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Attitudes and Perceptions of Non-Punjabi Speakers Toward the Punjabi Language

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ABSTRACT

In a multilingual sociolinguistic setting in Pakistan, this study examines how non-Punjabi speakers feel about the Punjabi language. A structured questionnaire given to thirty non-Punjabi speakers and semi-structured interviews with chosen participants were used in a mixed-methods approach to gather data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data and thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative responses. The results show that non-Punjabi speakers recognize Punjabi as a significant regional language with rich historical and cultural significance and they typically have positive cultural and emotional attitudes toward the language. However, Punjabi is generally regarded as less formal and prestigious especially when compared to Urdu and English and is deemed inappropriate for formal and academic contexts. Two major factors influencing these perceptions were found to be social stereotypes and a lack of institutional support. In order to advance linguistic equality in Pakistan the study underlines the complexity and diversity of language attitudes as well as the necessity of inclusive language policies and increased institutional recognition of Punjabi.

Keywords: Punjabi language, non-Punjabi speakers, language attitudes, language perceptions, sociolinguistics.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In multilingual societies, language is crucial in determining social identity cultural values and interpersonal relationships. Languages serve as symbols of power prestige and social belonging in these situations in addition to being tools for communication. Pakistan is a linguistically diverse nation where English the official language and Urdu the national language coexist with a number of regional languages. In terms of native speakers Punjabi is the most commonly spoken of these regional languages.

Punjabi holds a complicated sociolinguistic position despite having a large speaker base. It is frequently ignored in formal contexts like education administration and official discourse despite being widely used in informal and domestic domains. Because of this Punjabi is perceived differently by speakers of other languages.

Non-Punjabi speakers frequently develop opinions about Punjabi based on cultural representations social stereotypes and public language usage patterns. Language attitudes and perceptions are essential to comprehending how languages are assessed in society according to sociolinguistics. These attitudes affect intergroup relations language choice and language maintenance or shift. Researching how non-Punjabi speakers view Punjabi



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sheds light on more general problems with linguistic hierarchy identity formation and social inequality in multilingual societies like Pakistan.

Compared to Urdu and English, Punjabi frequently lacks institutional support and social prestige despite being the most widely spoken regional language in Pakistan. Particularly among non-Punjabi speakers this disparity has led to the formation of particular attitudes and perceptions regarding Punjabi. These opinions could include the idea that Punjabi is only used in domestic or rural settings is less formal or is informal. Empirical sociolinguistic studies that concentrate on the perceptions of Punjabi by non-Punjabi speakers are conspicuously absent. There is a gap in our knowledge of intergroup linguistic perceptions because the majority of current research focuses on the attitudes of Punjabi speakers or language policy issues. It is challenging to comprehend Punjabis sociolinguistic status and the causes of its marginalization without addressing these attitudes. By methodically investigating non-Punjabi speakers' attitudes and perceptions of the Punjabi language within a sociolinguistic framework this study aims to close this gap.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

- i) To explore the attitudes of non-Punjabi speakers toward the Punjabi language.
- ii) To identify common perceptions associated with Punjabi among non-Punjabi speakers.
- iii) To examine how social factors such as education, age, and linguistic background influence these attitudes.
- iv) To analyze the perceived social status and prestige of Punjabi in a multilingual society.
- v) To contribute to sociolinguistic discussions on language attitudes and linguistic inequality.

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i) What attitudes do non-Punjabi speakers hold toward the Punjabi language?
- ii) How do non-Punjabi speakers perceive the social status and usefulness of Punjabi?
- iii) What stereotypes or social meanings are associated with Punjabi by non-Punjabi speakers?
- iv) Do demographic factors influence non-Punjabi speakers' perceptions of Punjabi?

1.4 Scope of the Study

For a number of reasons this study is important. By increasing research on language attitudes in multilingual societies it advances the field of sociolinguistics academically. It offers factual information on intergroup linguistic perceptions a topic that has received little attention in the Pakistani context. Socially the study contributes to increasing awareness of implicit prejudices and stereotypes related to regional languages such as Punjabi. Gaining insight into non-Punjabi perspectives can encourage inclusivity tolerance and respect for other languages. The results may also alert educators, legislators and language planners to the necessity of reevaluating Punjabis place in public life and education.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study only looks at people who don't speak Punjabi and live in multilingual settings. Rather than actual language proficiency or usage patterns the research focuses on attitudes and perceptions. Although the results might indicate more general sociolinguistic patterns, they are not meant to be representative of all non-Punjabi speakers in Pakistan.



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1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study is delimited in the following ways:

- The participants are limited to non-Punjabi speakers.
- Rather than comparing Punjabi to other regional languages the study concentrates on how Punjabi is perceived.
- Because of time and resource limitations data is gathered in a restricted geographic and social context.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

People's motivation to learn and use a language is greatly influenced by their perceptions of it according to Gardner and Lamberts (1972) groundbreaking study on language attitudes. Their research established the notion that languages have social connotations other than communication such as prestige or stigma. Despite the fact that their study concentrated on second-language acquisition it is extremely pertinent to the current investigation since it emphasizes how attitudes influence language assessment especially for non-native speakers. According to their research language marginalization a phenomenon seen in regional languages like Punjabi—may be exacerbated by unfavorable opinions.

Giles and et al. (1977) put forth the Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory highlighting the close connection between language attitudes and power dynamics and group identity. Languages connected to dominant social groups are generally viewed more favorably according to their research. This study is important because Punjabi frequently lacks institutional power despite having a sizable speaker base. Therefore, rather than linguistic characteristics non-Punjabi speakers' opinions of Punjabi may be a reflection of larger social hierarchies.

Rahman (1996) investigated attitudes toward regional languages including Punjabi in his study on language ideology in Pakistan. He discovered that Punjabi is frequently seen as a low-status language connected to informality and rural identity particularly by urban elites and non-Punjabi speakers. His study demonstrates how discriminatory or derogatory attitudes toward Punjabi are influenced by state language policies and educational methods. By placing non-Punjabi perceptions within Pakistan's sociopolitical framework this study directly informs the current research.

Mansoor (2005) examined how Pakistanis felt about different languages with a particular emphasis on language use in official and educational contexts. Despite their cultural value regional languages are frequently seen as unsuitable for socioeconomic mobility according to her findings. Many non-Punjabi speakers believed that Punjabi in particular was unfit for formal use. This study bolsters the claim that language attitudes are heavily influenced by functional perceptions.

Schiffman (1996) proposed the idea of linguistic culture contending that social norms and cultural beliefs are intricately linked to language attitudes. According to his research unfavorable opinions about a language may endure even in the absence of clear language regulations prohibiting it. When applied to Punjabi this framework clarifies why despite the languages widespread usage non-Punjabi speakers might have preconceived notions about it. In order to analyze implicit attitudes toward Punjabi this study offers a theoretical framework.

Edwards (1982) studied how listeners relate languages to social characteristics like social class intelligence and friendliness. His results imply that rather than being linguistically informed language attitudes are frequently stereotype-driven. This study is important because social stereotypes rather than true language proficiency or structure may also



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influence how non-Punjabi speakers perceive Punjabi.

The function of language attitudes in language maintenance and shift was investigated by Baker (1992). He maintained that unfavorable opinions held by non-native speakers can hasten the demise of regional or minority languages. This framework when applied to Punjabi aids in explaining how negative attitudes held by non-Punjabi speakers may be a factor in the languages limited usage in formal contexts.

Fishman (1991) highlighted the connection between intergroup relations language and identity. He maintained that regardless of the size of the speaker population dominant languages frequently eclipse regional languages. Despite being widely spoken Punjabi is still socially marginalized especially in the eyes of non-Punjabi speakers. This theory is extremely pertinent to Punjabi.

Ladegaard (2000) used perception-based evaluation methods to examine implicit attitudes. According to his research listeners frequently unintentionally link non-standard or regional languages to inferior status. This study clarifies unconscious prejudices against Punjabi among non-Punjabi speakers and supports the use of attitude measurement instruments.

According to Jabeen and Rasheed's (2018) investigation into attitudes toward regional languages a large number of respondents thought that these languages were socially restrictive but culturally rich. Punjabi was more frequently linked to humor and informality than to authority. This study emphasizes the need to take a closer look at non-Punjabi viewpoints and directly supports the current research.

Zaidi (2010) argued that the Punjabi languages dissemination in Pakistani society and its teaching in schools have suffered or how the government and media employ it. In Pakistan it is evident that Punjabis have never been able to find even a passing reference. When the teaching of much smaller languages such as Pashto and Sindhi was recognized. As a result, Punjabi has very little vitality in Pakistan's larger sociocultural context. Stated that the Punjabi people have been abandoned by the state or the ruling class. He mentioned that Punjabi history in Pakistan is not all that different from African history where Indigenous languages are viewed as inferior or vulgar while colonial languages are regarded as superior.

Gillani et al. (2014) Highlighted that language is one of the most significant markers of identity and social standing. Punjabi is spoken by many people in Pakistan. Due to people switching from Punjabi to Urdu in order to meet the demands of the modern world the Punjabi language is becoming less popular in Punjab Pakistan. People's attitudes toward their mother tongue have changed particularly among the younger generation who no longer speak it. They examined the various perspectives that Punjabis have about the Punjabi language. A survey study was carried out to investigate how the younger generation feels about Punjabi. Urdu is replacing Punjabi as the dominant language. According to the opinions of the younger generation Punjabi is neither encouraged nor prohibited so this study concludes that it is a tolerated language.

Hussain et al (2020) discussed linguistic perspectives and the elements that lead to the marginalization of Punjabi a widely spoken language in Pakistan. A mixed-methods approach was used in the study. The study used racializing and curricularizing language theories to critically examine Punjabi marginalization and advancement in Pakistan. Punjabi is the most widely spoken language in Pakistan. Although Punjabi predominates in everyday life it is marginalized in formal and public discourse creating issues with access social engagement and marginalization for Punjabi speakers. It also emphasized the necessity of promoting Punjabi in public spaces and the media in order to dispel myths and promote ethnic pride. Punjabi education digital language and infrastructure are all encouraged by the study. It highlighted the importance of promoting Punjabi in public and



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in the media in order to eradicate prejudices and foster ethnic pride. As part of Pakistan's linguistic dynamics this study highlighted Punjabi culture and language which may contribute to the development of a more hospitable society.

Kanwal et al. (2024) explored the sociolinguistic elements causing the Punjabi languages decline in Pakistan. The predominance of Urdu and English which have permeated many aspects of public and private life poses serious challenges to Punjabi one of the most widely spoken languages in Pakistan. They investigated how Punjabi speakers perceive the status and usage of their language. The results showed that the decline in Punjabis status and usage among younger generations is largely due to socioeconomic pressures educational policies that favor Urdu and English and a lack of institutional support for the language. The study also emphasized the cultural and emotional effects of language change highlighting how language death jeopardizes Punjabis rich cultural legacy. By suggesting focused tactics to advance Punjabi through educational programs and community involvement this study added to the larger conversation on language preservation and revitalization. The study's conclusion emphasized how urgently policies that acknowledge and protect linguistic diversity as an essential part of Pakistan's cultural landscape are needed.

Khan et al. (2025) examined Punjabi and Pashto speakers, attitudes regarding language their regional tongues in addition to English and Urdu. It draws attention to the impact of multiple factors such as social hierarchies' institutional rules and identity. It is discovered that maintaining Punjabi and Pashto speakers' native tongues is important. Urdu is a national language and English is acknowledged as a universal language. Language influence speakers' linguistic beliefs and actions. Most people prefer Urdu in formal settings but English is thought to be necessary for both domestic and foreign careers. Punjabi significance stems from its cultural and emotional value. Additionally, they oppose other languages taking precedence over their native tongues. Both Pashto and Punjabi are frequently linked to people from rural backgrounds. The study looked at societal perceptions that these languages are occasionally seen as indicators of illiteracy in urban settings. However, speakers acknowledge and support the preservation of native languages. The extent to which a language can be preserved depends mostly on social attitudes. Language decisions are influenced by social attitudes and behaviors of humans. The reviewed studies show that cultural ideology, identity, power and policy all have an impact on language attitudes. There is little research that particularly focuses on how non-Punjabi speakers view Punjabi despite the fact that many academics have studied language attitudes in Pakistan. The majority of research either takes a macro-level policy stance or concentrates on Punjabi speakers. Thus, the current study attempts to close a glaring gap in empirical sociolinguistic research on intergroup perceptions of Punjabi.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Using a mixed-methods sociolinguistic research design the study combines quantitative and qualitative techniques.

Quantitative: A structured questionnaire is employed in the quantitative component to gauge general attitudes and perceptions.

Qualitative: Through semi-structured interviews the qualitative component offers a deeper understanding of participants perspectives. Since attitudes involve both quantifiable patterns and subjective interpretations this design is suitable for language attitude studies.

3.2 Research Approach

The study adheres to;



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The descriptive method which describes current attitudes and perceptions.

An analytical method to investigate the ways in which social factors impact these attitudes.

Based on theories of language attitudes and ethnolinguistic identity the study is based on attitudinal sociolinguistics.

3.3 Population of the Study

The Population of the study is non-Punjabi speakers who live in a multilingual environment. This includes the speakers who do not speak Punjabi as their first language.

- Urdu
- Balochi
- Sindhi
- Pashto
- Saraiki

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

3.4.1 Sampling Technique. Purposive sampling is used in the study because participants must not speak Punjabi as their first language.

3.4.2 Sample Size.

Questionnaire: 30 non-Punjabi speakers completed the questionnaire.

Interviews: 10 participants were chosen for interviews from the questionnaire respondents.

The sample varies in the following ways.

- Age
- Gender
- Education

3.5 Research Instruments

3.5.1 Questionnaire. The main instrument for gathering data is a structured questionnaire. There are two sections;

Section A: Demographic data including mother tongue, age, gender and education. Likert-scale statements assessing attitudes and perceptions regarding Punjabi are included in

Section B: A five-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree is used to record responses.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews. Selected participants are interviewed in a semi-structured manner to investigate the following.

- Personal experiences with the Punjabi speakers
- Perceived social status of Punjabi
- Cultural associations and stereotypes

Participants can voice opinions during interviews that questionnaires might not adequately capture.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

i) The purpose of the study is explained to the participants.

ii) Consent is obtained after being informed.

iii) Questionnaire sent out in person or online.

iv) Participants in interviews are chosen according to their willingness and diversity.

v) With consent interviews are audio recorded.

3.7 Analysis

3.7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis. Data is analyzed by using statistics, such as:

i) Frequencies

ii) Percentages

iii) Mean scores

Comparisons are made across demographic variables where relevant.



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3.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis. Interview data is transcribed verbatim. A thematic analysis approach is used. Responses are coded to identify recurring themes such as:

- i) Prestige
- ii) Informality
- iii) Identity
- iv) Social stereotypes

3.6 Theoretical Framework

The foundation of this research is Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (Giles Bourhis and Taylor 1977) which explains how a language groups social status prestige and vitality influence language attitudes. The theory aids in understanding how non-Punjabi speakers view Punjabi in relation to dominant languages like Urdu and English in the context of this study. The results show that despite Punjabis strong cultural vitality attitudes about its use in formal and academic domains are influenced by its low perceived prestige and lack of institutional support. Therefore, ethnolinguistic Identity Theory offers a useful framework for comprehending how language identity and social power are related to how non-Punjabi speakers perceive Punjabi.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The analysis and Interpretation of data gathered to look into non-Punjabi speakers' attitudes and perceptions of the Punjabi language are presented in this chapter. Descriptive statistical techniques were applied to the data analysis. Frequencies, percentages and mean scores are used to display the results which are then interpreted in light of the study's goals.

Table 4.1: *Demographic Information of Respondents (N = 30)*

Item	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	47%
	Female	50%
	Prefer not to say	3%
Age Group	18–22	40%
	23–27	33%
	28–35	20%
	36 and above	7%
Education	Intermediate	17%
	Bachelor's	43%
	Master's	30%
	MPhil/PhD	10%
Mother Tongue	Urdu	60%
	Pashto	20%
	Sindhi	10%
	Balochi	7%
	Other	3%
Understanding Punjabi	Yes	40%
	A little	43%
	No	17%
Interaction Frequency	Very often	27%
	Often	33%
	Sometimes	23%
	Rarely	13%



4.2 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Total 30 people who are non- Punjabi speakers took part in the study. Gender, age group, educational background, mother tongue, comprehension of Punjabi and frequency of interaction with Punjabi speakers were among the demographic factors.

4.2.1 Gender Distribution

Both male and female respondents made up the sample. The distribution ensures a variety of perspectives regarding the Punjabi language by demonstrating a fairly balanced representation.

4.2.2 Age Groups

The majority of the respondents who represented young adults who actively participate in multilingual social settings were between the ages of 18 and 27. This group is especially pertinent to the study of modern linguistic attitudes.

4.2.3 Educational Background

The majority of responders had a bachelors degree and those with a master's degree came next. This suggests that respondents had enough educational experience to critically examine language use and social perceptions.

4.2.4 Mother Tongue

Urdu followed by Pashto and other regional languages was the most commonly reported mother tongue among all respondents who did not speak Punjabi. This verifies that the sample satisfies the study's main criterion.

4.2.5 Understanding of Punjabi

Despite the fact that Punjabi is not their first language the majority of respondents stated that they either fully or partially understand the language.

4.2.6 Interaction with Punjabi Speakers

The majority of participants said they interact with Punjabi speakers often or sometimes indicating frequent interaction and experience both of which are crucial for shaping attitudes and perceptions.

Table 4.2: Attitudes Toward Punjabi Language

Statement	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Punjabi is an important regional language	40	37	13	7	3
Punjabi has cultural & historical value	43	40	10	4	3
Punjabi sounds pleasant	27	33	20	13	7
Punjabi should be promoted	30	37	17	10	6
Punjabi speakers are confident	33	30	20	10	7

4.3 Analysis of Attitudes Toward Punjabi Language

Responses to Likert-scale questions about general attitudes toward the Punjabi language are analyzed in this section.



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4.3.1 Importance and Cultural Value of Punjabi

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Punjabi is an important regional language of Pakistan with great cultural and historical significance. The scores for these items show that people generally view Punjabi as a cultural symbol favorably.

4.3.2 Aesthetic Perception of Punjabi

Responses to the statement that Punjabi sounds pleasant revealed mixed opinions but most were positive. Punjabi was seen as expressive and lively by many respondents but some expressed neutral opinion indicating subjective variations in aesthetic judgement.

4.3.3 Promotion of Punjabi

The idea that Punjabi should be promoted in the media and in education was endorsed by a notable percentage of respondents. A smaller percentage however expressed disagreement or neutrality indicating uncertainty regarding its place in formal domains.

4.4 Perceptions of Prestige and Social Status of Punjabi

Statements that emphasize prestige, formality and social associations are analyzed in this section.

Table 4.3: Perceptions of Prestige & Use

Statement	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Punjabi suitable for informal use	47	33	13	4	3
Punjabi not suitable for formal use	40	30	17	10	3
Punjabi linked to rural identity	37	33	17	10	3
Punjabi lacks prestige	30	27	23	13	7
Speaking Punjabi affects social image	23	27	27	13	10

4.4.1 Informality and Domain Restriction

The majority of respondents are agreed upon that it is appropriate for informal communication due to Punjabi's strong association with daily and domestic use. However, a large number of respondents concurred that Punjabi is inappropriate for formal or academic settings, underscoring domain-based language perceptions.

4.4.2 Rural Association and Prestige

According to responses Punjabi is perceived as being connected to informal or rural identity. In comparison to Urdu or English Punjabi is less prestigious according to a significant number of respondents. This result validates previous sociolinguistic studies on regional language marginalization.

4.4.3 Social Image of Punjabi Speakers

There were different views on the impact of speaking Punjabi on one's social image. While some respondents thought it had a negative impact on social perception others disagreed indicating that educated non-Punjabi speakers' attitudes are gradually changing.

4.5 Social and Personal Views Toward Punjabi Speakers

This section analyzes comfort, social interaction and stereotypes.

Table 4.4: Social Attitudes Toward Punjabi Speakers



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Statement	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Comfortable hearing Punjabi speakers are friendly	43	37	10	7	3
Punjabi is stereotyped	37	40	13	7	3
Non-Punjabi should learn Punjabi	33	37	17	10	3
	40	33	13	10	4

4.5.1 Comfort and Social Interaction

The majority of respondents said they feel comfortable when people around them speak Punjabi suggesting a generally accepting and tolerant attitude toward Punjabi speakers in social situations.

4.5.2 Stereotyping of Punjabi

The presence of socially constructed images associated with Punjabi is confirmed by the majority of respondents, agreed that the language is frequently stereotyped in society.

4.5.3 Learning Punjabi

Despite perceived prestige constraints many respondents agreed that non-Punjabi speakers should learn basic Punjabi indicating positive openness toward linguistic integration.

4.6 Analysis of Open-Ended Responses

Thematic analysis was used to examine qualitative answers to open-ended questions.

Table 4.5: Open-Ended Responses (Thematic Distribution)

Question	Common Responses	Percentage (%)
What comes to your mind when you hear the Punjabi language?	lively, expressive, energetic	45%
	Informal / rural/Cultural	30%
	Neutral / mixed	25%
	Lack of institutional support	40%
In your opinion, why is Punjabi less used in formal domains?	Preference for Urdu/English	35%
	Social prestige issues	25%
Any additional comments about Punjabi language or its speakers?	Cultural pride, emotional, humor, friendly	38%
	Need for promotion	34%
	Neutral views	28%

- Punjabi people are vivacious, emotional and expressive.
- A connection to humor, friendliness and culture.
- The impression of insufficient institutional support.
- In formal education Punjabi is not taught.

These responses offer a deeper understanding of respondents' perceptions and support the quantitative findings.



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5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The results of the study are interpreted and discussed in this chapter in light of the research goals and body of current literature. The purpose is to comprehend how non-Punjabi speakers perceive the Punjabi language, the social and cultural elements that shape these perceptions, consequences and the implications for sociolinguistic identity and language policy.

5.2 Attitudes Toward Punjabi Language

According to the study, non-Punjabi speakers generally have positive attitudes toward Punjabi as a regional and cultural language. The majority of respondents concurred that Punjabi is significant and culturally valuable supporting the claim made by Gardner and Lambert (1972) that language attitudes are impacted by perceived social and cultural significance. Schiffman's (1996) theory of linguistic culture is further supported by the aesthetic perception of Punjabi as expressive and lively suggesting that language elicits cultural and emotional reactions in addition to functional communication. Nonetheless some respondents expressed neutral opinion regarding Punjabi's advancement in education which reflects a practical mindset akin to Mansoor's (2005) findings that functional factors affect language valuation.

5.3 Perceived Prestige and Formality

Frequent respondents thought Punjabi was less appropriate for formal or academic settings and often associated it with informal rural or domestic domains. Rahman (1996) who emphasized the perceived low status of Punjabi in urban and institutional settings is consistent with these findings. Giles et al. are also mirrored in the perception of limited prestige. Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (1977) which contends that power dynamics and social hierarchies influence attitudes. Despite having a large number of speakers, Punjabi is perceived by non-Punjabi speakers as informal or inferior to Urdu and English due to its sparse institutional and official presence.

5.4 Social Stereotypes and Personal Views

Although most respondents said they feel comfortable interacting with Punjabi speakers the data showed that Punjabi is frequently stereotyped. In line with Edwards (1982) observation that attitudes are shaped by both exposure and social evaluation this duality emphasizes that attitudes are not only based on prejudice but also on social contact and familiarity. According to Bakers (1992) observation that positive attitudes can support language maintenance and cross-cultural communication the positive response to learning basic Punjabi indicates a willingness for linguistic integration.

5.5 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Open-ended responses complemented the quantitative results, highlighting Punjabi as energetic, expressive, and culturally rich, yet lacking institutional support. This thematic convergence confirms that non-Punjabi speakers value Punjabi culturally, but social and functional factors limit its perceived prestige.

The combination of Likert-scale and open-ended responses illustrates a multifaceted view: Punjabi is appreciated at the cultural and interpersonal level, while formal contexts remain dominated by Urdu and English.

5.7 Comparison with Previous Studies

Consistent with Rahman (1996) and Mansoor (2005), Punjabi is often seen as informal and rural. Aligns with Giles et al. (1977) that language attitudes reflect social power. Contrasts slightly with Edwards (1982), as the current study found a higher level of comfort and acceptance among non-Punjabi speakers, possibly due to urbanization and education.



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Confirms Schiffman (1996) that cultural and emotional factors influence language perceptions, not just functional use.

6. CONCLUSION

In a multilingual sociolinguistic setting this study examined non-Punjabi speakers' attitudes and perceptions of the Punjabi language. The results show that non-Punjabi speakers recognize Punjabi as a significant regional language with rich historical and cultural significance and they typically have positive cultural and emotional attitudes toward the language. There is a degree of social acceptance and interpersonal comfort with Punjabi speakers as evidenced by the numerous respondents who linked Punjabi with expressiveness friendliness and cultural identity. Despite not being the respondents' mother tongue, these favorable opinions imply that Punjabi is still a powerful indicator of cultural belonging. The study does however also draw attention to enduring views of Punjabi as having little formality and low prestige. The majority of non-Punjabi speakers thought Punjabi was more appropriate for domestic and informal settings than for formal academic or official ones. This view is consistent with larger sociolinguistic hierarchies in Pakistan where institutional spaces are dominated by Urdu and English. Language attitudes are influenced by social stereotypes power dynamics and state language policies rather than just linguistic characteristics as evidenced by the association of Punjabi with rural identity and informality. In conclusion non-Punjabi speakers' attitudes toward Punjabi are nuanced and multifaceted fusing functional constraints with cultural appreciation. The ongoing marginalization of Punjabi in formal domains highlights the need for inclusive language planning and policy reforms even though favorable interpersonal and cultural perceptions show openness and tolerance. In Pakistan's multilingual society promoting Punjabi in public discourse education and the media may help dispel preconceived notions raise the languages social standing and advance linguistic equality.

6.1 Implications

In order to improve prestige, the results highlight the necessity of recognizing regional languages like Punjabi in education and the media. To combat ideas of low status policymakers should think about incorporating Punjabi into public discourse and curricula. In multilingual societies positive attitudes among non-Punjabi speakers point to chances for linguistic integration and cross-cultural communication. By dispelling myths and promoting Punjabi as a representation of cultural heritage awareness campaigns can help preserve the language and foster social cohesion.

6.2 Recommendations

In order to enhance Punjabi's social status and visibility more institutional support should be provided by integrating it into media educational curricula and cultural initiatives. To dispel myths about Punjabi and encourage respect for regional languages awareness campaigns and scholarly projects should be launched. To obtain a more thorough understanding of language attitudes among various social groups future research should increase the sample size and geographic scope.

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