

# **Students' Belief about Arabic and Arabic Learning in Pakistani Universities**

Dr.Haris Mubeen<sup>\*</sup>

## **Abstract**

This is a first research of its kind to know the Pakistani students' beliefs about learning Arabic language at post graduate level. 208 students of M.A. Arabic from six Pakistani universities have participated in this study. Most of the items have been taken from BALLI with some changes. Few items have been developed by the researcher himself in religious and Pakistani context. All data have been analyzed using the SPSS version 15.0. Results indicate that overall male and female students hold similar beliefs about Arabic language learning, with nine items being statistically significant such as female students are more conscious than males about the understanding of Qur'an and Hadith.

## **1. Introduction**

Beliefs are a central construct in every discipline that deals with human behaviour and learning (Fishbein&Ajzen, 1975, Ajzen, 1988, cited in Bernat, E.&Gvozdenko, I., 2005; Altan, 2006). According to Patsy M. Lightbown and Nina Spada (2008) "second language learners are not always aware of their individual cognitive or perceptual leaning styles, but

---

<sup>\*</sup> Assistant Professor, Dept. of Arabic, Oriental College, Punjab University, Lahore

virtually all learners, particularly older learners, have strong beliefs and opinions about how their instruction should be delivered. These beliefs are usually based on previous learning experiences and the assumption (right or wrong) that a particular type of instruction is the best way for them to learn”.

In last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, massive research in L2 (second language) learning was devoted to beliefs that language students hold. The pioneer of this research was Elaine Horwitz of the University of Texas at Austin. She developed an instrument to assess student opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning and named it: The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) (Horwitz, 1988; Bernat, E.&Gvozdenko, I., 2005; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006; Altan, 2006).

This study is aimed at to examine the diversity of beliefs between male and female students about learning Arabic language.

## **2. Methodology**

Methodology is described as under:

### **2.1 Subjects**

The subjects in this study were 208 Pakistani students of M.A. Arabic (all semesters) University of the Punjab, Lahore (12 males & 63 females), G.C. University, Faisalabad (3 males & 36 females), University of Karachi, Karachi (3 males & 7 females), B.Z. University, Multan (7 males & 30 females), National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad (5 males & 10 females) and the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (8 males & 24females).In total thirty eight(38) subjects were male and one hundred and seventy females.

Since Pakistan is a multi-lingual country, so subjects have different mother tongues and of the 208, one hundred and twenty one were Punjabi, 45Urdu and 33 Saraiki speaking while 9 belongs to other local languages such as Balti, Hindko, Lassie etc.

## **2.2 Instrument**

Most of the items have taken from the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) (Horwitz, 1988) with some changes and from other available sources as well (Kuntz, 1997). Moreover, few items were developed in religious and Pakistani context. The instrument employs a 5-point Likert-scale format and subjects were asked to choose from “strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree (1)”. It is a 47 item scale, having statements related to the following seven areas:

1. The Difficulty of Language Learning
2. Foreign Language Aptitude
3. The Nature of Language Learning
4. Learning and Communication Strategies
5. Motivations and Expectations
6. Religious Aspect of Learning Arabic Language
7. Literary and Social Aspect of Learning Arabic

## **2.3 Procedure**

The instrument was distributed to the subjects in English and it is possible that some of the items were interpreted wrongly. The instrument does not have clear-cut right or wrong answers. The instrument was administered by the teachers of the above mentioned departments during April and May 2008. The subjects completed the instrument in class, one form for each subject, so response rate was hundred percent. Consultation with other subjects was not allowed while working with the instrument to ensure the replies of each subject's own belief and opinion about learning Arabic language.

## **2.4 Results**

All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0. Every item has a table showing three categories: overall responses of the participants and individual responses of males and females. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number and shown within the brackets. SA= collapsed scores for

Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N= Neutral, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree.

In the interpretation of data, category of strongly agree included in agree as well as strongly disagree included in disagree. In every item values of chi square and significance have also been mentioned.

#### 2.4.1 The Difficulty of Language Learning

It is evident from item 1 of figure 1 that majority of the respondents (58%) are of the view that Arabic language can be learnt easily than other languages. Similarly value of the chi square (19.99) indicates that there is significant difference in the opinion of male and female about the easiness of learning Arabic language. Male have a better opinion than that of female.

Most of the respondents (61%) disagreed with the statement that Arabic language is structured as Urdu language. Male and female subjects have almost same opinion, and a reasonable number (22%) believed that Arabic language is structured as Urdu.

The figure 1, item 3 shows that majority of the subjects (70%) are of the view that they may speak Arabic language very well but this item shows a lower mean ranking of female (64%) compared to male (92%). No male subject disagreed with the statement. On the other hand (15%) of females disagreed that they will ultimately learn to speak Arabic language very well.

Responses to the item 4 of difficulty of language learning show that majority of the respondents (71%) are of the view that Arabic language is easier to read and write than to speak and understand it. There is no significant difference between the opinions of both groups of the subjects.

Item: 1, Arabic language is easier to learn than other languages.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	28	94(45)	40	33(16)	13(6)		

	(13)		(19)			19.99	.001
Male	13(34)	15(40)	2(5)	6(16)	2(5)		*
Female	15(9)	79(46)	37(22)	27(16)	11(7)		

\* Significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 2, I am trying to learn Arabic which is structured in the same way as Urdu.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	7(3)	40(19)	33(16)	100(48)	28 (13)	2.18	.702**
Male	2(5)	5 (13)	8(21)	18(47)	5(13)		
Female	5(3)	35(21)	25 (15)	82(48)	23(13)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 3, I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak Arabic language very well.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	64(31)	81(39)	38(18)	22 (11)	3(1)	14.03	.007*
Male	19(50)	16 (42)	3(8)	0 (0)	0(0)		
Female	45(26)	65 (38)	35(21)	22(13)	3(2)		

\* Significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 4, It is easier to read and write Arabic language than to speak and understand it.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	55(26)	93(45)	20(10)	33 (16)	7(3)	6.25	.181**
Male	15(39)	14(37)	1(3)	7(18)	1(3)		
Female	40(23)	79(46)	19(11)	26(15)	6(3)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Figure 1 : The Difficulty of Language Learning

### 2.4.2 Foreign Language Aptitude

In figure 2, item 5 shows that overall sixty four percent of the subjects disagreed with the statement that males are not naturally better than females in Arabic language. Among male subjects, eighty four percent and sixty one percent of females disagreed. On the other hand (44%) of female participants agreed to the statement that males are not naturally better than females in Arabic language. According to item 6, participants with a great majority (74%) perceived themselves as having special ability to learn Arabic language. All male and female participants have same opinion.

It is evident from item 7 of the figure 2 that forty seven percent of the respondents disagreed that it is hard to believe that a female could be a genius in Arabic language, and on the other hand thirty seven percent male and female subjects agreed to the statement. Responses on item 8 indicate that fifty one percent of the participants agreed that it is easier for someone who speaks Urdu language to learn Arabic. The results have shown that thirty one percent of the female subjects disagreed to this statement and (16%) of males have same opinion.

65 percent of the subjects have strong belief that a person speaks more than one language is very intelligent. From the agreed students sixty six percent are males and sixty five percent females. Ten percent of male and twenty one percent of female participants disagreed with this belief.

Overall sixty three percent of the respondents in item 28 of figure 2 agreed that every one can learn a foreign language. 73% of male and 60% of female participants agreed as well as eleven percent of male and twenty three percent of female subjects disagreed that every one can learn to speak a foreign language.

In item 40 the results were a bit mixed, overall 37% of the respondents disagreed that they are not good in Arabic and (36%) agreed with the statement. From agreed (15%)

were males and (40%) females. Among male respondents (63%) and females (32%) disagreed with the statement.

Results on item43 of figure2 indicate that fifty one percent of the respondents believed that Pakistanis are good at learning Arabic language and twenty four percent disagreed with the statement. Among the total number of respondents (61%) male and (49%) female agreed with this item. On the other hand (21%) males and twenty four percent females disagreed about this opinion.

Item: 5, Males are not naturally better than females in Arabic language

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	35(17)	20(10)	18(9)	84 (40)	51(24)	19.07	.001*
Male	1(3)	3 (8)	2(5)	13(34)	19(50)		
Female	20 (34)	17(10)	16(9)	71(42)	32(19)		

\* Significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 6, Some people are born with a special ability which helps them to learn Arabic language.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	70(34)	84(40)	33(16)	16(8)	5 (2)	.29	.990**
Male	14(37)	14 (37)	6 (16)	3(8)	1(3)		
Female	56 (33)	70 (41)	27 (16)	13 (8)	4 (2)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 7, It is hard to believe a female could be a genius in Arabic language.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	20(10)	56(27)	34(16)	65(31)	33(16)	.79	.939**
Male	5(13)	9(24)	6(16)	12(32)	6(16)		
Female	15(9)	47 (28)	28(16)	53(31)	27(16)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 8, It is easier for someone who speaks Urdu language to learn Arabic language.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	28(13)	80(38)	41(20)	42 (20)	17(8)	8.34	.080**
Male	9(24)	13 (34)	10(26)	3(8)	3(8)		
Female	19(11)	67(39)	31(18)	39(23)	14(8)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 10, People, who speak more than one language well, are very intelligent.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	73(35)	63(30)	31(15)	35(17)	6(3)	4.87	.300**
Male	13(34)	12(32)	9(24)	4(10)	0(0)		
Female	60(35)	51(30)	22(13)	31(18)	6(3)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 28, Every one can learn to speak a foreign language.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	56(27)	74(36)	34(16)	32(15)	12(6)	3.61	.461**
Male	13(34)	15(39)	6(16)	3(8)	1(3)		
Female	43(25)	59(35)	28(16)	29(17)	11(6)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$



Item: 40, I am not good at Arabic.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	18(9)	56(27)	55(26)	55(26)	24(11)	13.56	.009*
Male	2(5)	4(10)	8(21)	17(45)	7(18)		
Female	16(9)	52(31)	47(28)	38(22)	17(10)		

\* Significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 43, Pakistanis are good at learning Arabic language.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	30(14)	77(37)	52(25)	33(16)	16(8)	1.83	.767**
Male	6(16)	17(45)	7(18)	5(13)	3(8)		
Female	24(14)	60(35)	45(26)	28(16)	13(8)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Figure 2: Foreign Language Aptitude

### 2.4.3 The Nature of Language Learning

In item 9 of figure 3, an overwhelming majority (86%) of the respondents supported the belief that it is better to learn Arabic language in an Arab country. 89% of the male and 84% of the female participants agreed with the statement. Only five percent males and eight percent females disagreed to this opinion. But at same time only 49% subjects have shown their agreement that it is necessary to know the Arab culture in order to speak Arabic language. There is a significant difference of opinion between male and female population, 37% of males and 51% of females agreed with the statement. On the other hand 42% male subjects and 24% females disagreed with the necessity of the knowledge of Arab culture in order to speak Arabic language. Female subjects have better opinion than males.

Item 12 indicates that seventy seven percent of the respondents supported the belief that learning of new vocabulary is necessary to learn Arabic language. A small proportion 12% disagreeing with this statement. From the

agreed respondents 71% are males and 79% females. Overall seventy six percent of respondents endorsed item13 that learning of Arabic language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules. The value of the chi square (9.54) indicates that there is significant difference in the opinion of male and female subjects about the statement. Female subjects have better opinion than males.

In item 44 of figure 3, seventy one percent of the respondents agreed that learning of Arabic is different from learning other academic subjects; few respondents (12%) disagreed with this statement.

About item 38, responses indicate that 43 % of the subjects can not do a good translation from Arabic to English or vice versa. On the contrary, thirty two percent of the subjects disagreed with the statement. There is no significant difference of belief between male and female.

Item: 9, It is better to learn Arabic language in an Arab country.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	133(64)	45(22)	14(7)	10(5)	6(3)	2.10	.717**
Male	27(71)	7 (18)	2(5)	2(5)	0(0)		
Female	106(62)	38(22)	12(7)	8(5)	6(3)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 11, It is necessary to know the Arab culture in order to speak Arabic language.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	49(24)	52(25)	49(24)	44 (21)	14 (7)	11.40	.022*
Male	8(21)	6(16)	8(21)	9(24)	7(18)		
Female	41(24)	46(27)	41 (24)	35(21)	7 (4)		

\* Significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 12, Learning of Arabic language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	103(49)	58(28)	20(10)	24(11)	3(1)	3.15	.532**
Male	16(42)	11(29)	6(16)	5(13)	0(0)		
Female	87(51)	47(28)	14(8)	19(11)	3(2)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 13, Learning of Arabic language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	102(49)	57(27)	25(12)	19(9)	5(2)	9.54	.049*
Male	11(29)	12(32)	8(21)	6(16)	1(3)		
Female	91(53)	45(26)	17(10)	13(18)	4(2)		

\* Significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 44, Learning of Arabic is different from learning other academic subjects.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	54(26)	94(45)	34(16)	19(9)	7(3)	3.76	.438**
Male	9(24)	14(37)	8(21)	6(16)	1(3)		
Female	45(26)	80(47)	26(15)	13(8)	6(3)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 38, I can not do a good translation from Arabic to English or vice versa.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	15(7)	74(36)	52(25)	48(23)	19(9)	.19	.996**
Male	3(8)	13(34)	9(24)	9(24)	4(10)		
Female	12(7)	61(36)	43(25)	39(23)	15(9)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Figure 3 : The Nature of Language Learning

#### 2.4.4 Learning and Communication Strategies

##### Learning Strategies

An overwhelming majority of the subjects (94 %) strongly endorsed the statement: "To learn a language, it is important to repeat and practice a lot". However, only two percent disagreement with this belief was found.

Eighty two percent of the respondents agreed that practice in the language laboratory is important. On the contrary, nine percent disagreed with this item. There is no significant difference in both genders about these items.

#### **Communication Strategies**

Seventy six percent participants stressed the importance of speaking Arabic with an excellent accent and pronunciation. Twelve percent of all the respondents disagreed with the statement. No significant difference appeared within men and women.

In item17 of figure 4, forty nine percent of the participants disagreed with the statement: “you should not say any thing in Arabic until you can say it correctly”. Among the male participants (63%) and from the female side (45%) have shown their disagreement. On the other hand thirty nine percent of both genders agreed with the statement.

An overwhelming majority (82%) show their keenness to communicate with a person who speaks Arabic language. All male and female subjects have same opinion with the statement. Only nine percent disagreed with this opinion.

It is evident from item 16 of the figure 4 that sixty four percent of the respondents agreed that they feel self-conscious speaking the Arabic language in public. There is a significant difference of belief between male and female subjects about this item. Female respondents have more confidence than males in speaking Arabic language publicly. Overall twenty percent disagreed with the statement.

Forty six percent of the respondents agreed that if you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on. On the other hand thirty seven percent disagreed with the statement. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents.

In item 35 of figure 4, sixty four percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that it's o.k. to guess if you don't know a word in the foreign language. Eleven percent has shown disagreement with this opinion.

### Learning Strategies

Item: 15, to learn a language, it is important to repeat and practice a lot.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	157(75)	39(19)	7(3)	2(1)	3(1)	5.35	.253**
Male	26(68)	11(29)	0(0)	0(0)	1(3)		
Female	131(77)	28(16)	7(4)	2(1)	2(1)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 45, It is important to practice in language laboratory.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	98(47)	73(35)	18(9)	13(6)	6(3)	2.66	.616**
Male	22(58)	11(29)	3(8)	1(3)	1(3)		
Female	76(45)	62(36)	15(9)	12(7)	5(3)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

### Communication Strategies

Item: 18, It is important to speak Arabic with an excellent accent.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	64(31)	94(45)	24(11)	19(9)	6(3)	2.72	.743**
Male	13(34)	18(47)	5(13)	1(3)	1(3)		
Female	51(30)	76(45)	19(11)	18(11)	5(3)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 17, You should not say any thing in Arabic until you can say it correctly.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	37(18)	46(21)	24(11)	79(38)	22(11)	9.33	.053**
Male	7(18)	3(8)	4(10)	16(42)	8(21)		
Female	30(18)	43(25)	20(12)	63(37)	14(8)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 14, If I heard someone speaking Arabic language, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking Arabic.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	75(36)	95(46)	21(10)	16(8)	1(1)	6.31	.177**
Male	15(39)	16(42)	2(5)	4(10)	1(3)		
Female	60(35)	79(46)	19(11)	12(7)	0(0)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 16, I feel self-conscious speaking the Arabic language in front of other people.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	41(20)	92(44)	33(16)	34(16)	8(4)	21.04	.000*
Male	8(21)	11(29)	15(39)	3(8)	1(3)		
Female	33(19)	81(48)	18(11)	31(18)	7(4)		

\* Significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 46, If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	36(17)	61(29)	33(16)	61(29)	17(8)	1.88	.756**
Male	7(18)	12(32)	8(21)	9(24)	2(5)		
Female	29(17)	49(29)	25(15)	52(31)	15(9)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 35, It's o.k. to guess if you don't know a word in the foreign language.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	45(22)	88(42)	52(25)	20(10)	3(1)	4.24	.374**
Male	8(21)	21(55)	7(18)	2(5)	0(0)		
Female	37(22)	67(39)	45(26)	18(11)	3(2)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Figure 4: Learning and Communication Strategies

### 2.4.5 Motivations and Expectations

It is evident from item 29 of the figure 5 that seventy three percent of the respondents agreed that if we get to speak Arabic very well, we will have many opportunities to use it. Nine percent of the respondents disagreed with this statement. From agreed seventy seven percent were males and seventy one percent females.

In item 19 of figure 5, fifty five percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that if we learn to speak Arabic very well, it will help us to get a good job. Twenty six percent disagreed with this opinion.

Sixty percent of respondents are sure about advanced studies after M.A. and twenty percent disagreed with this statement. Seventy one percent of the male respondents and fifty eight percent of the female respondents are agreed with the statement. On the other hand, only eight percent males and twenty one percent female show their disagreement with this opinion.

An overwhelming majority of the participants' (71%) believed that they are learning Arabic to educate their next generation. On the other hand only eleven percent disagreed with this statement. There is no significant difference in this belief between male and female participants

Sixty six percent of the respondents disagreed that we are studying Arabic language because we have friends or

relatives who speak it. Twenty three percent show their agreement with the statement.

In item 33 of figure 5, fifty one percent of the respondents agreed with the statement: "I am interested in studying Arabic because I plan to travel an Arab country". Thirty two percent disagreed with the statement.

"I do not expect to speak Arabic when I get out of university", forty eight percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement. On the other hand forty percent agreed with this opinion. There is no significant difference in the opinion of men and women.

Forty eight percent of the respondents agreed with the statement: "I can communicate in Arabic in many ways" and thirty two percent have shown their disagreement..

Forty seven percent of the respondents want to develop the ability to function as an interpreter and twenty three percent disagreed with the opinion.

It is evident from item 39 of figure 5 that majority of the respondents (70%) are of the view that they study Arabic because they know how useful it is. Eleven percent disagreed with the statement. Sixty one percent of the male and seventy three percent of the female participants agreed with the statement.

Sixty nine percent of the subjects disagreed with the statement: "Arabic language will not be important to me in my life's work". On the other hand sixteen percent of the subjects agreed with the statement.

A great majority of the subjects (86%) endorsed the statement: "my teachers have encouraged me to study more Arabic language". Eleven percent shows their disagreement with this opinion. There is no significant difference in the opinion of men and women.

It is evident from item 47 of figure 5 that an overwhelming majority (47%) of the participants endorsed the belief: "I would like to learn this language so that I can



get to know its speakers better”. Nine percent disagreed with this statement. Male and female participants have no significant difference.

In item 27 of figure 5, Seventy three percent of the subjects want to teach Arabic language and literature. On the other hand twelve percent subjects disagreed with this statement. Sixty three percent males and seventy five percent females want to adopt teaching profession.

Item: 29, If I get to speak Arabic very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	91(44)	60(29)	37(18)	15(7)	5(2)	7.01	.135**
Male	12(32)	17(45)	7(18)	2(5)	0(0)		
Female	79(46)	43(25)	30(18)	13(8)	5(3)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 19, If I learn to speak Arabic very well, it will help me to get a good job.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	64(31)	50(24)	38(18)	30(14)	26(12)	2.72	.605**
Male	11(29)	11(29)	8(21)	6(19)	2(5)		
Female	53(31)	39(23)	30(18)	24(14)	24(14)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 20, I am sure I could do advanced work in Arabic.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	47(23)	77(37)	46(22)	28(15)	10(5)	8.37	.079**
Male	14(37)	13(34)	8(21)	1(3)	2(5)		
Female	33(20)	64(38)	38(22)	27(16)	8(5)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 21, I am learning Arabic to educate my next generation.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	68(33)	80(38)	36(17)	19(9)	5(2)	1.09	.896**
Male	14(37)	15(39)	6(16)	2(5)	1(3)		
Female	54(32)	65(38)	30(18)	17(10)	4(2)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 32, I am studying Arabic language because I have friends or relatives who speak it.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	16(8)	31(15)	25(12)	70(34)	66(32)	9.17	.057**
Male	3(8)	5(13)	10(26)	10(26)	10(26)		
Female	13(8)	26(15)	15(9)	60(35)	56(33)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 33, I am interested in studying Arabic because I plan to travel an Arab country.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	40(19)	66(32)	37(18)	47(23)	18(9)	4.83	.305**
Male	7(18)	15(39)	9(24)	4(10)	3(8)		
Female	33(19)	51(30)	28(16)	43(25)	15(9)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 34, My most important goal in studying Arabic is to develop the ability to function as an interpreter.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	35(17)	63(30)	62(30)	42(20)	6(3)	3.93	.415**
Male	7(18)	11(29)	14(37)	4(10)	2(5)		
Female	28(16)	52(31)	48(28)	38(22)	4(2)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 36, I do not expect to speak Arabic when I get out of university.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	24(11)	61(29)	24(11)	68(33)	31(15)	8.59	.072**
Male	4(10)	5(13)	5(13)	14(37)	10(26)		
Female	20(12)	56(33)	19(11)	54(32)	21(12)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 37, I can communicate in Arabic in many ways.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	42(20)	58(28)	43(21)	49(24)	16(8)	8.03	.090**
Male	10(26)	15(39)	4(10)	5(13)	4(10)		
Female	32(19)	43(25)	39(23)	44(26)	12(7)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 39, I study Arabic because I know how useful it is.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	66(32)	80(38)	38(18)	19(9)	5(2)	5.49	.240**
Male	12(32)	11(29)	7(18)	7(18)	1(3)		
Female	54(32)	69(41)	31(18)	12(7)	4(2)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 41, Arabic language will not be important to me in my life's work.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	10(5)	23(11)	30(14)	82(39)	63(30)	.61	.962**
Male	2(5)	5(13)	6(16)	13(34)	12(32)		
Female	8(5)	18(11)	24(14)	69(41)	51(30)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 42, My teachers have encouraged me to study more Arabic language.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	108(52)	70(34)	7(3)	11(5)	12(6)	1.09	.895**
Male	21(55)	11(29)	1(3)	3(8)	2(5)		
Female	87(51)	59(35)	6(3)	8(5)	10(6)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 47, I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	55(26)	109(52)	26(12)	14(7)	4(2)	6.60	.158**
Male	15(39)	18(47)	4(10)	0(0)	1(3)		
Female	40(23)	91(53)	22(13)	14(8)	3(2)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 27, I want to be a teacher of Arabic language & literature.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	87(42)	65(31)	31(15)	19(9)	6(3)	2.91	.572**
Male	13(34)	11(29)	8(21)	4(10)	2(5)		
Female	74(43)	54(32)	23(13)	15(9)	4(2)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Figure 5: Motivations and Expectations

#### 2.4.6 Religious Aspect of Learning Arabic Language

It is evident from item 22 of figure 6 that majority of the respondents (89%) are of the view that being Muslims, we have to learn Arabic language. Similarly, value of the chi square indicates that there is a significant difference in the opinion of male and female students about learning Arabic language. Female subjects are in majority than male subjects.

A very large number of the subjects (95 %) endorsed the statement: "I am learning Arabic language for the better understanding of the Qur'an and the Hadith". Only three percent disagreed with this statement. The value of the chi square indicates that there is a significant difference in the opinion of males and females about learning Arabic. Female subjects are in majority than male subjects.

It is evident from item 26 of figure 6 that majority of the respondents (69%) are of the view that they want to know the Islamic law. Thirteen percent disagreed with this statement. There is no significant difference of opinion between men and women.

Item: 22, Being a Muslim I have to learn Arabic language.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	131(63)	55(26)	15(7)	5(2)	2(1)	16.06	.003*
Male	19(50)	10(26)	4(10)	4(10)	1(3)		
Female	112(66)	45(26)	11(6)	1(1)	1(1)		

\* Significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 23, I am learning Arabic language for the better understanding of the Qur'an and the Hadith.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	172(83)	26(12)	4(2)	5(2)	1(1)	12.05	.017*
Male	28(74)	6(16)	0(0)	3(8)	1(2)		
Female	144(85)	20(12)	4(2)	2(1)	0(0)		

\* Significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 26, I want to know the Islamic law that's why I am learning Arabic.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	65(31)	79(38)	38(18)	22(11)	4(2)	5.99	.199**
Male	12(32)	17(45)	3(8)	4(10)	2(5)		
Female	53(31)	62(36)	35(21)	18(11)	2(1)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Figure 6: Religious Aspect of Learning Arabic Language

#### 2.4.7 Literary and Social Aspect of Learning Arabic

In item 24 of figure 7, forty six percent of the respondents want to know the classical Arabic literature. Twenty three percent disagreed with this statement. Forty seven percent of the male respondents and forty five percent of the female respondents are agreed with the statement.

Fifty seven percent of the respondents agreed that they want to learn modern Arabic literature. On the other hand sixteen percent disagreed with this statement. There is no significant difference in the opinion of male and female subjects.

60 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement and they have no concern with the politics of Middle East.

Only eighteen percent have shown their interest in the Middle Eastern politics.

Sixty three percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement and they have no interest in the economic system of Middle Eastern countries. Twenty one percent agreed with the statement. There is no significant difference in the opinion of male and female subjects.

Item: 24, I am learning Arabic to know the classical Arabic literature.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	33(16)	62(30)	64(31)	38(18)	11(5)	3.07	.546**
Male	7(18)	11(29)	10(26)	6(16)	4(10)		
Female	26(15)	51(30)	54(32)	32(19)	7(4)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 25, I am learning Arabic to know modern Arabic literature.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	28(13)	91(44)	54(26)	24(11)	11(5)	2.98	.561**
Male	5(13)	16(42)	8(21)	5(13)	4(10)		
Female	23(13)	75(44)	46(27)	19(11)	7(4)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 30, I am studying Arabic language because I am interested in the politics of Middle East.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	15(7)	24(11)	43(21)	71(34)	55(26)	2.45	.654**
Male	4(10)	6(16)	6(16)	11(29)	11(29)		
Female	11(6)	18(11)	37(22)	60(35)	44(26)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Item: 31, I am studying Arabic language because I am interested in the economic system of Middle Eastern countries

	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\chi^2$	Sig
Overall	16(8)	27(13)	32(15)	78(37)	55(26)	2.73	.604**
Male	5(13)	5(13)	7(18)	13(34)	8(21)		
Female	11(6)	22(13)	25(15)	65(38)	47(28)		

\*\* Not significant at  $p \leq .05$

Figure 7 : Literary and Social Aspect of Learning Arabic

### 3. Discussion and Conclusion

The results show that males and females have common beliefs about Arabic and Arabic language learning. However, there were nine items: 1 and 3 of figure one, 5 and 40 of figure two, 11 and 13 of figure three, 16 of figure four, 22 and 23 of figure six on which beliefs of males and females differed.

All subjects have different mother tongues. In Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtu, Balouchi, Saraiki and other Pakistani languages, one reads and writes from right to left like Arabic. These languages have borrowed alphabets and most of the vocabulary from Arabic language (Versteegh, K., 2006). Due to these similarities subjects believe that Arabic language is easier to learn than other languages. There is a significant difference of belief between male and female participants. Most of the male subjects feels that Arabic is easier than other languages as compare to female subjects. There is a rational behind it; usually some male subjects study Arabic in "Madrassa" before getting admission in M.A. so they have solid background and they feel easiness in Arabic.

Some of the subjects believed that Arabic is structured as Urdu and they feel that it is easier to read and write Arabic language than to speak and understand it because of above mentioned reasons and there is an other reason: from their childhood, they learn Arabic along with the principles of

reading and writing by going to a traditional teacher and learning to recite the holy Qur'ān (Versteegh, K., 2006).

There is a significant difference between male and female respondents with reference to speak Arabic language very well. Male students have more confidence than females. In government colleges, a student learns Arabic as an elective subject for two years at bachelor level but he or she can't speak or write in Arabic up to mark.

An overwhelming majority of the female participants believe that males are better than females in Arabic language and it is hard to believe a female could be a genius in Arabic language. This shows lack of confidence in female students.

There is a significant difference in male and female participants about the statement: "I am not good at Arabic". Female students have shown lack of confidence once again. Although they are good enough but when they compare themselves with male students they feel that they are not good at Arabic.

Most of the students preferred to learn Arabic language in an Arab country. Unfortunately in Pakistan, there is no such programme for Arabic students to learn it in the Arab world. A student must get admission to study Arabic language at least one semester of M.A. in an Arab country like the students of United States (Kuntz, P., 2000; Al-Batal, 2006), Britain, Germany and other European countries (Nahla, M.A., 2006). Economic limitations of students also play negative role to achieve this target (Kuntz, p., 1997). Teacher exchange programme from Al-Azhar University, Egypt has been closed in Pakistan due to the incident of September 11, 2001. It should be reopened for the betterment of the students of Arabic.

The results show a significant difference of opinion between male and female population about the statement: "It is necessary to know Arab culture in order to speak the Arabic language". Female students have better opinion than



males. Students have not sufficient knowledge of Arabic language culture and language class should be a cultural forum for posing questions. Task-based teaching may provide daily life experiences like conducting interviews, buying merchandise, writing checks, defending a point of view, negotiating contracts, evaluating a product, attending a wedding, or giving directions(Kuntz, P., 2000). Beside this, teachers must have an awareness of current social, political and economic conditions in the Arab world (Kuntz, P., 1997; Alish, M., Elkhafaifi, H.M. & Hammoud, S. 2006).

A great majority of the students endorsed the statement that learning of Arabic language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary. There is no difference of belief between Pakistani students and previous studies regarding belief about learning vocabulary (Altan, 2006; Bernat, E.,& Lloyd. R, 2007). Studies related to the acquisition of vocabulary shows that there is a strong agreement among scholars that vocabulary has an important role of learning a language which has not received the attention it deserves .To meet this challenge, vocabulary in the Arabic curriculum must be taught both directly and indirectly and vocabulary-building activities can and should be integrated with other activities in the various skills and vocabulary activities constitute an essential component of classroom activities and homework assignments(Al-Batal, 2006).

Most of the students believed that learning of Arabic grammar rules is very importance. Liz England (2006) emphasised the impotence of grammar and highlighted the role of teacher that he must know the grammar of Arabic to be able to teach it. On the other hand she explained her own experience and gave us a comparison between vocabulary and grammar: “I have acquired more vocabulary than I would have without awareness of the Arabic root system”.

Vocabulary and grammar both have importance in learning Arabic language. There is a significant difference in the opinion of male and female respondents. Majority of the female students endorsed the statement about grammar than males. Students acquire their beliefs from their previous experiences (Peacock, M., 1999). In fact most of the male students studied in madrasa and they have already better command than females in grammar. But at the same time they lack in vocabulary and can not speak Arabic.

A reasonable number of the students can not do a good translation from Arabic to English or vice versa because they have not sufficient knowledge in both languages. There should be two options: Arabic to Urdu or vice versa / Arabic to English or vice versa. New techniques of translation and translation materials must be adopted (Kuntz, 1997; Dickins, J., 2006).

An overwhelming majority of the students knows the importance of repetition and practice to acquire the second language and the role of language laboratory for language acquisition. To get the fruitful results of beliefs of students Patricia Kuntz (2000) “suggests the need for teachers to use strategies from the audio-lingual method such as oral repetition, pattern practices, and auditory discrimination to supplement a variety of instructional approaches. Teachers might incorporate classroom assessment techniques to evaluate students’ progress such as chain notes, pro and con grids, a memory matrix, or interest inventories”.

In Pakistan, few universities have language laboratories. There should be a modern language laboratory in each university with trained staff to meet the requirement.

A large number of students believe that it is important to speak Arabic language with an excellent accent. This statement is loaded highly in previous studies also (Peacock, M., 1999; Kuntz, P., 2000; Altan, 2006; Diab, 2006). Language laboratory is the right place to acquire a good

accent (Peacock, M., 1999). Frequent visits will help the students to acquire an excellent accent especially when an Arab teacher is not available.

A reasonable strength of students have shown their disagreement with statement: “You should not say any thing in Arabic until you can say it correctly”. Students understand that speaking with some errors is part of the language-learning process even when studying Standard Arabic (Peacock, M., 1999).

Results of statement: “I feel self-conscious speaking the Arabic language in front of other people” shows significant difference of belief between male and female students. Female students have shown more confidence than male students. Students have potential to develop their spoken skills.

Students of Arabic are well-motivated and no significant difference observed in male and females’ motivations and expectations. On the other hand jobs are very limited in the field of Arabic and this leads to student frustration.

Few years back, the number of Arabic language learners worldwide has grown at a remarkable pace (Wahba, K., Taha, Z., England, L., 2006) but in Pakistan the number is decreased due to economic and political conditions.

Most of the students are learning Arabic to educate their next generation and they want to join teaching profession

Pakistani students have an emotional affiliation with Arabic language and they feel that it is essential for a Muslim to know Arabic. There is a significant difference of opinion between male and female students. Female students are more conscious than males about learning Arabic being Muslims.

A great majority of the students are learning Arabic to know the meanings of the holy Qur’an and the Sayings of

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Religious literature is being taught at M.A. level and new methods of teaching must be tailored to achieve the high level of students' belief. Significant difference of opinion in men and women is observed about learning the Qur'an and the Hadith. Female students are more concerned than males to understand the Qur'an and the Hadith. It shows that female students are very religious.

Students are not very much keen to know the Islamic law as compare to above mentioned other two reasons.

The respondents have shown lack of interest in the study of classical and modern Arabic literature as compare to religious literature. Unfortunately Pakistani students of Arabic have shown no concern about the political and economic system of Middle Eastern countries. Male and female students think in the same way.

The findings of researcher in which male and female students differed in their beliefs are as under:

Male students believed that Arabic language is easier to learn than other languages and they will learn to speak Arabic language very well. Most of the female students feel that male students are better than they are in Arabic language. Female students believe that they are not good at Arabic. They are very keen to know Arab culture and they also emphasised the importance of learning Arabic grammar. Female students feel self-conscious speaking Arabic language in front of other people. According to the results, majority of them believe that being Muslims they have to learn Arabic language. Finally, female students are more conscious than males about the understanding of the Qur'an and the Hadith.

The BALLI has proven helpful in the assessment of male and female students' beliefs about learning Arabic language and given us an overall information and reflection on students' potential about learning Arabic language at post graduate level in Pakistani universities. This study will

provide the better understanding of learners' beliefs and will be helpful to enhance the language learning process (for a review, see Bernat, E., 2006).

Syllabus should be revised and teachers' training programmes and refresher courses must be started in universities to instruct the teachers.

### **References**

- (1) Al-Batal, Mahmoud,(2006). Playing with Words: Teaching Vocabulary in the Arabic Curriculum, Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Edited by: Kassem M. Wahba, Zeinab A. Taha, Liz England, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey& London 2006, pp.331
- (2) Al-Batal, Mahmoud,(2006).The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in the United States: Realities, Needs, and Future Directions, Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Edited by: Kassem M. Wahba, Zeinab A. Taha, Liz England, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey& London 2006, pp.395
- (3) Alish, M., Elkhafai, H.M. & Hammoud, S.(2006). Professional Standards for Teachers of Arabic, Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Edited by: Kassem M. Wahba, Zeinab A. Taha, Liz England, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey& London 2006, pp.413
- (4) Altan, Mustapha.Z. (2006). Beliefs about language learning of foreign language-major university students, Australian Journal of Teacher Education, Vol.31, No.2, 2006, pp.45-52
- (5) Bernat,E., (2007).Assessing EAP learners' beliefs about language learning in the Australian context. The Asian EFL

Journal Quarterly, Vol.8, Issue2, Article9, (June2006), pp202-227.

- (6) Bernat, E., & Gvozdenko, I., (2005). Belief about Language Learning: Current Knowledge, Pedagogical Implications, and New Research Directions. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, Vol.9, No.1, (June 2005), Retrieved October9, 2008 from <http://testl-ej.org/ej33/al.html>
- (7) Bernat,E.,& Lloyd,R.,(2007).Exploring the Gender Effect on EFL Learners' Beliefs about Language Learning. *Australian journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*.Vol7, 2007, pp79-91
- (8) Diab,Rula L.,(2006).University students' beliefs about learning English and French in Lebanon, *System*34 (2006), pp.80-96.
- (9) (Dickins, J., (2006). Arabic/ English Translation and Interpreting teaching in Britain, *Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Edited by: Kassem M. Wahba, Zeinab A. Taha, Liz England, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey & London 2006, pp.363-367.
- (10) England, L., (2006). Methodology in Arabic Language Teacher Education, *Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Edited by: Kassem M. Wahba, Zeinab A. Taha, Liz England, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey & London 2006, pp.428
- (11) Horwitz,(1988). E.K. Horwitz, The Beliefs about Language Learning of Beginning University Foreign Language Students, *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol.72, No.3 (Autumn, 1988), pp283–294.
- (12) Lightbown, P.M., & Sapda, N., (2008).How languages are learned, Third Edition, Oxford University Press.pp.66-67

- (13) Nahla, M.A., (2006). Teaching Arabic to Non- native Speakers at Alexandria University, Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Edited by: Kassem M. Wahba, Zeinab A. Taha, Liz England, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey & London 2006, pp.67-79
- (14) Nikitina, L.,& Furuoka, F.,(2006) Re-examining Horwitz's Belief about Language Learning Inventory( BALLI) in the Malaysian Context, Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, Vol.3, No.2, 2006, pp.209-219
- (15) Kuntz, P. (2000).Beliefs about Language Learning: Students and Their Teachers at Arabic Programs Abroad, African Issues, Vol.28,No. ½, Study Abroad in Africa (2000), pp 69-76
- (16) Kuntz, P. (1997). Students and Their Teachers of Arabic: Beliefs about Language Learning, (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED407854). Retrieved October 2008 from E-Subscribe database
- (17) Kuntz, P. (1997). Stateside and Overseas Students of Arabic: Belief about Language Learning.( EDRS Document Reproduction Service No. ED407 835) Retrieved October 2008 from E-Subscribe database
- (18) Peacock, M. (1999). ). Belief about Language Learning and Their Relationship to Proficiency, International Journal of Applied Linguistics, Vol.9, No.2, pp.247-265
- (19) Versteegh, Kees.(2006).History of Arabic language teaching, Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Edited by: Kassem M. Wahba, Zeinab A. Taha, Liz England, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New jersey& London 2006, pp.5
- (20) Wahba, K., Taha, Z., England, L. (2006). Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New jersey& London 2006, pp. xv

