

## **Urdu or English as Official Language - Perceptions and Preferences of Students and Teachers**

**Perveen Naseem  
Mehmood Ul Hassan  
Asma Saman  
Samia Sajid**

=====

### **Abstract**

The current study aims to explore the preferences and perceptions of the teachers and students towards Urdu and English as an official language. In a multilingual country like Pakistan, this preference varies from one family to another, one society to another society and from one region to another. A sample population was taken from different schools and colleges of District Pakpattan. Data was collected from 30 teachers and 70 students through a Questionnaire by applying simple random technique. The study reveals that in spite of the fact that Urdu is the National language of Pakistan, students and teachers preferred English language as an official language.

**Keywords:** Teachers, Students, Official language.

### **Introduction**

Language is the main source of transmission of information and sharing of knowledge. The concept of silent society wherein no language is spoken would not be acceptable. No doubt, preferences and perceptions change with the passage of time.

Nisar and Ahmad (2011) made a research and the major purpose of the study was to investigate the discrepancy in performances of students of English and Urdu medium schools at the Higher Secondary School Level. He concluded that students of English medium schools performed better than the students of Urdu medium schools in the subjects of English and Physics than in the subject of Urdu. It was recommended that medium of instruction for science subjects at the secondary level should be English.

Grittner (1974) was of the observation that scholars must know that the language they learn makes them ingenious and so in this way their level of curiosity and stimulus can be increased among L2 learners.

Dornyei (1994) stated that the nature of communal and hardheaded measurements of target language rest on who, what and where i.e. who learns the language, what language and where.

Khlique presents examples of the language boundary, the insights and consideration of the followers of banished communities across Pakistan, the switch over from one to the other in a specific state of affairs and its end product. These examples were from the author's work as a community development professional. Most of the people cross-examined and most of the events chronicled for the purpose of this analysis tangled individuals who speak Urdu as their second language. The evidence and investigation was not necessarily organized in an undeviating fashion but there was an attempt to monitor a configuration.

Ahmad (2011) stated that the medium of instruction is a provocative concern in Pakistan because different languages are used. In addition to Urdu as the national language of the country, English functions as the language of Masters. People living in different parts of the country speak different mother tongues/languages. He stated that we can't have improvement in the standards of education with a foreign language as the medium of instruction and that we should uphold our own National language and should take it the medium to convey knowledge in our institutions.

Shamim (2007) concluded in his research that English as the language for development has not helped the political awareness and formal discourse in Pakistan and has become a travel document to success, upward social mobility, and key to national development.

Jalal (2004:24), a former education minister, contends when we chip in to the experts' view that the cost-effective future of Pakistan is allied with the extension of information technology, it means that we need to be acquainted with the need for making the intellectual capacity and use of English as well-known as possible. This is now an imperative public obligation, and the governance management should take it as its duty to fulfill this obligation.

Reviewing the literature on this subject, it was felt inevitable to do a survey-based study to explore the students' and teachers' preferences relating to the official language in Pakistan: Should it be English or Urdu?

## **Objectives**

Following objective were set to move into the current study:

1. To explore perceptions of the teachers towards their preferences regarding Urdu or English as official language.
2. To explore perceptions of the students towards their preferences regarding Urdu or English as official language.
3. To find out importance of Urdu or English as official language

## Methodology

The current research was survey based. A questionnaire was used as research tool to conduct the survey. English and Urdu teachers and students in district Pakpattan was the population of this research study. Random sampling was applied in the selection of population. The research was quantitative in nature. The data were collected through questionnaire and then analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS. The outcomes of the study were discussed one by one and at the end discussion was generalized to the teachers and students of district Pakpattan in Punjab.

**Table 1 Showing results about perceptions of the teachers towards their preferences regarding Urdu or English as Official Language.**

Statements	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
English fulfills the demands of modern era.	30	1.70	.118	.651	.424
Urdu fulfills the demands of modern era.	30	2.16	.136	.746	.557
English should be an official language.	30	3.03	.139	.764	.585
Urdu should be an official language.	30	1.56	.141	.773	.599
Majority of people know English Language in Pakistan	30	2.93	.165	.907	.823
Majority of people know Urdu Language in Pakistan.	30	1.86	.184	1.00	1.01
Teaching method should be in English in Pakistan completely.	30	3.06	.178	.980	.961
Teaching method should be in Urdu in Pakistan completely.	30	2.20	.200	1.09	1.20
English should be an elective subject at B.A level.	30	2.46	.207	1.13	1.29
Urdu should be an elective subject at B.A level.	30	2.73	.172	.944	.892
All competitive exams should be held in English.	30	3.13	.157	.860	.740
All competitive exams should be held in Urdu.	30	2.30	.204	1.11	1.25
Our surroundings are suitable to learn English.	30	2.86	.190	1.04	1.08
Our surroundings are suitable to learn Urdu.	30	2.03	.155	.850	.723
Our science curriculum should be in English.	30	2.30	.192	1.05	1.11
Our science curriculum should be in Urdu.	30	2.16	.173	.949	.902

We feel proud to speak English.	30	2.13	.196	1.07	1.15
We feel proud to speak Urdu.	30	1.73	.158	.868	.754
We can make progress without English.	30	2.40	.189	1.03	1.07
We can make progress without Urdu.	30	3.33	.129	.711	.506

The above table shows statistics analysis about the perception of the teachers towards their preferences regarding Urdu or English as official language in Pakistan. The results reveal that the mean score in statement one about English is 1.70 and Urdu 2.16 , in statement two about English is 3.03 and Urdu is 1.56 , in statement three about English is 2.93 and Urdu is 1.86, in statement four about English is 3.06 and Urdu is 2.20 , in statement five about English is 2.46 and Urdu is 2.73 , in statement six about English is 3.13 and Urdu is 2.30, in statement seven about English is 2.86 and Urdu is 2.03 , in statement eight about English is 2.30 and Urdu is 2.16, in statement nine about English is 2.13 and Urdu is 1.73 , in statement ten about English is 2.40 and Urdu is 3.33 , from minimum 1.56 and goes up to maximum 3.06 which shows teachers' perception are very favorable towards English or Urdu as official language. While standard error and std. Deviation mean score is nominal.

**Table2 showing about perception of the students towards their preferences regarding Urdu or English as Official Language**

Statements	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
English fulfills the demands of modern era.	70	1.72	.109	.915	.838
Urdu fulfills the demands of modern era.	70	2.20	.096	.809	.655
English should be an official language.	70	2.65	.114	.961	.924
Urdu should be an official language.	70	1.81	.113	.952	.907
Majority of people know English Language in Pakistan	70	3.02	.105	.884	.782
Majority of people know Urdu Language in Pakistan.	70	1.52	.090	.756	.572
Teaching method should be in English in Pakistan completely.	70	2.94	.118	.991	.982
Teaching method should be in Urdu in Pakistan completely.	70	2.21	.105	.882	.780
English should be an elective subject at B.A level.	70	2.30	.130	1.09	1.19
Urdu should be an elective subject at B.A level.	70	2.24	.124	1.04	1.08

All competitive exams should be held in English.	70	2.81	.110	.921	.849
All competitive exams should be held in Urdu.	70	2.41	.115	.970	.942
Our surroundings are suitable to learn English.	70	2.94	.111	.930	.866
Our surroundings are suitable to learn Urdu.	70	1.95	.104	.875	.766
Our science curriculum should be in English.	70	2.11	.117	.986	.972
Our science curriculum should be in Urdu.	70	2.40	.112	.938	.881
We feel proud to speak English.	70	1.75	.112	.939	.882
We feel proud to speak Urdu.	70	1.68	.094	.790	.624
We can make progress without English.	70	3.07	.115	.967	.937
We can make progress without Urdu.	70	3.01	.122	1.02	1.05

The above table shows statistics analysis about the perception of the students towards their preferences regarding Urdu or English as official language in Pakistan. The results reveal that the mean score in statement one about English is 1.72 and Urdu 2.20 , in statement two about English is 2.65 and Urdu is 1.81 , in statement three about English is 3.02 and Urdu is 1.52, in statement four about English is 2.94 and Urdu is 2.21 , in statement five about English is 2.30 and Urdu is 2.24 , in statement six about English is 2.81 and Urdu is 2.41 ,in statement seven about English is 2.94 and Urdu is 1.95 , in statement eight about English is 2.11 and Urdu is 2.40, in statement nine about English is 1.75 and Urdu is 1.68 , in statement ten about English is 3.07 and Urdu is 3.01

## Discussion

First the present study explored the intentions, perceptions and preferences of teachers and students towards English or Urdu as an official language. Mostly teachers preferred English language having a fundamental role in our education because it accomplishes the anxieties of modern era and they believed that in our institutions teaching and learning should be in English because all the competitive exams are seized in English language. The present-day knowledge of all fields are accessible in English language and they are of the opinion that they feel proud in speaking English and they can make progress with learning the English language. Most of the population of Pakistan is living in the rural areas so they are unaware of ABC of English. So English should be an enforced subject in our institutions. Some gave positive response about English. In urban areas, of course, teachers as well as students favored English language.

Secondly the perceptions of students were also of the same opinion that English as an official language enables them to understand latest invasion in knowledge. It is the doorway to

higher education to achieve triumph in every field of life today. Most innovative books are available in English language. They became able to earn most recent information at latest and universal level. They are engrossed to get good grades and good employment. They want to apply for higher education. It would benefit them in their imminent career as well. They want to go overseas.

Thirdly English is very much obligatory for the people of Pakistan, it is not just for their subjective coaching but at the same time it is one of their most central and grave need. They want to first get to know the language in which the dealing and negotiation will take place because if the communication obstruction is not detached than no improvement and no benefit will be taken from all such communications and dialogues and at the same time it is also being implicit as the dishonor for the national people if the officials and the exemplifications of the state are unable to converse.

The education all over the biosphere is being mainly directed in English language and in the countries like USA and UK which are deliberated to be one of the most established motherlands of the world also have English as the official language so if Pakistan has the objective of ambulatory side by side to such rational countries they will have to advance their proficiency in the English language so that they can best make use of this opportunity. The resolution and need of increasing the enthusiasm of having the good command over the English language can be resolute through the attention of the educational boards in Pakistan which are profoundly stressing on the English medium education reported on all the government and private sectors. The educational institutions have recognized the need and the importance of the English language and for this very purpose they have inculcated the method of education in the English language so that the children can have respectable secure foundation on the subject of this language from the primary stage of their existence.

As it was a survey study so during the collection of our data we face some problems. Students and teachers were hesitant to fill the questionnaire. The language of the questionnaire is in Urdu because it is very easy for the participants to understand it and express their ideas and understandings about Urdu and English language. So it's a practice which makes them realize the importance of English language and appreciate English language as the results are illustrating which are in the favor of English language.

## Conclusion

It is concluded that there is a great need for our teachers as well as our students to learn English. It is the need of the day that we should apply those strategies and techniques which are helpful to learn English language.

---

## References

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:3 March 2015

Perveen Naseem, Mehmood Ul Hassan, Asma Saman and Samia Sajid

278

Urdu or English as Official Language - Perceptions and Preferences of Students and Teachers

Nisar, A. & Ahmad, S.I. (2011). Scholar Performance of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Graduates of English and Urdu Medium Schools: A Comparative Study. Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com). Vol.11.pp. 352-361.

Grittner, F.M. (Ed.1974).Student Motivation and Language Teacher. Skokie, III: National Textbook.

Dornyei, Z. (1994).Motivation in the Foreign Language Classroom. The Modern Language Journal, 78(3) pp. 273-284.

Khalique, H. The Urdu-English Relationship and Its Impact on Pakistan's Social Development. The Annual of Urdu Studies. Pages 99-112

Ahmed, S. (2011). Issue of medium of instruction in Pakistan. International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Volume: 1(1).

Shamim, F. (2007). English as the language for development in Pakistan: Issues, challenges and possible solutions. In H.Coleman (ed.), Language and Development: Africa and Beyond: Proceedings of the 7th International Language and Development Conference, 97-116. Addis Ababa: The British Council. Available at [www.langdevconferences.org](http://www.langdevconferences.org)

Jalal, Z. (2004). Language policy in Pakistan. In S.Mansoor, S.Meraj and A.Tahir (eds), Language Planning, Policy and Practice: A South-Asian Perspective. Karachi: Aga Khan University and Oxford University Press.

=====

Perveen Naseem

[perveenshadch@yahoo.com](mailto:perveenshadch@yahoo.com)

M.Phil Scholar of Linguistics, University of Lahore, Pakpattan campus, Pakistan.

Mehmood Ul Hassan

[mehmood.uol@gmail.com](mailto:mehmood.uol@gmail.com)

Head, Department of English, University of Lahore Pakpattan, Pakistan

Asma Saman

[Asmasaman045@gmail.com](mailto:Asmasaman045@gmail.com)

M.Phil Scholar of Linguistics, University of Lahore, Pakpattan campus, Pakistan.

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 **15:3 March 2015**

Perveen Naseem, Mehmood Ul Hassan, Asma Saman and Samia Sajid

279

Urdu or English as Official Language - Perceptions and Preferences of Students and Teachers

Samia Sajid

[diyasaim@yahoo.com](mailto:diyasaim@yahoo.com)

M.Phil Scholar of Linguistics, University of Lahore, Pakpattan campus, Pakistan.