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**TÍTULO:** Actitudes lingüísticas de los estudiantes de pregrado hacia inglés, urdu y punjabi: un estudio comparativo de los institutos públicos y privados de Lahore.

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**RESUMEN:** El estudio explora las actitudes lingüísticas de estudiantes universitarios hacia el inglés, el urdu y el punjabi. Baker (1992) considera, que dependiendo de las actitudes de la sociedad, un lenguaje tendrá éxito o fracasará. El marco teórico fue el modelo de 1992 de Baker. Este es un estudio en profundidad que exploró las actitudes de 272 estudiantes graduados de las dos universidades del sector público y dos privadas de Lahore, empleando enfoques cualitativos y cuantitativos. Los resultados mostraron actitudes fuertemente optimistas de estudiantes universitarios en ambos sectores hacia el inglés y el urdu, y las actitudes menos favorables hacia el punjabi. Los estudiantes de ambas industrias mostraron actitudes similares de género hacia los tres idiomas.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** actitudes lingüísticas al inglés, urdu y punjabi; público; privado.

**TITLE:** Language Attitudes of Undergraduate Students towards English, Urdu and Punjabi: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Institutes of Lahore.

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**ABSTRACT:** The study explores the language attitudes of undergraduate students towards English, Urdu and Punjabi. Baker (1992) takes the view, that depending on the attitudes held by society, a language will succeed or fail. The theoretical framework implemented for this study was Baker's 1992 model. This is an in-depth study that explored the attitudes of 272 graduate students from Lahore's two public and two private sector universities. This analysis employed qualitative as well as quantitative approaches. The findings showed strongly optimistic attitudes of undergraduate students in both sectors towards English as well as Urdu, and the least favorable attitudes towards Punjabi. Students from both industries displayed similar gender-based attitudes toward the three languages.

**KEY WORDS:** language attitudes to English, Urdu and Punjabi; public; private.

## **INTRODUCTION.**

Baker (1992) argues that the prestige and value of a language is most often determined by attitudes towards that language. According to Crystal (1997), attitudes refer to an individual's opinions regarding a language which relies on beliefs and morals and can be observed in one's behavior. According to Richards, Platt and Weber (1985) "attitudes towards a language can either be positive or negative this in turn reflects the ease or difficulty in learning a language".

Language attitudes help to clarify the development of a certain language and the demise or shift of a language due to negative attitudes (Baker, 1992). Positive attitudes towards English, an international language is the major determinant of its worldwide spread. Baker (1992) is of the view that studying

attitudes towards certain languages is significant because these attitudes can help to determine political, economic, religious, educational and social issues.

## **DEVELOPMENT.**

### **Background of the study.**

The estimated population of Pakistan is approximately 195.4 million (Pakistan Economic Survey (2015-2016). According to Ethnologue (2016), Pakistan has 73 living languages. Urdu enjoys the position of being the national language of Pakistan (Rahman, 2010). The official language of Pakistan is English (Akram & Mahmood, 2007). Besides Urdu and English, the other major languages spoken in Pakistan are Punjabi, Pushto, Sindhi, Siraiki, and Balochi. 44.15% of the people in Pakistan speak Punjabi (Rahman, 2010).

According to Mansoor (2004), the number of speakers speaking a language does not determine the dominant language. Although regional languages in Pakistan are spoken by a large part of the population, they are still treated as minority languages and are dominated politically, culturally and economically by Urdu and English (Mansoor, 2004). English and Urdu are awarded a high status in Pakistan (Mansoor, 2004). On the other hand, Punjabi is given a very low status in Punjabi society (Amjad, n.d).

### **Statement of the problem.**

Researchers have been attracted to language attitudes due to their significance in determining the status of different languages within a society. Attitudes towards a language have an important influence on the development of the individual as well as societal bilingualism and must, therefore, be considered in the implementation of language planning and policy (Tauroza, 1997).

According to Baker (1992), for any language to prosper or decay, the attitudes of the language group play a vital part. Studying language attitudes helps to understand the extent of a language's spread or decay (McKenzie, 2008). To have a real understanding of the status of different languages, attitudes to different languages spoken and used for formal and informal purposes need to be studied.

By investigating attitudes, a researcher can find out whether students have positive attitudes or negative attitudes towards a language and the reasons behind these attitudes. With the passage of time attitudes towards English, Urdu and Punjabi have changed. Most of the bilingual students use English as a supportive language along with Urdu and the regional language. The impact of English is increasing rapidly.

Undergraduate students from different socio-economic class and educational backgrounds are being prepared to enter different levels of higher studies and professional life. These students will be using English, Urdu and Punjabi to a certain extent in everyday life. Therefore, it is pertinent to investigate the attitudes of undergraduate students toward English, Urdu and Punjabi languages in Lahore.

The attitudes towards a language are important not only for language users, but also for the vitality, and preservation of the language. No importance is given to the attitudes of students regarding different languages in Pakistan when important decisions regarding language policies are taken. This study attempts to give an insight into students' attitude towards English, Urdu and Punjabi and the importance of these languages in distinct spheres of life. The uniqueness of research lies in the fact that the attitudes of undergraduate students towards English, Urdu, and Punjabi languages are explored by doing a comparative study.

### **Objectives of the Study.**

The objectives of this research are:

- To explore the attitudes of undergraduate students in public and private universities of Lahore towards English, Urdu and Punjabi.
- To compare the language attitudes of undergraduate students in public universities with that of the undergraduate students in private universities.
- To investigate the effect of gender of students towards English, Urdu and Punjabi.
- To identify the reasons for these attitudes from the students' point of view.

### **Research Questions.**

What are the attitudes of undergraduate students of public and private universities in Lahore towards English, Urdu and Punjabi?

The sub-questions of this study are:

1. How do the attitudes towards English, Urdu and Punjabi of undergraduate students in public and private universities compare on the basis of the educational sector?
2. How does the choice of language of the undergraduate students compare on the basis of use in different domains?
3. How do the attitudes towards English, Urdu and Punjabi of undergraduate students compare on the basis of gender?
4. What are the reasons behind these attitudes from the students' point of view?

### **Literature review. Language Attitudes.**

Language attitudes have traditionally been important in the field of sociolinguistics (Edwards 1985). Different linguists have defined language attitudes in different ways. Language attitudes have been defined in 'The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages' as "the opinions individuals have towards different languages" (Crystal, 1992). People can have positive or negative opinions regarding a language.

### **Significance of studying Language Attitudes.**

In sociolinguistics, studying language attitudes carries great importance (Edwards, 1982). Language attitudes can help in predicting linguistic behavior. Attitudes can also help to determine the usage of a specific language in a particular society, loyalty towards a language and in determining the prestige of a language (Obiols, 2002). Studies of language attitudes help in exploring how people respond to different interactions made with the help of a language and how they judge others according to the observed language behavior.

Language attitudes cover the history as well as the current position of different linguistic groups within a society (Edwards, 1979; Fu, 1979 as cited in Mansoor 1993). According to Mansoor (1993), to have an understanding of specific language problems, attitudes to different languages spoken and used for formal and informal purposes need to be studied. Mansoor (1993) points out that it is necessary to have knowledge of attitudes for the formation of a language policy.

### **Status of English in Pakistan.**

Practically, English is the official language of Pakistan (Manan & David, 2014). The English language is spreading fast in Pakistan. It is used in the formal domains of education, government, bureaucracy, media, law and the armed forces (Baumgardner, 1993). Knowing English in Pakistan is a gateway to success for all respectful corporate professionals, managerial and administrative jobs along with success in higher education (Ghani, 2003). English is a compulsory subject in schools right from the first grade and has become a refiner medium of education (Akram, 2007). English is necessary for the development of Pakistan and also for competing in the international market. It is also considered as the language of prestige and power (Akram, 2007).

### **Status of Urdu in Pakistan.**

After independence, Urdu was proclaimed as the national language of Pakistan (Ahmad, 2011). It is also considered a symbol of national unity (Ahmad, 2011). Ahmad (2011) points out that the national language represents the cultural heritage of a country and should be an effective means for communication. Urdu unites all people and all communities of Pakistan whatever their mother tongues are (Ahmad, 2011).

### **Status of Punjabi in Pakistan.**

After partition, Punjabi language was not given any government support that is necessary for the spread and development of a language (Riaz, 2011). Punjabis are the largest group in Pakistan. Punjabi language is dominated both culturally and linguistically by Urdu and English (Mansoor, 1993).

Zaidi (2001) is of the view that Pakistani Punjabis have a pessimistic attitude regarding their mother tongue. The most anti-Punjabis attitude regarding Punjabi comes from the educated and semi-educated classes (Zaidi, 2001). Zaidi (2001) points out that Punjabis themselves think of Punjabi as a vulgar and indecent language. Punjabis degrade their language and think of Urdu as the language of taste and class. The only places where Punjabi is spoken without shame are the backward rural areas (Zaidi, 2001). Zaidi (2001) fears that if Punjabis continue having a negative attitude towards their own language, Punjabi would become a dead language by the end of the century.

According to Rahman (2002), the government's language policies have made English, Urdu and Punjabi class markers in the community. English represents the refined gentry, Urdu the middle order and Punjabi represents the illiterate rural class (Rahman, 2002).

### **Research done on Language Attitudes in different countries.**

Extensive research has been done on language attitudes internationally. Schlettien (2015) did a comparative study on the attitudes of multilingual students studying at two universities of South Africa towards their mother tongues and other languages. This study focused on attitudes towards English, Afrikaans and Xhosa languages. In the study, different domains were identified in which these language attitudes were shown. Also, the reasons for the attitudes held by the university students were identified. An online questionnaire was administered, to obtain a clearer perception into the language attitudes held by the students of the two universities. The results revealed that the respondents held most favorable attitudes towards English and the least favorable attitudes towards the indigenous languages. The findings further revealed that English is mostly used in the formal domains, while the mother tongue of the respondents is given preference in informal domains. It was concluded that the students of both universities had similar attitudes.

Magogwe (1995) conducted research on language attitudes among Botswana Cambridge 'O' Level Senior Cambridge (COSC) students regarding the official functions of Setswana and English. In the study, it was assumed that the students had a favorable attitude towards both languages. The attitudes of 240 Form V students were investigated with the help of a questionnaire. For the interviews four students were randomly selected. Two lecturers were interviewed from University of Botswana. The findings revealed that the attitudes of the students as well as that of the two lecturers interviewed were positive towards English and Setswana.

Dweik, Nofal & Qawasmeh (2014) conducted a study on 'language use and attitudes among the Muslim Arabs of Vancouver/Canada'. A sample of 70 Muslim Arabs was selected based on convenience. The respondents selected represented different age groups, educational background and gender. A questionnaire was used as a research tool. Results showed the respondents positive attitudes towards both the languages which were used parallel in all walks of life.



Dweik & Qawar (2015) also conducted a study to investigate language choice and language attitudes towards Arabic, French and English in particular among 100 Arabs of Quebec- Canada. The study also investigated the factors that support their choice in using Arabic, English and French. The results also showed that the Canadian Arabs of Quebec used Arabic in the informal domains, whereas English and French were used in formal domains, for example, in government offices and in educational institutions.

Almahmoud (2012) used mixed methods research design to explore the attitudes of Saudi male undergraduate students at King Saud University, towards standard Arabic, colloquial and English and to highlight the usage of these languages in the different domains and to finally evaluate the factors behind these attitudes from the students' point of view. The respondents' conscious attitudes were investigated using a questionnaire, the sub-conscious attitudes were investigated using the matched guise test and to investigate the factors behind the attitudes group interviews were used. The questionnaire was filled by 260 students, 257 students participated in the matched guise test and 17 students participated in the focus group interviews. The results of the research showed that the students had favorable attitudes towards English and a little less positive attitude towards the two varieties of Arabic.

Laila (2015) conducted a study on Bangladeshi engineering EFL learners' attitudes towards learning English. This was a comparative study. The participants were 67 engineering students from one private and one public university in Bangladesh. It was a quantitative study. A 34-item attitude questionnaire was used for data collection. The findings of the study showed that the engineering EFL learners in both the universities had a moderately favorable attitude towards learning English. Results revealed that public university students were less capable and were also discouraged by bad results which showed the negative attitudes of public university students towards learning English.

## **Research done on Language Attitudes in Pakistan.**

Mansoor (1993) carried out a survey of the students of Lahore's educational institutions towards English, Urdu and Punjabi. This was published as a book entitled "Punjabi, Urdu and English in Pakistan". Both direct and indirect techniques for measuring language attitudes were used. In her study positive attitudes were displayed by all groups of Punjabi and Urdu speaking students to Urdu and English and a negative attitude towards Punjabi.

Rukh (2014) conducted research on the attitudes of business students towards learning English and its relation to their academic achievement. This study revealed that students had a favorable attitude towards English language learning.

Akram (2007) investigated the link between motivation and attitudes to learn English among female learners of southern Punjab and concluded that females have a favorable attitude towards English language learning.

Hashwani (2008) conducted a study in which she investigated the attitudes, motivation and anxiety of male and female students towards English language learning in a multilingual context. Results showed that the students had positive attitudes and a high motivational level towards English language learning.

Gillani & Mahmood (2014) have done a study on the attitudes of the young generation towards Punjabi language. 60 graduate and postgraduate students from Government College University were randomly selected which consisted of 30 males and 30 females. The study aimed to investigate the attitudes of young generation towards Punjabi language, to find out their opinions and feelings about Punjabi and to find out whether they have a favorable or a non-favorable attitude towards Punjabi. A questionnaire was used as a research tool to investigate the attitudes of young generation towards Punjabi language. The results revealed that the students have a negative attitude towards Punjabi and prefer using Urdu instead of Punjabi. The conclusion drawn from this study is that the young

generation view about Punjabi is that it is just a tolerated language that is not being promoted and is being replaced in daily life with Urdu.

Akram & Yasmeen (2011) conducted a research on students' attitudes towards English and Punjabi languages in Faisalabad. A close-ended questionnaire was administered to 42 students of eight different educational institutes. The data was statistically analyzed. After analyzing the data, the results revealed that students had positive attitudes towards English and a negative attitude towards Punjabi language.

Riaz (2011) has conducted an ethnographic study to investigate the status of Punjabi language. In this study, the participants were five families from urban areas and five families from rural areas. The research findings revealed a distinct contrast regarding utility and status of Punjabi. The subjects of the urban areas do not consider Punjabi an important language. They think that Punjabi is not an economically advantageous language. According to the urban participants Punjabi is not used as a mode of communication it is only a part of the ethnic identity. The subjects from the rural areas, on the other hand, showed a strong affiliation with Punjabi. It is a dominant language in their daily lives. They feel proud of their Punjabi identity and do not want to desert their mother tongue. The study revealed that language desertion is an urban phenomenon.

An extensive literature survey suggests that the attitudes of undergraduate students towards English, Urdu and Punjabi languages in the private and public universities of Lahore have not been studied. Therefore, it is of relevance to do a comparative study and explore the attitudes of the undergraduate students towards the three languages.

### **Methodology.**

The study had made use of 'the concurrent mixed methods design'. Questionnaires were used to gather the quantitative data and the qualitative data was collected by interviewing selected participants, this facilitated in giving a clearer picture of the attitudes of the participants. The study

took help from both the aspects of quantitative and qualitative approach, so that the research could be made valid. The current study employed ‘triangulation by methods’ approach to increase the validity of the research findings.

### **Population and Sampling.**

Undergraduate students of two private and two public universities in Lahore constituted the population of this research study. The two public universities of Lahore chosen to conduct the study were: University of the Punjab and Kinnaird College for Women Lahore. Beaconhouse National University and University of Management and Technology Lahore were chosen to represent the private sector.

The sampling techniques used in the research were: convenience sampling and purposive sampling. The main reasons for using convenience sampling in the present study were due to time constraints for collecting data and the non-availability of the list of undergraduate students at one of the public sector universities. However, to overcome this weakness in the sampling technique a large sample size was used.

Purposive sampling was utilized for collecting data for the qualitative part of the study. Purposive sampling was employed to get a deeper insight into the attitudes of the respondents. Eight groups were interviewed to find out the reasons behind the attitudes of undergraduate students towards the three languages under consideration.

### **Theoretical framework.**

For the present study, Baker’s research model (1992) has been adapted as the theoretical framework and changed to measure the undergraduate students’ attitudes towards English, Urdu and Punjabi. Baker’s study included seven variables but for the present study, two variables have been included as

these were considered appropriate within the context of the study. These variables are: gender and type of university.

### **Research instruments.**

Quantitative data from the students was collected using a questionnaire. The rationale for using questionnaire as a research tool is that a questionnaire is best suited to measure attitudes (McLeod, 2014). The first part of the questionnaire was designed to gather personal information of the respondents and their language background, to investigate what variables may explain the attitudes of undergraduate students towards English, Urdu and Punjabi.

The language background section of the questionnaire was adapted from Mansoor (1993) with some modifications made. The first two parts of the second section of the questionnaire ‘Opinions about English, Urdu and Punjabi’ were adapted from the study of Dweik and Qawar (2015). The third part was based on the Likert scale. This section comprised of 32 statements related to attitudes towards English, 20 statements related to attitudes towards Urdu and 17 statements related to attitudes towards English. In the sub-section ‘attitudes towards the use of English’, statements were adapted from the study of Almahmoud (2012), Tahaineh and Daana (2013), Hohenthal (1998), Mansoor (2005), Magogwe (1995) and Rukh (2014) with some modifications. Statements were made based on the suggestions of the experts, who had reviewed the suitability of the questionnaire. In the sub-section ‘attitudes towards the use of Urdu’ statements were adapted from Almahmoud (2012), Magogwe (1995) and Hohenthal (1998) studies. In the sub-section, ‘attitudes towards the use of Punjabi’ statements were adapted from the study of Almahmoud (2012), Hohenthal (1998) and were modified for the present study by including Punjabi language and some statements designed by the researcher based on the suggestions given by the experts who reviewed the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was pilot tested with 20 undergraduate students who were not included in the sample of the research. The purpose of piloting the questionnaire was to find and iron-out problems related with the understanding and interpretation of the items stated in the questionnaire.

Focus group interviews were considered the most appropriate instrument for collecting qualitative data. The interview was chosen as a tool to offer an in-depth understanding and extra details about the attitudes of undergraduate students towards English, Urdu and Punjabi and the reasons behind these attitudes from the students' perspective. A focus group interview guide was designed for the research. The interview questions were adapted from the study of Riaz (2011), Almahmoud (2012) and Mansoor (1993) and some of the questions were modified to suit the needs of the current study. Focus group interviews were done on voluntarily basis. The researcher interviewed two groups from each university. There were two to four participants in each focus group.

### **Data analysis strategies.**

The quantitative data collected was analyzed statistically, computed and tabulated using SPSS software. To measure the attitudes of the students' frequencies and percentages were used. T-test was utilized to compare students' attitudes in both groups (public versus private sector universities).

The qualitative data collected were thematically analyzed. The thematic analysis gave a deeper insight into the reasons that lead to the formation of the undergraduate students' attitudes towards the three languages.

### **Data analysis.**

Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the quantitative data. In inferential statistics, t-test was utilized to compare the attitudes of undergraduate students in both the sectors, and also to see whether there were differences in the attitudes of male and female students towards English, Urdu, and Punjabi. The qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic analysis.

## Results.

### *Demographic background of the research participants.*

Table 1 presents the demographic information of participants obtained through data collection.

Table 1. Baseline characteristics.

	Public N=136	Private N=136
Gender		
Male	45 (33.1%)	86 (63.2%)
Female	91 (66.9%)	50 (36.7%)
Parent's Monthly Income (PKR)		
Below 30,000	17 (12.5%)	6 (4.4%)
30,000-49,900	22 (16.2%)	20 (14.7%)
50,000-74,900	44 (32.4%)	22 (16.2%)
75,000-99,900	24 (17.6%)	20 (14.7%)
100,000 & above	29 (21.3%)	68 (50%)

Table 1 shows that out of the 136 respondents of public sector universities, 33.1% were male, and 66.9% were female, and in the private sector universities, 63.2% were male, and 36.7% of the respondents were female. In the public sector universities, 32.4% of the respondents' parents' monthly income lies between 50,000 and 75,000, whereas in the private sector 50% of the respondents' parents' monthly income lies between 100,000 and above.

Table 2. Language Background.

	Public N=136	Private N=136
First language		
English	3 (2%)	4 (3%)
Urdu	117 (86%)	116 (85%)
Punjabi	14 (10%)	16 (12%)
Others	2 (2%)	0 (0%)

Table 2 displays that the majority of the respondents in both the groups (public 86% versus private 85% universities) reported Urdu as their first language.

Table 3. Choice of English, Urdu, and Punjabi in different domains.

Statements	Public			Private		
	English	Urdu	Punjabi	English	Urdu	Punjabi
Family and home play an important role in using	31 (22.8%)	92 (67.6%)	13 (9.6%)	20 (15%)	102 (75%)	14 (10%)
Social interactions strengthen the use of	67 (49%)	65 (48%)	4 (3%)	66 (48.5%)	67 (49.3%)	3 (2.2%)
Religion strengthens the use of	17 (13%)	113 (83%)	6 (4%)	10 (7.4%)	123 (90.4%)	3 (2.2%)
Job/ future career requires using	118 (86.8%)	18 (13.2%)	0 (0%)	108 (79%)	26 (19.2%)	2 (1.5%)
Pakistani national identity is expressed in	3 (2.2%)	131 (96%)	2 (1.5%)	7 (5.2%)	128 (94.2%)	1 (0.6%)
Ethnic identity is expressed in	5 (3.7%)	100 (73.5%)	31 (22.8%)	16 (11.7%)	100 (73.5%)	20 (14.7%)

Table 3 shows the choice of language by the students in different domains. The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents in both public (67.6%) as well as private (75%) sector universities feel that family and home have the most important role in using Urdu. The majority (49%) of the respondents of both sectors are of the view that social interactions also strengthens the use of English and Urdu. The majority of the students in public both the sectors (public 86.8% and private 79%) think that a future career requires using English. Surprisingly, the majority of the students in both the sectors in Lahore (which is located in Punjab) believes that not only national but also ethnic identity is expressed in Urdu. This indicates a negative attitude regarding the Punjabi language. In spite of



being Punjabis and living in the province of Punjab, the students think that Urdu symbolizes their ethnic identity.

Table 4. Opinions about English, Urdu and Punjabi.

Questions	Public			Private		
	English	Urdu	Punjabi	English	Urdu	Punjabi
1. For me the most useful language is ....	75 (55.15%)	58 (42.6%)	3 (2.2%)	65 (47.8%)	62 (45.6%)	9 (6.6%)
2. For me the most beautiful language is ....	28 (20.6%)	90 (66.2%)	18 (13.2%)	18 (13.2%)	90 (66.2%)	28 (20.6%)
3. For me the most interesting language is ....	46 (33.8%)	38 (27.9%)	52 (38.3%)	34 (25%)	50 (36.7%)	52 (38.2%)
4. For me the most prestigious language is ....	46 (34%)	75 (55%)	15 (11%)	30 (22.1%)	89 (65.4%)	17 (12.5%)
5. According to me, the language which symbolizes Pakistani national identity is..	5 (3.7%)	124 (91.2%)	7 (5.2%)	16 (11.7%)	111 (81.6%)	9 (6.6%)
6. The language connected with my ethnic heritage is ....	15 (11%)	85 (62.5%)	36 (26.5%)	13 (9.56%)	90 (66.2%)	33 (24.3%)
7. For me the most important language is ....	72 (52.9%)	59 (43.4%)	5 (3.7%)	62 (45.6%)	65 (47.8%)	9 (6.6%)
8. According to me, the language dominant in Lahore is ....	22 (16.2%)	66 (48.5%)	48 (35.3%)	14 (10.3%)	79 (58.1%)	43 (31.6%)
9. According to me, the language easiest to learn is ....	41 (30%)	83 (61%)	12 (9%)	48 (35.3%)	74 (54.4%)	14 (10.3%)
10. I think the most poetic language is ....	24 (6.6%)	95 (69.8%)	17 (12.5%)	9 (6.6%)	95 (69.8%)	32 (24.6%)
11. The language I like the most is ....	53 (38.9%)	64 (47.1%)	19 (13.9%)	43 (31.6%)	65 (47.8%)	28 (20.6%)

Results in Table 4 reveal that the majority of respondents of both sectors consider English to be the most useful language. Similarly, the majority of the respondents from both the sectors find Urdu to be the most beautiful language which shows that they have a highly positive attitude towards Urdu. However, some 38.2% of the respondents from both sectors consider Punjabi to be the most interesting language. Urdu is considered the most prestigious language by the majority of the students. The majority of the respondents in both the sectors (public 96% and private 94.2%) indicated that Urdu is the language which symbolizes their Pakistani national identity. In public universities, 52.9% of the students consider English as the most important language, whereas, in private universities, the majority of the students (47.8%) consider Urdu to be the most important language followed by English. According to the students of both the sectors, the language dominant in Lahore is Urdu followed by Punjabi. Most of the respondents consider Urdu to be the easiest and the most poetic language.

T-test was used to identify whether there were similarities or dissimilarities in the attitudes of the respondents from both the sectors towards the three languages under consideration.

Table 5. Comparison of the attitudes of undergraduate towards English, Urdu and Punjabi on the basis of sector

Sector	N	M	df	T	Sig
Public	136	20.79	270	-1.490	.294
Private	136	21.46	268.1		

\*p < .05 Level of significance.

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of the undergraduate students towards English, Urdu and Punjabi sector wise.

T-test was also conducted to determine the effect of gender on the attitudes of the students from both the sectors towards English, Urdu and Punjabi.

Table 6. Comparison of the attitudes of undergraduate towards English, Urdu and Punjabi on the basis of gender.

Sector	N	M	df	T	Sig
Public	131	10.75	266	1.53	.505
Private	141	10.42	265.87		

\*p < .05 Level of significance.

Table 6 shows that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of undergraduates' students towards English, Urdu and Punjabi on the basis of gender.

The main themes that have emerged from the focus group interviews were:

- Status of Punjabi, Urdu and English.
- Attitudes towards the three languages (Punjabi, Urdu and English).
- Usage of these three languages in different domains.
- Purposes for which these languages are used.
- Future of these three languages in Pakistan.

These themes have helped in analyzing and interpreting qualitative data.

The respondents interviewed from both the sectors consider Punjabi as the language of communication amongst the lower class. All the participants of the different groups in both public as well as private sector awarded Punjabi a very low status and called it a language of the illiterate class.

All the students interviewed thought of Urdu as an important language and had positive attitudes towards it. All the students interviewed stated that Urdu was the language in which they could easily express their feelings and was the most used language for social interactions. They felt comfortable using Urdu with family and friends.

The majority of the students interviewed said that English was the “official language” and was also the “medium of instruction” at the educational level.

The overall results from the focus group interviews revealed that the undergraduate students of both the sectors have very positive attitudes towards English, followed by Urdu and a negative attitude towards Punjabi. Punjabi, the regional language of Punjab is not given a positive attitude by the students. All the respondents found English easy to learn, which shows the positive attitude of students towards English.

In case of Punjabi subtractive bilingualism has taken place. Students were of the view that it is important to speak Punjabi to “keep it alive”. Absence of government support and financial backing as well as language shift by the parents Punjabi to Urdu and English has left a gap. It has to be promoted academically to keep it from decay and to stop language shift towards Urdu and English. Everything is slowly moving towards English at the expense of losing one’s language. In case of English additive bilingualism is taking place. All the students think that “English is an international language of higher education”. English as a second language adds to rather than replacing the first language which is Urdu because all the participants still liked to communicate in Urdu in the home domains.

Urdu is being used informally throughout the province. The majority of the students interviewed considered Urdu as the most widely used language for communication and easily understood by everyone. All the students that were interviewed like to converse with their friends in Urdu. The reason given by them was that they feel more comfortable talking in Urdu. The students of both the

sectors who were interviewed stated that Urdu and English were playing a strong and important part in their lives.

English was considered the most prestigious and progressing language by all the research participants. According to them knowledge of English provided an easy access to international communication and job opportunities and that English had a very bright future and was progressing day by day.

The overall results from both the questionnaires and the focus group interviews showed that the undergraduate students from both the sectors held a very positive attitude towards English and Urdu and a negative attitude towards Punjabi. Punjabi is not given any importance at any official level including education.

The trend of moving away from Punjabi and adopting English and Urdu has made these two languages the mode of communication even at home. Unlike Urdu and English, Punjabi does not have any place in any economic matters, therefore resulting in a very weak socio-economic status.

### **Discussion.**

The findings reveal that the majority of the students from both sectors have highly positive and favorable attitudes towards English which is followed by Urdu and the least favorable, in fact, negative attitude is held towards Punjabi which is an indigenous language. Similar findings were made by Schlettien (2015) in South Africa who conducted a study on the attitudes of multilingual students studying at the Universities of Stellenbosch and the Western Cape towards English, Afrikaans and Xhosa languages.

The findings of the present study also show that majority of the respondents' first language, Urdu is used in the informal domains of family and friends and English plays the most vital role in the domain of education. This finding is also supported by the finding of Schlettien (2015). The findings of the current study reveals that the undergraduate students of both sectors have similar attitudes towards English, Urdu, and Punjabi. This is in line with the findings of Schlettien (2015) who found out that

the same attitudes were held by the students of the two universities and there were no differences in their attitudes towards English, Afrikaans and Xhosa.

The findings show that the attitudes of students in both the groups (public versus private) towards English and Urdu are positive. It is also learned from the findings that the respondents consider Urdu a symbol of national identity and display strong national sentiments towards Urdu.

The findings also reveal that the respondents have a favorable and highly positive attitude towards English and are instrumentally motivated towards learning English. The two main reasons for studying English given by the students are: for success in higher education and for getting a good job. The findings of this study agree with the findings of the study of Magogwe (1995) in which the students held a positive attitude towards English as well as Setswana, the most widely spoken language of the locals in South Africa. It is the major official language spoken and is recognized by the government. It is similar in status to Urdu in the present study.

Students of both sectors show a positive attitude towards English and Urdu, and both the languages are being used side by side in different domains of life. English is being used formally in education with teachers, in the government sector in jobs and is a requirement for getting a good job. The findings reveal that the students are using Urdu informally with family, friend and neighbors. The results are consistent with the findings of Dweik, Nofal & Qawasmen (2014), in which the respondents had a positive attitude towards the languages which were being studied and both the languages were used side by side in different domains.

The findings of the study also indicate that Urdu is being used in the informal domains, whereas, English is used in the formal domain by the students. The finding confirms the positive attitudes that the respondents have for these two languages. These findings agree with that of Dweik & Qawar (2015).

The current study reveals that the students mostly have a positive attitude towards English since they want to learn English. The majority of the participants were of the view that if they speak English their family would be proud of them. These findings are consistent with Almahmoud's (2012) study in which students felt positively towards English.

According to the findings of the present investigation, the undergraduate students of both sectors display a favorable and positive attitude towards English and Urdu and a negative attitude towards Punjabi. Highly positive and favorable attitudes are displayed towards the English language. English is considered the language of advancement and opportunities for better jobs. It is an international lingua franca used to communicate with the world. English is considered important and an advantage to Pakistan as a whole by the majority of the participants. These findings are in agreement with that of Mansoor's (1993).

With regards to Urdu language, the majority of respondents stated that scientific knowledge should be translated into Urdu. Similar finding was also observed by Almahmoud (2012). It is also seen that most of the participants have a positive attitude towards Urdu as well. The most important reason given by the students is that Urdu represents the true national identity of being a Pakistani. Most of the students identify themselves with Urdu and consider it a big part of their culture and heritage. The students find Urdu easier to speak and understand than Punjabi. Urdu is also seen as a beautiful, poetic language. Urdu is considered a prestigious language by the respondents. These findings are similar with that of Mansoor (1993). Students from both sectors display negative attitudes towards Punjabi. A large number of students think of Punjabi as a language with no future. Some students are of the view that they will make no progress if they study Punjabi as all the higher education is in English. The findings show that Punjabi is considered a rude, harsh and the language of the illiterate and uncivilized- a low class language by the majority of the respondents. Punjabi is not considered important by the students and the negative attitude towards Punjabi is distinctly shown. The findings

also indicate that Punjabi has no educational and economic value. The findings of this study are in line with that of Mansoor (1993).

The findings also reveal the students' positive attitude towards English language learning. The majority of the students think that their ability to speak English will facilitate them in getting a good job. This is in line with the findings of Rukh (2014), who found out that business students have a positive attitude towards English language learning.

The respondents, irrespective of their gender, have positive attitudes towards the English language, and English language learning and also stressed the importance of learning the English language. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Hashwani (2008).

The status of Punjabi language is declining day by day. The majority of students from both groups (public versus private) claim Urdu as their mother tongue and first language instead of Punjabi. The findings of the study also show that the respondents prefer using English and Urdu instead of Punjabi because it is the demand and requirement of modern day resulting in the decline of Punjabi. The respondents are of the view that Punjabi language is not being promoted at the government and educational level and is losing its importance. The students think of Punjabi as a derogatory language. Another reason given by the respondents for preferring Urdu over Punjabi is that Punjabi is not fulfilling their social and educational requirements. The overall findings show that Punjabi has lost its status. It is no longer considered a prestigious language and is losing its importance in the Punjabi society. The findings of this study agree with that of Gillani and Mahmood (2014) who conclude that students have a negative attitude towards Punjabi.

The majority of the respondents thought that Punjabi is awarded a very low status, whereas English is considered a status symbol. The results reveal that Punjabis are hesitant and feel ashamed of speaking Punjabi. For a language to progress, the speakers of that language must strongly identify themselves with that language and the group that speaks it. The results of the current study highlights



that the majority of students do not identify themselves with Punjabi and the group that speaks it. This clearly shows a negative attitude towards Punjabi language. The students are of the view that learning English will help them in getting a good job, whereas Punjabi language does not guarantee a good job. English is considered to be a gateway for a bright future whereas Punjabi is not. The findings of this study agree with the findings of Akram & Yasmeen (2011) who found out that the students of Faisalabad possess a positive attitude towards English language and a negative attitude towards Punjabi language.

The findings of the present study also highlight that the students consider English as the language of the educated class and as a language that leaves a good impression on others- it is a sign of refined, educated people - it is basically a status symbol. English is being used in education and the workplace in the formal domain. In the present study it is observed that the respondents show a preference for using English in the classrooms.

Urdu is a compulsory subject till intermediate level, so according to the respondents Urdu is progressing to a certain extent. Punjabi is a spoken language, with no kind of development and no government backing. According to the respondents Punjabi does not have a good future. English is progressing followed by Urdu but Punjabi is just an oral language. The findings reveal that Urdu and English are replacing Punjabi language. A sense of inferiority is leading to Punjabi language desertion. It is not considered a progressing language. Punjabi is not an economically advantageous language and the knowledge of Punjabi does not guarantee a job. This shows a negative attitude towards Punjabi. These findings are supported by the findings of Riaz (2011), who found out that in the urban areas Punjabi is not considered an important language and is not an economically advantageous language.

## **CONCLUSIONS.**

The findings of the study reveal that all the respondents hold highly favorable attitudes towards English. English is considered important because of its usefulness in international communication, education, for jobs and career advancements, therefore, resulting in gain and progress of the language. Positive attitudes are shown towards Urdu which is considered a prestigious language.

The findings reveal that the respondents have a negative attitude towards Punjabi mainly because it is not considered a language of prestige and refinement. Inter-generational language transmission plays a vital role in language maintenance, here, it has been implied for Punjabi. Punjabi is considered a low prestige language.

Urdu and English are languages of power and dominant as compared to Punjabi. The results of the study show that although Urdu is important for people when compared with English it is less important. Therefore, it can be summed up that attitudes towards English are the most positive, followed by Urdu and lastly the derogatory attitudes towards Punjabi. According to the findings of the study sector-wise, there is no difference in the attitude of undergraduate students towards the three languages. The findings regarding gender revealed that the male and female students of both sectors have similar attitudes towards English, Urdu, and Punjabi. Using Urdu and English in everyday life has resulted in the decline of Punjabi, but at the same time use of English in everyday life does not threaten the status of Urdu.

A comparative study should be done in all the universities of the province of Punjab to gain a wider perspective of the attitudes of students towards English, Urdu, and Punjabi. Further research into the effects of gender on attitudes to the other regional languages, for example, Pashto, Sindhi, and Balochi etc. would be useful in promoting the regional languages. It is also recommended that the same study should be done on students of different age groups. The attitudes of teachers towards English, Urdu

and Punjabi should also be studied to have an insight into their opinions regarding the three languages.

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