Phonological Change of Monosyllabic Words in Rampuri Urdu

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Abstract

Generally, a language changes according to its speakers' speech community and their family and living locality. On the basis of its usages, region and environment, every native speaker differs in the process of language change, vocabulary, style, context, situations, topics, etc. The language change process regularly happens in all the languages of the world. As Aitchison (1991) suggested that, "Language like everything else, gradually transforms itself over the centuries". The current study is an attempt to analyse the phonological changes in Urdu as spoken in Rampur. Mostly the speakers of Rampuri Urdu break the consonant clusters using monosyllabic words. For instance, they use the words /xərəc/, and /dərəd/ in place of /xərc/ 'expenditure' and /dərd/ 'pain' and change the CVCC structure into the CVCVC structure. This study is purely based on the spoken data collected from native speakers of Urdu in the Rampur district of Uttar Pradesh.

Keywords: Rampuri Urdu, Phonology, language change, monosyllabic structure, consonant clusters.

1. Introduction

Language change is a phenomenon that is widely found in almost all languages of the world because languages are dynamic in nature. Fromkin (2003) defined

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language change as, "it is a natural linguistic phenomenon that all languages change over time". Generally, language changes in all their aspects, and hence it can be analysed at all linguistics levels such as phonology, morphology, syntactic, and semantic. Further, Edward Sapir (1949) stated that, "nothing is perfectly static. Every word, every grammatical element, every locution, every sound, and the accent is a slowly changing configuration, molded by the invisible and impersonal drift that is the life of language". (p. 171). Language is usually changed due to the way it is used and acquired by individuals or groups of people in society. This is the result of socio-political contacts, such as language policy, language planning, transportation, immigration, etc. Remarkably, the need for technological progress and the Internet play a most crucial role in language change. As a result, new terminology to meet the needs of time and new technological discoveries such as transportation, household appliances, industrial equipment, sports, recreation, and healthcare are included in the glossary and thesauri. Languages also change in various situations, such as language learning, language interaction, social differentiation, nature, and attitudes. There are several works that have been concerned with language change such as Aitchison (1991), McMahon (1994), Bauer (1994), Bynon (1977), Millroy (1992), Trask (1996), Campbell (1998), and Fennell (2001). Consequently, it is a universally accepted phenomenon that all languages undergo change. It is also a well-established fact that the speed and degree of change can vary from one language to another and from one variety or dialect to another of the same language.

2. Introduction to Urdu Language

The Urdu language is widely spoken in India and other nations around the world. Urdu is generally spoken in Muslim-majority areas of India. When we talk about the Muslim majority speakers, it is important to mention the name of the city of Uttar Pradesh where Urdu is spoken is Lucknow. Urdu is also spoken in Delhi, Bhopal, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Mysore. Historically, Urdu had originated from Khari Boli, which developed in North India, mainly in Delhi and its adjoining regions at the end of the 12th century A.D. It was an era when the Muslims, including Turks, Afghans, and Iranians, were settled and established their rule in Delhi in north India. Hence several socio-political, cultural, and linguistic changes were taking place in North India. During this period, the Khari Boli undergoes many new linguistic and cultural changes, and

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finally, it has ultimately developed and named as 'Urdu'. Hence, the Urdu language also passes through the process of language changed during its development. Urdu's structure is purely based on Indo-Aryan, but its vocabulary has mostly resulted from the Persian and Arabic language. It is written in the Perso-Arabic script. Being an Indo-Aryan Language, Urdu shares many syntactic and semantic features with Hindi except for the script, which can be traced back from Šauraseni Apabhramša. Thus, Urdu and Hindi both share the same source.

3. Review of Literature on Urdu: A Brief Outline

Many linguistic types of research have been conducted on the historical development of Urdu and its phonology. One of Urdu's earliest works was Platts, (1874) 'A grammar of the Hindustani or Urdu language'. Following the Platts research, there exists a series of studies on Urdu. Kelkar (1968), an eminent scholar, has contributed to the study of Hindi and Urdu. Masud Husain Khan also produced a series of studies on Urdu. One of his essential works is on the phonological analysis of Urdu. Subsequently, Khan (1973, 1987) focused on the origin and development of Urdu. The more current studies include Beg (1988), Schmidt (1999, 2003), and Khan (2000). Beg (1988) gives an account of the Urdu language structure with the description of the development of Urdu, especially at the level of phonology and morpho-syntax. Schmidt (1999) also provides an overview of the descriptive grammar of Urdu. In the latest work by Schmidt (2003), we find a brief study of Urdu's grammatical structure. Khan (2000) discussed the phonological aspects of Urdu.

Although several works have been done on Urdu language phonology from time to time, no one captures their attention on Rampuri Urdu except the author of this present study. This research paper aims to analyze the phonological change in monosyllabic words in Rampuri Urdu (variety of Urdu as spoken in Rampur) in particular. The research is selected for this study is the Rampur district of western Uttar Pradesh state in India. It lies under the Khari Boli region. In Rampur, Urdu is mainly influenced by Khari Boli or Hindi, especially at the phonological level, as it has sociolinguistic and sociocultural consequences. Consequently, various phonological changes have been observed in the formations of monosyllabic words during the usage carried out in the day to day language usage by Urdu Speakers in Rampur.

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4. Syllabic Structure of Rampuri Urdu

Every language has its specific rules for combining the speech sounds as a meaningful word or a part of it, known as a syllable. In this regard, there are some restrictions on these combinations in every language. For example, in English, no word can begin with /gfj/, /zdf/, or /tzp/. Similarly, no words in Rampuri Urdu can begin with nŋ, kʰpʰ, or xkʰ. When we talk about restrictions in a language, we are analyzing the syllable of that language. Therefore, we can divide a word into one or more syllables based on its composition. For example, /vo/ 'he or she' has one syllable (CV). Similarly, /mɑmu/ 'uncle' has two syllables (CVCV), /dɪvɑnɑ/ 'mad' has three syllables (CVCVCV), and so on.

The syllable plays an essential part in the phonology of every language. In Rampuri Urdu, a syllable consists of vowel/vowels with or without preceding or following the consonants. Mostly, it has no consonant cluster in the initial position because of the breaking of the consonant cluster by the insertion of a schwa vowel /ə/ between a consonant and a semivowel /y/. Similarly, two consonant clusters cannot occur in a word-final position in generality. However, the consonant cluster can take place in the word medial position. But most of the consonants are geminated in word medial position in Rampuri Urdu. A syllable does not begin and end with a long consonant or gemination. A single consonant in the initial utterance position always belongs to the following vowel. The syllable does not start with flap /ɽ/ in word-initial position, and the open syllable does not have any short vowel /ɪ, ʊ/ in word-final position. In Urdu, a minimal syllable consists of a single vowel and can be recognized as a word. For example, the word /ɑ/ 'come'. Based on this discussion, possible syllable structures in Rampuri Urdu can be presented in the following table (1).

Table 1: Syllabic Pattern in Rampuri Urdu

Syllabic Pattern	Rampuri Urdu	Glossing
V	/ɑ/	'come'
VC	/ɑm/	'mango'

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CV	/mu/	'face'
CVC	/kɑm/	'name'
CVCV	/mɑmu/	'uncle'
CVCVCV	/mʊmɑni/	'aunty'
CVCCVCCV	/kənpəʈʈi/	'temple'
CVCVCVV	/xəmãkʰaĩ/	'extra'

The above Table (1) successfully show the possibilities of syllabic pattern that have observed in the language of Rampur. Consequently, in Rampuri Urdu, the syllabic structure can be of three broad types, i.e., monosyllabic, disyllabic, and polysyllabic.

The central objective of the present study is limited only to the phonological analysis of monosyllabic words in Rampuri Urdu.

5. Phonological Change of Monosyllabic words used in Rampuri Urdu

The Urdu language is used in the actualized form rather than in an expressive way. The notable changes which can easily be seen in the phonology of Rampuri Urdu are confined only to the monosyllabic words with a consonant cluster having the syllabic structure VCC and CCVC in standard Urdu that have changed into the VCVC and CVCVC by the breaking of consonant clusters in Rampuri Urdu. From the collected corpus, it has been found that the Urdu speakers of Rampur frequently change the monosyllabic cluster words, VCC, CVCC, and CCVC into disyllabic one, i.e., CVCVC by the addition of an epenthetic vowel /ə/ between the two consonant unintentionally. Beg (1988) also said that, "the old Urdu has preserved the VCC or CVCC structure of the Perso-Arabic words but there are many cases in which this structure is generally broken up by infixing a vowel between the two consonants." The possibilities of insertion of the schwa vowel are more frequent in final consonant cluster monosyllabic words in Rampuri Urdu. However, the schwa vowel's insertion is also present in the initial consonant cluster in a few monosyllabic words. But the occurrence of schwa vowel is absent in medial consonant cluster monosyllabic words in Rampuri Urdu. But, there is no change in the meaning in the shift monosyllabic pattern. The following

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section deals with the phonological process of vowel epenthesis in initial and the final consonant clusters and the change of monosyllabic structure into a disyllabic one.

5.1. Insertion of /ə/ Vowel in Initial Consonant Cluster

Generally, initial consonant clusters are very few in standard Urdu because, when the native speakers speak in a hurry, they form initial consonant clusters in Urdu. In contrast, Rampuri Urdu speakers sometimes insert a schwa vowel /ə/ between the initial consonant clusters in their speech. Hence, they change the monosyllabic pattern into the disyllabic one, but the meaning remains unchanged only forms change. The following examples show the insertion of the schwa vowel /ə/ in the initial consonant cluster.

Table 2: Insertion of Vowel in the Initial Consonant Cluster

Standard Urdu	Rampuri Urdu	Glossing
/myən/	/məyɑn/	'sheath'
/kʰyɑl/	/kʰəyɑl/	'care'

It is evident from the above Table (2) that show the phonological change of monosyllabic structure (CCVC) into a disyllabic pattern (CVCVC).

5.2. Insertion of /ə/ vowel in Final Consonant Cluster

The schwa vowel /ə/ insertion phenomenon is frequently present in the final consonant cluster words in Rampuri Urdu. In Rampur Urdu speakers often insert the central vowel /ə/ in the final consonant clusters monosyllabic words in their daily conversation. Hence, they break the final consonant clusters to change the syllabic pattern. In this type of phonological change of syllabic pattern, only sound affected, but the meaning remains the same. There are many examples in Rampuri Urdu, as shown in the below Table: 3.

Table 3: Insertion of Vowel in the Final consonant Cluster

Standard Urdu	Rampuri Urdu	Glossing

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/əjr/	/əjər/	'reward'
/əsr/	/əsər/	'prayer time'
/ərq/	/ərəq/	'juice'
/ɪtr/	/ɪtər/	'perfume'
/ɪlm/	/ɪləm/	'knowledge'
/ʃərm/	/ʃərəm/	'shyness'
/xərc/	/xərəc/	'expenditure'
/səbr/	/səbər/	'passion'
/nəzm/	/nəzəm/	'poem'
/hərj/	/hərəj/	'disadvantage'
/dəfn/	/dəfən/	'burial'
/ʃʊkr/	/ʃʊkər/	'thankful'
/ʃəkl/	/ʃəkəl/	'face'
/zəxm/	/zəxəm/	'wound'
/mʊft/	/mʊfət/	'free'
/sʊrx/	/sʊrəx/	'red'
/dərd/	/dərəd/	'pain'
/həʃr/	/həʃər/	'finale'
/qədr/	/qədər/	'value'

The above table (3) shows the phonological change of monosyllabic structure VCC and CVCC into the disyllabic pattern CVCVC.

6. Causes of Phonological Change in Rampuri Urdu

There are always many causes that play a significant role in the phonological evaluation of a language. Similarly, many factors are responsible for changes in the phonology of Urdu in Rampur. Whenever the Rampuri Urdu speakers come into contact with people from different geographical locations who speak a different language or dialects like Hindi and its dialect such as Khari Boli, Braj Bhasha, etc. they adopt many linguistic features very rapidly in their native language from these contact languages or dialects especially at the level of phonology. However, other social factors are involved in this language change within the same speech community, depending on the speaker's

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age, gender, ethnicity, and social and educational background. The Rampuri Urdu speakers belonging to different social classes are more prone toward the use of new words, expressions, and pronunciation, which are reflected in the usage of their language, Even if the members of the same family have lived in the same area for generations, also vary in the language they use and the way their ancestors spoke. Because each successive generation makes its small contribution to language change and becomes more apparent when enough time has passed from the effects of these changes, sometimes the other reason behind the language change is the speaker's intention. In Rampur, language change usually occurs inadvertently and is never the intention of native speakers of Rampuri Urdu. Nowadays, language change is a result of necessity. In particular, talking about language changes in terms of exact date and time is entirely out of scope. For example, the Rampuri Urdu speakers unintentionally inserted the schwa vowel /ə/ in-between consonant cluster in initial and final positions in using monosyllabic words like /səbr/ vs./səbər/ 'patience'. No Rampuri Urdu speaker can tell us why such an addition happened. In fact, none of us can present a description for the same that something changes, and at what precise moment a particular change occurred in a language.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, it is right to say that a native speaker's speech is the best observer for analyzing any language. It can also indicate variations on all fronts of usage with definiteness and actuality. Apart from this, the most remarkable point is that if a language is changes at the levels of sound, grammar, and vocabulary it always undergoes many new linguistic changes in its structure and vocabulary, especially at the level of phonology due to the contact of its neighbouring dialects or languages. In this paper, I have shed light on the phenomenon of language change in Rampuri Urdu at the phonological level in contrast with standard Urdu. The Urdu, as spoken in Rampur district, is one of the varieties of standard Urdu. The data clearly shows that the Rampuri Urdu speakers frequently insert the schwa vowel /ə/ in the initial and final consonant cluster monosyllabic words during their speech. Such Phonological changes in Rampuri Urdu occur due to prolonged and direct contact with Hindi and some of its dialects, such as Khari Boli, Braj Bhasha, etc.

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