

The History of the Urdu Language Together with Its Origin and Geographic Distribution

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Abstract: The objective of this paper is to briefly review the Urdu or else further specifically Modern Standard Urdu, which is a consistent register of the important language globally. Historically, Urdu is associated with the Muslims of the region of subcontinent before the partition. It is the national and one of the two official languages of Pakistan, along with English, and is spoken and understood throughout the country, whereas, the languages spoken throughout various regions of the country are the provincial languages. Despite of this, Urdu is chosen as a token of unity and not to give any preference over the other native local languages. Urdu is therefore spoken and understood by the vast majority of peoples in some form or another, including a majority of rural and urban dwellers. Also, despite the fact that the peoples from different provinces may have different indigenous languages, it is written, spoken and used in all provinces or territories of Pakistan, as a result it is the base language of the country. For this reason, it is also taught as a compulsory subject up to higher secondary and graduate schools in both English and Urdu medium teaching systems. This has produced millions of Urdu speakers from peoples whose native languages are different from the State language of Pakistan. It is distinct by its mixture of vocabulary from Arabic, Persian and Turkish that are not found in the standard dialect of Urdu, but Urdu uses more Perso-Arabic prefixes and suffixes. In terms of pronunciation, Urdu spoken in various states of world is different from Urdu spoken in other areas due to a mixture of the native languages. Urdu is conventionally written in the style of the Persian alphabets and relies heavily on Persian and Arabic calligraphy as a source for technical and literary vocabulary. In a very preliminary stage, the early Islamic religious preachers, Urdu poets and Urdu writers served a lot in evolving and development of Urdu, and contributed to mobilize peoples for knowing this language. Today, Urdu is spoken in many countries around the world, and has always been considered an elevated and somewhat aristocratic language in South Asia. It continues to conjure a subtle, polished affect in South Asian linguistic and literary sensibilities, and thus carries on to be preferred for song-writing, news papers and poetry, even by non-native speakers.

Keywords: Urdu Language, Culture and Civilization, Literature, Urdu History.

I. INTRODUCTION

A language is the method of human communication in a particular country or community, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. The human language has the properties

of productivity, recursivity, and displacement, and relies entirely on social convention and learning [1]. The estimates on the number of languages in the world vary; however, Ethnologue contains information on 7,106 known living languages. It is the comprehensive reference work that catalogs all the known living languages in the world today. Many of the languages listed in it are technically dialects and not the separate languages. They are listed separately because they differ from each other enough to be mutually unintelligible [2]. Urdu is a language spoken by peoples in many countries around the world and is widely spoken amongst Pakistani communities all over the globe.

Origin and Development of Urdu Language

Pakistan is a country with at least six major languages and 58 minor ones. Urdu is national language and English is the official language of Pakistan. The national language Urdu, has over 11 millions mother-tongue speakers while those who use it as a second language could well be more than 105 millions [3]. Philologists say that there are over 300 dialects and languages spoken in the country today and each is distinctly differently from the other. Urdu is used as identity symbols of nation and it is not resented or opposed in any region where there are native languages spoken [4]. Urdu has been formed from or vernacular spoken (Khariboli- Prakrit), in North India, by adding Persian and Arabic words to it. Contrary to the widely held misconception, it is not formed in the camp of the Mughal armies [5]. But the word Urdu is derived from the same Turkish word ordu (army) that has given English horde. However, Turkish borrowings in Urdu are minimum, and the words that Urdu has borrowed from Turkish and Arabic have been borrowed through Persian, and hence are a Persianized version of the original words [6]. The name Urdu has been first used by the poet Ghulam Hamadani Mushafi around 1780 [7]. Although English is used in most elite circles, and Punjabi has a plurality of native speakers, only about 7% of Pakistanis have Urdu as their native language, but Urdu is understood all over Pakistan. It is used in education, literature, office and court business. It holds in itself a repository of the cultural and social heritage of the country [8].

The earliest linguistic influences in the development of Urdu probably began with the Muslim conquests of Sindh particularly with the conquest of Muhammad Bin Qasim in 94 AH/ 712 AD. The language started evolving from Persian and Arabic contacts during the invasions of the Indian subcontinent by the 11th century to onward. Urdu

developed more decisively during the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) and the Mughal Empire (1526-1858). When the Delhi Sultanate expanded south to the Deccan Plateau, the literary language was influenced by the languages spoken in the south and court usage. The earliest verse dates to the 15th century and the golden period of Urdu poetry was the 18th-19th centuries. Urdu religious prose goes back several centuries, while secular writing flourished from the 19th century to onward. During the 14th and 15th centuries, much poetry and literature began to be written in Urdu. More recently, Urdu has mainly been connected with the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent, but there are many major works of Urdu literatures today [9]. The arrival of the Muslims in the sub-continent of Indo-Pakistan was a remarkable incident of the history of subcontinent. It influenced almost all departments of the social life of the peoples. The Muslims had a marvelous contribution in their culture and civilization including architecture, painting and calligraphy, book-illustration, music and even dancing.

The Muslims had always taken interest in life-history, biographical literature and political history. Therefore, they had an excellent contribution in this field also. However, their most significant contribution is the bestowal of Urdu language. Although the Muslims came to the subcontinent in three capacities, as traders or business men, as commanders and soldiers or conquerors and as preachers who performed the responsibilities of preaching, but their role in evolving and development of Urdu is the most significant. Modern Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and is also spoken and understood by many millions of people in the world [10]. After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Urdu was chosen to be the national language of the new country. In Pakistan Urdu is mostly learned as a first language and most of Pakistan's population has also their native languages other than Urdu. Despite this, Urdu was chosen as a token of unity and as a lingua franca so as not to give any native Pakistani language preference over the other languages. Urdu is therefore spoken and understood by the vast majority in some form or another, including a majority of urban dwellers in such cities as Karachi, Lahore, Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Multan, Faisalabad, Hyderabad, Peshawar, Quetta, Jhang, Sargodha and Skardu. It is written, spoken and used in all provinces or territories of Pakistan despite the fact that the peoples from differing provinces may have different indigenous languages, so, from the facts it is the "base language" of the country. For this reason, it is also taught as a compulsory subject up to higher secondary and graduate schools in both English and Urdu medium teaching systems. This has produced millions of Urdu speakers from peoples whose native language is one of the State languages of Pakistan such as Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi, Potwari, Hindko, Pahari, Saraiki, Balti and Brahui who can read, and write Urdu. It is absorbing many words from the regional languages of Pakistan. This variation of Urdu is sometimes referred to as Pakistani Urdu [11-12].

Speakers and geographic distribution of Urdu Language

Today, Urdu is spoken in many countries around the world, including Britain, Canada, the United States, the Middle East and India. In fact there are more Urdu speakers in India than they are in Pakistan. Urdu is also one of the officially recognized languages in India and has official language status in some Indian states. Urdu is also read and written in many parts of India and a number of daily newspapers and several monthly magazines in Urdu are published in these states. It is an official language of six Indian states and one of the 22 scheduled languages in the Constitution of India. Apart from specialized vocabulary, Urdu is mutually intelligible with Standard Hindi, which is associated with the Hindu community. The Urdu language received recognition and patronage under the British rule when the British replaced the Persian and local official languages of North Indian States with the Urdu and English languages in 1837 [13]. Lucknow, in India has been a centre of Urdu culture and literature for centuries. The city has been home to many Urdu poets, including Mir Taqi Mir, who was a famous poet in the 18th century. The Indian city of Agra is famous for the Taj Mahal. It is also the birth place of one of the most famous Urdu poets, Mirza Ghalib, who was born there in 1797. In Jammu and Kashmir, section 145 of the Kashmir Constitution provides: "The official language of the State shall be Urdu but the English language shall unless the Legislature by law otherwise provides, continue to be used for all the official purposes of the State for which it was being used immediately before the commencement of the Constitution" [14]. Outside South Asia, it is spoken by large numbers of migrant from South Asian workers in the major urban centres of the Persian Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia. Urdu is also spoken by large numbers of immigrants and their children in the major urban centres of the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway and Australia. There are many areas in Britain with large numbers of Urdu speakers. These include northern towns such as Manchester, Leeds and Bradford, parts of Scotland and the West Midlands, and various parts of London. Along with Arabic, Urdu is among the immigrant languages with the most speakers in Catalonia, leading to fears of linguistic ghettos. The importance of Urdu in the Muslim world is visible in the Islamic Holy cities of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia, where most informational signages are written in Arabic, English and Urdu, and sometimes in other languages [15]. Significant Urdu speaking communities exist in the United Arab Emirates as well [16].

Estimating the number of peoples or speakers for whom Urdu is a second language, is uncertain and controversial. There are between 60 and 70 million native speakers of Urdu: there were 52 million in India per the 2001 census, having some 6% of the population; [17], and approximately 10 millions in Pakistan or 7.57% per the 1998 census and several hundreds thousands in Bangladesh [2]. However, a knowledge of Urdu allows

one to speak with far more peoples and it is the fourth most commonly spoken language in the world, after Mandarin, English, and Spanish [18]. Urdu in Pakistan has undergone changes and has lately incorporated and borrowed many words from Pakistani languages like Pashto, Punjabi, Sindhi and Balti as well as former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) Bengali language, thus allowing speakers of the language in Pakistan to distinguish themselves more easily and giving the language a decidedly Pakistani flavour. Similarly, the Urdu spoken in India can also be distinguished into many dialects like Dakhni (Deccan) of South India, and Khariboli of the Punjab region since recent times, for socio-political reasons. So, although most of the population is conversant in Urdu, it is the first language of only an estimated 7% of the population who are mainly Muslim immigrants in different parts of South Asia. The regional languages are also being influenced by Urdu vocabulary. There are millions of Pakistanis whose native language is not Urdu, but because they have studied in Urdu medium schools, they can read and write Urdu along with their native language. Most of the nearly five million Afghan refugees of different ethnic origins (such as Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazarvi and Turkmen) who stayed in Pakistan for over twenty-five years have also become fluent in Urdu. With such a large number of peoples speaking Urdu, the language has acquired in recent years a peculiar Pakistani flavour to further distinguishing it from the Urdu spoken by native speakers and diversifying the language even further [19].

Urdu is written in an adapted form of Arabic script and during the 8th century the Persians began to use the Arabic script, adding a few letters for Persian sounds that did not occur in the Arabic language. Several centuries later, invaders of subcontinent who came from central Asia, added more letters to write the language spoken and this language eventually became known as Urdu. The Urdu script is written from right to left which is in the opposite direction to English. There are 36 letters in the Urdu alphabet that are in an extension of the Persian alphabets, which are their self an extension of the Arabic alphabets. However, there are also some symbols that can go above or below letters to modify their sound. Calligraphy in Urdu script is considered an art form. It is often used to write a verse or saying, or someone's name or a title. The images created by a Calligrapher can be in abstract shapes, or sometimes forms of objects or animals. Urdu also retains a complete set of aspirated stops (sounds pronounced with a sudden release with an audible breath), as well as retroflex stops. Urdu does not retain the complete range of Perso-Arabic consonants, despite of its heavy borrowing from that tradition. The largest number of sounds retained is among the spirants, which a group of sounds uttered with a friction of breath against some part of the oral passage.

Urdu Literature

Urdu has a rich culture of literature spanning many centuries and this literature has a history that is inextricably

tied to the development of the Urdu language. Its first major poet was Amir Khosrow (1253-1325), who composed couplets, folksongs, and riddles in the newly formed speech. Some famous classical poets include Mirza Ghalib and Mir Taqi Mir. More recently, to a great extent Pakistan owes its existence to the vision of one of the greatest Urdu poets, Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), who was the national poet of Pakistan. His poetry in Urdu is recited from the cradle to the corridors of power, and from the elementary school to the parliament house. There are several genres of Urdu poetry, the most famous probably being the amatory verse that can be set to music and can be sung. Urdu is also used for many lyrics of songs in films or movies. It is really courteous that the popularity of Urdu and its great literature increased manifold after the country became independent. A great number of newspapers are published in Urdu in Pakistan, contributing for knowing of this language. In India, Urdu is spoken in places where there are large Muslim minorities or cities that were bases for Muslim Empires in the past. Some Indian schools teach Urdu as a first language and have their own syllabus and examinations. Indian religious schools also teach Arabic as well as Urdu. There are several Urdu publications including daily news papers for Urdu speaking communities in that region.

Urdu literature is mostly popular in Pakistan, however, it is also popular in India and is widely understood in Afghanistan, whereas Sayyid Shamsullah Qadri is considered as the first Urdu researcher of Deccaniyat [20, 21, 22].

It is argued that languages need communities of people who speak them and pass them on to the next generation. The communities can only exist where there is a viable living environment [23]. The knowledge of any language is essential in every aspect and interaction to inform the peoples, communicate with each other, what we feel and desire around us, understand the world around us, and teamwork in our everyday lives [24, 25, 26]. Therefore, all language communities should be considered equal and their languages should be strengthened by being put into practices [27].

II. CONCLUSION

During the very initial stage, the Muslims came to the sub-continent in three capacities, such as traders or business men, as commanders and soldiers or conquerors. The origin of Urdu is related to the arrival and residing of the Muslims in the subcontinent, and they did not bring it with them. It came into being just due to the interaction of the conquerors and the conquered, and the heterogeneous language like Urdu arose due to amalgamation of local languages with Arabic, Persian and Turkish. In a very preliminary stage, the early Islamic religious preachers adopted the local dialects as well as contemporary literary traditions and characteristics to perform their job of preaching. Nevertheless, they served a lot in evolving and development of Urdu while performing the preaching

duties. Similarly, role of the Urdu poets who performed the responsibilities of poetry by writing patriotic poems, prose, novels and fictions, in the evolving and development of Urdu is the most significant. Furthermore, Urdu song writers and lyricists made it a highly reformed literary language capable for all types of expressions. Additionally, Urdu writers also wrote humorous columns, essays, articles and debates in different news papers and periodicals which are available on-line, and contributed a lot to mobilize peoples for knowing of this language. This information will be valuable to anyone with an interest in cross-cultural communication, language planning and language policy, language development, language relationships, and to all with a general curiosity about languages.

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AUTHORS PROFILE

Mrs. Robina Kausar, is exactly a refined professional with revolutionary career and reflecting strong leadership quality. Maintains and focuses on achieving bottom line results by formatting and implementing advanced technology to meet a diversity of needs. She has a superior record of delivering a large scale and mission critical projects on time. She completed her M. A., Degrees in Urdu and Education from University of the Punjab, Lahore. Afterward, completed M. Phil., from GC University Faisalabad. She tracked her service career as Lecturer in Govt. Islamia College (Women), Faisalabad, from August 8, 2005. Attended workshop on "Fire Prevention Course at Home for Ladies" at Federal Civil Defense Training School, Faisalabad, Pakistan. From 14th December to 26th December, 2009, which was held from the Civil Defense, Pakistan. Then attended workshop on "Senior Guide Leaders' Training" at Guide House, 5-Habibullah Road, Lahore. From 25th February to 29th February, 2008, which was hosted from the Pakistan Girl Guides Association, Punjab Branch.



Dr. Muhammad Sarwar, presently is working as Principal Scientist in Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology (NIAB), Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. Dedicated in the field of Entomology (Insects) and Acarology (Mites) and significantly contributed in the field of crop protection. Worked on vertebrate pests management especially controls of rodents in field crops and storage. Explored, hitherto the unexplored 36 species of stored grain & stored products mites, which were new additions to Acarology, by conducting extensive survey of different localities in Pakistan & Azad Kashmir. These species were belonging to 8 genera viz., *Forcellinia*, *Lackerbaueria*, *Acotyledon*, *Caloglyphus* and *Troupeauia* of family Acaridae; *Capronomoia*, *Histiostoma* and *Glyphanoetus* in family Histiostomatidae. Identification keys, taxonomical observations, differentiation remarks, comparison of characters, similarity matrices, Phenograms and Geographical maps of new species along with 48 alien species had been prepared. Conducted research work on Integrated Management of Cotton Leaf Curl Disease, Pest scouting, Pest monitoring and forecasting; planning, designing and layout of different research trials and data recording for integrated pest management on different crops, vegetables and orchards. Imparted training to the farmers and Field Staff, and provision of advisory services to the farmers regarding plant protection practices. Initiated training to the pesticide's dealers for proper handling, distribution and storing of pesticides, their legal aspects, and sampling of pesticides for the purpose of quality control. Involved in the research Projects, viz., Studies on the ecology, behavior and control of rice stem borers, Insect pests management of Brassica crops, Ecology and

control of gram pod borers, and Management of post harvest food losses. Presently, is conducting research work on IPM of Mosquitoes, Cotton insect pests and Fruit flies. Have a total of 125 Publications in International and National Journals and awarded with Medals by Pakistan.



Mr. Muhammad Shabbir, is technically a sophisticated professional with pioneering career reflecting strong leadership quality coupled with valuable computer expertise. He completed M. Sc., and M. Phil., from University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, having research titles “Forecasting of Wheat Area, Production and Yield by using ARIMA model”, and “Modeling and volatility of returns on the Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE)”, respectively. He started his service career as Lecturer in Punjab Group of Colleges, Faisalabad, from May 20, 2006. Attended workshop on “Principle of experimental design & Analysis” at University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan, from 1st December to 12th December, 2003, which was held from the University of Wales, Bangor, UK. Also attended workshop on “Focusing Statistics Education at College Level” at University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Pakistan, from 19th August to 20th August, 2008, which was held from the Higher Education Commission, Islamabad, Pakistan.