The work is intended to study the argument structures of Urdu and English verbs to bring out the basic difference, if any, between these two languages in this regard. It explains why such a study is necessary. It begins with a theoretical discussion on what has already been done within the framework of Principles and Parameters theory and the Minimalist Program. It discusses theta roles required by verbs in Urdu and English and compares them to find out the ways in which they are similar to or different from each other.

The First Chapter deals with some theoretical issues that led to the evolution of the theta theory within the principles and parameters theory (Chomsky 1981). It discusses the significance of theta theory for the well-formedness and semantic interpretation of a sentence. It discusses briefly the crucial justification for thematic relations given by Gruber (1976, (originally 1965)) which was followed by Jackendoff’s conceptual approach to the thematic relations (1990). Further it has discussed how Chomsky’s concept of thematic structure is different from Jackendoff’s conceptual structure. It argues that Chomsky’s theta theory offers a more satisfactory solution than Jackendoff’s in so far as the thematic structures of sentences of natural languages are concerned.

The theta criterion which is an important component of theta theory has been discussed in details. It retains its significance even in the Minimalist Program which questions almost every assumption of Principles and Parameters theory. Chomsky notices that Theta roles are a fundamental property of grammar and their proper assignment to the arguments is necessary to satisfy the principle of Full Interpretation (FI); otherwise a
derivation gets crashed. The chapter presents the aims and objectives of this work and argues that the comparative study of the thematic structures in Urdu and English is essential to understand the problem faced by the native speakers of Urdu learning English as a second language.

The Second Chapter contains detail of the possible theta roles of Urdu and English verbs. It assumes the hypothesis that verbs of similar semantic types in different languages have similar argument structures at LF but all of them are not expressed the same way at PF. Some of them may be implicit or theta-absorbed in a specific language. Here an attempt has been made to find out whether the difference between Urdu and English is due to some semantic or structural factors.

On the basis of the required number of arguments for the well-formedness of a sentence, we have classified Urdu verbs as verbs with one essential argument, verbs with two essential arguments, verbs with three essential arguments and verbs which need an embedded sentential argument. Based on their semantic affinity verbs with two arguments have been further subdivided as inchoative transitive verbs, verbs of creation, accomplishment, motion, physical and mental perception and Performative verbs. The sentences with causative verbs in Urdu have been discussed separately.

We have found that the verbs with one argument have a lot of similarity between Urdu and English. There are some verbs which are basically transitive in English but may be used intransitively, if only theme is to be focused. In Urdu, on the other hand, there are separate though morphologically related –sets of transitive and intransitive verbs (e.g. in English open is either transitive or intransitive and in Urdu khulnaa ‘to get open’ is intransitive and kholnaa ‘to open’ is transitive). The verb
with one argument indicating volitional action takes agent and the verbs which indicate physical and mental perception take experiencer as their argument. If an argument voluntarily does the act to draw the attention of someone, it is an agent rather than an experiencer. Intransitive verbs carrying medio-passive sense take theme as their essential argument in the subject position in Urdu and have their medio-passive counterparts in English. Such verbs are basically transitive in English but may be used intransitively if only the theme is to be focused. Some intransitive verbs take patient as an argument in both Urdu and English.

The verbs which need two essential arguments in Urdu may have agent and theme, agent and patient, agent and goal or theme and experiencer as their arguments. The verbs which take agent and theme as their arguments are inchoative transitive verbs (e.g. paka:na: ‘to cook), verbs of creation (e.g. ka:Rhna: ‘to embroider’), accomplishment (e.g. ji:tna: ‘to win’), motion (e.g. Dhakelna: ‘to push’), performative verbs (e.g. rad karna: ‘to reject’) or verbs of physical (ta:kna: ‘to stare at’) and mental perception (e.g. bhu:lna: ‘to forget’). Some other inchoative transitive verbs (e.g. ma:rna: ‘to kill’), verbs of accomplishment (e.g. dabočna: ‘to grab’), motion (e.g. ragedna: ‘to chase’), verbs of physical (e.g. dekhna: ‘to see’) and mental (e.g. ta:Rna: ‘to perceive’) and emotive verbs (e.g. jhiRakna: ‘to scold’) may take agent and patient as well. The theme argument of the verbs bearing two arguments agent and theme and the patient argument of the verbs bearing agent and patient are obligatory in the structures of both the languages. There are verbs of motion (e.g. gherna: ‘to surround’) in both Urdu and English which take agent and goal. We found the motion verbs (e.g. čaRhna: ‘to climb) of Urdu and English appear somewhat different here in the nature of their arguments
i.e. in Urdu they take PoP as goal but their English counterparts take NP as goal. Some emotive verbs (e.g. Khush karna: ‘to amuse / please’) take theme and experiencer as their essential arguments. Some verbs of Urdu and English take three arguments: (a) agent, theme and goal (bhejna: ‘to send’) (b) agent, theme and location (e.g. bharna: ‘to fill’) (c) agent, theme and source (ha:sil karna: ‘to obtain’) (d) agent, theme and experiencer (e.g. mādhna: ‘to impose’) (e) agent, patient and instrument (e.g. ċubho:na: ‘to pierce’) or (f) agent, patient and source (e.g. bedakhal karna: ‘to expel’). Something common in these verbs with three arguments is that they have agent and theme or patient as their first two arguments. They differ in regard to the third argument they take. Some verbs of exchange or transaction (e.g. bečna: ‘to sell’) need θ-role of goal both in Urdu and English. There are some verbs (bharna: ‘to fill’) in Urdu may take the θ-role of location. The sentence may be well-formed without the location argument in Urdu but in English, the location is essential with agent and theme to generate grammatical sentence with verbs such as bharna: ‘to fill’. Agent can be deleted when the sentence is passivised in both the languages. In Urdu, a sentence may be complete with theme only but in English both theme and location arguments are needed with verbs such as to fill up. There are verbs of exchange (e.g. ha:sil karna: ‘to obtain’) which require the theta role of source as their third argument. mādhna: ‘to impose’ type of verbs in Urdu and English need agent, theme and experiencer. The verb ċubho:na: ‘to pierce’ takes agent, patient and instrument. Some locational verbs (e.g. haTā:na: ‘to remove’) need agent, patient and source to complete a sentence.

The verbs which need an embedded sentential argument have been discussed separately. Such verbs (e.g. tardi:d karna: ‘to deny’) take CP
or IP as one of their essential arguments which bears the theta role of theme and the other argument may be agent or experiencer. Agent can be dropped from Urdu sentences, as it is a pro-drop language. Verbs with three essential arguments may also take a clause as their theme and other two arguments are agent and experiencer. The experiencer argument of the verb (e.g. mashwera dena: ‘to advise’) can be dropped in Urdu but its equivalent in English should be overt for the sentence to be well-formed.

The causative verbs have been discussed separately. We have adopted the framework of Hale and Keyser (1993) to tackle the complexities of causatives and shown that they can be discussed the same way in which other verbs with embedded sentences have been discussed. Superficially, causative verbs seem to have (a) causer, agent and theme (b) causer, agent and patient (c) causer, agent, theme and location (d) causer, agent, theme and source or (e) causer, agent, theme and goal. The configuration of causatives in English appears biclausal (e.g. make…to do or cause…to do). In Urdu, causative verbs are usually formed by adding the suffix (-wa): to an intransitive or transitive verb. Almost all intransitive verbs have transitive and causative counterparts (e.g. Khulna: ‘to get open’, kholna: ‘to open’ and kholwa:na: ‘to cause to open’) but all transitive verbs do not have intransitive counterparts (e.g. paRhna: ‘to read’).

The thematic structure of causatives is complex to some extent, in the sense that one argument is an NP which is the agent and another is an embedded clause as its theme. This theme argument which is a clause has its own thematic structure which may have (a) agent and theme (b) agent and patient (c) agent, theme and location (d) agent, theme and source or (e) agent, theme and goal. In Urdu, the agent argument can be deleted optionally but it is not possible to do so in English. Keeping the
complexities of causatives in mind, we have initially adopted Grimshaw’s approach and considered the agent of the causative sentence as ‘causer’ and the agent of the embedded sentence as ‘agent’ but we are not satisfied with this approach, as it violates UTAH (Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis). In the last section of the chapter, we have discussed the drawback of Grimshaw’ hypothesis and given the priority to Hale and Keyser’s approach (1993) over it, which enabled us to represent identical thematic relationship in both Urdu and English.

In the Third Chapter, we have examined the reason of absence of an argument in the PF of various sentences. If an argument is absent from the surface but not due to its movement or because it is a pro-drop language or it is represented by PRO then it may be due to incorporation or theta absorption. We have discussed the concept of incorporation proposed by Gruber (1976) and Baker (1988) and differentiated them with Chomsky’s concept of θ-absorption (1981, 1986) Jackendoff’s concept of argument fusion (1990). The incorporation represents the phenomenon where two elements become one unit and are visible on the surface (e.g. to babysit) whereas in theta absorption, an unspecified argument is dropped from the surface if it can be inferred from the semantics of verb (e.g. he is reading, meaning reading something readable).

We adopted the concept of θ-absorption given by Chomsky (1981, 1986). We have investigated the phenomenon of theta absorption in Urdu verbs to find out which type of theta roles might be absorbed in the verb and compared them with their English counterparts to check whether these two languages are alike or behave differently. The most common argument which is absorbed in the verb in both Urdu and English is
theme. It is also found that it is absorbed in a situation when it has an unspecified reference or when it can be inferred from the predicate which absorbs it. Some verbs (e.g. ga:na: ‘to sing’) can be used either transitively or intransitively. When transitive, they absorb unspecified theme. They indicate a profession when used in an indefinite present tense. Some verbs (da:Rhi: bana:na: ‘to shave’) may take reflexive of an agent as the either theme or patient. There are some verbs (e.g. pi:na: ‘to drink’) which absorb a specified theme and are used in an indefinite present tense. In Urdu, the verbs of transaction can omit the theme if it can be recovered from the PF but in English it is not possible at all. Verbs of perception in Urdu absorbs the theme if it can be recovered contextually but it is not so in English. When these verbs are used in the abilitative sentence, they may absorb the theme in Urdu and English. Some other arguments which are absorbed in both the languages are experiencer, goal, source, location and instrument. The experiencer argument is absorbed in Urdu but not in English. Performative verbs (iqra:r karna: ‘to testify’) may absorb experiencer in both the languages. Urdu and English appear alike in the absorption of goal and source. Unspecified location arguments seem to be absorbed in the verbs (e.g. bharna: ‘to fill’) in Urdu but not necessarily so in English. However, some verbs (e.g. bona: ‘to sow’) absorb location argument in both the languages. The instrument argument is also found to be absorbed in the verbs (e.g. bunna: ‘to kneat’) of both Urdu and English. The goal or source can be absorbed in the verb of transaction but not theme. Theme is absorbed in such verbs only in Urdu when it can be recovered contextually. In passive sentences, the agent argument is absorbed by the morphological marking on the verbs in both the languages but in active sentence, it is not the case. Agent argument can be dropped in Urdu, as it
is a *pro-drop* language. The theme argument is noticed to be absorbed more easily. The theme argument which is lowest in hierarchy, as Grimshaw (1990) mentioned, is seem to be absorbed more easily than the other arguments in both the languages i.e. Urdu and English.

In *Chapter Four*, we have focused on the relation of theta theory with case theory. We have discussed the role of the case theory in the derivation of a grammatical sentence. Though, the theta role assignment is a basic property of grammar; it cannot alone generate a well-formed sentence. All the functional elements such as case markers, tense and Agr features should be there to arrange them structurally. The case theory discusses the distribution of overt NPs in such a manner that they are assigned proper case and the *case filter*, its basic component, says that every lexically realized NP must be assigned proper case, for which features of case and case assigners must be in proper configuration. We have traced out that the interaction takes place between the case theory and movement rather than theta theory and movement. The assignment of theta roles is not concerned with movement because it is assigned before movement.

During the discussion, we noticed that there is strong relation between cases and theta roles. Hence, we have examined the types of cases taken by a particular theta roles and checked whether an NP with a specific θ-role (e.g. *agent*) is assigned a specific case (e.g. *nominative*) uniformly or it is assigned a specific case in one situation and another case in a different situation. As a result, we have found that there is no one to one correspondence between the theta roles and the cases. In other words, one case (e.g. nominative) may correspond to more than one θ-role (e.g. *agent, theme, patient* or *experiencer*) and one θ-role (e.g. *agent*) may
correspond to more than one case (e.g. nominative, ergative, dative and instrumental). The realization of agent and theme or patient is found to be different in Urdu because of the difference in the nominative-accusative structure in some situation and ergative-absolutive structure in some other situation.

We started with the hypothesis that Urdu and English differ at PF in regard to the application of theta theory but are alike at LF. We have analyzed the argument structures of several types of Urdu verbs and compared them with those of their English equivalents. We have reached the conclusion that the number of arguments needed by a specific type of verb is the same in Urdu and English but their overt realization varies across these two languages due to the difference in the absorption of some arguments such as, theme and experiencer. We have shown that our hypothesis was correct. This work may be helpful in teaching English to Urdu speakers. It may help them in using well-formed and complete sentences in English. The section on the relation of Theta theory with case theory may also provide useful hints about the use of specific prepositions in English. This work may also be helpful to those working in the area of natural language processing.