

SEMANTIC CHANGE IN URDU: A SOCIO LINGUISTIC IMPACT ON LEXICAL BORROWING FROM ARABIC TO URDU

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Abstract

The Socio-cultural contact between the Muslim soldiers speaking different languages including Arabic and the local population of Indian subcontinent resulted in the evolution of a new language known as Urdu. Consequently upon this sustained contact between the languages of the soldiers and the dialects spoken by the local population, the process of this linguistic amalgamation started. Lexical borrowing from these languages into Urdu vocabulary is one of the examples of such a linguistic amalgamation. This paper is restricted to the discussion of the socio cultural impact of borrowed words of Arabic origin in Urdu and the Semantic change in Urdu and the circumstances under which word borrowing has taken place. The aim of this paper is to analyze the lexical aspect of Arabic borrowings in Urdu and its uses in semantically different context. This paper is different from previous attempts of studies in area of 'borrowings' because the loan words are used in Urdu is which has undergone some changes they get differ in meaning. For example 'axba: r' in Arabic means 'information, notification' but the same word in Urdu is used for 'newspaper'. An attempt has been made to discuss the conditions and the results of interactions between two cultures and a linguistic amalgamation in terms of cultural learning. This study is to show the comprehensive study of loan words and also the corresponding causes of such Semantic changes. A comprehensive list of loanwords of Arabic origin has been prepared with a view to studying the socio-cultural aspects and the semantic change of these words.

Keywords- borrowing, semantic change, socio-cultural, lexical borrowing, loan words, Linguistic amalgamation, culture.

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1. Introduction

Word borrowing is a common linguistic phenomenon. However, there is no denying the fact that for most lexical borrowing a socio-cultural and linguistic interaction between two or more linguistic communities is essential. The contact with Arabs and Islamic culture had exercised an immense impact on the socio-cultural life of the Muslims in Indian subcontinent. The interaction of Muslim army: Arabs, Iranian, Turks, Afghans resulted into arrival in the Indian Territory which later became the basis for an emergence of a language like Urdu that etymologically means an 'army'. The political, social, and religious events over these centuries had not only affected Urdu speakers but also had a recognizable effect of their language culture. The socio-cultural contact between the Muslim soldiers speaking different languages including Arabic and the local population of the Indian sub-continent resulted in the development of Urdu. The Urdu language of today reflects the growth and development over the past few centuries. Consequent upon this sustained contact between the languages of the soldiers and the dialects spoken by the local population, the process of linguistic amalgamation started. Lexical borrowings into the Urdu vocabulary may be considered as the outcome of the socio-cultural impact of Arabic and Persian on various groups of people of the Indian sub-continent and their culture. The presence of groups of lexical borrowings from different languages (especially Arabic, Persian, and Turkish) is evident from the historical development of Urdu vocabulary and its contextual use and reveals the fact that one of the sources of new words during the last few centuries had been the borrowing from other languages in contact.

Urdu, a member of the Indo- Aryan family of languages, has borrowed most of its lexical item from Persian and Arabic. The exposure to Arabic language and Islamic culture had a major impact on the social life of Urdu speakers and their language. The first exposure to Islamic culture and Arabic language began with the arrival of the Arabs in the early part of the 8th century. Sustained contact continued when the Mughals came to the Indian sub-continent and established their empire. It was during this period that the exposure to the Islamic faith influenced the population in various parts of the Indian sub-continent (where the Mughals had

their effective rule), which led to the evolution of Urdu as a language through the borrowing of a large number of Arabic and Persian words and expressions into Urdu vocabulary. During this period of socio cultural and religious changes, Arabic words must have been making their way into Urdu vocabulary. It is likely the mass conversion of the people to Islam was responsible for the rapid borrowing of Arabic words. As such, the acceptance of Islam exercised a profound influence on the socio-religious life of the people as well as on their language.

2. The Linguistic Borrowing: Nature and Types

In a journey of a language, 'words' usually migrate from a place to another with cultures, the users of language. There are many halts, situations and environments that affect the linguistic achievement. In other words, there are so many linguistic, social, cultural and political variables that attribute to the process of linguistic borrowing. Urdu is known as a combination of many languages that originated abroad. It was believed that these foreign languages were mixed and may not be real or genuine, however Muslims welcomed foreign languages and followed them for some reasons. Consequently, Urdu was born in the Indian sub-continent.

Historically, when a language with a lot of foreign words try to make a place in a language like Urdu try to make a place in a language like Urdu it is accepted especially if it is the case of Arabic (due to religious connections). Out of many reasons, it can be pointed out that linguistic borrowing is the direct or indirect result of 'language contact' or cultural interaction in which people exchange language, life aspects, and other cultural phenomena.

Bilingualism can be another reason of linguistic borrowing. For many years Indians have been bilinguals or even polyglots. Muslims are supposed to learn Arabic for religious reasons, while Urdu is broadly considered as the language of Muslims in the sub-continent. As a matter of other linguistic needs, the learners acquire Hindi (or a local language) and English as a lingua franca (the second link language). Attempt have been made to explore the types of borrowings, however in a given perspective. The types may be related to the language, dialect, words, meaning or even the sound.

2.1. The context of borrowing and Semantic Change: the case of Arabic and Urdu

If we look at Urdu dictionary one may realize the extent of borrowed word from Arabic origin into Urdu vocabulary. One may not identify the approximate number of these borrowed words

into the present day Urdu. Arabic borrowed words are used in almost in all the domains of Urdu as a linguistic outcome of the contact between Arabic and Urdu. A large number of these words and their derivatives belongs to religious domain, frequently and commonly used by the Urdu speakers as well as by the Muslims speaking languages other than Urdu and residing in different parts of the Indian-subcontinent. There is ample research evidence to conclude that many of these words have been assimilated and nativized in Urdu language. Some of these words are commonly used by the Urdu speaking population irrespective of their religious faith. There are many words which form an integral part of every-day speech. Word borrowed from Arabic when came to Urdu had a semantic change and either there meanings have shift or they are used in the same way as they are. Many examples can be seen of Arabic borrowed word and when they come to Urdu there is Semantic change.

The borrowing take place in the following two basic conditions

1. Two languages may have certain features in common because these features may be universal in nature.
2. Two languages may share features because they have inherited them from a common ancestor language or common culture. In the following pages, we may explore commonly used words in both Arabic and Urdu, but it is more interesting to note that sometimes these words are used in different context. In languages, borrowing implies that one language takes something from another languages.

2.2. The Socio-Historical Contexts

Mohammad Bin Qasim was the first Arab to entered India from the north western part of the Indian sub-continent in the year 711 A.D. along with his army. With the arrival of Arabs there was the first exposure to the Islamic culture and with their Arabic language. Mohammad Bin Qasim established a Muslim state in and around the province of Sindh and the Arabs remained in power continuously for 300 years and so (711 to 1000 AD). After that Mohammad Ghaznawi took over the province of Sindh in the year 1023 A.D. thus the Arab influence continued for about 300 years on the languages as well as on the socio-cultural life of the people of North-Western part of India.

Another political changes took place when the Persian and the Turkish speaking Muslim took over the power in the later part of the 10th century. These new comer were confined to the province of Punjab and influenced the socio-cultural aspect of the people. In the 12th century AD, the Mughals appeared in North India and settled in and around Delhi. A new political change took place when Delhi was conquered by them in 1193 AD. This political change had a great impact on the social and cultural life of the people because of this a large number of loan words entered into the local dialects of Delhi.

Baber the first Mughal king, invaded south Asia with a large army comprising soldiers from different countries (Turkey, Arab, Iran, Afghanistan and some other Countries). These soldiers had to face many problems while interacting with one another and hence an urgent need of a medium of communication among them laid the foundation for the emergence of a new language. The newly evolved language containing words from different languages of the soldiers and the word from local dialects (Khari boli, Haryanvi and Braj bhasha) was called during the medial period by various speech communities and during different periods of time as Hindavi, Zuban-e-Urdu-e-Muallah, Zuban-e-Urdu, Zuban-e-Hindi, Hindi, Zuban-e-Delhi, Gujri and Rekhta. The term Urdu (after a Turkish word meaning 'army') become popular only when the Mughal emperor Shahajahan built s walled city Shahajahanabad as his capital in Delhi in the year 1639 AD. The market area close to the Royal Fort (Red fort) popularly known as Lal-Qila, was called Urdu Bazar. However, Urdu emerged as as the dominating force replacing Persian gradually in the 18th century only.

2.3. The growth and Development of Urdu

Urdu is a member of Indo Aryan family of languages uses Perso-Arabic script, which modified to suit the requirements of Prakrit based Apbhransh dialects sharing Indic base. As we discussed earlier, Urdu grew out of the interaction between the Muslims speaking different languages and the dialects spoken by the native population. Like all other languages, Urdu had to pass through the process of evolution over a period of 800years or so. Historically, Urdu originated in later part of the 12th century AD when the Muslim rule was established in Delhi initially in the North West part of the Indian sub-continent. These Muslims used to speak different languages. However, Arabic remained their commonly accepted religious language whereas Persian continued to be their cultural as well as the language of administration. The political incident

making Delhi as the capital had a far reaching impact on the socio-cultural life of the native people of north India. Besides, the cultural synthesis, the process of linguistic amalgamation started. Rapidly Urdu started too flourished in India. The main role to spread new language speedily was of 'Sufis' who traveled far and wide preaching the message of Islam. Urdu reached South India (Deccan) in 1294 AD when Malik Kafur conquered Devnagri (Daulat Abad).

The change of capital from Delhi to Daulat Abad resulted in migration of people from north India to south India. These people spoke the same language called Hindavi or Rekhta (mixed language) which was in the state of fluid and undergoing the process of its formation. The people of north India irrespective of their cultural and religious affiliations participate equally in the formation towards the growth and development of Urdu.

2.4. The Socio-Cultural context

Since the arrival of Arabs this was the period of socio-cultural and socio-religious changes, words of Arabic origin must have made their way into Urdu lexicon directly or through Persian. The spread of Islam resulted in building of Mosque and establishing of schools (madrassa) for Islamic teaching which were quite often attached to Mosque. Apart from the impact and power of Mughal rule, it is also likely that the conversion to and practice of Islam was responsible for the borrowing of the Arabic words into the vocabulary used by the people of Urdu. The earlier borrowing included a large number of words associated with the new faith (Islam). Garland Cannon (1994: 2-3) states: "The Mogul Movement through the Middle-East all the way into India assured historical transfer of Arabic religious and other words into languages from Turkey to Bay of Bengal". Thus to surmised it may be said that Arabic loan words may have found their way into the newly evolving language. Urdu vocabulary through religious writings prior to their entry into both religious and non-religious Urdu literature. The presence of Arabic loan words is attested in the 12th century AD in the poetry of Amir khusrau and in the sayings of Sufis composed in Urdu. The presence of Arabic loanwords is also attested in the Deccani Urdu poets, like khwaja Banda Nawaz Gesu Daraz, Aminuddin Ala, Mullah Wajhi, et al. the rapidity with which the loan words of Arabic origin were assimilated is evidence by the promptness with which many of these words have become the basis of derivatives, through the basic structure of these words remained purely Urdu.

Linguistically, a language has four major elements, sound system (phonology), vocabulary (Lexicon), meaning (semantics) and structure (morphology). The most important aspects of language is 'vocabulary' that is basically due to the reason that it is most commonly affected by the cultural exchange and social interaction. The present attempt is also related to Arabic lexicon and semantic change in Urdu.

The list bellow shows Linguistic borrowing from Arabic to Urdu vocabulary and semantic change if any.

Table 1: borrowed word that appear to be nearly same

Words of Arabic roots					Words used in Urdu
Razza:q	Roza:q	Ra:ziq	-	-	only razzaq is used in Urdu
Sakan	Sakin	Sikken	Miski:n	-	Miski:n is Used in Urdu
Sa:d	Sai:d	Maso:d	-	-	All these names are found in Urdu
Hamad	hammad	Hami:d	Hamoud	Mahmu:d	Hami:d and mahmu:d are used in Urdu

Sha:hid	shahadah	Shahu:d	Shahi:d	Shohda:	Almost all the words are used in Urdu

Table 2: Words used in Islamic context

S.No	Words in transcription	Meaning in Arabic	Meaning in Urdu	possible semantic change
1	Ima:n	Faith, belief	Faith, belief, belief in oneness of Allah and that Prophet Muhammad is his messenger	This word is used both in Arabic and in the Urdu with same meaning.
2	Aza:n	Call for prayer	Call for prayer	In both the languages this word is used with the same meaning
3	Sajda:	Prostration at the time of prayer	Prostration at the time of prayer	There is no semantic change in this word
4	Xhutba:	Address, speech	Discourse, sermon, lecture,	It is used in the same context
5	Farz	Obligatory	Obligatory	No semantic change is seen

Table 3: Arabic borrowed words are also used in the Domestic life of the people and their culture they are used so frequently that it seems that they are nativized in Urdu. Some of the examples are given below.

S.no	Words	Meaning in Arabic	Meaning in Urdu	Semantic change if any
1	Niza:m	system	System	Used as it is. There is no semantic change
2:	Tib	medicine	It is particularly used for yunani medicine	In both the language word is little changed. It is used in particular context.
3	Axba:r	News, information	Newspaper	Meaning is narrowed in Urdu.
4	Adab	literature	Literature	Meaning is used in the same context.
5	Qa:zi	judge	One who conduct Muslims marriage	Here the word is used as marked in

				Urdu.
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Table 4: Commonly used terms

S.no	Words	Meaning in Arabic	Meaning in Urdu	Semantic change if any
1	Ha:l	condition	The present time, condition	The meaning in both the language is linked
2	Trti:b	Sequence, order	Order, arrangement	In both the languages words are used in the same way
4	Jeha:z	Apparatus, system	aero plane, air craft	Here also there is some sort of semantic change.
5	sanad	Support, stay	Certificate	Semantic change is clearly seen.

Table 5: Some borrowed word used in different connotations

S.N.o	Words	Meaning in Arabic	Meaning in Urdu	Analysis of possible Semantic Change.
1	Naql	Transfer, move	Copy, cheat,	'naql is to change and move from one place to other, therefore people

				started using for a change of place (transfer) also.
2	makhtab	Desk, office	Religious school	School have office and desk
3	Faqi:r	poor	Sufi/poor	Sufis were used to be poor (without money) so the word faqi:r was understood as faqi:r (Sufis).
4	Ami:r	prince	rich	A 'prince' is always rich

The Research Context

The studies of linguistic borrowings, especially in the area of lexicon, have always caught attention of contemporary researchers, pedagogues and linguists. However, to the best of my knowledge through related literature, no such attempt has been made in the specific area of Arabic borrowed words are used in different contexts. As, mentioned, 'Linguistic borrowing' is a natural linguistic phenomena. Loanwords are prominent group of borrowings from the donor language. In the context of, certain research many attempt have made to analyze their integration into the receptor language (e.g' Volland 1986, Meisenburg 1993, Hall and Harmann 2003, Heinemann 2003, Peperkamp and Dupoux 2003, LaCharite and Paradise 2005).

There is no denying the fact that certain features of borrowing are not understood by many researches. This lead to the idea of heterogeneity as the researchers may hypothesis different option of studying the borrowing perspectives. With respect to the phonological, lexical, morphological level there is an agreement they fall under the head of loanword integration (Kiesler 1993, Blank 1995). Empirical researchers in the past were mainly to phonological integration (Hall and Hamann 2003). In the current research perspective, it is much debated

whether such process of loan word adaptation are phonetic/grammatical (LaCharite and Paradise 2005).It is also felt by many researchers that the difference of opinion may be because of the difference in methodological approach that have been used in the two types of approaches (Rose and Demuth 2006: 1136-1137).

The history of research in the area of borrowing can be traced since the study attempted by Haugen (1950) and Ullmann (1957). In the recent past, Blank (1999) tried to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. In relation to the Semantic change, researches in the past suggest that meaning change in reanalysis is driven by a process: pragmatic inference and subsequent semanticization of the originally inferred information (Hopper and Traugott 1993, Levinson 2000). Semantic analysis is suspected to be the driving factor in the process rather than just one aspect involved (Auwera 2002:23).

The Research Analysis, statement and problem

The study is of descriptive type, initially based on the lexical analysis in a given sociolinguistics perspective. It has always been a topic of discussion that Urdu linguistics includes the issues of borrowing. Arabic Urdu connection is the outcome of religious as well as cultural bond. In addition to lots of workers/employees move to the Arab Countries from India and Pakistan who are mostly Urdu speakers. Thus, it is imperative to explore relevant research issues related to the Arabic borrowings to Urdu and its utilization in the receiver language in a different linguistic context. Such an attempt is expected to facilitate the bilingual teachers, learners and users in Arabic Urdu environment.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the paper is to focus on lexical aspect in particular, however pedagogic connections have been drawn in order to evolve a better learning-teaching strategies based on comparative analysis. The borrowing from Arabic to Urdu is not the main thrust of the papers, however, the emphasis is on those borrowed words that is lexically used in a different context. The reasons are unknown, but a prediction can be made on certain socio-cultural and linguistic bases.

Finding and Conclusion

Based on the analysis, literature review and the data collecting from the native speaker of Arabic and Urdu, it has been found that there are many aspects of linguistic borrowings are available in the case of Arabic and Urdu. The thrust of the paper reveals the fact that there are lots of borrowed or loan words that are actively used in Urdu, however, in a different semantic context. To conclude it can be stated that though borrowed words are used in Urdu, it is difficult to explore the reasons of the semantic differences between Arabic and Urdu lexical items. The findings will be of special use with reference to socio-cultural aspects, religion and diaspora elements. There are enough research evidence to show that word borrowings is a consequence of cultural contact, resulting into cultural interaction/ fusion, acculturation and culture learning. Sociolinguistic analysis of loanwords may serve as a useful tool in studying the very extent and the nature of word borrowing resulting into the process of culture learning.

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