

# Implicit Measure of Language Attitude: Study of Punjabi Native Speakers by Using Matched Guise Technique

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The current study aims to investigate the language attitude of Punjabi native speakers by using implicit measure technique of matched guise. Punjabi is the mother tongue of the majority of the population in Pakistan, but it has been observed that the Punjabi has not obtained the status of a prestigious language in the country. In the backdrop of such a situation, it was necessary to conduct research to compare the language attitude of the Punjabi native speakers towards their mother tongue in contrast with English and Urdu. It has been commonly observed that the direct techniques of language attitude like surveys by using interview or questionnaire often yield socially desirable responses. So, the use of an indirect technique like matched guise has been considered appropriate for analysing the subconscious thought patterns of the language speakers. In the current study, the matched guise technique required the respondents to rate the ten speakers on a seven-dimensional language attitude trait scale (LATS) which comprised twenty-seven personality traits. The findings indicate that the participants of the research awarded the best possible status to the English language; the status given to Urdu language was also quite high, while they perceived quite low status for Punjabi language. The results from the application of paired sample t test reveal that the language attitudes of Punjabi native speakers differ significantly across Punjabi, Urdu and English languages. The respondents showed the highest positive attitudes towards English language, high positive towards Urdu while their attitude towards Punjabi language was not very positive even on the dimension of solidarity. With respect to gender, no significant differences were recorded on the base of gender while the demographic variable of age was found to have significant influence on the formation of language attitude. The study implicates

that there is further need to collect data in order to explore and account for this age based variation. The study also implicates that there is dire need to counter the influence of English as international language to work for the development of indigenous languages like Punjabi. The study concludes that the process of language shift with respect to Punjabi language may take place as this implicit attitude is expected to find articulation in the language practice patterns of the respondents.

**Key words:** *Implicit language attitude, Lambert, Indirect technique, Matched guise technique.*

## Introduction

Pakistan is a linguistically rich country with more than seventy languages in use. Among the important languages are English with the status of the second language in the country; Urdu with the status of the national language and Punjabi with the status of the provincial language of the Punjab province (Abbas, & Iqbal, 2018). Besides Punjabi, there are Sindhi, Balochi and Pashto which are the provincial languages of the province of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa respectively (Rahman, 2011). There are other languages like Siraiki, Shina and Brahvi which are used to perform some limited functions within their own domains.

As mentioned earlier, Punjabi, Urdu and English are the important languages of the country and there are various reasons for their importance. English is the legacy of British colonisers and is considered a status symbol and a window to progress and success in life (Abbas, Aslam & Rana, 2011; Abbas, Aslam & Yasmeen, 2011). It is widely used in bureaucracy, judiciary and most importantly in the education sector (Abbas, & Iqbal, 2018). There are various private institutions that offer certificate courses and diplomas besides its regular implementation as medium of instruction in education sector (Abbas, Pervaiz & Arshad, 2018). The critics assert the importance of English because of its status in global linkage and business as well as considering it as the language of science and technology (Chohan, Abbas & Saleem, 2018).

The national language of the country is Urdu and enjoys a prestigious status in the country. It is taught as a subject and is also used as medium of instruction at various level of education (Abbas, & Iqbal, 2018). In situations where interlocutors belong to different languages and cannot understand one another, Urdu operates as lingua-franca to facilitate communication (Rahman, 2011). There are organisations like Urdu Language Authority and Centre for Language Engineering (Formerly known as CRULP – Centre for Research in Urdu Language Processing) that play a significant role in promoting the Urdu language. The researchers claim that the language policies have promoted Urdu at the cost of other languages.

Consequently, Urdu has become institutionalised while the other languages have been pushed to the background (Abbas, Pervaiz & Arshad, 2018).

The third important language of the country is Punjabi as it is the language that comprises approximately 45% of the population in the country. Despite this numerical majority, it has been observed that Punjabi has not obtained the status of a prestigious language in the country (John, 2015). Punjabi language has not gained prestige and status in the country and the researchers cite various reasons for this. In the earlier days of establishment of Pakistan, it was associated with Sikh identity and as a result, not given importance. Secondly, since the Punjabi population was already closer to power circle, they considered themselves safe in terms of safety of their culture or language (Abbas, Jalil & Rehman, 2019). The lower status of Punjabi language is attributed also to lack of its implementation in educational sector (Asher, 2008) as well as intergenerational transmission.

Since Punjabi native speakers have not paid much attention to the promotion and maintenance of their mother tongue (Abbas, Jalil & Rehman, 2019), they have been relying on Urdu or English for performing formal function while the use of Punjabi has been restricted to informal functions or limited domains (Zaidi, 2011). In the backdrop of such a situation, it was necessitated to conduct this research in order to draw comparison of the language attitude of the Punjabi native speakers towards their mother tongue Punjabi in contrast with English and Urdu.

## **Literature Review**

Crystal (1997) defines language attitude as a set of feelings entertained by individuals with respect to a language; of their languages or the language of the others. It is interesting to note that the area of language attitude research is ambivalent in nature as it includes the attitude towards a language, to the speakers and sometimes is broadened in order to include the discussions regarding language policies and phenomena like language shift and language maintenance (Fasold, 1996). This important area of research in sociolinguistics has attracted the attention of the multitude of scholars from across the globe. It occupies central focus in sociolinguistics as the survival of a language is dependent upon the extent with which a linguistic community use that language or think positive about that language (O'Rourke, 2005). The language attitude studies are helpful in capturing the changes occurring in the usage of and behaviour as well as attitude towards a language since these changes cannot be directly captured through speech data. Besides the importance of language attitude studies for these reasons, this research area has emerged with much potential because of globalisation and the increasing connectivity among diverse language communities.



The direct technique of language attitude and the use of questionnaire and interview is the commonly used mode of conducting research in the area of language attitude. Some of these important researches conducted by direct technique have been summarised and discussed for the readers to highlight the trends and the findings. Liu and Zhao (2011) studied the language attitude of university students from Mainland China in order to examine the language attitude of Chinese students towards English as well as Chinese languages with respect to their enthusiasm to study both the languages and the awareness about their ethnic identity. The data from the respondents revealed positive attitudes of the students towards English. The study further revealed the high motivation of the respondents to learn English language as they valued the English culture supplementary to English language. However, the respondents of the study also considered Chinese, their mother tongue superior to English in many ways. Habtoor (2013) explored the problem of language shift and maintenance in Saudi Arabia on Eritrean immigrant speakers of Tigrinya belonging to second generation. The data demonstrated that the respondents retained only a restricted aptitude and proficiency in Arabic language as they often translated Tigrinya into Arabic and vice versa. In Pakistani context, Khan (2016) conducted research with the findings that the Pashto speakers were in a process of shifting their language gradually. They exhibited the preference for Pashto only for their association with their Pashtun ethnic identity. Even this integrative significance of their tongue seemed to be ambivalent, complex and contradictory at times. The speakers of Pashto language expressed that they feel shy in speaking their language. The area of language attitude studies has been widely explored across the globe through matched guise technique as well. In doctoral dissertation by Kircher (2009) the evaluation of attitudes towards English and French displayed variation across different social variables. Kircher (2014) revealed that there was an overall positive attitude towards English more than towards French. In terms of solidarity, they articulated their solidarity with the French language in privacy while their attitude towards English was more positive than French as explained in terms of their social identity.

Since the current research aims at exploring the implicit language attitude of Punjabi native speakers, some of the researches conducted on Punjabi native speakers are summarised here. Among the research conducted on the language attitude of Punjabi speakers, Mansoor (1993) is the earliest as well as prominent. Her research concluded that Urdu is in the process of replacing Punjabi as their first language of the Punjabi students to some extent. The low status and prestige in which Punjabi is held by parents, teachers and society in general, was considered to have accelerated the process of language shift. According to Abbas Zaidi (2010), Punjabi has never been allowed to grow in any political era. He claimed that there has been very little debate on Punjabi culture in Pakistan and the sociocultural factors affecting the Punjabi language in Pakistan have been detrimental to its spread in society, teaching in schools, or its use in government and media. Riaz (2011) explored the status of Punjabi language by using ethnographic method of research and the focus of the study was

the use of language and language practices upheld by Punjabi native speakers. The findings reveal that the status of Punjab has been constrained to cultural perspective as its use is not encouraged by Punjabi speakers and the trends of language desertion are prominent in urban areas. This study by John (2015) on Punjabi language revealed that the respondents still consider the Punjabi language a part of their identity but the future of Punjabi language seems to be bleak unless the governments support it and its speakers realise its importance. Gulzar, Ali, Javid and Farooq (2018) conducted research on the prestige of Punjabi language with the purpose of exploring the language attitude of Punjabi speakers. According to them, Punjabi has been constrained to informal functions as the respondents preferred Urdu or English in formal settings and the use of Punjabi is not appreciated even by peers, the speakers of Punjabi feel shy in using Punjabi language for communication.

Some of these researches on Punjabi language hypothesize that the native speakers of Punjabi look down upon their language as Punjabi is considered a derogatory language. This theorizes the need to conduct the research to analyse the language attitude of the speakers of Punjabi to find out the ground realities by collecting empirical data from the speakers in a linguistically competitive environment. As mentioned earlier, there are two approaches namely behaviourist and mentalist approach used in order to the study the construct of language attitudes. Since the current study employs mentalist approach in order to address the construct of language attitude, some of the researches conducted across the globe were discussed above in order to highlight the importance of the research area. Within mentalist approach, there are researches conducted by using direct techniques through research instruments like questionnaire and interview which outnumber the limited research conducted by using indirect technique through matched guise data. There is dire need to explore the construct to explore the implicit dimension of language attitude by the use of indirect technique especially in Pakistani scenario and the speech community of Punjabi speakers. The current research has been designed to fill in the practical and theoretical gap by exploring the implicit language attitude of Punjabi speakers.

### **Research Methodology**

There are two theoretical approaches namely mentalist and behaviourist that are used to explore the research area of language attitude. Since the current research aims at exploring the subconscious mental state also called implicit attitude, mentalist approach to language attitude and the use of matched guise technique were considered appropriate choices. It has been commonly observed that the direct techniques of language attitude like surveys by using interview or questionnaire often yield socially desirable responses. So, the use of indirect technique like matched guise has been considered more appropriate for analysing the sub conscious thought patterns of the language speakers. In this technique, speech data of multilingual speakers is recorded in the desired languages and then randomly placed in

different slots. The respondents listen to them and rate them on different features, exhibiting their attitude towards the speakers but unconsciously towards the language.

In the current research, there were ten speakers proficient in Punjabi, Urdu and English who were recorded in these languages and placed in random slots. A sample of 94 respondents listened to the recorded data and rated the speakers on 27 personality features under seven dimensions developed for the current research. The first dimension of the construct with the name of behaviour included five attributes of personality such as being friendly, decent, polite, caring and formal. Physical appearance was the second measurement of the rating scale and three attributes of the personality such as being beautiful, smart and attractive were included in this aspect. The measurement of psychological strength comprised four attributes of personality like being intelligent, confident, passionate and focused. The solidarity as fourth measurement comprised the attributes such as like loyalty, reliability and familiarity. Four attributes of personality were included under the component of resourcefulness which were being poor (the reverse trait which was recoded later on as being rich), hardworking, educated and popular. The fifth measurement incorporated some important qualities like being humorous, introvert, happy, talkative and strict that were set under the name of general attitude. One measurement was there in the characteristic scale named as negative personality traits (NPT) that included three characteristics of personality such as rustic, conservative and boring. This measurement as negative statements implied that if the respondents appraised any appearance as higher, they would have contradictory approach in connection with that appearance and the other way around.

The scale was named Language Attitude Trait Scale (LATS) and reliability of the collected data on LATS was found to range between 0.74 and 0.86 on three languages under investigation which was within acceptable range. Since the purpose of the research was also to compare the attitude of the respondents across three languages involved in the study, the paired sample t-test was applied to see the significance of difference across three languages.

### **Data Analysis**

The results show that the research participants granted the most ideal position to English language; the position granted to Urdu language was also very high, whereas they identified very low position for Punjabi language. It is revealed by application of paired sample t test that the language attitude of Punjabi speakers contrasts altogether throughout Punjabi, Urdu and English languages. The participants demonstrated a very positive attitude towards English language, positive towards Urdu language whereas their attitude towards Punjabi language was less positive even on solidarity measurement. There were seven dimensions of the scale on which the respondents were asked to record their responses. The dimension wise analysis of the seven dimensions of the construct is presented in the table 1 below:

**Table 1:** Paired sample statistics on dimension wise mean score

Dimension	Statistics			
Behaviour		Punjabi Guise	Urdu Guise	English Guise
	MS	1.4257	4.3519	5.4483
	SD	.24206	.31345	.24604
		Punjabi-Urdu	Urdu-English	English-Punjabi
	T value	-69.278	-28.107	97.124
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
Physical Appearance		Punjabi Guise	Urdu Guise	English Guise
	MS	1.9025	4.2819	5.3773
	SD	.62004	.20622	.31502
		Punjabi-Urdu	Urdu-English	English-Punjabi
	T value	-40.260	-27.117	40.127
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
Psychological Strength		Punjabi Guise	Urdu Guise	English Guise
	MS	1.8098	4.2516	5.3540
	SD	.54472	.21121	.32230
		Punjabi-Urdu	Urdu-English	English-Punjabi
	T value	-46.903	-25.789	43.254
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
Solidarity		Punjabi Guise	Urdu Guise	English Guise
	MS	1.4245	4.1986	5.3823
	SD	.28086	.19807	.33925
		Punjabi-Urdu	Urdu-English	English-Punjabi
	T value	-73.789	-30.239	70.850
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
Resourcefulness		Punjabi Guise	Urdu Guise	English Guise
	MS	1.7061	4.3242	5.4790
	SD	.39917	.26359	.28756
		Punjabi-Urdu	Urdu-English	English-Punjabi
	T value	-61.795	-26.668	58.537
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
General Attitude		Punjabi Guise	Urdu Guise	English Guise
	MS	2.5943	3.7821	4.2889
	SD	.43989	.17116	.60904
		Punjabi-Urdu	Urdu-English	English-Punjabi
	T value	-20.244	-9.955	15.980
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000

Negative Personality Traits		Punjabi Guise	Urdu Guise	English Guise
	MS	5.3450	2.8589	1.5925
	SD	.34017	.24773	29131
		Punjabi-Urdu	Urdu-English	English-Punjabi
	T value	53.981	37.956	-71.196
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000

MS = Mean Score, SD = Standard Deviation, Sig = Value of Significance

The data collected through matched guise reveals interesting findings with English language receiving highest positive rating. The mean score on responses to English language remained between 5.57 and 4.37 other than the dimension of negative personality trait on which the score was 1.54 (if reversed, it would also be similar to other patterns). The lowest mean score was recorded for Punjabi language as the mean score ranged between 1.32 and 2.58 other than the dimension of negative personality trait on which it was 5.44 (if reversed, it would also be similar to other patterns). The mean score on responses to Urdu language was in the middle. The comparison of mean score through paired sample t test revealed that there existed significant differences in all three comparisons. The value of significance for the comparison of responses to Punjabi and Urdu language, the comparison of responses to Urdu and English language and the comparison of responses to English and Punjabi language was found to be 0.00 which was significant. Thus, it can be concluded that the language attitude of the respondents towards English was highly positive while the language attitude towards Punjabi was negative. The language attitude towards Urdu language was also recorded to be positive. The implicit measure of language attitudes revealed interesting findings as the rating of Punjabi language was not high even on the dimension of solidarity.

The upcoming part of the analysis addresses the results acquired from processing demographic data with the general mean score of language attitude. It contains the portrayal of cause-effect relationship of demographic data and perspectives of participants regarding Punjabi, Urdu and English languages. The overall mean score of the respondents on three languages engaged with the present research was determined and handled to see its relationship with the demographic data. The table 2 given below exhibits the independent sample t test results employed on the mean score in connection with the gender of the participants:

**Table. 2:** Gender based independent sample t-test statistics (matched guise data)

	Gender	MS	SD	T value	Sig
Punjabi	Male	2.19	0.26	-1.007	0.316
	Female	2.26	0.34		
Urdu	Male	4.06	0.10	1.063	0.291
	Female	4.02	0.17		
English	Male	4.79	0.22	0.311	0.756
	Female	4.77	0.30		

MS = Mean Score, SD = Standard Deviation, Sig = Value of Significance

Table 2 exhibits that in accordance with the statements regarding Punjabi language, the mean score of male group was 2.19, whereas the mean score of female group was 2.26. The comparison of responses of male and female groups revealed that the t value was -1.007 and the significance value was 0.316. As the significance value was higher than 0.05, no significant differences were observed between the views of male and female groups, however the female group mean score was little higher. The results regarding Urdu language exhibit that the mean score of male group was 4.06 whereas the mean score of female group was 4.02. The t value for comparing the responses on Urdu language was 1.063 and the significance value was 0.291 with respect to gender. As the significance value was higher than 0.05, no significant differences were observed among the perceptions of male and female groups; however, the mean score of male group was little higher. The mean scores of the male and female group with respect to English language were 4.79 and 4.77 respectively while the t value was 0.311. The value of significance was 0.756 and since it was above 0.05; there existed no significant differences in the responses towards English language on the base of gender. Age was the second demographic variable and the mean score of respondents on matched guise data was analysed by employing the variance analysis (ANOVA) test on the base of age. The findings of ANOVA test with respect to different age group have been presented in table 3 given below:

**Table 3:** Age based ANOVA statistics (matched guise data)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Punjabi	Between Groups	92.423	2	46.212	32.293	.000
	Within Groups	130.222	91	1.431		
	Total	222.646	93			
Urdu	Between Groups	5.855	2	2.928	6.404	.003
	Within Groups	41.605	91	.457		
	Total	47.460	93			
English	Between Groups	60.202	2	30.101	26.614	.000
	Within Groups	102.923	91	1.131		
	Total	163.125	93			

The table reveals the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) employed on the mean score on of the respondents with respect to the demographic variable of age. The comparison of the mean score of different age groups in connection with the responses regarding Punjabi language demonstrates that the F value was 32.293 and the significance value was 0.000. The comparison of the mean score of different age groups in connection with the responses regarding Urdu language demonstrates that the F value was 6.404 and the significance value was identified as 0.003. The mean score comparison of the different age groups regarding English language exposes that the F value was 26.614 whereas the significance value was determined as 0.000. As the value of significance for all the comparisons was found to be lesser than 0.05, significant differences were recorded in the perceptions of different age groups in connection with their mean score for each of three languages under investigation.

## Conclusion

The current study was designed to investigate the implicit language attitude of the Punjabi native speakers towards Punjabi, Urdu and English. The previous studies on Punjabi have been conducted by using direct technique through research instruments like interview and questionnaire. The current research was unique in the sense that it investigated the language attitude by the use of indirect technique through matched guise data. The study concludes that the respondents hold English language quite high; Punjabi is at the bottom while Urdu language in the middle. The perceptions of the respondents differed significantly from language to language. With respect to gender, no significant differences were recorded on the base of gender while the demographic variable of age was found to have significant influence on the formation of language attitude. The study implicates that there is a further need to collect data in order to explore and account for this age based variation. The study also implicates that there is dire need to counter the influence of English as international language to work for the development of indigenous languages like Punjabi. The study also implicates that the process of language shift with respect to Punjabi language may take place as this



implicit attitude is expected to find articulation in the language practice patterns of the respondents.

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