

Comparative study of Gender marking in Punjabi and Urdu

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Abstract

This study is a morphological investigation of identifying gender marking. This phenomenon has been identified in two languages of Pakistan. One is the International language lingua franca of Pakistan and the other is an Indigiounous language spoken in different regions of Pakistan and India. Both languages have two gender systems: masculine and feminine. There is also found a neuter gender that is commonly used for both masculine and feminine. The research highlighted many of the gender markers within different categories. Four grammatical categories are observed for gender markers which are nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs. It is found that Urdu and Punjabi are grammatical gendered languages. Gender marking is found in both the languages within the studied categories.

Keywords: Comparative Study, Gender marking, Punjabi, Urdu

1. INTRODUCTION

Urdu is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in Pakistan and is a lingua franca too (Grimes & Grimes, 2000), it is spoken in India and in a few different international countries too. Urdu language has moderate degree of lexical sources. It is written from right to left adopting a modified Perso Arabic script. It has a robust impact of Arabic and Persian, alongside with some loans from Turkish and English language having SOV word order. It is a free order language. It is diligently

correlated to Hindi language (Masica, 1991) as both initiated from the dialect of Dehli region.

Punjabi, an offshoot of Sanskrit, belongs to Indo-Aryan language family (Jain & Cardona, 2007). It is, according to Sharma & Aarti (2011), an agglutinative language in which root words take one or more affixes to employ different semantics (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2002). Predominately, it is spoken in the two countries of Indo-Pak subcontinent: India and Pakistan. On the other hand, it is spoken to some extent round the globe, such as in UK, UAE, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya, Singapore and Canada. According to Singh (2008), almost 120 million speakers of Punjabi position it on the 10th rank in the widely spoken languages of the world. It enjoys the status of official language of Indian Punjab and religious language of Sikhs. In Pakistan, it is the first language of about 60% of the populace (Kalra & Butt, 2013).

Gender is not simply an inherent characteristic of noun but it also it is contextual. The totally of gender marking in nouns does not define a language as gender based but rather constituents of a sentence with the gender of noun (Corbett, 1991). In other words, gender is mainly dependent on agreement (Hockett, 1958, 1991). This relationship of agreement is between, noun, adjectives, verbs and postpositions in Urdu. These word categories are gender marked, according to the gender of their corresponding nouns and on their own behalf too. Similarly, gender assignment also varies from language to language.

Cross Linguistic Variation in Gender Marking

Grammatical gender is one phenomenon that builds the lexis of some languages known as gender-languages. It is seen as characteristically morphosyntactic possessions of noun which controls agreement amongst nouns gender classes which normally are masculine, feminine or neutral gender. And it adheres to some satellite components often an adjective, article, pronoun, numeral or verbal form. (cf. Koniuszaniec and Blaszkowska, 2003:261). For instance, grammatical gender marking is much more noticeable in the highly inflected Slavic languages than in most German languages, due to the agreement of more satellite components. Like in the preceding examples from Polish, agreement is recognized between the noun and the three satellite elements whereas its equivalent English examples show no agreement with these elements.

<i>Ten jedenmalychlopiec (m)</i>	<i>'this one little boy'</i>
<i>Ta jedna mala dziewczynka (f)</i>	<i>'this one little girl'</i>
<i>To jedno male dziecko (n)</i>	<i>'this one little child'</i>

There are some languages which have the attribute of grammatical gender and these are challenged with very diverse snags in searching for gender inclusive options and alternatives like Polish, Russian, French and German (*Lehrerinnen (f) und Lehrer (m) teachers*) than Grammatically gender less languages like Turkish, Chinese and English (e.g. *flight attendant for stewardess*).

On the contrary, lexical gender establish share of the semantics of animate/personal nouns like daughter and son (gender-specific), in contrast citizen or patient (gender-neutral or gender-indefinite). Lexical gender may or may not be marked on the noun itself. In English, most human nouns are not formally marked for lexical gender, with exceptions such as widower or princess, which show overt gender-marking by suffixation. But it is marked extensively in German, by means of the fully productive suffix –in, as in *Bischofin* ‘female bishop; *Elektrikerin* ‘female electrician, or *Soldation* ‘female soldier.

1.1. Significance

Although Urdu and Punjabi is spoken across the borders of Pakistan and India, still there is difference found at various linguistic levels. Unfortunately, it is still very inadequately studied languages on modern linguistic grounds. Rammah (2002) reported that poor status of Urdu and especially Punjabi in Pakistan on social, official and linguistic grounds. He stated that only a small number of linguists and researchers are struggling to save these languages.

It is pathetic to state that Pakistan lacks in the field of linguistic investigation regarding indigenous languages of the area (Nagraj, 1986). Although, this is the birth place of linguistics and grammar studies, these fields are neglected here. Apart from Pakistani context, linguistic literature available on Punjabi language has been done by Indian researchers in Gurmukhi script. Orthographic difference is not the only issue; rather there found vocabulary and other feature differences highlighted by Virk, et al (2011) they also point out a gap in their computational resource regarding gender agreement between nouns and compound verbs. Thus, the present study would be proved as a pioneering work in the morphology of Punjabi and Urdu with reference to gender marking and would be a valuable theoretical

addition to Pakistani linguistic circle particularly and to the international circle generally.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to identify gender marking in Urdu and Punjabi language. Urdu is the official language of Pakistan and Punjabi is the local language spoken across many regions of Pakistan especially in Punjab with different varieties. The study is designed to identify gender marking in Urdu and Punjabi language having a look at similarities and variations while inflecting gender.

1.3. Objectives of the study

- To identify the gender markers in Urdu and Punjabi language
- To distinguish the similarities and dissimilarities in gender marking between Urdu and Punjabi language
- As well as having a glance at cross linguistic variation in gender marking among other languages

1.4. Research Questions

Research questions for the present study are following:

1.4.1. What are the gender markers in Urdu and Punjabi language?

1.4.2. What variations are there in marking gender between Punjabi and Urdu, if these exist?

1.5. Literature review

Gender, according to Wichmann & Holman (2009), is one the most permanent features of grammar. Comparison of languages in this regard is worth noting in understanding their linguistic role (Corbett, 2011). Gender marking is part of the competence of the speakers of any language (Corbett, 1991). Sometimes the lexical roots of masculine and their associative feminine are the same and in some other cases, they may be different. Inanimate nouns are also marked with masculine or feminine gender, so that their classification becomes more complex than animate nouns (Ambadiang, 1999). Basically, the foundation of gender marking systems is not clearly distinguished. Aikhenvald (2004) gives two reasons for the discrepancies among gender marking system. Firstly, these, markers of varied types, and secondly they originate from different sources.

Language families evolved and developed in heterogeneous ways, that is to say that cannot be detected straight away. Lughari (2011) opinion states that previous studies focus on the rise and extension of gender systems of Indo-European languages. She reports that marking systems may upsurge in varied ways from various morphological resources. Furthermore, these discrepancies are always of different nature. The researcher agrees with the mentioned notions and intends to investigate the morphological materials responsible to mark gender in the language of modern Indo-European language family. For the purpose, an overview of available studies relevant to the topic is presented as follows.

The beneficial study of Ijaz and Moin (2003) deals with gender and number marking in Urdu. They also present some patterns of gender marking that are common in Punjabi such as: in some cases, suffix *-ais* replaced with suffix *-i* to mark feminine from masculine gender and suffix *-i* is substituted with suffix *-ən* marking feminine from masculine gender.

Aikhenvald (2006) reports another pattern of gender marking in two genders system with reference to Manambu that in some inanimate nouns, gender is marked according to the size of the things. Gender assignments to nouns, generally has been studied by some researchers and some formulae have been devised by them. Suffixes have been found responsible for the said purpose (Ijaz&Moin, 2003), as also observed in Punjabi.

Gender assignment rules offer a connection between nouns and well-defined gender. These rules do not exclusively observe semantic relationship between nouns and allotted gender. For instance, table is neuter in English but feminine in French owing to different assignment systems. The former language observes semantic assignment system, whereas the latter considers biological sex distinction (Santaacreu-Vasut et al, 2014). Correspondingly, Grade (1980) gives examples of discrepancy among gender assignment systems of languages as: in Russian, Bacteria and oysters are considered as inanimate on morphological grounds, whereas *corpses*, *dolls* and *playing cards* are animate.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in its nature so the qualitative research method is used as research tool for identifying and discussing the gender marking in both the languages. The major focus of the research is identifying gender markers in four main grammatical categories i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives and pronouns in both the languages (Urdu and Punjabi).

2.1. Sampling:

The data was gathered from text books, Urdu and Punjabi grammar books and from printed literature as well as Urdu and Punjabi nouns, adjectives etc. are taken from oral communication in daily life by fellows and family members too. Participant observation was there to collect the data.

2.2. Data Analysis

2.2.1. Nouns

Nouns are the words used to identify any of a class of people, places, or thing or to name a particular one of these. Urdu has grammatical gender and all Urdu nouns are masculine or feminine or either of these as well as Punjabi too. Urdu gender system is consisted on two genders called “Muzekker (masculine)”, and “Muennis (feminine)”. It has no any neutral gender marking but it has some words which are followed by postpositions. Same is the case with Punjabi nouns category. However, some words are there, which can take any of these genders.

There are five categories in Urdu nouns which are grounded on different morphemes with their syntactic information. First category is observed as animate nouns with the ending morpheme –aa or –ah. This category of morphology is applicable in regular practice with those animate nouns which are used for humans but sometimes it is used in any narration or story with animate nouns too. There are virtually eight morphemes in Urdu like –aa, -ah, -ey, -ooN, -ao, -ee-aN, -ee-ooN, -ee-aoetc. These are represented in following tables along with Punjabi morphemes.

Table 1: Masculine nouns in Urdu and Punjabi ending in suffix –a, -aa or -ah

Urdu (masculine)	Punjabi (masculine)
Lark-aa ‘boy’	bānda‘man’

murG-aa ‘rooster’	bakra’he goat’
roapey-ah ‘money’	kəʔora ‘horse’
boRhaap-aa ‘old age’	əbba’father’
qarJ-aa ‘loan’	mamma ‘maternal uncle

Table 2: Feminine nouns in Urdu and Punjabi ending in suffix –ee, -eeaa, -i

Urdu (feminine)	Punjabi (feminine)
laRk-ee ‘girl’	bəndi’woman’
murG-ee ‘hen’	bakrai ‘she goat’
doast-ee ‘freindship’	kəʔori’mare’
don-eeaa ‘world’	dadi ‘paternal grandmother
ceR-eeaa ‘sparrow’	potri ‘grandson’s daughter

Table 3: Bigger nouns representation in masculine gender in Urdu and Punjabi

Urdu (masculine)	Punjabi (masculine)
Ras-aa ‘rope’	Pira ‘stool’
Gol-aa ‘big spherical object’	Pijalla ‘bowl’
Pag ‘big /special cap’	kikkər’kikar-babool tree
GhaR-ee-aal ‘clock’	bədəl’clouds’
Deygch-aa ‘big pan’	ponta ‘anklet’

Table 4: Smaller nouns representation in feminine gender in Urdu and Punjabi

Urdu (feminine)	Punjabi (feminine)
Ras-ee ‘thin rope’	Ponti ‘small anklet’
pagR-ee ‘small special cap’	Piri ‘stool’
goal-ee ‘small spherical thing,	Pijalli ‘small bowl’
ghar-ee ‘watch’	Kikkri ‘kikar- Babool tree’
deygch-ee ‘small pan’	bədli’small, withered’

Table 5: Plurals representation in gender marking in Punjabi and Urdu

Urdu	Punjabi
Lark-ee-an ‘girls’	Kurian ‘girls’
Jorabb-eyn ‘socks’	Manjiyaan ‘beds’
Taal-ey ‘locks’	Mundey ‘boys’
Penjr-ey ‘birdcage’	Anghotian ‘rings’
Roat-eean ‘breads’	Beli/ beliyaan ‘friends’

Table 6: Gender marking in vegetables names

Vegetables names	Gender
Tori ‘Ridge Ground’	Feminine

Muli ‘reddish’	Feminine
Gobi ‘cualiflower’	Feminine
Methi ‘fenugreek’	Feminine
Pheli ‘bean’	Feminine
Aloo ‘potato’	Masculine
Kheera ‘cucumber’	Masculine
Palak	Feminine
Timator ‘tomato’	masculine

Table 7: Gender marking in body organs

Kaan ‘Ear’	Masculine
Aankh ‘Eye’	Feminine
Chehra ‘face’	Feminine
Ungli ‘Finger’	Feminine
Bal ‘Hair’	Masculine
Hath ‘Hand’	Masculine
Sar ‘Head’	Masculine
Ghutna ‘knee’	Masculine
Taang ‘Leg’	Feminine
Pat ‘stomach’	Masculine
Munh ‘mouth’	Masculine

2.2.2. Pronouns

Pronouns are the words which are used in the place of nouns. These can pay the function of a noun phrase or these can refer either to the participants in any discourse (like I, you) or to mention someone or something elsewhere in the discourse (like she, it, this).

Pronoun gender marking in Urdu language

Pronouns inflect in gender, person, case and number. However these inflections are not regular and at times may display no inflections. Subsequently developing generalized rules for pronouns inflections is quite challenging. However Humayun (2007) have assembled some rules case through case in order to handle pronoun inflections primarily centered on the most common nouns.

Personal pronouns such as ‘mein, ham, tu, tum, ap, woh(he/she), who(they)’ are known to inflect in case and number. Demonstrative pronouns are ‘yeh’ (yehadmi), (yehaurat), and ‘wo’ (womakan), (wo darwaza) indicating no gender marking but the following nouns are grammatically gender marked. These are used immediately preceding the nouns. For instance, *Meramakan, merighari, tumharaqalam, apkakutta, tumhari pencil, apki pencil etc.* Possessive pronouns in Urdu are used immediately preceding the nouns with clear gender marking for instance:

Table 8: Pronouns gender marking in Urdu language

Masculine		Feminine
Mera	‘my’	Meri
Tumhara	‘your’	Tumhari
Apka		Apki
Hamara	‘our’	Hamari
Uska‘his/her’		Uski
Unka‘their’		Unki

Pronoun gender marking in Punjabi language

Personal pronouns are said to be adjusted for person information. Punjabi language has personal pronouns ‘main, mera, tuhada’ for the first & second persons and demonstrative pronouns like ‘uh’ and ‘ih’ for the third person, which is further categorized for remote (distant) and distal (near) deictics. For instance, *toadaghar, toadinuhh, sadighadi, uhn’na di majetc...*

Table 9: Pronouns gender marking in Punjabi language

Masculine		Feminine
meri	‘my’	Meri
toada	‘your’	toadi
tusi		tusi
sadda/saddy	‘our’	saddi/saddiyan
odda	‘his/her’	odei
uhn’na da	‘their’	uhn’na di

However, the reflexive pronoun ‘ap’, with the genitive of ‘apna’ is mostly used. And this feature is evidentially present in Urdu and Punjabi language. While it is not present in English, for instance...

Table 10: Examples of reflexive pronoun with the genitive case

Urdu	Punjabi	English
Mein apnakamkerrhatha.	Mein apnakamkerrayasaan.	I was doing my work.
woapnakamkerraha he.	Uh apnakamkerrayasi.	He was doing his work.
Asiapnakamkerrahysaan.	Tusiapnakamkerrhy o.	You are doing your work.

2.2.3. Adjectives

Adjectives are those words or lexemes which modify and describe the traits of other person or thing in the stretch of words (sentences).

Adjectives in Urdu language

The grammatical element, Adjective in Urdu and Punjabi come before noun according to their modified nouns and it is vital for them to agree with noun form in number, gender or obliqueness if there are morphemes to signify these structures and features. If adjectives do not have morphemes to categorize gender and number it is understood that theoretically they do not need to agree. There are two categories of adjectives .i.e. one is having morphology of agreement with

Table 11: Gender marking categories in Urdu language

Gender	Category 1	Category 2
Masculine	Ach.ch-aa ‘good’	Goal ‘round’
Masculine	Ach.ch-ay	Sorkh ‘red’
Feminine	Ach.ch-ee	Laal ‘red’
		Baasee ‘old’
Masculine	Taaz-ah ‘fresh’	Shreer ‘naughty’
Masculine	Taaz-ay	meHnatee ‘hardworker’
Feminine	Taaz-ee	
Masculine	Har-aa ‘green’	
Masculine	Har-ay	
Feminine	Har-ee	

Adjectives in Punjabi language

Adjectives are divided into two categories inflected and uninflected categories. Inflected adjectives are marked through the process of termination like for the gender, case or number of the nouns which they qualify. The set of inflected adjective terminations is similar however greatly simplified in comparison to that of noun terminations. For instance, ‘*wadibehn*” where ‘*wadi*”is an adjective for a girl/female and ‘*wadabhara*’where‘*wada*’ is an adjective for a boy/male that is in agreement with the gender of that particular noun it qualifying for instance,*changimaan, changabaap, perikuri, peramunda, sohnikuri, sohnamunda*. Whereas uninflected adjectives are entirely inflexible and can finish in either consonants or vowels. For instance *udas,saryal, manhoos,kanjoos, perishakal etc.*

2.2.4. Verbs

Verbs are the words that conveys an action (walk, learn, bring, read), a state of being (be, exist, stand) an occurrence (become, happens).

Urdu verbs describing gender marking

Humayun (2007) ruminates tense, aspect, gender, mood and number inflections of the verbs and the rules take all of these in account. Here just verbs are under considerations. Verbs are also marked for the genders. For instance,

Larkaayya 'the boy came'

Larkiaai 'the girl came'

Mehmaanaye 'the guests came'

Wahanmeinthe 'I was there'

Wahanmeintha 'I was there'

Larky wapisjarhyhein 'the boys are going back'

Larkiyawapisjarahihin 'the girls are going back'

The above examples show that there is clear gender marking in verbs in Urdu language. And the verb does not agree with the subject, if the subject is committed with any postposition as well as in the accusative case for pronouns too. The verb relatively agrees with the gender and the number of the object. This kind of phenomenon is called split ergativity.

Gender marking in Punjabi verbs

The Punjabi verbal system is basically dependent round a mixture of aspect, mood or tense. The Punjabi verb includes successive layers of inflectional elements to the right of the lexical base. Punjabi has two aspects within the perfective and the habitual, and likely a third inside the continuous, with each having over morphological associates and correlates.

Punjabi has participle forms for inflecting gender and number through the process of vowel termination, like '*gai*', '*gae*' and '*gayee*' (*gone*). The root verb is the core constituent of Punjabi verb phrase. Some examples of gender marking on verbs in Punjabi language are following down:

Kurijandi ay 'the girl goes'

Munda janda ay 'the boy goes'

O biryani pasandkerdi ay 'she likes biryani'

O biryani pasandkerda ay 'he likes biryani'

Kurian hansrhayan nein 'the girls are laughing'

Mundy hansrahy nein 'the boys are laughing'

Moreover, in Punjabi language, most verbs are consisting on one word but there are several words having dual verbs or conjunct verbs. For instance, '*tur- tur- ke*' and '*khadapeta*' are observed as double verbs. Like in English almost all the nouns can occur as verbs. But in Punjabi, verbalization of nominal is achieved with the combination of two lexical items - noun and a simple verb, these verbs are retained in the grouping of conjunct verbs. For instance, '*kerna*', '*kita*', '*ditta*' etc.

Some examples are shown below, for instance

'meriarzimanzurkitigai'

'Jajj ne mujrim nun maafkita'

'Uh ne mere uttehamlakita'

3. FINDINGS/DISCUSSION

This study is dealt with the phenomenon that how gender is marked in Urdu and Punjabi language. This is identified in different grammatical categories like Nouns, verbs, adjectives and pronouns in both the languages. It is observed that both the languages have the same order SOV. Many of the rules are same in gender marking in different categories but some variation are also there.

Gender is confounded category for linguists as well as grammarians, because its nature is somewhat double featured (Luraghi, 2011). The term 'gender' by definition, not only refers to the grammatical classification of nouns, but also includes sexlessness. Masculine and feminine are the main genders but neuter is also included in the term. Neuter by definition, refers to lifeless things which are neither male nor female. It is observed by the study that some languages have three gender marking system like German, Kannada and English and Punjabi and Urdu have two genders. (Chumakina et al, (2007). It is also observed that masculine and feminine genders are marked with a(nu) and a(lu) suffixes respectively. Occasionally, /i/ and /e/ also mark in feminine gender in Kannada (Steeve, 2003). Interestingly, / i/ is the most used commonly feminine marker of Punjabi. Neuter category of Punjabi nouns is employed either gender: masculine or feminine which are marked by adjectives, case markers or postpositions. For instance, *ʃa:rpai'bed* (fem), *bə:a'door* (masc), and *ʃaʃʃəʃə'r* 'covering sheet' (fem) and interestingly these are marked on the same gender in Urdu too.

It is also observed that in two genders system that in some inanimate nouns, gender is marked according to the size or shape of the things.

Likewise, body organs and some vegetables names are also found on gender alignments and these are found alike in both the languages. However, gender assignments to nouns is the result of suffixes as found in Punjabi and Urdu. Suffixes like *-aa lark-aa, bakra, bach-a, bach-i, ras-ee, dost-eeetc* were observed. The variations were found in phonological change within the languages and across the languages. The plurality gender marking was also found in nouns *Lark-ee-an 'girls'(Kurian), roat-eean 'breads', taal-ey, mundy* etc. Gender marking was also found in describing, adjectives, verbs and pronouns in both the languages. Like *meriyaad (f), merakutta (m), lambikahani (f) etc.* it was also observed that some nouns are only feminine in these languages like, *makhi (fly), takleef (trouble), mithai (sweets), manganic, sagai (engagement), phirki (thread roll)* and many more. Likewise some nouns are only masculine like *cava (crow), insan (human being), shitan (devil), naksan (loss), Quran (the Holy book), samaan (luggage), nishan (mark), naan (baked bread) etc.*

An interesting feature is also observed like the word 'dost' which is Urdu word and typically it is masculine and linguistically/culturally refers to a man/boy's male friend (dost, mitr, beli). And a woman/girl's female friend is a sahelii/sakhi. But in modern times, the language has changed to accommodate new sensitivities. For instance, ***mera dost for male friend*** whereas ***meri dost for female friend***. The same case is with *mangaiter/fiancé* like *merimangaiter* and *meramangaiter*.

4. CONCLUSION

In the particular study, it is concluded that the gender allocated to different objects and entities actually represent mental representation of people's minds and their acquired systems. It is also observed that the objects grammatically feminine are regarded more similar to females and the objects grammatically masculine are more similar to males (Boroditsky, 2003). The attribution of male/female properties to these objects, i.e. people's thinking about these objects, seems to be influenced by grammatical gender. It is also observed that the structural dissimilarities between languages associate with cognitive differences of the respective languages, perceived by native speakers of that particular languages. (Whorf 1956; Hill, 1988.14). Moreover, the gender system of every language has inordinate and great impact on

every native speaker and it is a notable feature for every speaker to catch this kind of mispronunciations on the behalf of non-native speakers. To conclude, the two languages under study (Urdu & Punjabi, are grammatical gendered languages and have a notable gender marking system.

5. DELIMITATION

Due to the lack of time and instruction, I just researched the main grammatical categories for identifying gender marking. Moreover, the particular research would be an aid for the researchers and linguists to work further on any of these languages. Many researchers and linguists are doing work on these indigenous languages but they are least in number. And if the work is done, it is not accessible online (not published). There is need to work on many of aspects of these indigenous languages.

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