

**Language, Prestige and Linguistic Insecurity:  
The Case of English and Punjabi**



**BY**

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## **Abstract**

The research work is Language, prestige and linguistic insecurity: The case of English and Punjabi. The purpose of the research is to observe the attitude of a speech community towards its mother tongue. This research explores the status of two languages (Punjabi and English) in a speech community through its use and the consequent prestige attached to both of the languages. Moreover, it investigates the linguistic insecurity among the speakers of a speech community and the type of affiliation with the mother tongue in a comparatively developed global scenario. This dissertation finally offers a window to peep into the psychology of Punjabi speech community of Pakistani Punjab. The questions set for the research work were originated from the basic ideas of the issue. Two questionnaires were designed as tool and for the sake of data collection. The population size was of hundred out of which 50% (25% male and 25% female) are professionals from government, private organizations and 50%(25% male and 25% female) are students from different institutes. The questionnaire responses were analyzed with the help of percentages and frequencies, presented through frequency analysis tables and graphs. The responses of the respondents are measured by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and there is a statistical representation of the results. There are a number of research works on the psychology of the children (the detailed description of the works is in chapter two in 2.4.1) which prove that formal mother training on initial stage enhances the development of global language proficiency. The findings of the research throw light on the pedagogical shortcomings of the system in which the students use their mother tongue. The findings demand education policy making authorities to revise their policy, consider the language spoken by 44.15 %

people, the widely spoken language (Census 2001: 107) by making it a part of their educational policy. So, the Punjabi language is given a due prestige and its speakers use it confidently.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **1.1 Purpose:**

The purpose of the research is to identify the status of two different languages English and Punjabi by their use and to look into the fact, why do 80% of the educated Punjabi speakers prefer learning English language?, even at the cost of their mother tongue. Furthermore, it highlights the linguistic situation of English and Punjabi languages in the Punjab, province of Pakistan.

The purpose of the research is to observe the attitude of a speech community towards its mother tongue. This research explores the status of two languages (Punjabi and English) in a speech community through its use and the consequent prestige attached to both of the languages. Moreover, it investigates the linguistic insecurity among the speakers of a speech community and the type of affiliation with the mother tongue in a comparatively developed global scenario. This dissertation finally offers a window to peep into the psychology of Punjabi speech community of Pakistani Punjab.

## **1.2 Background:**

Pakistan is a multilingual country. There are four large speech communities in Pakistan i.e. Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi. Punjabi is the most celebrated and comparatively developed speech community located in the Punjab. The ratio of the English institutes and organizations is higher in Punjab as compared to those in other areas of Pakistan. In Pakistan the medium of instruction in education from initial to higher level is in English language. Punjabi speech community prefers to send their children in the English medium schools, for the sake of full understanding of English language which is not their mother tongue, they are taught this language even at homes before/after they are sent to the schools. In this way, even the personal and domestic functions of a language (Punjabi) are replaced by another language (English) and the use of Punjabi language is being restricted day by day in Punjabi speech community.

The Punjabi speech community is learning English at the cost of its mother tongue and treating English as a higher and Punjabi as a lower variety. This research is

trying to investigate the factors behind the phenomenon of why English language is being superimposed heavily on Punjabi language by Punjabi speakers?

There is a need to throw light on the linguistic situation of the Punjabi speech community of Punjab with two languages English and Punjabi and finding out the existing relationship between these two languages` functions and domains. The research brings forth linguistic choice, made by an individual or a speech community with his/its background information which influence his/its perception and language use.

In multilingual society Pakistan, the most spoken languages are not given due prestige, they are not used in formal settings and have no part in educational curricula. The research facilitates in finding out the element of language endangerment in such a multilingual speech community as Pakistan. This dissertation also address to the language planners to revise their strategies of language planning.

### **1.3 Research Questions:**

- Is there any difference in the speaker's perception about English and Punjabi in Punjabi speech community of Pakistan?
- Do English and Punjabi enjoy different types of prestige in Punjabi speech community?
- Is it "linguistic insecurity" which directs Punjabi speakers towards English as the prestige language?

### **1.4 Aims and objectives:**

The aims and objectives of the research are,

- Look at a number of factors in using two different languages English and Punjabi where Punjabi is the mother tongue of most of the population of Punjab.
- Highlight the perceptions and prestige attached to languages based on their use.
- Bring forth the factors which determine the use of these two languages English and Punjabi in a comparatively developed global scenario of Pakistan.

- Explore which language Punjabi or English is fulfilling the personal and domestic needs of the population of the Punjab along with fulfilling their socioeconomic and personal needs.

### **1.5 Significance of the study:**

The research is significant because it elucidates the reasons of giving up of “mother tongue” of a community or of an individual and learning of a language even at the cost of its/his mother tongue. The research also brings to light the element of self-fulfillment and confidence in using of a language in different domains.

The findings of the research bring forth quite an alarming situation about the use of Punjabi and English by the Punjabi speech community and demands amendments in the decisions of education policy makers. The findings demand to education policy making authorities, consider the language spoken by 44.15 % people, the widely spoken language (Census 2001: 107) by making it a part of their educational policy and selecting it as a medium of instruction for Punjabi speakers at least at primary level so that they feel no guilt in using Punjabi language.

The research throws light on the pedagogical shortcomings of the system in which, the students use their mother tongue. Firstly the teachers strictly snub them on using their mother tongue, then the class and the whole school system. The language (mother tongue) is finally negatively evaluated in the society and the society start to judge the speaker on the base of standard (low and high) because of his use of language. Punjabi language is facing the same dilemma in Pakistan.

Furthermore, it presents a detailed description of a number of case studies, expressing the same situation as of the current Punjabi speech community and provides a base for those who are interested in the Sociolinguistic phenomenon of language, prestige and linguistic insecurity.

### **1.6 Delimitations of the study:**

The attitude of the Punjabi speech community towards their mother tongue (Punjabi) can be investigated in different ways. However, this research is limited only to

the current attitude of the Punjabi speech community towards their mother tongue and English language in relation to the type of prestige (covert and overt) attached to both of the languages and pedagogical challenges involved in the phenomenon

The study is confined to the Punjabi speakers of Lahore city though it is applicable to almost all of the Punjabi speech community of Pakistani Punjab because the whole community faces the same dilemma as its speakers move towards modernization or they get educated.

### **1.7 An Overview of the Research design:**

Universe of the research is Lahore city. The target population has been divided into two strata from where the sample is chosen. The first stratum is of professionals of different fields and the second one is of the students of different subjects.

Target population of the research is being selected from the students and the professionals of Punjabi speech community located in Lahore. The least level of qualification for the selected population is of fourteen years of formal education means of graduation level. The selection of the current research site is essentially related to the population, more accurately to the class who generally maintain the standard. The research is limited to the students and professionals of the Punjabi speech community.

The researcher purposely selected five organizations (3 private+ 2 government) and five Universities (3 government + 2 private) for the sake of representative data. The anonymity of the selected organizations and universities was conserved to avoid any imminent setback.

The qualification of the population is from graduation to masters or above. The professionals of the sample are from the field of business management, commerce, medicine, engineering, technology and educational departments. The students are from different educational institution. The participants have been selected through Stratified Random Sampling under proportional allocation method. The size of the population is fifty from each of the strata. Fifty were selected from the stratum of professionals, working in the private or government organizations and fifty were from the stratum of students of different universities private or government. The subdivision of the fifty of each of the stratum as, twenty five were male and twenty five were female (50=25male+25female). The population`s age ranges between twenty to forty.

The questionnaire was developed as an instrument for the sake of data collection. The questionnaire was constructed by using five point Likert scale. The questionnaires are with the close ended questions in order to get exact responses of the respondents. There are two types of questionnaire being used in the research, questions of the first questionnaire are based on “language use” and of the second one “language preference”. The purpose of the questionnaires is to throw light on the general use and preference of language in different functions and domains of Punjabi speech community of Punjab, Pakistan.

#### **1.7.1 Key terms used in the research:**

**Prestige:** attached status or reputation.

**Covert prestige:** low type of prestige, evaluated negatively.

**Overt prestige:** high type of prestige, evaluated positively.

**Prestigious language:** a language which is given more prestige or considered as more standardized.

**Linguistic inequality:** inequality in languages that has linguistic reasons.

**Social inequality:** inequality in languages that is based on social reasons.

**Literacy education:** a proficiency in a language regarding its reading, writing and communication understanding.

**Medium of literacy education:** members of community, group of people.

**First language:** mother tongue (Punjabi language)

**Second language:** English

**Heritage language:** mother tongue

**Anglicization:** Three-generation language learning process

#### **1.8 Synopsis:**

The present study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 consists of a brief overview of the whole research work. It has basic points of the study as the purpose of the research, objectives of the research, delimitations and methodology.

Chapter 2 is “Literature review” explains works of the scholars related to the topic. It gives a detailed historical perspective of Punjabi language and the sociolinguistic perspectives engrossed in the research.

Chapter 3 is named as “Methodology”. It deeply explains the tools, population, sample size, the complete sample design and the type of the research and analysis.

Chapter 4 is entitled as “Data analysis” explains data description and observations through analysis.

Chapter 5 is of “Findings and recommendations”, which explains findings of the research and gives answers of the questions in detail.