Linguistic Variations in Urdu Lexicon in Everyday Communication: A Case Study of the Last Decade of the Modern Century

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Abstract: The study discusses the variation in general (everyday) communication found in the Urdu lexicon in the previous 10 years. The research is qualitative, based on random interviews collected from Urdu speakers belonging to District Sanghar and Karachi from Sindh; and Lahore from Punjab. The study is based on the data provided by the interviewed participants who have rich experience and proficiency in Urdu. The article aims to find the changes in the lexicon of Urdu that include modifications in Urdu vocabulary by borrowing words and code-mix in communication. It discusses the causes of variations (technology, migration, and language imperialism) in detail and determines the status of language after these changes. It highlights the words used in Urdu speech whose equivalent alternatives are present in Urdu and those words that have died due to a lack of use of those words. It determines the impact of geography, modernization, globalization, and cultural coherence on language. It studies the changes in words used to call family members and friends and the changes in speech for communication between friends and family.

Keywords: lexical variation, code-mixing, code-switching, borrowing words, style.

1. Introduction

According to Social Contact theory, language is the result of the emergence of social interaction. Language is a vital component of a society. The purpose of language is communication which can be possible with the community. Therefore, the language grows with the society. It is affected by society and society also affects it which leads to drastic changes in it. Language variation can occur at the level of style, pronunciation, and lexicon (vocabulary). Languages change with the evolution process. Different societies with their respective languages come in contact and affect each other in terms of code-switching, code-mixing, borrowing, and modification of lexicon.

Urdu is the composition of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. It arose in the Mughal Empire from Lucknow and has a great history of 1000 years. The language gained prominence during the Mughal Empire. In the subcontinent, the Urdu language resembled Marathi, Marwari, and Hindi in its word choice. Being the language of the court, it possessed enriched culture and literature. But, immediately after the Mughal Empire, India was ruled for 200 years by the British after which the

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impact of the English language grew by every passing day. The Urdu language, as a result, suffered and borrowed loan words from the English. Languages due to the natural process of evolution and social interaction are born, die and interact with each other. Thus in a bilingual or multilingual society languages experience several variations at the level of phonology, lexicon (vocabulary), accent and dialects. Bilingualism is a natural phenomenon that occurs through natural language contact. Bilingualism indicates the presence of two or more languages in the same speaker, in the way these languages play a significant role in effective communication [1]. Language gets impure due to bilingualism; observe code switching and code mixing in their speech. Urdu and English have the status of national and official languages respectively which persuades the speakers to switch and mix the languages. In addition, Westernization, modernization, technology, and mass communication are massive agents for variations in the Urdu language. The conflict between the official language and the national language is the major cause for the language switching, borrowing, and inclusion of English words in Urdu vocabulary. Eventually, the language loses its standard of linguistic factors i.e.; vocabulary, style, and register. The curriculum conflict is yet another major problem. Children are taught English from the primary level eventually; they learn English and forget their native language such students speak an impure language.

The imperial languages are always promoted and dominant over the indigenous languages. The coming generations wish to learn the language which is superior and prestigious in the society. Therefore, in pursuit of learning English as a Second language and lingua Franca, Urdu has experienced drastic variations in its lexicon. Pakistan is a multilingual state where 6 major and 57 minor languages are spoken [6]. Being the national language, the speakers from different languages with their own culture and ethnicity also bring the changes; These changes are so contagious that they have found the ground and are spoken mixed with Urdu in our everyday communication with family members and friends; moreover, it has altered the names, titles, meet and greet manner.

1.1. Research Questions

- 1) What forms of variations have taken place in the vocabulary of the Urdu language for everyday communication?
 - 2) What are the causes of variations in the use of Urdu implied in everyday communication?

1.2. Research Objectives

- 1) To investigate the forms of variations which have taken place in the vocabulary of the Urdu language for everyday communication.
 - 2) To gain an in-depth study of variations in the use of Urdu implied in everyday communication.

1.3. Research Limitations

The study is restricted to finding the changes in the lexicon of the Urdu language for the last ten years. It focuses on exploring the causes of those changes and types of the changes; finally, the study concludes with the impact of those changes. It also discusses how far these changes are valuable and hazardous. The gap is left in this study to find a solution to preserve the Urdu language from becoming impure.

1.4. Methodology

The study is based on interviews asked from the Urdu speakers belonging to District Sanghar and Karachi from Sindh, and Lahore from Punjab. The data collected is based on a questionnaire that asked participants to answer based on their experience and knowledge. Tape recording, note taking

and manual analysis are methodologies used. The collected data from participants is transcribed and analyzed manually relating to the nature of answers provided and comparative analysis with the previous studies.

2. Literature Review

Several authors and scholars have worked on the language variation in the Urdu lexicon caused by numerous linguistic factors: regional variations (dialectal variations), social class, education, and technology. Language variation is an inevitable aspect of evolution as societies grow and communities interact with the language due to interaction with its neighboring languages faces the changes. The variations primarily are observed due to geographical changes that give rise to dialects. Pakistan and India vary in the dialects of language due to this geographical factor. Language varies due to the influence of other languages, language imperialism; bilingualism, and multilingualism that is, a person who speaks more than one or two languages shifts and shuffles the languages together causing the code-switch and code-mix. Code-switching is the inevitable consequence of bilingualism or multilingualism and anyone who speaks more than one language chooses between them according to concrete circumstances [5]. Code mixing occurs when a conversant uses two languages together to the extent that he/ she changes from one language to the other in the course of a single utterance [7]. Studies of Urdu varieties other than Modern Standard North Indian Urdu have received attention perhaps disproportionate to their number of speakers or position in the sociopolitical language hierarchy [2]. Language varies due to technology, television advertisements, and social media trends. The person who spends excess time surfing on social media and television reflects the habits and actions he watches, according to the theory of interaction. English as a lingua franca is widely used across the globe. Commercial advertisements which are readily capable of gaining public attention play a crucial role in language mixing. The English language is almost spoken and understood in every country around the world and various programs in magazines, radio, TV, and movies were reported in the English language. This contact of the English language with other domestic languages allows English to mix in spoken, and written, as well as in dictionaries [4]. As language dynamicity results in linguistic transformations over time, the linguistic properties become unstable. However, it is interesting to mention that is not a problem for the speakers, because the heterogeneity is structured and does not cause any damage to the process of communication [3].

3. Findings

The study led to very interesting and insightful findings which are detailed as follows.

Original names No Modified After impact Description of English names 1 آپي/بېن Sis/ sister Female Sibling 2 بهئیا /جان /بهائی / Bro Male Sibling بهائي 3 امي/ امان امي Mama Mother ابو/ بابا 4 ابو/ ابّا Papa Father 5 پهپهو /آپ/ بوا Auntie sister of father پهوپهی

Table 1: Variation in names of Family members

6	مامي	مامي		wife of brother of mother
7	تائی	طائ		Wife of older Uncle
8	ماسی	خالہ		Sister of Mother
9	چچی	چچی		Wife father's younger brother
10	نانی	نانو	not changed	Maternal grandmother, mother of one's mother
11	دادی	دادو	not changed	Grandmother/ mother of one's father
12	چچازاد	بهائی/ بہن	Cousin	kids of father's brothers and sisters
13	مامو زاد	بهائی/ بهن		kids of mother's brothers and sisters
14	تايا	تيا	Uncle	Elder brother of father
15	چچا	چاچو		younger brother of father
16	پهوپها	پهوپها		Husband of the sister of father
17	ماموں	ماموں		Brother of mother
18	خالو	خالو		Husband of Sister of Mother

Table 2: Other Changes In Lexemes

Othe	Other Changes In Lexemes		
No	Urdu	After influence of English	Modification in Urdu
01	واقعم	Accident	-
02	میرا مطلب یہ ہے	I mean	-
03	تشويشناك	Serious	-
04	دو ائى	medicine	-
05	ہوشیار / سمجھدار	Intelligent	-
06	درد	pain	-
07	خواب	Dream	-
08	خونی رشتےدار	Relative	-

Table 2: Continued

09	میں نے یہ بات کار ی ہے	-	میں نے یہ بات کی ہے
10	پیغام	Messaging and texting	
11	استاد, استانی	Teacher	
12	الفاظ	Words	
13	بھائی جان	Bro, Sis	یار ارے
14	پپو, گڈو	baby boy	
15	بقاياجات	change	
16	انتخابات	election	

Table 3: Changes In Standard Of The Language

]	No	Standard vocabulary	Slang/ loose vocabulary
	1	بھائی, بھایا, بہن, آپی	وے ابے

2	ابو اپ کیا کر رہے ہیں	بو آپ کیا کر رہے ہو
3	ابو آپ کہاں سے آرہے ہیں	ابو آپ کدھر سے آرہے ہو
4	آپ	و ∠ تم تو
5	_	یار ارے

4. Discussion

The collected data from different participants highlight the changes in word choice during conversations in Urdu between friends and family. All the participants agreed that the changes have taken place in the Urdu lexicon in the previous 10 years. As per the collected data, the changes found are given below.

People observe code-switching and code-mixing in their communication. They have made the language impure ultimately, the young speaker does not speak or understand the original vocabulary of the words. The factors behind these variations are education standards, migration, globalization, socialization, personal touch, and geographical distance. The evolution has resulted in massive changes in the Urdu language and with those adaptations the language has shifted for betterment as well and is called, "Modern Urdu". The stress in words has subsided with the evolution that has resulted in the language becoming more elegant.

Since the adaptations and changes are also appreciated to some extent. But, the Urdu language in recent years has encountered such changes that it has completely diverged from its original classical style. Due to the lack of social interaction with elderly people, excess use of social media, and preference to English over Urdu has caused the death of several words in Urdu. The contents of social media such as commercial ads and vlogs, also imply the use of the English language extensively. Ultimately, the youth is inspired by them and replicates their style. The teachers in educational institutes mix and switch the codes to make their language understandable for the students. Roman Urdu is widely used in texts and messaging, and this has badly affected the write-up, dictation, and script (الملاء).

Due to the impact of contact languages, the compassionate and delightful tone of Urdu has changed to aggressive and offensive. During the interview with Participant 1, she said that being a teacher she has observed the students are not reluctant to use immoral and abusive language and use of pragmatic approach to mock each other, this shows the traces of immorality in the conversation of youth. Participant: 04 answered the question on changes in word choice while communicating the friends as, nowadays, the loose and uncivilized manner of speech is rampant. Ethics and norms of speech have vanished while frankness and friendliness are valued. Participant: 06, in his interview, stated these changes have affected the religious and cultural values. The English culture and trends that are shown on Social media are promoted. Eventually, it has led society towards destruction.

Technology has immensely caused harm to the socio-cultural identity of the nations. Several borrowed vocabulary words have been adapted. It has coined vocabulary from innovations in technology. Words like texting, messaging, email, phone, internet, and media have become part of everyday communication due to the advancement and wide use of technology. Thus, language encounters variations in lexeme (vocabulary) based on sociocultural interaction and union.

5. Conclusion

Language is with the community, as long as the active speakers are present in the society the language survives. Language through the natural process of evolution keeps changing and developing. These changes can be good or bad for the language, in other words, these changes may

develop or destroy the language. Urdu is spoken as a first language by nearly 70 million people and as a second language by more than 100 million people, predominantly in Pakistan and India. It is the official state language of Pakistan and is also officially recognized, or "scheduled," in the constitution of India. Urdu is the language composed of Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and Hindi. Since Urdu is not a completely original language it has emerged from several languages, therefore, it has several words of the languages of which it is composed. In the previous 10 years, Urdu has confronted several impurities in it in the form borrowing of new vocabulary by different linguistic practices like coinage, borrowing, abbreviations, and acronyms. The rise of mobile phones and instant messaging has led to the widespread use of abbreviations and acronyms in written communication. Urdu speakers have adopted this trend by using abbreviations like "LOL" (لول), and "BRB" (البيك ك). Urdu, like other languages, has adopted numerous technological terms from English and other languages. As technology advanced, new concepts and inventions emerged, and Urdu needed to incorporate these terms into its lexicon. Words like "ميل" (text), "ميل" (email), "فون" (phone), "أنثرنيث" (internet), and "سوشل ميڈيا" (social media) are examples of borrowed words that have become part of everyday Urdu vocabulary. With the development of new technologies, Urdu-speaking communities have coined new words and phrases to describe these innovations. For instance, "ويب سائث" (website), "أؤن لوڈ كرنا" (to download), and "ويب سائث" (to go viral) are Urdu neologisms that have emerged in response to technological advancements.

Yet, after such immense changes in word choice, Urdu has moved towards betterment due to print form (literature), courses, showbiz industry. Therefore, the language apart from impurities, has developed, though there need to draw the focus of youth towards Urdu to promote the language by increasing the vitality (active speaking community) and standard of the language.

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Appendix

Transcribed Interviews

Participant: 01

۔ آپ کے مطابق اردو زبان میں گھر والوں اور دوستوں سے بات کرنے کے لیے الفاظ میں کیا تبدیلیاں آئی ہیں؟

As Urdu is composition of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. Urdu has been affected with evolution and its contact languages leading to change in every day communication in Urdu with a long passage of time.

The changes observed in recent times are as follows: Urdu spoken in Subcontinent was quite different from the today, Urdu, at that time was simple and nowadays, Urdu has evolved with glorification in terms of its accent and word choice. The Urdu spoken by individuals before the partition of subcontinent used stresses in speech and resembled Hindi, Marathi, and Marwari in words choice.

With the passage of time, the influence of aforementioned languages faded away from Urdu and it improved by uniqueness, and new style by getting influence from Punjabi and other contact languages. It changed totally in few years, and the current Urdu is entitled as "Modern Urdu"

The impact of English has been observed on great extent owing to status of English and its privilege and promotion. Its status in modern world, curriculum and technology.

- ان تبدیلیوں کی وجہ کیا ہے؟

There are several reasons for changes in language like:

- 1. The first reason is migration of community and acceptance of influence of the language by other contact languages. It takes generations to adopt and observe the change.
- 2. Educational Standards have led to betterment in words selection and word choice. Obsolete and archaic words have been replaced with new

words.

- 3. Globalization, socialization, and internet have led to exchange of vocabulary and creates words which then can be found in both the languages.
- 4. Personal touch is involved in language change (style, idiolect) formal speech, informal speech, lofty and sublime language.
- 5. Research proves that after every 15kms accent and words choice varies in every language.

۔ ان تبدیلیوں کی نوعیت کیا ہے؟

Language has moved towards betterment with every passing day. The reason for his betterment is wide acceptance by community, and secondly being national language, it is promoted with rich literature and culture. Due to these changes, Urdu has attained an elegant look. The Modern Urdu is regarded more advanced comparatively Ancient Urdu.

The Original names were called for the friends, family members (of same age). The relatives were called as: Mami (Wife of the mother's Brother), Phuphi (sister of father), Taya (Elder brother of father), Taai (Wife of Taya), Khala (Mom's sister), Khalu (spouse of Khala), Nana (Mother's Father), Nani (Wife of Nana, Mother's Mother), Mamu zaad (The son of Mamu), Chacha Zaad (offspring of Chacha).

Due to modernization where Urdu became modern, on the other hand, English language due to its importance around the globe resultantly, it started to be taught in Curriculum and given the status and designation of respectable language. Urdu started to be replaced by English words in everyday communication. We have accepted to include those words in our language in passion and curiosity of learning English.

Parents are called "Mama and papa" instead of "ami, abu"

Taya, phupha, mamu, chacha, and khalu are renamed with "uncle"; similarly, "Tayi, phuphi, mami, khala, and chachi changed into "aunty"

The words for grandparents were nana and nani; dada and dadi. These were replaced with grandfather, and grandmother.

Taya zad, chacha zaad, mamu zaad, khala zaad are replaced with, "Cousin".

The identity of kith and kins and relatives is lost due to English.

There are several changes observed in everyday communication. For example, we use the word, "use" instead of having its complete and equivalent word. Because it reduced the length of the sentence and it also looks elegant. Secondly, we usually say, "accident" instead of "waqia".

Thirdly, we use the phrase, "I mean instead of, mera matlab ye he".

Fourthly, we use word "serious" instead of "Tashweeshnak".

Fifthly, the words medicine is used in place of "dawai".

Sixthly, the word intelligent is used instead of "hoshyaar and samajhdar".

Seventhly, "pain" is used instead of "dard".

Eighthly, we use the word "dream" for aim in future instead of "khuwaab".

Friends instead of dost, relative instead of khooni rishtedaar,

In urdu, people used to say, "mene ye baat **kari** he" and now, it is called as, "mene ye baat **ki** he"

The impact of English has been observed while communicating the friends. They were called with their own names before and now as well, though there are some changes observed in the word choice as have been previously told in question.

Participant: 02

Several changes have been observed so far in Urdu lexicon for every communication. The classical (difficult vocabulary) is avoided. English words are included in Urdu (Code mixing). Youth is unable to understand the pure Urdu (Language impurity). They prefer the mixed language.

- ان تبدیلیوں کی وجہ کیا ہے؟

There are several reasons of these variations. Among them, some are as follows:

- 1. Fall in family interaction and elderly people, while spending plenty of time in social media.
- 2. The contents of social media such as, commercials ads, Vlogs, also imply use of English language extensively. Ultimately, the youth is inspired of them and replicate their style.
- 3. The educational institutes also pay attention on using the classical and standard Urdu to make students understand more easily. The write-up (IMLAH) style of the student is deteriorated.
- 4. Due to impact of social media and its trends, lack of interaction with family and elderly people, the death

- of several words in Urdu have occurred.
- 5. The institute for rights and preservation of Urdu language is also named as "Baord" that is an English Word.

- ان تبدیلیوں کی نوعیت کیا ہے؟

The nature of these variations are as follows:

- 1. Roman Urdu is given preference in texts and messaging.
- 2. Such words are used whose equivalent words are existing ie: messaging, (pegham), words (Alfaz), Teacher (ustad, Ustaani)
- 3. Due to use of Roman Urdu, the script or writing system of urdu has been affected.

The family members were called with their original names; while, in some families, nicknames were also used to call them.

Any adequate difference or variations are not observed in calling the names; though, the behavior and style has become friendly. The respect and honor has been comparatively reduced in relatives, freedom and liberty is observed largely nowadays.

The change has been observed between parents and children and vice versa. The respect and prestige for parents have been destructed and became friendlier. Children do not respect their parents in terms of their tone and word choice. On the other hand, the parents have also altered their tone from sympathetically and compassionate to aggressive and offensive.

Being a teacher, I have observed that the students are not reluctant to use abusive, immoral words. The use of slang words is also observed (ie: Yar, are).

The use of hidden and pragmatic speech is observed by using immoral gestures, and signals which were not counted respectable previously, and even today.

Participant: 03

The largest variation observed so far is use of English words that's why the originality of Urdu is being affected (language impurity).

Some words as "change" and "election" are commonly used in everyday Urdu conversation.

۔ ان تبدیلیوں کی وجہ کیا ہے؟

The role of social media content and trends have affected the language on great extent, as they make

Use of English words which are adopted (modernization, code-mixing).

The nature of these variations are devastating as they have affected the accent, and standard style of the Urdu language due to influence of other languages.

The family members were called with their own names as per Urdu language style, and friends were called by their nicknames ie: Papu, Guddu.

The names of parents in family is replaced with Mamma or mummy instead of ami or ama jaan, chachi, mami, taayi and chachu, mamu, taya are replaced with aunty and uncle respectively. This is corollary of losing the identity of family relations.

Uncivilized talks are observed in family interaction, specifically children have forgot the limits and norms to talk to the elder and young.

The frankness and friendliness are not found among friends nowadays.

Participant: 04

Urdu is our national language. It is spoken and understood by person belonging to any area of Pakistan. Nowadays, it has been observed that Urdu has not been regarded or focused as English is. The language academies for English language courses are given prominence while, there is no idea of Urdu academies where the children should admitted to learn the moral values and norms of culture and language.

Previously, the nature of language was not aggressive as now it has been switched to loose talks. The purity and originality of language has been affected.

Urdu should be promoted the way English is promoted today.

- ان تبدیلیوں کی وجہ کیا ہے؟

Social media is the primary cause of these changes. The accents and style of the language shown on social media has affected the language of individuals. It has resulted in including English vocabulary.

۔ ان تبدیلیوں کی نوعیت کیا ہے؟

The words brought in use nowadays are of loose nature which has compromised on the ethical and moral values as well as the beauty of the Urdu Language. As a result, the respect, dignity, and honor of parents has declined. The beauty of Urdu in Mughal empire is not seen nowadays.

A decade ago, the family members were called as: Aba or abu for Father, Ami ji for mother, Dada jaan for grandfather and Dadi jaan for grandmother respectively. These words had love and affiliation for if one get offended these names had enough love and respect to apologize.

Today, the names have been replaced with loose prefixes which could've been used for close friends like "Yaar, Oe". The honour and privilege of elderly individuals has is not taken in consideration.

Aaapi, baji, behn are not used while, sister

and sis are used. "Bro" is being called instead of bhai jaan, bhaiya, bhai.

Father is called as daddy and in some places the abusive and disrespectful talk is on such an extent that the parents are called as "oe".

The talk has lost the elegance. Formerly, the sentence, Father, what are you doing? Was spoken as: abu ap kiya kar rahe hien? And now it is spoken as abu ap kiya kar rahe ho? Similarly, the sentence, father, Where are you coming from was spoken as: abu ap kahan se arahe hein while, now it is spoken as: abu kidhar se arhae ho?

Friends had lot of adoration and love. They were regarded as brother or sister. The relation was fulfilled for they might had to sacrifice.

Now, the friendship is other name of selfishness, greed, and envy.

Participant: 05

Urdu has experienced great change in the last decade in vocabulary. Firstly, the formal and rigid speech was spoken. The names were called as, abu ji, ami jaan, dada ji, dadi jaan, chacha ji, chachi jaan, mamu jaan, mumani ji. And, now these words to call father and mother are mama and papa, similarly, mamu, chacha, taya are changed into "Uncle". Likewise, chachi, mumani, tai are converted into "aunty".

The use of English is regarded as superior and respectable. The English culture is assimilated and those who do not imbibe with English culture is counted into backward and downtrodden. As a result, we could not have learnt English; moreover, we have lost our identity.

Those nations who have preferred their own language are the successful nations today like China, Japan, and Germany.

- ان تبدیلیوں کی وجہ کیا ہے؟

There are many reasons for variation of language like:

- 1. Social media: Social media has brought the whole world in the interaction. Since, the language of technology and its resources is English, therefore it is given great importance to acquire the English language.
- 2. The language that is imperial is promoted, it is used in education, its literature is promoted, and its influence is observed in indigenous language.

- ان تبدیلیوں کی نوعیت کیا ہے؟

The nature of change is such that it has led to affect the religious and cultural values, the English culture, trends that are shown on Social media is promoted. Eventually, it has led society towards destruction.

The names were called as, abu ji, ami jaan, dada ji, dadi jaan, chacha ji, chachi jaan, mamu jaan, mumani ji. And, now these words to call father and mother are mama and papa, similarly, mamu, chacha, taya are changed into "Uncle". Likewise, chachi, mumani, tai are converted into "aunty".

Today, the parents are called as, mamma and papa respectively. Brother is called bro. mama, mami; chacha, chachi; are called uncle and auntie respectively.

The friends were given the status of DOI: 10.54254/2753-7080/4/2021020ther. While, today everyone is constrained with selfishness, greed and envy. Friendship had started depending on greed. The loose talks and vocabulary is being observed as; "tum, oe, and tu" are used.