ATRIBUIÇÃO DE GÊNERO EM URDU E NO DIALETO KHATTAK DO PASHTO: UMA ANÁLISE COMPARATIVA DE EMPRESTIMOS DO INGLÊS

GENDER ASSIGNMENT IN URDU AND KHATTAK DIALECT OF PASHTO: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH LOANWORDS

Neelma Riaz[1]

Sarwet Rasul[2]

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa examina os mecanismos de atribuição de gênero no dialeto Khattak do pashto e na língua urdu, com foco específico no tratamento dado aos empréstimos do inglês. O estudo utiliza o modelo teórico de Corbett (1991) para analisar o funcionamento dos princípios semântico, morfológico e formal (fonológico) em ambas as línguas. Tanto o pashto quanto o urdu apresentam um sistema binário de gênero, com formas masculinas e femininas, mas as regras de atribuição diferem consideravelmente entre elas. A pesquisa também investiga como os empréstimos do inglês são incorporados ao dialeto Khattak do pashto e ao urdu, e quais parâmetros são adaptados na atribuição de gênero a essas palavras em cada língua. A análise comparativa evidencia a existência de uma sistematicidade nos processos de atribuição de gênero e as estratégias adaptativas empregadas na incorporação de empréstimos do inglês.

Palavras-chave: Atribuição de gênero; Concordância; Empréstimos linguísticos; Semântica.

ABSTRACT

This research examines the mechanisms of gender assignment in the Khattak dialect of Pashto and Urdu, specifically regarding the treatment of English loanwords. The study employs Corbett's (1991) framework to examine the operation of semantic, morphological, and formal (phonological) principles in both languages. Pashto and Urdu both have a binary gender system with masculine and feminine forms, but the rules for assigning gender are very different. The study also examines how English loanwords are incorporated into the Khattak dialect of Pashto and Urdu, and what parameters are adapted in assigning gender to them in both the languages. The comparative analysis underscores the systematic approach to gender assignment in both

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[1] Lecturer at National University of Sciences and Technology: Islamabad, PK.
[2] PhD Linguistics (English) at National University of Modern Languages: Islamabad, Islamabad, PK, Tenured Professor/Dean (English) at Fatima Jinnah Women University: Rawalpindi, Punjab, PK.

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languages and the adaptive strategies employed in the incorporation of English loanwords.

Keywords: Gender assignment, Agreement, Loanwords, Semantics.

Introduction

With more than 70 different languages spoken there, multilingualism is both a historical and sociolinguistic reality in Pakistan. While English is an official language and is used extensively in higher education, government, and the workplace, Urdu, the national language, serves as a symbol of unity and a medium of instruction and administration. Regional languages including Pashto, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Balochi are essential for everyday communication and cultural identity in this multilingual environment. The Khattak dialect, which is the subject of this study, is one of the many dialects of the Pashto language, which is mostly spoken in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and some areas of Balochistan. It is classified as a provincial language. In addition to placing the existence and impact of English loanwords in Pashto in context, introducing the linguistic situation at the national level helps the reader understand the dynamics of code-mixing, borrowing, and gender assignment in it.

The Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family includes Pashto, a major regional language spoken in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It differs structurally from Urdu and Punjabi, especially in how it handles grammatical gender. Because gendered tendencies in Pashto can occasionally conflict with those in other prominent languages of Pakistan, these variances frequently result in a confrontation in gender usage when Pashto speakers code mix with Urdu or English. This leads to a linguistically complicated scenario that is worth looking into. Using Corbett's (1991) model as a framework, the study provides a targeted linguistic examination of gender assignment to English loanwords in the Khattak dialect of Pashto and Urdu.

Grammatical Gender

Grammatical gender is actually a specific kind of noun class system in which an agreement is made with other linguistic elements like pronouns, adjectives, verbs, articles, and so forth. "Genders are classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words," according to Corbett (1991). "Genders are classes of nouns reflected

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in the behavior of associated words," goes another description of the three genders. Every noun must belong to one of the classes, and very few can belong to more than one, in order for the classification to be considered complete and free of extensive intersection as a gender system. (Page 231, Hockett 1958)[3]. There are two ways to indicate the grammatical gender of the noun. It can be conveyed by the agreement process, which entails altering noun-related words, or through the noun's inflection, modifications, or changes. There are numerous ways to classify nouns into different grammatical genders. The three fundamental approaches are morphological, or by arbitrary convention, lexical classification, and semantic, or based on symbolical or logical analogies in the meanings of the nouns. The gender assignment rules of a grammatical gender system can be used by native speakers to ascertain the gender of a given word (Corbett 1991, p. 7). There are two primary goals for these rules. The first advantage is that speakers of the language would no longer need to learn, commit to memory, or remember the gender of every phrase in their language's lexicon. Second, they may give newly coined words, neologisms, or loanwords a particular gender.

Types of Assignment Rules

There are gender differences in some languages that are based more on rules than in others. The genders of pre-existing words are motivated by the two gender assignment criteria, and they are successfully used to generate a variety of gender-neutral loanwords and coinages. Generally speaking, there are three types of rules that determine a noun's grammatical gender: morphological, phonological, and semantic factors. Despite being gender-neutral, English loanwords are assigned a specific gender when they are adopted into Pashto or Urdu. By examining a noun's semantic, phonological, phonetic, or morpho-syntactic properties, the researcher will look into how Pashto and Urdu gender English loanwords.

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[3] Corbett (1991) conceptualizes grammatical gender assignment as operating through interacting principles, primarily semantic (natural gender and conceptual associations), phonological/formal (e.g. word-final segments), and morphological mechanisms. Rather than functioning in isolation, these principles form hierarchies that languages use productively to assign gender to native nouns, neologisms, and loanwords. The present analysis follows this model by examining how these principles interact in Pashto and Urdu, particularly in cases of English lexical borrowing.

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Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following basic questions.

1.   How does grammatical gender system functions in Urdu and Khattak dialect of Pashto language; and what is its impact on English loanwords in terms of gender allocation?

2.   What parameters are adopted in assigning gender to English loanwords in Urdu and Khattak dialect of Pashto language?

Methodology

The nature of the work does not necessitate the examination of specific data. Instead to examine the various facets of language, such as morpho-syntactic, phonological, and semantic, for which a language bank or fund was needed as a source to support any claims made throughout the conversation. I took the data from the various sources listed below to establish that fund. All of the data recordings are stored on a CD; the specifics are provided in the appendix at the conclusion.

 Information is gathered from a variety of sources, including natural data, recordings of conversations and discussions that occur in real life, interactions with store owners, and sermons from religious institutions, radio shows and news, social media, such as YouTube and Facebook, personal and intuitive understanding of Pashto and Urdu.

As a result, the information is gathered from a variety of official and informal contexts. The noun examples were gathered from natural facts, everyday language use, and both formal and informal interactions. However, I required access to the noun data that is utilized in formal usage. I therefore also compiled a list of nouns from textbooks. Each phenomenon is shown using a database of samples taken from different sources.

Theoretical Framework for the Current Research

Corbett's (1991) typological categories for gendering nouns have been used in this research project, and they serve as the foundation for my investigation. He contends that for determining a noun's gender, both form and meaning are equally significant. Both have different functions within the system of grammatical gender assignment. The categories into which Corbett separates the gender assignment system are listed below.

a.   Semantic System

When it comes to semantic criteria, a noun's meaning determines which gender it should be assigned. There are two groups into which the semantic system is further separated.

i. Strict Semantic Assignment System

In case of strict semantic system, a noun's grammatical gender is determined exclusively by the language's semantics. For example, all nouns referring to men are assigned a masculine gender, while nouns referring to women are assigned a feminine gender. The remaining nouns are given the neuter gender.

ii. Predominantly Semantic Assignment System

Even though the semantic assignment method is the foundation of the languages that use this system, there are several instances where additional criteria are needed to assign a particular gender.

b. Formal Assignment System

The formal properties or assignment rules are used to assign a certain gender to nouns that cannot be ascribed a gender using the semantic assignment rules. There are languages that only use formal assignment systems, but there are also languages that only use semantic systems. The two subcategories into which the formula system is further subdivided are listed below.

i. Phonological Properties

When it comes to phonological characteristics, nouns are given a gender depending on their phonology, with inflectional word ends being particularly important.

ii. Morphological Properties

Nouns are assigned a specific gender mostly based on their phonological or semantic characteristics. However, the morphological rules take effect if these rules are unable to provide the nouns a certain gender. When determining a noun's gender, its inflectional morphology can sometimes be quite important. Gender assignment involves a variety of morphological rules, including compounding, derivational, and inflectional rules.

Data Analysis

Corbett emphasizes the significance of the semantic system in the context of gender assignment; in fact, this is the first kind of gender assignment system he has concentrated on.

Strictly Semantic System

Strict semantic gender assignment systems assign a certain gender to nominal entities based on their literal meanings or semantic features, according to Corbett (1991). Therefore, the meaning of the noun—regardless of its form—is all that is needed to assign a certain gender to it. The semantic system of assignment might also depend on logic, shape, size, attributes, color, profession, and other factors, according to Corbett (1991).

Gender Assignment based on Sex

According to Nesset's (2003) "Core Semantic Override Principle," the biological sex is the semantic core of the grammatical gender and supersedes all other gender assignment criteria. The idea that this concept is likewise a component of the universal grammar is supported by a wealth of data. In addition, Dahl (2000:101f.) described sex as the "major criterion" for determining gender in several languages.

There are two genders in Urdu and Pashto: feminine and masculine. They do not have a neutral gender. In Khattak dialect of Pashto language, all female humans, animals, and plants are assigned a feminine gender, whereas all male humans, animals, and plants are assigned a masculine gender. Inanimate objects, including abstract nouns, are given a gender that can be categorized as either feminine or masculine. This also applies to the Urdu language. The animate referents or entities in Urdu are likewise given a gender according to their biological or natural gender. The gender distinction for animated characters is therefore natural and realistic in Urdu as well. Therefore, nouns that indicate female are feminine in both languages, while nouns that indicate males are masculine. Accordingly, in English loanwords, a noun's natural or biological gender might occasionally express its gender. Only animates with distinct words for male and feminine creatures are included in the table the researcher created, which is provided below.

Khattak dialect of Pashto language		English		Urdu	
Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine

1.	Wrur	Xur	Brother	Sister	Bhai	Behen
2.	səṛa	Šəza	Husband	Wife	Šohər	Biwi
3.	Plor	Mur	Father	Mother	Baap	Maa

In the Pashto language, distinct terms are used for masculine and feminine figures, but in the English language, some nouns have no distinct meanings for their male and female counterparts. There are distinct terms for male and female entities in the Urdu language as well.

	Khattak dialect of Pashto language		English	Urdu	
	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine/Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
1.	Xar	Xra	Donkey	Gdha	Gdhi
2.	Bizoga	Bizogay	Monkey	Bəndər	Bəndərya

Gender Assignment based on Religious Beliefs

In Khattak dialect of Pashto, some nouns are always treated as masculine and are given a masculine gender. For example, *Xodaye* means "*God," Qoran Mɜjid* means "Quran," *jɜnat* means "Paradise," *dozax* means "Hell," *kɜyɜmat* means "doomsday," *jɜmat* means "mosque," *ɜlmunz* means "prayer," and so on. In contrast, nouns like "Quran," "hell," "dozɜx," "paradise," "doomsday," and so on are assigned a feminine gender in the Urdu language. Therefore, the Urdu language does not meet this criterion. Another intriguing fact is that all of these Urdu words, such namaz, which means "prayer," *Jannɜt,* which means "paradise," and *dozɜx,* which means "hell," are given a masculine gender when they are borrowed into the Khattak dialect of Pashto. They were assigned a feminine gender in Urdu, but a masculine gender in the Khattak dialect of Pashto. This is one of the reasons why Pathan speakers have trouble identifying the actual gender of some objects when speaking Urdu.

Thus, English nouns with religious meanings, such mosque, prayer, hell, paradise, and son on, are always given a masculine gender when they are used as loanwords in Khattak dialect of Pashto sentences. Like their Pashto equivalents, these English loanwords are therefore regarded as masculine.

Gender Assignment based on Size

When it comes to assigning gender to inanimate objects in the Khattak dialect of Pashto, size also matters. Things that are bigger, bigger, or more substantial are viewed as masculine. In a similar vein, items that are smaller than their larger counterparts are given a feminine gender. Once more, this may allude to the patriarchal

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system in Pakistan, where women are viewed as weak, frail, and lesser in social standing than the large, macho patriarchal man[4]. As a result, everything little and small is connected with the feminine gender, whereas everything large and massive is assigned to the masculine gender. Below are a few instances of the Khattak dialect of Pashto.

Nouns with big size	Nouns with small size
Masculine	Feminine
Maaṭ *'Big pitcher'*	*Maṭay* *'Small Pitcher'*
Tol *'Big plate'*	*Talay* *'Small plate'*
škur *'Big plate'*	*škəray* *'Small plate'*

Additionally, in Urdu, words that are large, tall, and powerful are typically given a masculine gender. On the other hand, nouns that are short, slender, and little are given a feminine gender. Another name for these referents is diminutives. The gender assignment of Urdu nouns according to their size is displayed in the table below.

Masculine (Muzakkar) Nouns with big size	Feminine (Moannas) Nouns with small size
Tokra 'large basket'	*Tokri 'small basket'*
Piyala 'bowl'	*Piyali 'cup'*

It is interesting to note that words that are given a masculine gender in Urdu because of their size are given a feminine gender when they are borrowed into the Khattak dialect of Pashto. In Urdu, words like *tokra (basket), thaela (bag), čɒmča (spoon), ara (saw), rassa (rope), and kɜṭora (bowl)* are all considered male. Their gender is changed to a masculine one when they are used as loanwords in sentences written in the Khattak dialect of Pashto. This could be because in the Khattak dialect of Pashto, nouns that finish in the letter "a" are assigned a feminine gender. As a result, the phonological principles also contribute to gender assignment. There is one exception, though. In phrases written in the Khattak dialect of Pashto, the noun *sɜnduk*, which means "box," is allotted a masculine gender. The reason behind it is that it ends with the letter k. Additionally, words that are considered feminine in Urdu because of their diminutive size are given the same feminine gender once they are incorporated into sentences in the Khattak dialect of Pashto. Thus, all nouns that end in the letter "i,"

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[4] For discussions on the interaction between grammatical gender, cultural models, and social hierarchies, see Lakoff (1986), Corbett (1991), and Hallowell (1955), who argue that gender systems frequently reflect culturally salient oppositions such as size, strength, and social dominance.

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such "*basket" (tokri),* "*cup" (piyali),* "*saw" (ari),* "*rope" (rassi),* "*bag" (thaeli),* "*hammer" (h\thoṛi),* etc., are feminine.

No such rule or criterion has been seen or observed when it comes to adopting English loanwords, where the size of the loanwords influences the assignment of grammatical gender.

Gender Assignment based on Physical Strength and Qualities

The characteristics that are typically associated with men are physical strength and toughness. As a result, both Urdu and Pashto use these nouns as masculine. Therefore, based on their physical characteristics, nouns like "storm" *(tufan)* are also assigned a masculine gender in Urdu. Both *"storm" and "tufan"* are assigned a masculine gender in Urdu phrases.

Similar to this, some English loanwords are employed as feminine nouns in Khattak dialect of Pashto sentences because of their attributes, such as beauty, delicacy, fragility, meekness, etc. Dolls, fish, nurses, cats, wind, and fairies are a few examples.

Gender Assignment based on Profession

In Pakistani society, there are a few occupations that are primarily reserved for men. Therefore, in the Khattak dialect of Pashto, the nouns relating to such occupations are primarily used as masculine. For example, *mɜzdur means "laborer," mistri means "mechanic," plumbĝr means "plumber," and moči means "cobbler."*

Like Pashto, Urdu likewise has a small number of occupations that are primarily held by men. As a result, terms like sonar, which means jeweler, *mĝzdur,* which means laborer, *moči,* which means cobbler, *nulkar,* which means plumber, and *mistri,* which means mechanic, are always seen as masculine. It is evident that no women have chosen these careers in this patriarchal environment.

Let's now use a few English-speaking occupations as an example. The English language exhibits gender separation through distinct terms for men and women in specific occupations. As a result, a similar profession has designated distinct names for its male and female counterparts. Therefore, the distinct names or nominal referents used for the two genders working in the same profession in this instance clearly indicate

their grammatical genders. Below are a few examples where a person's gender is established by their biological gender.

Masculine	Feminine
Actor	Actress
Waiter	Waitress
Steward	Stewardess

Certain nouns in Pashto are referred to as "common gender" nouns because they can be used for both the masculine and feminine genders. Examples of such nouns include *libğhoṛa (player) and milma (guest).* Both male and feminine individuals can be indicated or referred to by such terms. These nouns join with the masculine agreement targets while referring to males, but they take feminine agreement when referring to females.

Likewise, there are English loanwords or nouns that are appropriate for both men and women. Examples of "common gender" nouns include patient, student, member, client, artist, singer, anchor, writer, tourist, teacher, scholar, and so on.

Only by looking at the nouns' literal meanings or semantics can the gender be ascertained in strict semantic systems. There may be some exceptions even if gender assignment to some nouns in purely semantic systems is quite important and strongly impacted by meaning. By following the formal set of norms of primarily semantic systems, the remaining nouns can be assigned a specific gender.

Predominantly Semantic Systems

Meaning or semantics is at the heart of a gender assignment system that is primarily semantic, however there may be a few exceptions. In stringent semantic systems, the gender is determined only by examining the semantic or literal meaning of the nouns in question. There may be certain exceptions in systems that are mostly semantic, even while meaning is crucial and influences how some nouns are assigned a gender. By adhering to the formal set of rules, the remaining nouns can be given a particular gender. The following subcategory is a further division of the primarily semantic gender assignment system.

Gender Assignment based on the Criteria of Concept Association and Semantic Equivalence

Gender is primarily assigned using the idea association criterion in this type of gender assignment system, which is mostly a semantic system. Similar genders are assigned to nouns that share similar qualities or attributes and are connected in some way. With very few exceptions, they all follow some comparable or common semantic patterns.

All items in this category are given a similar gender because they are either somewhat similar to one another or have some kind of relationship. This is due to the fact that they meet the idea association criterion. There is a relationship, resemblance, or association between them. Although there may be a few outliers, this gender assignment system is entirely based on semantics.

Both the Khattak dialect of Pashto and Urdu are subject to the idea association requirement. When determining the gender of specific English loanwords, the criteria of idea association and semantic equivalency are also taken into consideration. Sometimes the gender of a certain English loanword is assigned based on the gender of its Khattak Pashto equivalent. According to Haugen, "[t]he only really convincing type of correlation in the field of meaning" is the relationship between the loanword and its semantic equivalent that exists in the language that was borrowed (1969: 447).

Words that are associated with the physical world, like *sɜ-mɜ-ndɜ-r (sea), dɜ-ryob (river), uṭɜ-ka (hillock), ğar (mountain), and asmon (sky),* are a few examples. All of them are ascribed a masculine gender. Their vastness and size may be a contributing factor. Therefore, all of the aforementioned elements pertaining to the natural and physical world are regarded as masculine entities according to the idea association criteria. Nouns pertaining to the physical environment are considered as masculine in Pashto, their English semantic equivalents, and Urdu.

"Day" is a feminine English loanword in the Khattak dialect of Pashto. Thus, every day of the week is also given a feminine gender, such as *Mɜ-nḍy (Monday), Wensḍy (Wednesday), Tɜ-rsḍy (Thursday), Tuezḍy (Tuesday), Fraiḍy (Friday), and Sɜ-nḍy (Sunday).*

On the other hand, few of its semantic equivalents in the Khattak dialect of Pashto have a feminine gender, and even fewer have a masculine gender. This is a result of the phonological criteria and rules superseding the semantic criteria and rules. For example, because they finish in a consonant, the words *awal (Saturday), dwɜ-yam*

(Sunday), sɜˈlɜˈram (Tuesday), driyam (Monday), and pinzam (Wednesday) are all ascribed a masculine gender. However, because to their phonological ending in "a," the next two days, *juma (Friday)* and *wɜˈdina (Thursday)* are assigned a feminine gender.

All Urdu day names and their English loanwords are regarded as masculine entities and given a masculine gender in the context of the Urdu language as well. For example, *juma* means *Friday, hɜˈfta* means *Saturday, itwar* means *Sunday, pir* means *Monday, mɜˈngɜˈl* means *Tuesday, budh* means *Wednesday,* and *jomirat* means *Thursday.*

Formal Systems

Corbett (1991:34) asserts that whereas a fully and entirely formal grammatical gender system does not exist, a purely and entirely semantic grammatical gender system does occur. The formal aspect states that nouns are given a gender based on the formal, such as phonological or morphological rules. In actuality, there is no strict method or set of rules for determining a noun's gender. According to Corbett (1991: 308), "formal semantic systems are really semantic plus formal systems."

The two subcategories of the formal aspect are morphological and phonological.

Phonological Systems

The majority of nouns in the Khattak dialect of Pashto are given the grammatical gender according to their pronunciation. When it comes to gender assignment in the Khattak dialect of Pashto, the inflectional word ending is crucial. Similarly, phonological principles are used to assign gender to English loanwords in Khattak dialects of Pashto sentences when the semantic gender system is unable to do so. Based on their pronunciation, the nouns are given a specific gender.

There are numerous subcategories within the phonological category.

Gender Assignment based on Vowel Endings

Nouns with the vowels -a, -i, and -o, or alif, wao, choti yay at the end, are typically ascribed a feminine gender in the Khattak dialect of Pashto. The feminine gender is attributed to words like *suya "spirit," ğwɜˈša "meat," pša "leg," stɜˈrga"eye," kuṭa "room," mɜˈlṭa "orange," kela "banana," brišno "lightning.* In contrast to Pashto,

Urdu assigns a feminine gender to words that end in -i, such as tokri, while Pashto assigns a masculine gender to phrases that finish in -a and -o.

In Khattak dialect of Pashto sentences, the English borrowed word camera is given a feminine gender because it ends in the vowel /a/. Accordingly, the verb agrees. On the other hand, the same loanword is assigned a masculine gender when used in an Urdu phrase.

In the Khattak dialect of Pashto, the noun *"banana," kela,* is assigned a feminine gender since it ends in the vowel "a." Similarly, because of the vowel ending, the English loanword "banana" is similarly assigned a feminine gender. In the Urdu language, the English loanword "banana" is also given a masculine gender, in addition to the Urdu word *"kila,"* which means *"banana."*

In the Khattak dialect of Pashto, nouns that end in the vowels /i/, /o/, /y/, or diphthong vowels /ay/ are usually assigned the feminine gender. In the Khattak dialect of Pashto, words ending in the vowel /a/ are mainly assigned the feminine gender.

Yet, English loanwords with vowel /a/ phonological endings, such as media, agenda, visa, drama, plaza, etc., are usually assigned a feminine gender. In a same vein, masculine gender is applied to English loanwords that end in the /u/ vowel. Interestingly, when employed in sentences in the Khattak dialect of Pashto, English loanwords with a phonological ending in /i/, as lorry, library, agency, floppy, copy, etc., are assigned the feminine gender. Examples of these words include bamboo, shampoo, kangaroo, and so on.

Gender Assignment based on Consonants

Generally speaking, the last phonemes in the Khattak dialect of Pashto are quite important in determining a noun's gender. The Khattak dialect of Pashto assigns a masculine gender to most nouns that end in consonants, though there may be exceptions. In the Khattak dialect of Pashto, nouns that end in the nasal consonant -n and the voiceless plosive -t are usually assigned the feminine gender. The Khattak dialect of Pashto assigns a masculine gender to most nouns that end in consonants, including the voiceless plosives /p/ and /k/, the voiced plosives /b/, /ḍ/, and /g/, the fricatives /f/, /s/, /z/, the nasal /m/, approximant /r/, the lateral /l/, the voiceless /č/ consonant, and the consonant digraph /š/. The following English loanwords are

assigned a masculine gender: room, team, scheme, ship, soap, traffic, glass, class, jeans, license, bag, meeting, shirt, etc. These words have consonant endings, such as the nasal -m, the fricatives -s, -z, -f, plosives, voiced -b, -d, -g, lateral -l, approximate -r, and voiceless plosives -p, -t, -k.

In Urdu, words that end in the /t/ consonant are also assigned a feminine gender. However, because they finish in the vowel /a/ and nasal consonant /n/, the remaining terms, such din (meaning "religion"), eman (meaning "faith"), and roza (meaning "fast"), are assigned a masculine gender. Words that finish in /m/, /k/, /g/, and /p/ are typically masculine in Urdu, whereas words that end in /t/, /s/, and /z/ are typically feminine. Therefore, nouns ending in the vowels -i, -y, -o, and diphthong vowel -ay, -o sounds are generally regarded as feminine in the Khattak dialect of the Pashto language. Both masculine and feminine nouns can end in -a. The semantic rules are the ones that take precedence over the phonological rules in the event of a dispute. The feminine gender is also allocated to nouns that end in the nasal consonant -n and the plosive and voiceless -t consonants. The remaining consonants, however, including nasal m, fricatives s, z, f, plosives, voiceless p, k, voiced b, d, g, lateral l, approximant r, voiceless č, digraphs, and consonant š, are assigned a masculine gender. According to Zubin and Köpcke's (1981: 440) "consonant cluster principle," a noun is typically assigned a masculine gender in German if it contains consonant clusters at the beginning or end.

The grammatical gender of the Urdu language is somewhat predictable. The inflectional word ends can be used to forecast or judge it. In Urdu, words that end in /a:/ and /u:/ long vowels are typically assigned a masculine gender. For example, *hira* means *"diamond," gharaa means "an earthen vessel," baiṭa* means *"son," larka* means *"boy," čaku* means *"knife," aalu* means *"potato," bhalu* means *"bear," ullu* means *"owl," jadu* means *"magic,"* and *bazu* means *"arm."* (Platts, 2002: 24; Subzwari, 1982: 66).

However, words that end in the front vowel /i:/ are typically ascribed a feminine gender. For example, *baiṭi* means *"daughter," larki* means *"girl," sabzi* means *"vegetable," roṭi* means *"chapatti," phupi* means *"aunt,"* and *haddi* means *"bone."* (Platts, 2002: 28; Subzwari, 1982: 66; Makhdoom, 1952: 69).

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Additionally, nouns that finish in the dipthong /aʊ/ are assigned a masculine gender. For example, *čirkaʊ* means "*sprinkling,*" *bhaʊ* means "*price,*" *bɜčaʊ* means "*safe,*" *bɜrtaʊ* means *"treatment,"* *lĝgaʊ* means "*devotion,*" and so on (Platts, 2002: 24).

Likewise, nouns that end in the diphthong /ɪa/ are typically also given a feminine gender, such as *burhia,* which means "*an old woman,*" *čiria,* which means *"sparrow,"* *phuria,* which means "a pimple," and *guria,* which means "*doll."* (Subzwari, 1982: 66; Platts 2002: 27; Danish, 1970: 15).

Depending on which consonants they terminate in, nouns can occasionally be given a gender. The same standard that applies to Yamas is also relevant to Urdu. For example, words ending in the letter "r" in Urdu are typically ascribed a masculine gender, such as "*necklace" (haar),* "*office" (dɜftɜr),* "*city" (šehɜr),* "*goldsmith" (sunaar),* "*newspaper" (axbaar),* etc. Similar to this, Arabic nouns that finish in "*tay"t* are assigned a feminine gender, such as *ulfat,* which means "*familiarity,*" and *izzat,* which means "honor." There is a third category in Urdu where a noun can be used for both feminine and masculine meanings. For example, bulbul means "*nightingale,*" *pɜrinda* means *"bird,"* *janwɜr* means "*animal,*" and so on (Danish, 1970: 29; Subzwari, 1982: 62; Makhdoom, 1952: 67).

Morphological Rules

The derivational morphology is also connected to the grammatical gender criterion. Many languages use morphological methods to produce distinct words for males and females (both people and animals). The morphological gender system steps in and assigns a gender to numerous nouns in accordance with morphological principles when the semantic and phonological gender assignment systems are unable to give a gender to the nouns. There are numerous subcategories within the morpho-syntactic category.

Gender Assignment based on Inflections

In Urdu, if you remove / a: / long vowel, from a noun's ending and insert /i:/ at the end, then the noun's gender changes from masculine to feminine (Makhdoom, 1952: 64; Danish, 1970: 21, Subzwari, 1982: 63; Schmidt, 2006: 01).

| Larka 'boy' | Larki 'girl' |
| Baita 'son' | Baiti 'daughter' |

Moving on to the Khattak dialect of Pashto, which is the language we are interested in, the noun's gender shifts from masculine to feminine when the vowel -a is removed and replaced with -ay. Consider the table below, for example.

| bizoga 'm.monkey' | bizogay 'f.monkey' |
| bəlika 'm.cat' | bəlikay 'f.cat' |

Similarly, a male noun becomes a feminine noun if a consonant is removed and a vowel, -a, is added at the end.

| črg   'cock' | črga 'hen' |

Gender Assignment based on Derivations

Abstract nouns that end in -wɜt or -hɜt and are preceded by the long vowel /a:/ are primarily feminine in the Urdu language. *Thakawĝt* means *"tiredness," ghabrahɜt* means *"perturbation," benawɜt* means *"affectation," rukawɜt* means *"obstacle,"* and *sajawɜt* means *"decoration"* (Platts, 2002: 28, Schmidt, 2006: 05). The same is true for nouns that end in the suffix *"pan,"* such as *dewanapĝn*, which means *"madness," larakpɜn,* which means *"boyhood," bholpɜn,* which means *"innocence," bʃčpɜn,* which means *"childhood,"* and *nayapɜn,* which means *"newness."* Schmidt, 2006: 04; Platts, 2002: 25; Subzwari, 1982: 66).

The Khattak dialect of Pashto is another language where this phenomenon is evident. Nouns with the suffix "tub" are categorized as masculine. Examples of masculine terms include Sɜritub, which means *"mannerisms," išyortub*, which means *"intelligence," lɜwɜntub*, which means *"stupidity," buḍatub,* which means *"old age," sɜdatub,* which means *"simplicity,"* and *mɜrɜwɜrtub,* which means *"angerness."*Additionally, in the Khattak dialect of Pashto, the suffix /una/ is added to the plural forms of animate and inanimate singular nouns, or minor morphological changes are made first, followed by the addition of /una/. Likewise, nouns can be made plural by substituting the -i ending for the -a. It is believed that these plural forms are masculine. We can also create plurals from singular nouns by appending the suffix -gony to their ends. The gender feminine is assigned to such plural nouns. By omitting certain words and appending -andy to the end of particular animate nouns, plural forms can also be produced. Similarly, singular animate and inanimate nouns can be made

plural by simply appending the suffix /y/ to the end of the nouns or by removing the /a/ and substituting /y/. They are also perceived as feminine beings and are assigned a feminine gender.

Furthermore, compared to the English language, the Khattak dialect of Pashto has a more wide and diverse morphological system. In English, nouns are suffixed with -'s and -s to denote plurality and possession, respectively. However, nouns for gender (masculine/feminine), number (singular/plural), and case (direct/oblique) are inflected in the Khattak dialect of Pashto.

Gender Assignment based on Compounding

Additionally, in Urdu, a compound is given a feminine gender if both of its constituents are feminine. For example, *cheekh - o - pukaar,* or "*hue and cry."* A compound is given a masculine gender, such as "*business"* or *"kaar-o-bar,"* if both of its ingredients are male in nature. A compound is given the gender of the final word, which is the masculine gender, if the first constituent or word in the compound is feminine and the last one is masculine. For example, *namaaz – o – rozaa,* which means "*prayer and fasting."* Similarly, if the last word in a compound is feminine but the first one is masculine, the compound will be assigned the feminine gender. For example, "Pen and Inkpot," which is feminine, is *qalam - o - dawaat* (Subzwari, 1982: 70; Platts, 2002: 30).

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It is true that in addition to single nouns, compound nouns are also borrowed. Compound nouns can be divided into three main groups. The first group include all nouns or compound words that contain two English words. All English loanwords that take one term from the English language and another from the Khattak dialect of Pashto are included in the second group. Compounds with a first portion in the Khattak dialect of Pashto and a second part in English are included in the third group. It is interesting to note that, independent of the group to which they belong, the final component of compound words determines their gender. Therefore, if the compound word's final component is feminine, the entire compound noun will be given a feminine gender. On the other hand, if the last component is a man, the compound is assigned a masculine gender. Similar to other languages, Urdu experiences the same tendency when English loanwords are incorporated into it.

Major Findings: Criteria for Gender Assignment and Conflict-Resolution Hierarchy

By the end of our analysis, we can identify seven main factors that determine the gender of nouns in the Khattak dialect of Pashto and Urdu language, including English loanwords[5]. The following hierarchy of precedence is used to resolve conflicts between two or more criteria:

Natural/Semantic (Sex) ≫ Phonological ≫ Formal/Morpho-syntactic

The conflict-resolution rule simply restates that, whenever two criteria point to different genders, the one higher in the hierarchy takes effect. Concretely:

Semantic vs. Phonological: Always honor the semantic (natural) cue over any sound-based pattern.

Phonological vs. Formal: Always honor the phonological pattern (e.g. word-final vowel vs. consonant) over any morphological or syntactic ending.

Semantic vs. Formal: Always honor the semantic cue over any formal/morpho-

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[5] Similar hierarchies of gender assignment and conflict resolution have been discussed cross-linguistically in Corbett (1991), Barkin (1980), and Zubin & Köpcke (1981), particularly in contexts involving loanword integration.

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syntactic marker.

The lowest position in Urdu and Pashto's three-tier hierarchy is occupied by formal/morpho-syntactic criteria, which only take effect when both above levels are neutral and never take precedence over phonological or semantic clues. Put differently:

1. Semantic evaluation is the initial step in evaluating a noun, whether it is native or borrowed.

2. Its ultimate sound shape is reviewed in the event that no distinct semantic gender becomes evident.

3. Gender is determined by inflectional and derivational endings only when both semantic and phonological criteria are null or unclear.

Application to English Loanwords

For each criterion, English borrowings follow the same ordering, but not always the same default values, observed in native Pashto and Urdu.[6]

Why Pashto Speakers Miss Assign Gender in Urdu Language

The "gender errors" that Pashto speakers make in Urdu are not just random mistakes[7]; they are systematic examples of how languages can influence each other and transfer meaning. When bilingual individuals navigate two gendered systems, they inadvertently engage L1 gender heuristics during the processing of L2 nouns (Sabourin & Stowe, 2008).

Transfer Across Linguistics

Even when speaking Urdu, people use meaning and sound ends to figure out gender because Khattak Pashto puts a lot of emphasis on semantic and phonological ideas. In Urdu, light (semantically strong, phonologically consonantal) is said to be

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[6] Additional examples of English loanwords illustrating gender allocation include camera (F in Khattak Pashto due to final /a/, M in Urdu), banana (F in Pashto, M in Urdu), bus (M in Pashto, F in Urdu), and light (M in Pashto, F in Urdu). These cases reinforce the claim that loanwords are integrated according to language-specific hierarchies rather than arbitrarily.

[7] For psycholinguistic evidence that grammatical gender in bilinguals is computed probabilistically and influenced by L1 transfer rather than stored as fixed lexical information, see Sabourin & Stowe (2008) and White et al. (2019).

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feminine *(yeh light band ho gayi),* but in Pashto logic, it is said to be masculine *(da light band shwal).* The same pattern applies to bus (M in Pashto, F in Urdu) and fan (M in both). The difference is not due to ignorance, but rather the use of L1's rule hierarchy in an L2. For instance, Urdu speakers might laugh when a Pashto speaker says, *"Yeh light band hua" (M)* because they think it is a simple mistake. However, this response exemplifies sociolinguistic prejudice rather than linguistic superiority.

Psycholinguistic research indicates that bilingual individuals construct gender probabilistically rather than "storing" it separately for each language (White et al., 2019). Pashto's productive principles for Pashto-Urdu bilinguals, especially when speaking spontaneously, make Urdu's unique features less important. Overcorrection is uncommon as speakers perceive their gender reasoning as rational.

In Urdu training for Pashto speakers, this structural difference is not often talked about directly. Teachers often correct gender "mistakes" without dealing with bigger problems, which keeps the idea that students are not smart alive. To cultivate metalinguistic awareness, a linguistically informed methodology would prioritize comparative gender systems and consider them as transfer-based variants.

Conclusion

A comparative study of gender assignment in Pashto and Urdu shows that the Khattak dialect of both languages has a binary gender system, even though their basic ideas are very different. The treatment of English loanwords illustrates these structural variations, as each language's gender is governed by distinct phonological and semantic criteria. The study concludes that the unique grammatical structure of each language is evident in the variations in rule application, particularly regarding the assignment of gender to native nouns and loanwords. This comparative view shows how gender is assigned in both Pashto and Urdu in a systematic way. It also shows how language systems change and adapt when they come into contact with English.

One intriguing observation regarding Pashto native speakers is their frequent miss assignment of gender to numerous nouns when speaking in Urdu. This is evident in the gender distinctions assigned to various nouns in the Khattak dialect of Pashto and Urdu nouns. In Pashto, masculine marking is more often misused than feminine marking, which shows that gender marking in nouns is not being used correctly. The

high rate of masculine overuse errors is not due to speakers' inability to use the correct gender, but rather to the big differences in how the two languages assign grammatical gender to many nouns.

Pashto speakers often translate their own language's gender rules to Urdu because the two languages have different rules for assigning gender. This leads to mistakes. For instance, nouns that are feminine in Urdu may be masculine in Pashto, and the other way around. These incorrect assignments are not random mistakes; they are caused by the native language system interfering with the use of a second language. In short, Pashto speakers get the gender wrong in Urdu because the two languages have different rules for assigning gender. The results show how systemic grammatical differences affect bilingual speech and how hard it is to stay accurate when switching between two languages that are similar but have different structures.

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