

Attitudes of Punjabi Speakers towards their Mother Tongue in Dilawar, Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

The study has investigated attitudes of educated and uneducated Punjabi speakers towards their native language. The comparison of attitudes of both kinds of people was an indication to know about the local usage of Punjabi language too. The researcher wanted to know whether the myths towards the use of Punjabi language in Pakistan are applicable or not. Research questions were designed to find out perceptions, feelings and thoughts of educated and uneducated Punjabis towards their mother tongue. For this purpose, researcher made use of quantitative method and the data was collected with the help of questionnaires, from the population of Dilawar, Punjab. Total number of participants were 100; 50 were educated and 50 were uneducated. The data was analyzed through SPSS and it was seen that Punjabi speakers disown their mother tongue in Pakistan because it does not give them access to power and job opportunities. Their reasons behind holding negative attitudes were quite instrumental as the state does not give prestigious status to Punjabi language when it comes to academics and jobs.

Keywords: *Attitude, Mother tongue, Punjabi speakers, Punjabi language, prestigious status.*

1. Introduction

Language is very important element in the lives of human beings. This is an integral part of their lives, not only because of the communicative role it plays but also because of the power (political, economic, and colonial) attached to it. As the stratification of nations and people, languages are also stratified in the world. Some languages are powerful, and others are weak. This depends upon the political control of their people. Therefore, people tend to generate attitudes/ beliefs/ ideologies towards particular languages. Those languages are labelled as strong whose speakers are having political control over particular area of world. Thus, positive attitudes are formed among people to learn and use those particular languages. They believe learning these languages can lead them to success and honor. On the other hand, weak languages are marginalized by their own people because they cannot make them powerful and in this way negative attitudes are formed for these languages. People do not want their children to learn the weaker

languages. Such negative attitudes are also said to be possessed by Panjabi speakers in Pakistan.

Pakistan is a country located in Asian continent and almost more than 70 languages are spoken in Pakistan (Ahmad & Rao, 2013). Urdu is the national language of the country and English is used as the official language. In fact, English language is used as the Second Language for higher education, professional forums, business, the trade overseas, travelling to other countries and communication with the rest of the world (Ahmad & Rao, 2013). These statuses have been given to English and Urdu language since the times of independence. Therefore, Punjabi speakers themselves are assumed to have negative attitudes towards their mother tongue. This study aims to explore whether the above mentioned details are also applicable in Dilawar, Punjab or not.

The current study aimed at answering the research questions i.e. (a). What are attitudes of educated Punjabi speakers towards their mother tongue? (b). What are attitudes of uneducated Punjabi speakers towards their mother tongue? and (c). What are the differences in the attitudes of educated and uneducated speakers of Punjabi language? Because the significance of this current study aims to research through presenting a theoretical framework to prove whether the assumptions of negligence of Punjabi by its speakers are also applicable in Dilawar, Punjab or not. This research was also important because it intended to cover both educated and uneducated Punjabi speakers at the same time. Moreover, it also compared their attitudes to find out real implementation of Punjabi language in Dilawar. Apart from this, the village Dilawar had never been chosen as research context in this regard. The study highlighted language shift from Punjabi to Urdu and English language more in educated people in comparison to uneducated People in Dilawar. But Punjabi is still used by both as soft power. This research can also be utilized in other contexts for many other languages to find out attitudes and impacts.

2. Literature Review

Punjabi language was spoken by 44.15% people in 1998 and today, it has 38.78% native speakers in Pakistan. This decline in the usage of Punjabi Language by its native speakers is because of the reason that the state has not given any official status to this language. Moreover, most of the parents prohibit their children to speak Punjabi language in Pakistan because Punjabi speaking children are connoted as village yokel and rustic. Siddique (2016) talked about how a school in Sahiwal showed negative attitude towards Punjabi language and prohibit students from speaking Punjabi language in and outside school and labeled it as "Foul language". This negative attitude towards Punjabi Language is from the British era. Unlike Sindh, in Punjab, when Britishers replaced Persian language from Punjab, they used Urdu instead of Punjabi and for this step, they gave explanation that we have used Urdu instead of Punjabi because Urdu is more refined form of Punjabi. In addition, Punjabi is a dialect of village yokel or of lower class.

The negative attitude towards Punjabi language by its own native speakers is not only because of Britishers only, but also because of Punjabi elites who after independence, deserted their own language to be the part of prestigious groups. Mansoor (1993) shares his survey result in which 59% Punjabi students had negative attitudes towards their

language. He shared an opinion of a Lahori man who was a cab driver and gave more importance to Urdu and tried to avoid conversations in Punjabi. This man believed that Urdu was a sweeter language and Punjabi was a dirty language therefore, he tried not to speak it at least in formal conversations.

He also shared a horrible fact that to what extent Punjabi speakers feel ashamed of their language that in the census of 1998, most of the educated, urban middle class Punjabis marked their mother language as Urdu instead of Punjabi. Rahman (1996) said that educated Punjabis prefer to teach their children in Urdu and English because they consider Punjabi as an unsophisticated and uncultured language.

According to Majeed (2016), she and her siblings were always ashamed of speaking Punjabi language and pretended that Punjabi is not their linguistic identity because of the negative reaction of people after listening Punjabi language and its linkage with the lower middle class. Zaidi (2015) said that Fazul Hussain, a Punjabi parliamentarian insisted on taking Oath in Punjabi language therefore, he was thrown out of parliament in the presence of hundreds of Punjabis on the order of speaker who was a Punjab native. Sabah (2018) in its article "Pakistan: A land of many languages" wrote that smaller languages and cultures are in danger due to globalization. Globalization is a predator and smaller languages are its prey. People are shifting from their mother tongue to other language for academic and economic reasons. Migration is also the reason of language shift (Agency, 2018).

According to Zaidi (2010), Punjabi graduates feel embarrassed of their linguistic identity and call themselves Urdu speakers. He also said that in Pakistan, languages except Urdu are neither accepted nor encouraged, they are just tolerated. Iqbal (2018) refers to Khoklove (2014) who said that most of the youth in Pakistan prefer English or Urdu language for their social and academic activities. They have negative and disrespectful attitude towards their own languages. He further says that Punjabis who are considered as the most educated group in the country are the most illiterate in their mother tongue. He calls this situation as 'Linguistic Schizophrenia'. research is to explore teachers' teaching practices of ECCE teachers Utilized in different context.

3. Research Methodology

In the current study, quantitative method was used to analyze and collect data. According to Williams (2007), it is a type of research method in which researcher collects data which is numeric in nature and uses mathematical models to analyze the data. The aim of the research was to know effects of the particular variable i.e. education on its speakers. Research aimed to find out perceptions of Punjabi speakers towards their mother tongue. Therefore, the researcher chose the quantitative method to maintain the objectivity of the research. A close ended questionnaire was used as the research instrument to collect the data. It had 20 items and it was divided into three sections. The questionnaire was adapted from Gillani & Asim (2014). The participants were contacted by the researcher through telephonic calls and later on, they were given the survey.

Researcher had done stratified sampling for this study because researcher had collected data from Punjabi speakers, who were divided into two categories, i.e. educated and

uneducated. The convenient method of sampling was also used as the researcher had selected the participants from the village Dilawar, Punjab. The convenient method was used because the researcher collected data from those participants who were easily available. Researcher had 100 participants for his research; out of which 51 participants were educated and 49 participants were uneducated. People who had done their matriculation and were enrolled in college or university were grouped as “educated” and those who left their schools after 8th class or had never gone to school were grouped as “uneducated”. The reason for choosing only 100 people was that Dilawar is an under developed area and mobile phones are not easily available to everyone there. Moreover, since the participants were approached through telephonic calls, it was experienced that the area also had very poor network signals. So the researcher was able to approach around 100 people as per convenience. Dilawar was chosen for this study since the research on this or similar topics were not done here and it was accessible to researcher therefore, the research preferred Dilawar over other cities.

4. Results and Discussion

In this study, the data was collected through a survey and it was analyzed by a software called SPSS. The researcher had used crosstab in SPSS to analyze data because the study aimed to show differences in the perceptions of educated and uneducated Punjabi speakers.

1. I know writing style (script) of Punjabi.

I know writing style (script) of Punjabi.			
	Yes	No	Total
Educated	26	25	51
Uneducated	1	48	49
Total	27	73	100

Majority of the speakers of Punjabi language are unaware of the writing script of Punjabi language. This question was answered by 51 educated and 49 uneducated speakers of Punjabi language. 26% educated and 1% uneducated Punjabi speakers said that they know writing script of Punjabi whereas, 25% educated and 48% uneducated Punjabi speakers said that they are not aware of the writing script of Punjabi language. Although, as compared to the uneducated ones.

2. I write text messages in ____.

I write text messages in				
	Roman Script	If others, specify	Don't use Punjabi	Total
Educated	38	13	0	51
Uneducated	18	12	19	49
Total	56	25	19	100

This question was also answered by 51 educated and 49 uneducated speakers of Punjabi language. It was actually shocking to know that none of the speakers said that they prefer Punjabi language in their typing. Mostly, uneducated speakers preferred Urdu in their

typing/letters whereas, educated people preferred to use Roman or English language. This showed the extent to which Punjabi speakers ignore their language and prefer other's language. This ignorance of Punjabi speakers towards their mother tongue is endangering Punjabi language.

3) I can read Punjabi.

	I can read Punjabi.					Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Educated	7	10	5	23	9	51
Uneducated	4	10	3	6	23	49
Total	11	20	8	29	32	100

This question also had 100 participants; 51 educated and 49 uneducated. 17% of the educated Punjabi speakers and 14% uneducated speakers agreed that they can read Punjabi language fluently. 32% educated and 29% uneducated Punjabi speakers said that they cannot read Punjabi language. Educated ones had more ratios because they had more exposure to read different texts as compared to uneducated ones. It was quite unexpected to get answers where speakers said that they cannot read Punjabi because Punjabi poetry had always been famous and is in approach to every person. This shows that how speakers, irrespective of their education, ignore their language and don't even bother to read Punjabi text.

4. I have read Punjabi as a subject.

	I have read Punjabi as a subject.		
	Yes	No	Total
Educated	5	46	51
Uneducated	0	49	49
Total	5	95	100

This study was conducted in one of the village of Punjab where Punjabi speakers are in majority. Unfortunately, only 5% of the educated speakers said that they have read Punjabi language as a subject whereas, 46% of the educated speakers and 49% uneducated speakers of Punjabi language said that they had never studied Punjabi as a subject. This shows that neither Punjabi speakers nor government cares about Punjabi language and how it is being in danger due to its speakers and state policy.

5. I prefer ____ language in my social life.

I prefer ____ language in my social life.

	Punjabi	Urdu	English	Total
Educated	3	30	18	51
Uneducated	28	19	2	49
Total	31	49	20	100

According to data collected from Punjabi speakers, it was found that 18% of educated Punjabi speakers prefer English language, 30% Punjabi speakers prefer Urdu and only 3% educated speakers use Punjabi language in their social life. On the other hand, 28% uneducated Punjabi speakers prefer Punjabi language, 19% prefer Urdu and only 2% use English language in their life.

6. I prefer ____ language in my professional life.

I prefer ____ language in my professional life.

	Punjabi	Urdu	English	Other	Total
Educated	9	22	15	5	51
Uneducated	30	7	5	7	49
Total	39	29	23	9	100

This table shows that 22% educated Punjabi speakers prefer Urdu, 15% prefer English and 9% prefer English language whereas, 30% uneducated Punjabi speakers prefer Punjabi, 7% use Urdu, 5% prefer English language and 7% prefer other languages. This graph shows that educated people are shifting from their own language whereas, quite few uneducated Punjabis show language shift. The reason behind can be that educated people living in Dilawar are migrating, their language needs are changing and they have to interact with people from different educational and social background therefore, they prefer English and Urdu in their professional life. On the other hand, uneducated Punjabis do not find any specific need to communicate in other's language, their interaction takes place with people of similar educational background therefore, and their ration to language shift is less than educated Punjabis.

7. I prefer _____ language in informal situations

I prefer _____ language in informal situations.

	Punjabi	Urdu	Total
Educated	11	40	51
Uneducated	36	13	49
Total	47	53	100

This table shows that 11% of educated Punjabis prefer Punjabi language and 40% of them use Urdu in their informal life. However, 36% uneducated Punjabi speakers prefer to speak in Punjabi language and 13% use Urdu in their social life. These results show that educated Punjabis ignore their mother tongue as compared to uneducated Punjabi speakers.

8. _____ Language is easier for me to speak.

_____ Language is easier for me to speak.

	Punjabi	Urdu	English	Others	Total
Educated	13	19	13	6	51
Uneducated	31	13	3	2	49
Total	44	32	16	8	100

This table shows ease and comfort of educated and uneducated Punjabis while speaking their own mother tongue and second language. According to the data collected, 13% educated Punjabis feel easy to speak their own language, 19% said that they feel easy to speak in Urdu language and 13% said that English language is easier for them to speak as compared to their own mother tongue. However, 31% uneducated Punjabis said that Punjabi language is easier for them to speak, 13% said that Urdu language is easier for them to speak and 3% said that English is easier to speak for them.

9. I am fluent in Punjabi.

I am fluent in Punjabi.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Total
Educated	28	10	13	51
Uneducated	35	6	8	49
Total	63	16	21	100

This table indicates that 38% of educated and 41% uneducated people are fluent in Punjabi. The ratio is quite closer between both types of participants. Punjabis are quite

fluent in Punjabi though they don't prefer their language in power domains. It doesn't matter that they are educated or not but they have access to their language in their homes. However, 13% educated people have not enough fluency of Punjabi. Because after being educated they think that Punjabi is not suitable for their children and it won't help them to achieve their goals.

10. My parents speak in ____ language among themselves.

My parents speak in ____ language among themselves.

	Punjabi	Urdu	Total
Educated	50	1	51
Uneducated	49	0	49
Total	99	1	100

This table shows that 50% of the parents of educated Punjabis prefer Punjabi to talk to each other. On the other hand, 49% of the parents of uneducated Punjabis also prefer to speak in Punjabi. This shows that first generation of Punjabi speakers is closer to their language and values it more than any other language. However, second generation ignores their language. This ignorance is increasing with an increase in education

11. I will prefer to speak in ____ language with my children.

I will prefer to speak in ____ language with my children.

	Punjabi	Urdu	English	No Response	Total
Educated	13	24	13	1	51
Uneducated	19	21	8	1	49
Total	32	45	21	2	100

According to above ratio shown in the table, 37% educated people give more priority to English and Urdu over Punjabi and only 13% educated people use Punjabi language with their children. Because they want their children to be more sophisticated and cultured.

12. I want to preserve language of my forefathers.

I want to preserve language of my forefathers.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Educated	19	24	7	1	51
Uneducated	36	9	4	0	49
Total	55	33	11	1	100

The above table shows that Punjabis want to preserve their language, whether they are educated or uneducated. In this regard education hasn't much affected their attitudes. They want to save the literature and want to publish the course books of Punjabi.

13. I feel proud while speaking Punjabi.

I feel proud while speaking Punjabi.

	Strongly			Strongly	
	agree	Agree	Disagree	disagree	Total
Educated	24	4	8	15	51
Uneducated	41	1	0	7	49
Total	65	5	8	22	100

According to the responses, education has put an immense impact on the attitudes of people. Among the total participants, 42% of uneducated people feel proud to use Punjabi language and they use Punjabi in their homes and friends as well. On the contrary, only 28% of educated people are proud of their language and don't feel shame while using Punjabi with their family and friends. While many of them think that Punjabi is rustic language and it is not going to give us any privilege, so we should avoid this language.

14. Print and electronic media should promote Punjabi language.

Print and electronic media should promote Punjabi language.

	Strongly			Strongly	
	agree	Agree	Disagree	disagree	Total
Educated	16	21	7	7	51
Uneducated	34	9	4	2	49
Total	50	30	11	9	100

This table shows that majority of the participant accord with the statement that Punjabi should be promoted through print or electronic media. However, they don't want Punjabi in hard power as it is not going to give them any advantage but they want it to be used in soft power. They want to promote language through print and electronic media, songs, movies, books etc., so that the language prospers.

15. Urdu has higher status than Punjabi.

Urdu has higher status than Punjabi.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Total
Educated	49	2	51
Uneducated	49	0	49
Total	98	2	100

The above table shows that all the participants believe that Urdu has higher status than Punjabi. According to them it is quite general statement and the fact because our language policy favors Urdu and English only. It does not promote Punjabi or other languages.

16. Medium of instruction should be Punjabi.

Medium of instruction should be Punjabi.

	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Educated	1	14	36	51
Uneducated	0	5	44	49
Total	1	19	80	100

In this table, 50% educated and 49% disagree with the view that Punjabi should be medium of instruction. Punjabi speakers are of this view because their language is neither having any status in the policy nor it helps children to get good job therefore, they don't prefer Punjabi to be the medium of instruction.

17. In modern age, Punjabi is advantageous.

In modern age, Punjabi is advantageous.

	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Educated	2	10	39	51
Uneducated	0	5	44	49
Total	2	15	83	100

In this table, 49% educated Punjabis and 49% uneducated Punjabis believe that Punjabi is of no use in today's time whereas, 2% educated think that Punjabi is useful in modern age as well.

18. Educating people in Punjabi will fail purpose of education.

Educating people in Punjabi will fail purpose of education.

	Strongly			Strongly	Total
	agree	Agree	Disagree	disagree	
Educated	9	6	9	27	51
Uneducated	21	1	4	23	49
Total	30	7	13	50	100

Education in mother tongue is linguistic human right of every individual. This table show that 15% educated and 22% uneducated Punjabis agree that educating people in Punjabi will fail purpose of education. However, 36% educated and 27% uneducated Punjabis disagree with this view. From the data collected, researcher finds out that uneducated speakers are more negative towards their mother tongue. They don't want Punjabi language to be the part of educational policy.

19. Punjabi should be promoted.

Punjabi should be promoted.

	Strongly			Strongly	Total
	agree	Agree	Disagree	disagree	
Educated	26	16	1	8	51
Uneducated	40	5	0	4	49
Total	66	21	1	12	100

This table shows that Punjabi speakers are interested towards promotion of their language. 42% educated and 45% uneducated speakers want their language to be promoted.

20. Punjabi is language of _____.

Punjabi is language of

	Prestige and			Total
	pride	Rustic people	Power	
Educated	5	34	12	51
Uneducated	1	31	17	49
Total	6	65	29	100

This table shows perceptions of Punjabi people towards their mother tongue. In the table, majority of educated and uneducated speakers have shown negative attitude for their language. 34% educated and 31% uneducated Punjabi speakers said that Punjabi is a language of rustic people.

It has been found from the data that Punjabi speakers do not prefer their mother tongue and give importance to other languages i.e. English and Urdu. The negative attitudes of Punjabi speakers towards their native language are the reason behind language shift of educated Punjabis. This 'language shame' of Punjabi speakers has endangered their language. The findings are in alignment with findings of Studer and Konstantinidou (2015) where the researchers had found that the attitudes of speakers towards any language have a lot to do with their linguistic self-confidence. The Punjabi language do not provide self-confidence to its speakers due to instrumental reasons. Moreover, youngsters are more likely to shift their linguistic identities, so they show more preference towards using English and Urdu than using Punjabi. Such patterns are showing similarity with the research of Bichani (2015) where she has showed that youngsters are seen showing more eagerness towards shifting their linguistic and cultural identities and going for global languages when it comes to usage in different settings.

Even though the educated Punjabis do not speak in their language and are also ashamed of it. However, they have love for their language and want it to prosper. Punjabi is neither official nor provincial language of country. In Pakistan, Punjabis are in the majority but, their language is not having any linguistic right. Therefore, this perception of Punjabis is right in a way that Punjabi is not a bread winning language.

It has also been revealed from the data that educated speakers are more negative towards their mother tongue. They don't want Punjabi language to be the part of educational policy. Research also indicates that education has also put an immense impact on the attitudes of people. This happens because educational norms do not show acceptance towards non-standard languages, so people are left with no options other than trying to be fluent in national and international language. In the journey, they leave their mother tongue in the backgrounds. Here the study of (Roos, 2016) is important because according to the findings of the study, education must show acceptance towards all the languages so that people can confidently use their mother languages in different settings.

Among the total participants, many uneducated people feel proud to use Punjabi language and they use Punjabi in their homes and friends as well. On the contrary, only few educated people are proud of their language and don't feel shame while using Punjabi with their family and friends. Most of them go for English and Urdu for instrumental reasons. Here, the findings are in alignment with the findings of (Getie, 2020) where it has been concluded that the attitudes of people directly depend upon their instrumental motivation to learn and use a language; they want to get good jobs and prestigious statuses in the society. While many of them think that Punjabi is rustic language and it is not going to give us any privilege, so we should avoid this language. The ratio of uneducated people using Punjabi language with their children is higher than educated people but not as high enough to save Punjabi language and literature. Uneducated people are coming after the

educated people, which reflects that Punjabi is soon to be in the list of endangered languages.

The data has indicated that unlike uneducated speakers, educated Punjabi speakers prefer to use Urdu and English in their social life instead of Punjabi to make themselves classier and sophisticated. Getie (2020) also found similar results in his research where people showed more inclination towards the language of power so they could get good jobs after mastering the language. This also shows that educated people are shifting from Punjabi language to the languages of power for their instrumental reasons.

However, uneducated are stick to their Punjabi language as it is fulfilling their needs of social life. The ratio of uneducated people who are not enough fluent speakers of Punjabi is quite low, as they give preference to Punjabi outside their homes and with their children as well. This shows that uneducated ones speak in Punjabi easily because it is their mother tongue; they have more access to it. In contrast, educated Punjabis feel easy to speak in their mother tongue as well as in their second language. Punjabi language is easier for them to speak because they have access to it in home and Urdu/English is convenient for them as it is the language they learn and use in their schools and professional life. Educated ones prefer to speak in languages other than Punjabi because they think Punjabi language is not fulfilling needs of modern age therefore, they devalue their own language and shift to others whereas, uneducated Punjabi speakers show less shift in language. But, it is also a fact that educated speakers make and bring change in society. Their language shift is negatively affecting their own language and may endanger it.

5. Conclusion

Punjabi speakers in Pakistan are not proud of their identity and language for many possible reasons; their language has never been given any prestigious and standardized roles in education, jobs, social circles, etc. people do not want to read and write in Punjabi because they know that they will not get respectful jobs if they use this language. Not only this, even if we talk about the conditions before the partition of Pakistan, the Punjabi language never achieved any standard role during the British era. Parents of young children do not want their children to use Punjabi in social and academic settings because they think that this language will keep their kids away from success and prestigious life unlike English and Urdu. Similarly, the youngsters also go for English and Urdu in order to get economic benefits in this technology oriented era. The research also concludes that first generation of Punjabi speakers is closer to their language and values it more than any other language. However, second generation ignores their language. This ignorance is increasing with an increase in education.

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