



# THE URDUIZATION OF ENGLISH WRITTEN BY PAKISTANI AUTHORS

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## ABSTRACT

The paper is an attempt to bring the Urdu words used frequently by Pakistani writers who wrote literature in English language. The data for the study was drawn from Pakistani English Fiction Corpus (PEF) which is a compilation of one million Urduized words used by Pakistani English writers in their novels or novellas. The impact of Urdu due to code-switching has brought a lot of lexical innovations in the English version commonly used in Pakistan in spoken discourse. It has equally influenced the English language used by Pakistani English fiction writers in their writings. The analysis of the data makes it clear that the tinge of Urdu words exists in Pakistani English literature. The words colored by the national language Urdu reveal a distinct influence of Pakistani local culture on the literature produced by Pakistani authors in English.

**Keywords:** Urduization, Pakistani English, Pakistani culture, Indigenized English, Lexis

## Introduction

Pakistani English is emerging as an independent variation of the English language. While English is an international language and is widely used globally, it enjoys the status of an official language of Pakistan. It is the language used by law and the constitution.

The language of colonizers gave rise to several varieties in English in the subcontinent. The main reason for these independent new versions of the English language was the influence of indigenous languages on English (Baumgardner, 1993). Urdu being the national language of Pakistan, has immensely influenced on English. As a result, the lexical items manifest a significant shift from their primary usage in standard British English to an Urduized version (Talaat, 1993).

Since this Urduized variety of English is a non-native variety, it has maintained its own cultural and linguistic identity. This individuality of Urduized English can be seen at each syntactic level-lexical, phrasal and sentence. As already mentioned, this variety of English language is a consequence of a constant interaction between Urdu and English in Pakistan. A significant number of loan words from the national language Urdu and indigenous languages have entered Pakistani English (Baumgardner, 1993).

Pakistani English writers started appearing from the 1980s onward and won recognition both nationally and internationally. They were acclaimed by the Pakistan Academy of Letters and bagged many literary awards. The pioneer fiction writer who was accoladed this award was Alamgir Hashmi. During the last three decades, we witnessed a significant addition to the Pakistani writers writing in English. Nadeem Aslam, Bapsi Sidhwa, and Kamila Shamsi are a few reputed names who appeared subsequently.

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Later, great writers like Mohsin Hamid came up with their internationally shortlisted novels, such as *Moth Smoke* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. *Kartography*, written in 2002 by Kamila Shamsi, is another feather in Pakistani fiction writers' cap. It received Prime Minister's Literary Award and was shortlisted for many international awards too. Uzma Aslam is yet another name in the list whose *Trespassing* was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers Prize.

With the passing years, more and more Pakistani writers became interested in writing in English, and their writings had been greatly influenced by indigenous language and culture.

Given that the Urduized English used in the English literature written by Pakistani authors is a non-native variety, it has got its independent lexis, phrases, syntactic structure, and expressions. These features are distinctly associated with the Pakistani variety of English only.

### **Related Studies**

A few studies were conducted to study the hybridized structures introduced in the Pakistani variety of English. Kachru (1983) compiled several words that were a mixture of Urdu and English. For instance, 'tonga-driver,' 'lathi-charge,' 'rickshaw-driver'.

Another significant contribution in compiling Urduized words in Pakistani English is by Baumgardener (1993). He worked on the impact of the national language Urdu on the English at lexical level in detail. He brought forth the words used in Pakistani English literary circles, taken as a loan mainly from Urdu and other regional languages. The significance of Baumgardener's (1993) study lies in the fact that he categorized Urduized words in Pakistani English according to their field of formation. He highlighted the importance of suffixes and prefixes and tools that are used quite innovatively in this non-native variety of English and greatly helped to make a foreign language indigenized for the locals.

Similarly, Rehman (1990) put forward the distinct patterns in which Urdu semantically and lexically influences English words. Behzad (2007) brought forward the Urdu language's influence and its culture on the English language used in the local and national English newspapers.

The present research studies the Urduized words used in the Pakistani version of English used in literary writings written by Pakistani writers in their cultural context. It categorizes the terms used in Pakistani fiction by Pakistani English writers according to the categories deeply embedded in Pakistani culture.

### **Method**

The study makes use of a mixed method for its analysis. The Urduized words used in Pakistani English literature are quantified, and their frequency of use as mentioned in PEF is given in the form of tables. On the qualitative level, the study discusses their usage qualitatively. The Urduized words used in English literature written by Pakistani authors are collected from PEF (Pakistan Fiction of English Corpus). The current study's theoretical framework is supposed to



be the non-native variety of English being used in Pakistani literary circles. PEF is a storehouse of one million lexis, compiled from the fiction written by Pakistani writers who wrote in English. It is a compilation of work done by the dedicated researchers of Government College University Faisalabad and is openly available for researchers.

The selection process of the words from the corpus was purely subject to the researchers' choice. The canon claims to use a software named AntConc 3.1.1 to count the frequency of use of the Urduized words. The researchers who compiled the corpus manually took the stories from the novels and novellas written in English by Pakistani writers. The interpretation of the selected terms is also subjective and influenced by the culture in which the researchers are brought up.

The present study attempts to categorize the words listed in the corpus according to the areas related to the indigenous culture so that the cultural influence of Urdu as a language is revealed on the variety of English being used in Pakistani literary circles.

### **Data Analysis**

The Urduized words used in Pakistani English literature have imparted the Pakistani English variety an independent cultural and linguistic recognition. The current analysis brings the context of use for the selected Urduized words in Pakistani English.

Urduized words used in the non-native variety of Pakistani English render the local English a cultural and linguistic identity and can be seen in the abundance of borrowed words taken as a loan from Urdu and other regional dialects. These words are fused with English and are so commonly used. The impact of Urduization is quite pervasive in the English language used by the laymen and the literary men in Pakistan (Baumgardner, 1993).

### ***Categories of Urduized Words***

The Urduized words selected from the Pakistani English Fiction Corpus (PEF) are tabulated according to their categories. Their frequency of use, as mentioned in the corpus, is written against them. Also, their near-equivalent synonyms in English are given. The qualitative discussions of the words in each category is made after the tables.

***Table 4.1.1:***

***Urduized lexis related to weddings in Pakistan English Fiction Corpus (PEF)***

Sr.#	Urdu Words	Near Meanings in English	Frequency of Use
1	Dholki	Drumming on wedding	01
2	Mehndi	A pre-wedding function in which both the bride and groom put 'henna' on their hands.	01
3	Baraat	Arrival of the groom's family to the bride's family.	04
4	Walima	A feast organized after the wedding day	03
5	Dulha	Groom	02

Table 4.1.1 manifestly elucidates the Urduized words used by Pakistani authors in their writings in English. These words show the direction of Pakistani culture on the English language used in Pakistan. Most of these words do not have any alternative in English, and it appears that the



writers couldn't help using them to convey the intended meaning. All the terms included in Table 4.1.1 have rich cultural connotations attached to them. The nouns such as 'Baraat' and 'Mehndi' are unequivocally the words deeply imbibed in the indigenous cultural traditions. The sentences such as 'She was excited at her Mehndi night and was looking impatiently forward to putting on her Baraat dress the next day,' the words like 'Mehndi' and 'Baraat' are giving a complete sense to the readers and cannot be replaced with any equivalent in English. A few words, such as 'Dholkil' and 'Dulha', have their proper lexical substitutes in English, but the authors preferred to choose indigenized words to be understood in their cultural context.

**Table 4.1.2:**

***Urduized lexis related to religion in Pakistan English Fiction Corpus (PEF)***

Sr.#	Urdu Words	Near Meanings in English	Frequency of Use
1	Asr prayer	The prayer Muslims offer before the sunset	02
2	Tasbih	Rosary is made of wooden or ivory beads to keep the count of holy words.	02
3	Namazi	The one who offers prayers	01
4	Fateha	A supplication made on the grave	03
5	Qawwali	A song with spiritual associations	01

Table 4.1.2 clearly describes those words which are richly colored with Pakistani religious cult. As mentioned above in the column named Near Meanings in English, the words such as 'Namazi', 'Tasbih' and 'Fateha' can be easily replaced with their proper English meanings. Still, the writers here too opted to use the Urdu words instead. The use of these words has helped to build a strong bond of the text with Pakistani culture. On the other hand, the words such as 'Qawwali' in the table 4.1.2 do not appear to have a proper lexical substitute in the international language. The words that could provide their near meaning are also intentionally avoided so that the text seems to belong to the distinct Pakistani variety of English. All these words denote the impact of religion on society and highlight its pivotal place in Pakistani culture.

**Table 4.1.3:**

***Urduized lexis related to dresses in Pakistan English Fiction Corpus (PEF)***

Sr.#	Urdu Words	Near Meanings in English	Frequency of Use
1	Choli	A small shirt/a robe	02
2	Dupatta	Headcover	02
3	Lehnga	A floor-length dress completely adorned with beads and embroidery with a mini top,	03
4	Shalwar kameez	Shirt and trousers were worn in the East	04
5	Dhoti	A sheet used to tie around the waist in place of trousers. A traditional dress of Punjabis	01

Table 4.1.3 brings forth the nouns related to the dresses used in the novels and novellas written in English by Pakistani authors. The influence of Urdu words can be observed in this category. The Urduized terms such as 'Dhoti', 'Shalwar Qameez' and 'Choli' are dominantly used to reflect the local traditions and culture. The sentences such as 'She was looking pretty in her



lehnga,' Her farak was a bit old-fashioned, and she was quite exasperated (PEF.filetex.27) reflect deep connections with the local customs.

The process of indigenization, which the English language underwent in Pakistan after the partition is proof that the Urduized English used in Pakistan is a distinctive trademark of localization of international language.

**Table 4.1.4: Urduized lexis related to food in Pakistan English Fiction Corpus (PEF)**

Sr.#	Urdu Words	Near Meanings in English	Frequency of Use
1	Tandoori roti	Bread baked in clay oven	02
2	Naan Haleem	Flatbread with a curry made of shredded meat and pulses	01
3	Tikka kebab	Barbecue made with	01
4	Naan chanay	Flatbread baked in a clay oven with a curry made of spicy grams	01
5	Shaljam	Turnip	02
6	Gajjar	Carrot	02
7	Chargha	Roasted whole chicken	03

Table 4.1.4 discusses the Urduized words related to Pakistani fiction writers' food items in their writings in the English language. When analyzed at the micro-level, it is noted that the writers prefer to Urduize the words intentionally to give the text cultural coloring. The words like 'Shaljam' and 'Gajjar' have perfect English names, but they could not convey the cultural connotations attached to 'shaljam' and 'gajjar'. The use of indigenized alternatives speaks volumes of the indigenization of the English language.

**Table 4.1.5:**

**Urduized lexis related to relationships in Pakistan English Fiction Corpus (PEF)**

Sr.#	Urdu Words	Near Meanings in English	Frequency of Use
1	Chacha	Paternal Uncle	03
2	Mamu	Maternal Uncle	06
3	Khala	Maternal aunt	03
4	Phupho	Paternal aunt	04
5	Daadi	Granny/grandmother/father's mother	04
6	Baita	son	01
7	Abba	Father	02

Table 4.1.5 illustrates the Urdu words denoting relations. These words are frequently used in the fiction written by Urdu writers in their English writings, according to the data collected by PEF.

The words representing relationships, as seen in the table given above, can be categorized into two. The first being those who do not have any alternative in the English language. For instance, 'chacha', 'mamu', 'khala'. Although 'chacha' and 'mamu' English language uses two separate words, maternal and paternal uncle, the cultural connotation attached to the Urdu words 'chacha' and 'mamu' cannot be conveyed. That is the reason the Pakistani writers Urduized their text and intentionally used culturally rich words. They serve the purpose of making the literary English used in Pakistan a distinct variety of English. As for the second category, the words such as



‘baita’ and ‘abba’ can be exactly substituted by their son and father's English alternatives. But again, the culturally familiar nouns are preferred.

**Table 4.1.6:**

***Urduized Hybrid lexis with Urdu prefixes and suffixes used in Pakistan English Fiction Corpus (PEF)***

Sr.#	Urdu Words	Near Meanings in English	Frequency of Use
1	Gali-wise	According to the street	01
2	Pre-mehndi	Before the first function/gathering for the wedding	01
3	Karachites	Residents of Karachi	03
4	Urduized	Colored by Urdu	-
5	Mini-panchayat	Small court made to resolve local disputes	02

Table 4.1.6 illustrates the use of hybrid words used in English fiction written by local writers in Pakistan. The terms such as ‘Gali-wise’, ‘Karachites’, etc. manifest the English language's indigenization used in day-to-day conversation. The literary writers use the same language in their novels, written in the second language English. The people widely understand this localized version of the English language. It is the main reason behind blurring the previously defined boundaries between the two languages. The word 'Urduized' is not mentioned in PEF; it is included as a perfect example of hybrid terms tailored to Urdu's influence upon English.

**Table 4.1.8:**

***Urduized lexis related to law and order in Pakistan English Fiction Corpus (PEF)***

Sr.#	Urdu Words	Near Meanings in English	Frequency of Use
1	Dharna	A sit-in	02
2	Hartaal	A protest	03
3	Gherao	Blockade/ encirclement	01
4	Challan	A ticket in response to traffic rules violation	03
5	Lathi charge	Tyrannical punishment was used by the police to beat the culprits and offenders. Beating somebody with a cane stick	02

Table 4.1.8 shows the Urdu words related to law and order used in the English writings by Pakistani writers. All the terms listed above are so deeply embedded in Pakistani society that one feels that their English lexical substitutes could never have conveyed the complete sense. The words such as ‘Dharna’, ‘Challan’ etc. are repeatedly seen in the English newspapers too. The fiction authors used them in their writings to make the text richly imbued in the local culture.

**Table 4.1.9:**

***Urduized lexis related to descriptive labels for individuals in Pakistan English Fiction Corpus (PEF)***

Sr.#	Urdu Words	Near Meanings in English	Frequency of Use
1	Chaudhry sahib	An influential person in the village	03
2	Jooti choor	The one who steals shoes from public places	01
3	Haaji sahib	The one who has performed the pilgrimage of the holy places of Muslims	02





4	Murshid	A disciple	02
5	Peer sahib	A teacher, a mentor	02

Table 4.1.9 describes the Pakistani English fiction writers frequently using descriptive words or phrases commonly used as titles for individuals and their writings. A local deeply rooted in Pakistani culture will not grasp the meaning of the Near alternative for Chaudhry Sahib, the way he/she would understand by the title 'Chaudhry Sahib'. The same is the case with the other titles mentioned in the table. A complete sense of association, belonging, and sanctity is conveyed by the word 'Peer sahib' and cannot be comprehended using a mentor or a teacher.

**Table 4.1.10:**

**Urduized bilingual compounds (Noun+Noun) used in Pakistan English Fiction Corpus (PEF)**

Sr.#	Urdu Words	Near Meanings in English	Frequency of Use
1	Kharif season	Season for growing crops in winter	01
2	Dad G	Father (used with love and respect)	01
3	Muhajir camp	A camp for refugees	02
4	Party wala	The one who organizes parties	01
5	Garam suit	The dress suitable to be worn in winter to keep oneself warm	01

Table 4.1.10 shows the compound words formulated by combining the words from both languages. It can be seen in Table 4.1.10 that out of the two nouns, one is borrowed from Urdu. These compound words are so commonly used in day to day conversation and are widely understood in Pakistan. Therefore, these words became a part of Pakistani fiction writers' literature and represented the cultural connotations in the Pakistani setting. The compound word 'Dad G' is a typical example of a compound word in which one word is fetched from Urdu and the other from English.

**Table 4.1.11:**

**Urduized bilingual compounds (Noun+Verb) used in Pakistan English Fiction Corpus (PEF)**

Sr.#	Urdu Words	Near Meanings in English	Frequency of Use
1	Offer fateha	To offer prayer on the graves	03
2	Say namaz	To offer prayer	03
3	Deliver khutba	To deliver a sermon	04
4	Play kabaddi	To play a traditional game of subcontinent	01
5	Eat nihari	To eat a dish made with meat and spices	01

Table 4.1.11 exemplifies the use of Urduized compound words used in Pakistani fiction. Unlike the category of compound nouns mentioned in Table 4.1.10, these phrases are formulated by fetching a verb and a noun from both the languages. It can be noticed that the verbs are taken from English, and they are combined with Urdu nouns. English words can substitute the nouns such as 'namaz', 'fateha', and 'nihari,' but the writers preferred to stick to their culturally rich lexis. This phenomenon has made Pakistani English a unique variety of English languages, deeply rooted in indigenous culture.



## Conclusion

The influence of Urduized words used in English Pakistani fiction has been explored in the present research. The results of this research represent distinct features of Pakistani English. Due to the heavy influence of the Urdu language, English Pakistani fiction reveals lexical-level creativity. The process of hybridization at the lexical level that leads to the development of endocentric and exocentric compounds is seen in Pakistani English. The present study of English Pakistani fiction has shown that the authors used the Urduized words in English Pakistani novel to portray the rich Pakistani culture. Indeed, on the lexical level, this Urdu-English code-switching is the independent linguistic standard of Pakistani English and thus confirms the fact that Pakistani English is a different variety with its characteristics.

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