

An Analytical Study of Sociolinguistic Variations in Urdu Language

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Abstract: This paper will talk about the sociolinguistic variations in Urdu Language. The study uses the qualitative method it takes account of the interviews conducted by the various senior citizens of Urdu speakers in Pakistan, each interview is based on 4 questions to find out Urdu language variations for this paper. The questions on the value of the Urdu language in today's world, what changes took place in the Urdu language over the period from a lexical and dialectical point of view. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured with the use of different modern and simple tools. The study of this paper will be very helpful for the young generation of Pakistan because all the past studies did not solely talk about sociolinguistics in the Urdu language. It guides them to bring their native or national language with original accents and vocabulary which shows their actual culture and purity of Urdu language.

Keywords: language variations, dialect, accent, culture

1. Introduction

The word Urdu was first used by the poet Ghulam Hamadani Mushafi around 1780. At the end of the 18th century, it was known as Zaban-e-Urdu-e-Mualla زبَان اُرْدُو مُعَلَّى means the language of the exalted camp. Earlier it was known as Hindi, Hindi, and Hindustani. After the separation of Pakistan from India Urdu became the national language of *Pakistan* and a recognized regional language in India.

As the national language of Pakistan Urdu plays a vital role in communication and socio-cultural perspectives. 'Urdu, being an identity marker stood aside by the Muslims while Hindus wanted Hindi to enjoy the dominant status after English hegemony', [1]. 'After this classification, Urdu became the defining feature of the Muslims of the sub-continent based on belongingness and identification', [1]. 'According to Ethnology, Urdu is spoken as a first and second language by 170 million people making It the 11th most widely spoken language in the world. These countries include Afghanistan, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Guyana, Iran, Iraq, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States.

The paper considers the study of Urdu in a social manner by conducting interviews with random Urdu speakers of Pakistan who gave a detailed account of Urdu, such as the lexical and dialectical changes. 'Pakistan is the result of the struggle of AIML extended over four Decades. In the subcontinent of that age, several local Vernaculars and dialects were spoken which included Punjabi,

Saraiki, Pushto, Sindhi, Balochi, Hindi, and Bhasha etc., but for the Muslims of the Indo-Pak subcontinent, the representative language was only Urdu. Urdu remained the medium of communication throughout this Journey of the Pakistan Movement,[2]. Urdu shows our most decent culture throughout the world but with time, it loses its original beauty.

2. Literature Review

Urdu started developing in north India around Delhi in about the 12th century. It was based on the language spoken in the region around Delhi. Urdu became the identity of Muslims during the time of the separation of India. In past, it is noticed that European languages found great refinement and progress but there is a lack of research in Asian languages including Urdu. Indian and similar languages attracted researchers' attention in recent years. Especially, the Urdu language started to become a major part of Asian languages on the web,[3]. As Urdu language plays the role of communication and interaction between diverse backgrounds in Pakistan. People in Pakistani society, in general, are linguistically varied, and while one language represents their ethnolinguistic identity and presence, others are incorporated into everyday living for business transactions, official matters, entertainment, games, and education, indicating that no one language is sufficient for meeting all the communicative requirements across various social situations. All our speakers agree on this that the Urdu language is perfect for diverse linguistic people in Pakistan.

According to a survey "Urdu language processing: a survey" Ali Daud¹ · Wahab Khan¹ · Dunren Che² © Springer Science Business Media Dordrecht 2016. They 'present a survey regarding different linguistic Resources that exist for Urdu language processing, to highlight different tasks in Urdu language processing and to discuss different state-of-the-art available techniques. They did a solid discussion about Urdu characteristics and its resource sharing with Hindi emphasizing separate research for both. Furthermore, they also discussed the impact of using ULP techniques for IR, classification, and Plagiarism detection areas. ULP techniques, when properly applied do provide the basis for the Enhanced performance of different techniques. On one hand, our research is purely based on the variations in the Urdu language. On the other hand, this research highlights the processing of Urdu language and resource sharing with other languages including Hindi. There is a connection in between both topics as whenever the processing of a language happens it shows sociolinguistic variations.

'The phenomenon of language change is Assumed to be a result of the interplay of various Linguistic and non-linguistic factors',[4]. At present, the Urdu language continues to gain a huge number of words with other languages and now Punjabi, English, and Turkish languages highly influenced the Urdu language. With this effect, the Urdu language adopts different words with these languages. The English language influences the Urdu language as the English language is the official language of Pakistan, so it borrows many words from the Urdu language. In a study 'A Linguistic Study of Borrowings from English to Urdu. Examples of Words Showing Variations after Borrowings English words English Transcription Urdu Transcription Phonemic Variation

Ambulance |'æmbjələns| |'æmbələns| /jə/ is replaced by /v/

Antenna |æn'tenə| |æn'ti:nə| /e/ is replaced by /i:/

Art |ɑ:t| |ɑ:rt| r is clearly pronounced.

Café |'kæfeɪ| |'kæfeɪ| k is unaspirated.

Cast |kɑ:st| |kɑ:st| no change except unaspirated k

Chair |tʃeə| |tʃeər| r is pronounced at the end,

The Punjabi language affects the variations in the Urdu language due to its high number of speakers in Pakistan. On the contrary Turkish language effects variations in the Urdu language through its entertainment and film industry which takes high interest by the people of Pakistan in the 21st century, with this effect many more dramas, movies and Turkish series have been translated into

Urdu language including ‘Drilis Ertugrul’, Kurulos Osman, Ek Haseena Ek Deewana, Kosem Sultan etc.

2.1. Research gap

All the previous studies were based on the value, power, status, and processing of the Urdu language. This paper found that the Urdu language is changing and becoming professional and unprofessional day by day by gaining different words from other languages and modifying its existing words which shows it has a wide future across all over the world. Urdu is now the modern language of the world. ‘Modern Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and is also spoken and understood by many millions of people in the world’,[5].

2.2. Significance of the study

This paper encourages sociolinguists to do research on their native language analyze the changes and predict the future of their language(s). In the present time, sociolinguistics variations topic is much-debated question by linguists as many linguists want to know the variations and changes in their native language.’ Elena Bashir in her paper Urdu and Linguistics: A Fraught but Evolving Relationship’ accepts that Urdu language ‘In Pakistan too, there is a paucity of linguistic work on Urdu. Scholarship In Urdu, aside from literary studies, has been largely devoted to the extra-linguistic historical, political, and ideological issues associated with it,[6]. So, this research will help sociolinguists to know the major changes in Urdu languages over the course of time and they can easily come to know that Urdu language has a wide future in languages of the world due to its increasing users in all over the world. This research will open the doors of other regional variations in the Urdu language where the majority of non-Urdu speakers live and share their thoughts in Urdu with each other. This paper provides a framework of diachronic and synchronic variations in the Urdu language. All the interviewers from our research were intellectuals and knowledgeable about the Urdu language. They gave their behalf how the Urdu language functions in specific domains, and we found many variations in the Urdu language over the course of time. With this significance, we found the three most important literary figures in the Urdu language including Maulvi Abdul Haqq, Allamah Iqbal, and Mirza Ghalib, their work and dedication to the Urdu language must be remembered by the world. All of them were masters in the Urdu language at their respective times.

3. The procedure for conducting the study

The study follows the qualitative method with the procedure of conducting semi-structured interviews of the senior citizens of Pakistan, about their mother tongue (Urdu). During interviews, modern instruments were used like mobile phones for recording and headphones for listening. Moreover, three respondent responses were recorded and each one took a minimum of 7 minutes and a maximum of 12 minutes. For a clearer view see the given table 3.1.

3.1. Table 1: Respondents of the study

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S#	No of Participants	No of Questions	Duration	Method
1	Respondent no 1	04	10min	Recording and note-taking
2	Respondent no 2	04	07min	Recording and note-taking
3	Respondent no 3	04	12min	Recording and note-taking

3.2. Research Questions

1. Is there any Urdu writer whose legacy is always remembered?
2. What changes took place in the Urdu language over time?
3. What role does the Urdu language play in your area?
4. Did you find any lexical and dialectical variations in the Urdu language?
5. What is the status of Urdu language in the world?

3.3. Purpose of study

‘(Ethnologue: languages of the world, SIL International, 2020) report 77 languages used by people in Pakistan, although the only two official languages are Urdu and English’,[7]. The main purpose of this is to guide young Urdu speakers to bring their native language (Urdu) with them in their original form to assess the changes. Nowadays Urdu has lost its original tone because Urdu is the national language of Pakistan, and every other language speaker adopts Urdu in a different manner for communication with another language speaker. With this mixing up with different languages and the dominancy of the English language, Urdu loses its original accent and vocabulary day by day. As the national language of Pakistan, it is every native’s responsibility to take Urdu in its original form because Urdu is one of the most spoken as well as a national language of Pakistan which shows their culture throughout the world.

4. Findings

‘Urdu is the lingua franca of Pakistan, the history of Urdu language is much older than that of Pakistan, which spreads over a period of almost 900 hundred years’,[8]. It plays a significant role in various socio-contexts in Pakistan. Interviews are given below:

4.1. Respondent no 1

1. What is the status of Urdu language? Rise or fall? And why?

Answer: “...As far as I know, in this period Urdu language is at its peak. The Urdu language was very well received from the beginning, but during the time of the British, it faced many difficulties. This language is not only in Pakistan but in other countries It is widely spoken, and it has the status of Official language in India as well...”.

(Here the respondent talks about the importance of the Urdu language with authentic arguments. As Urdu is the national language of Pakistan)

2. Is there any Urdu writer whose legacy is always remembered?

Answer: “...Of course, we remember Maulvi Abdul Haqq the first poet of Urdu, has contributed a lot to Urdu and I can say that he is always remembered as the Urdu language's first writer. Allamah Iqbal who is also called the poet of the East, his services in Urdu are eternal. Although Urdu and Farsi language is mixed in his writing, he adds Farsi words in the Urdu language...”.

(Here the answer we get is that Maulvi Abdul Haqq is the first poet who spread Urdu to many people.)

3. What changes took place in the Urdu language over time?

Answer: “...Thus, many changes were made in the Urdu language, but since the British conquered India, many words were interrelated, for example, the word ‘پنتون’ was changed to ‘pent’ and the word ‘گیت’ changed to ‘گانا’...”.

(Here we find out some changes in the Urdu language not all but a few of them.)

4. What role does the Urdu language play in your area?

Answer: *“Well...as I live in Nawabshah Sindh, there are a lot of Sindhi-speaking people and I couldn't understand some Sindhi language words or phrases so here Urdu plays a vital role in understanding them very well because every language speaker understands and speaks Urdu very well because of their national status, Urdu connects us and plays the role of a common language...”*.

(Here respondent talks about the role Urdu plays in their area as a communication tool.)

4.2. Respondent no 2

1 Did you find any dialectical variation in the Urdu language?

Answer: *“...Yes, Karachi is the hub of Urdu language speakers, and their dialect is way more different from the Lahore, Nawabshah, Mirpurkhas, and Hyderabad Urdu accents. Through their specific accent, we easily find out Karachi citizens. In my point of view, the Karachi accent is not the original accent of Urdu, and it is also an informal accent of that people...”*.

(The second respondent told us that in Urdu language dialectical variations occur over the period.)

2. Any lexical variation you find in the Urdu language?

Answer: *“...Yes, in Karachi, people add some words instead of their original Urdu words just as ‘aby’ instead of ‘سنو’, a phrase like ‘scene banana yar koye’ instead of ‘کوئی منصوبہ بناو’. However, when we go towards the mountainside, we find Peshawari Urdu, where people use to speak ‘thum kesa hai?’ instead of ‘تم کیسے ہو؟’. These are some common changes I observed...”*.

(Respondent linked their first answer with the second one and told us about the lexical variations in the Urdu language.)

3. What changes took place in the Urdu language over time?

Answer: *“...There is a big difference in the Urdu accent over the period. Earlier the tone of the Urdu language used to be very sophisticated, now it has added a non-literary tone and new words have been added which dulls its natural beauty...”*.

(The second respondent was told about the change in Urdu over time and the major difference we found out that, a dialect of Urdu was changed over the period.)

4. What Does the Urdu language play the role in your area?

Answer: *“...In my area, the Urdu language is widely spoken and plays the role of conversation and connection between non-native and native speakers of the Urdu language...”*.

(Here we ask the same question about the role of Urdu and get the same answer that Urdu is the connecting tool)

4.3. Respondent no 3

1. What are the major changes in the Urdu language with time?

Answer: *“...The Urdu Language includes the words of every language. It also included a lot of Turkish words, which are now reduced, or these words have been changed and made different. For example, the meaning of the word count in the Turkish language is justice, while in the Urdu language, it means the process of justice. A bench of justice - and many such Turkish words have been added to the Urdu language like ‘Laakin’ was changed to Urdu ‘لیکن’ And ‘Hatun’ word was converted into ‘خاتون’ in the Urdu language...”*.

“...The Urdu language also borrowed some words from the Persian language. Their meaning or spelling changed as Pakistan's national anthem was written in Persian language and many of its words were taken from Urdu language. Arabic language words are also frequently included in Urdu language such as ‘عظیم’, ‘حلال’, ‘بیٹ’, ‘جہاد’, ‘احم’, ‘فتوی’, etc. Some words have been changed in the Urdu language from Arabic, such as ‘Lihata’ word has been changed to ‘لہذا’ in Urdu...”.

(The third respondent talks about the major changes in the Urdu language and he answered us very well in detail, he talks about borrowing new words from different languages and word changes.)

2. What is the status of Urdu language in the world?

Answer: “...*The Urdu language has a special status in the world, it is the first language of 70 million people, and 100 million people use it as a second language. The culture of this language is very high. It is a very beautiful and sweet language. Other languages also borrow words from it such as words for its traditional festivals Basant) and the words associated with clothes are also spoken in every language, for example, ‘Shalwar Qameez’, ‘Arosi’, ‘Johar’, etc. One of the reasons for this is that these alternative words do not exist in their society. The Urdu language is the tenth most spoken language in the world, and it holds a high rank in the world...’*”.

(Respondent gave us a detailed account of the status of the Urdu language in the World and talks about how other languages also borrowed words from the Urdu language which is quite interesting.)

3. What role does Urdu play in your area?

Answer: “...*The Urdu language is used in conversation, and it is the most spoken language in my area because Urdu is the national language of Pakistan, and everyone knows the Urdu language very well...’*”.

(The same question we repeated with three of them and all of them gave the same answer that Urdu plays a role in connecting one culture people with another culture people.)

4. Any personality of the Urdu language that the legacy Urdu language needs?

Answer: “...*Mirza Ghalib can be said a famous poet of the Urdu language. He was a poet who started writing at the age of 11 and spent day and night in the promotion of the Urdu language...’*”.

(Respondent talks about Mirza Ghalib and answers us that his legacy is the need for the Urdu language.)

5. Results

The interview results find out that:

- Urdu is the 10th most spoken language in the world, it has a special status all over the world. It plays a vital role in connecting people all over Pakistan and in India, because the starting point of the Urdu language is in India, and it is also very similar to their national language which is Hindi.
- As Pakistan is a multilingual country, the interaction between one language speaker with the other language speaker Urdu plays a vital role in communication. People agreed with this point of view and every respondent was given the same answer.
- Urdu is a mixture of different languages and borrowed words from other languages like Turkish words, Persian words, and Arabic words. Other languages also borrowed words from the Urdu language.
- With time Urdu has changed from a lexical and dialectical point of view. One of the respondents said that the dialect of Karachi Urdu speakers is different from other areas, they also have a specific vocabulary which is not found in the official Urdu language. The changes harm the actual beauty of the Urdu language.
- Maulvi Abdul Haqq, Allamah Iqbal, and Mirza Ghalib are the main writers of the Urdu language. Their services in Urdu are eternal.

6. How to improve it

To improve any language by three simple steps. Firstly, the speaker needs to read a lot about the language and read the literature of that language to improve vocabulary, knowledge and understanding of that language. Read famous writers mandatory.

Secondly, produce literature in that language to be aware of a language like Urdu. In this 21st century producing literature is quite simple, write blogs on any social media platform, or create a

personal website on Google and write anything in any language if one has not enough money to publish the work.

Lastly, listen in your native language to improve the ability to pronounce words properly, which helps to improve a person's accent. Listen to senior citizens or those who have a great grip on any language.

7. Conclusion

To sum up, nowadays Urdu plays a main role in connecting the people of Pakistan because Sindhi, Punjabi, Balochi, Pashto, and other language speakers live together and as the national language of Pakistan, everyone knows how to communicate in Urdu. So, Urdu is the best communication platform for those who do not know the other person's language in Pakistan. So many people adopt Urdu as their second language, they pronounce words in their accents or add different words to it, through which Urdu loses its originality. One responder said that Karachi people have an accent in Urdu, and they add different informal words instead of formal words in the language. On the other hand, Urdu borrowed words from other languages and other languages borrowed some Urdu words as well. In the end, the legacy of the pure Urdu writers Maulvi Abdul Haqq, Allamah Iqbal, and Mirza Ghalib were also remembered over the period, and it is necessary to read these real gems of Urdu literature to improve one's understanding of their national and native language Urdu.

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