Behavior*

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree%
You want your child to be proficient in the English language to behave like English people.	28.6	45.2	2.4	19.0	4.8
You want your child to be proficient in Punjabi language to behave like Punjabi people.	7.1	26.2	2.4	57.1	7.1

Source of Admiration in Society

Table 6 presents that almost 82% of parents support this view that the English language

symbolizes honor and admiration in society whereas only 32 % of parents favored for Punjabi language.

Table 6. *Source of Admiration in Society*

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree%
Your child will earn admiration in society if he communicates in English fluently.	28.7	54.8	—	11.9	4.8
Your child will earn admiration in society if he communicates in Punjabi fluently.	9.5	23.8	—	61.9	4.8

Medium of Instructions in Schools

Table 7 shows that parents are 100% willing that the English language should be the medium of instruction

in the schools while only 16% of parents are in support of Punjabi language. This proves English as a most suggested medium of instruction by globalized middle-class parents in Faisalabad.

Table 7. Medium of Instruction in Schools

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
You support English as a medium of instruction in your child's school	31.0	69.0	—	—	—
You support English as a medium of instruction in your child's school.	2.4	14.3	2.4	71.4	9.5

Compulsory Subject in Schools

Table 8 shows that 96% of parents appreciate that only the English language should be used as a

compulsory subject in the schools while only 11% of parents supported the Punjabi language as a compulsory subject in schools.

Table 8. Compulsory Subject in the Subject

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
You support English as an obligatory subject in the schools.	23.8	73.6	1.1	1.4	—
You support Punjabi as an obligatory subject in the schools.	2.4	9.5	—	78.6	9.5

Videos and Movies

The results of table 9 indicate that parents

appreciate their children to watch English movies more as compared to Punjabi movies.

Table 9. Videos and Movies

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
You appreciate your child if he watches English movies	52.4	2.4	—	11.9	33.3
You appreciate your child if he watches Punjabi movies	1.4	6.1	—	46.6	41.9

Public Fear

Table 10 indicates that 87% of parents agree that they are afraid of the situation when people laugh at

their child if he speaks English incorrectly. While in case of Punjabi speaking, the percentage of public fear is just 8%.

Table 10. Public fear

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
You feel that people will make fun of your child if he speaks English incorrectly.	16.7	71.4	2.4	7.1	2.4
You feel that people will make fun of your child if he speaks English incorrectly.	4.8	4.8	—	69.0	21.4

Master's Degree

Almost 92% parents wish their child to get a master degree in English while 32% parents expressed the

same wish for Punjabi language which confirms that English language is in more demand than Punjabi language.

Table 11. Master's degree

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
You wish your child to get Masters degree in English language	26.2	66.7	—	2.4	4.8
You wish your child to get Masters degree in Punjabi language	9.5	23.8	2.4	42.9	21.4

Media Language

The findings presented in Table 12 show that 74% of parents support that the English language should

be used abundantly in media whereas only 63 % of parents are against the use of Punjabi in media.

Table 12. Media language

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
You support use of English language in media	14.1	60.4	1.3	16.6	3.7
You support use of Punjabi language in media	13.2	—	3.6	63.7	15.6

Behavior of People

Table 13 shows that 48% of parents agree that English speakers are well-mannered and

sophisticated people while 37% of parents feel the same for the Punjabi language.

Table 13. Behavior of people

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
You feel that users of English language are well-groomed, decent and sociable	8.1	41.9	2.8	18.0	25.2
You feel that users of Punjabi language are well-groomed, decent and sociable	3.8	34.7	1.4	39.5	15.7

Progress of Country

The results in Table 14 confirm English as the language of developed nations, and if Pakistan wants

to keep pace with developed countries, it must equip its students with English speaking skills.

Table 14. Progress of country

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
You encourage your child to speak English language to make position of Pakistan stronger among progressive countries	61.9	38.1	—	—	—
You encourage your child to speak Punjabi language to make position of Pakistan stronger among progressive countries	—	3.8	—	69.4	22.8

Significance of Learning Activity

The results in Table 15 indicate that that 76% of respondents feel that it is the need of hour that their

children should learn English language while 78% respondents agree that Punjabi language learning is a useless activity.

Table 15. Significance of learning activity

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Not Decided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Your child should not pay attention to learn English because it is a useless activity	2.4	—	—	76.2	21.4
Your child should not pay attention to learn Punjabi because it is a useless activity	7.1	78.6	—	14.3	—

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to highlight the approaches towards English and Punjabi language in Faisalabad. The results have confirmed that the positions of Punjabi and English languages are different in Faisalabad and its main cause is the poor economic, social and educational status of Punjabi language in our society. In our society Punjabi language has become a sign of cultural disgrace and is regarded as a language which is not the assurance of a good and secure job. In Faisalabad majority of people are not willing to own this language and hence, are reluctant to communicate with each other by using this language. Similarly, in the educational sector, Punjabi language is not considered as a sophisticated and decent language. Punjabi, in comparison to the English language, is not a preferred medium of instruction in schools and colleges; moreover, this language is not selected as a compulsory subject in

the institutions. Even the value of this subject is not recognized in our society. Comparatively, people feel honored in getting Bachelors and Masters's degrees in English, and they aim to select English as a source of education and instructions, and they consider it as a permit to secure and bright future. Hence, all this discussion clearly shows that our culture itself promotes the English language as compared to Punjabi, and it is interesting to point out that the Punjabi people themselves are adopting English culture. Even Punjabi pronunciation, verse, rhymes, and films are vanishing from the skies of fame, and all this change can be associated with the policies of the government and destabilized planning of educational bodies who only put their efforts in promoting of English and Urdu languages. So, the present study has established a negative attitude towards Punjabi and a positive attitude towards the English language in Faisalabad

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