

URDU LANGUAGE VARIATION: A DIACHRONIC STUDY OF URDU DRAMAS

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Abstract

This research explores Urdu language variations Diachronically, analysing Urdu dramas from the period of state controlled Pakistani television times to the modern privatisation of Pakistani channels' dramas from the 1971 to 2021. To move away from the traditional speaker-centered models, this study utilizes Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to investigate how language is serving as a social tool in a certain region, particular society or specific community or nation. The study compares two different periods of Urdu dramas traveling from the classic time period towards the modern era of digitalisation. It undergoes with the discourse of six representatives dramas three from the past represents classical and philosophical age, Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsane (1971), Guest House (1991) and Marvi (1993) and three from the contemporary modern period of functional and innovative linguistic as, Zindagi Gulzar Hai (2012), Phir Wohi Mohabbat (2017), and Parizaad (2021). The research is based primarily on the sociolinguistics aspects of morphology, phonology, syntax, and formality variations by time traveling from the past to the present. By applying SFL's Interpersonal Metafunction, the study examines how the "Tenor" of dialogues has been transformed over the span of five decades. The analysis points out the shift from the formal Persianized and Arabic-based morphology with the complexity of syntactic structures of the PTV time to the hybridized, direct, colloquial and functional Urdu prevailing in private media of the present day. It examines moreover how phonological preciseness has been moved from a marker of social prestige to a more easy going, urbanized articulations system.

Keywords

Diachronic Study, Urdu Language Variation, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Morphology, Linguistic Formality

Introduction

Urdu, which belongs to the Indo-Aryan family, is one of the most famous languages spoken in the Indo-Pak subcontinent peninsula. It is widely spoken and considered as the national language and as Lingua Franca of Pakistan. It is also important because it is one of the eight official scheduled languages in India. The name of the word Urdu was first used by the poet Ghulam Hamdani Musaffi around the 1780s in his poetry. Urdu means Army-Lashkari in the Turkic languages. In the late 18th century, it was known as Zaban-e-Urdu-e-Mualla, meaning the language of the exalted camp. Other historical names were Hindavi or Hindi, Hindustani and Rekhta in the long journey of its evolution and variations. It underwent Persian and Arabic based dialects along with a number of regional and local languages influence (Rai, 2001). It got different names because of its associations with geographical area-based Isogloss around the Indian Peninsula. It was known with that particular area's name like in Deccan as Decani and in Delhi as Dehlavi. Furthermore evolving into the literary style known as Rekhta, or the "mixed" language, during the 17th and 18th centuries (Shackle & Snell, 1990). The term Zaban-e-Urdu-e-Mualla, meaning the "Language of the Exalted Camp," and the most common term Lashkari highlighted its role as a bridge for the communicative purpose in military settings. While in the colonial era, it was frequently categorized as Hindustani to reflect and share everyday speech. It bridged diverse communities (Rahman, 2011). This covered the

journey of progressive chronology from a folk dialect to a high-prestige national language which is essential to understand the modern variations observed in the present.

As Pakistan established its national identity, television dramas as an early serial *Khuda ki Basti* (1969) one of the oldest drama serial, became the primary source to project the idealized version of the national language; though *Indar Sabha* which is widely considered as the first Urdu drama written by Agha Hasan Amanat and staged around 1853s. In the 1960s to the early 1990s, state-controlled PTV served as a "linguistic gatekeeper," to ensure that dialogue reflected the sophisticated and philosophical standards set by literary giants (Kothari, 2005). Works like *Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsane* (1971) and *Marvi* (1993) were not merely sources of entertainment rather to be the pedagogical tools that standardized the national language for its social and cultural ideology-based identification with certain values of the nation. However, the linguistic standards were replaced with the deregulation of media and under the encouragement of privatisation-based channels such as Hum TV. The drama transitioned from the classic, scripted and poetic medium into a democratic, functional and realistic social mirror. It reflected the street-level, hybridized, and colloquial Urdu spoken by the masses (Ahmad, 2016). This decades-based evolution offers a unique opportunity for a diachronic study, and to capture the movement from a language of prestige towards daily-based practical language of modern transmission.

To move beyond a mere descriptive account of these variations with the history of Urdu dramas, this research takes up the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). It was developed by M.A.K. Halliday (1978). SFL treats language not as a set of rigid and rigorous grammatical rules, but as a "social semiotic" a resource used to make meaning within a social background. SFL suggests that each and every linguistic selection a speaker makes is functionally motivated by the social circumstances. To focus on the Interpersonal Metafunction, this research examines how the "Tenor" of discourse (the relationship and social distance between speakers) has been shifted gradually with the passage of time (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). SFL allows for a deep analysis of how the internal mechanism of the language as its morphology, syntax and phonology work together constructing a specific level of formality.

Research Objectives

This research aims to map the linguistic variations of Urdu dialogues across a five decade while covering the time periods of fifty-years under two specific objectives:

1-To analyse Urdu's grammatical structures including morphology, syntax, and phonology have been modified from 1971 to 2026.

2-To identify the social tone of these dramas has shifted from high-prestige classic literary registers to contemporary colloquial speech.

Research Questions

This study investigates Urdu language variations from earlier classical times to the modern colloquial and functional times of the language. Following are research questions:

1. Why has the social Urdu dramas shifted from high prestige classicism to contemporary colloquial and functional speech?
2. How are Urdu grammatical structures including phonology, morphology, syntax and formality modified with the passage of time 1971-2026?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it provides a vital record of how the national language transformed diachronically over the period of fifty years in Pakistan's cultural history. While documenting the shift from formal classic literary time period of pure Urdu to modern colloquial and functional speech under the prominent sociolinguist aspects of Urdu language as Morphology,

Syntax, Phonology and Formality with global geographic and social factors. It offers deep insights into the changing social identity of the Pakistani nation in the L1 Urdu context.

Research Rationale

This study serves as a foundational framework for future researchers to explore linguistic variations in other genres of literature and media with regional dialectal specifications. Ultimately, this work preserves the linguistic heritage of Pakistani television while paving the way for further academic inquiry into the country's discourse based on time-traveled language variations.

Statement of the Problem

The real missing piece in current studies is a long-term look over decades of language variations Diachronically. How the actual structure of our language has shifted from the early formal days of PTV times to the modern era of privatized media. While many researchers have talked about merely the history of television or complained about "Urdish or Urduish" in modern shows. They usually look at these as separate, isolated events. No one has really sat down to track the evolution of Urdu as one continuous journey across five decades using a solid theory like Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Most of the existing works just point out the language "sounds different" now, but they don't explain the "why" or the "how" behind it. By not comparing a classic like Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsane directly with a modern masterpiece like Parizaad. Scholars have missed the bigger picture of how our social relationships and national identity are being rewritten through the true depiction of our dialogue. This study fills that exact vacuum, moving from the past classical era to the present functional age of the language.

Literature Review

While the academic study of Urdu in Pakistan often reflects as a "prestige" language. It needs to critically look at how this prestige has been achieved through television. Early researchers took attention to focus over the period of 1970s as a golden era of "Standard Urdu" when dramas like Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsane by Ashfaq Ahmad were taken as Persianized, literary Arabic based registers to define the identity of the nation as whole. However, a critical review advised that this era was to rely on high-flown classic vocabulary that was used rooted in Arabic and Persian based lexical items about sixty to seventy percent. That wasn't just about art rather to be the purposeful sociolinguistic tool that has ever been used to maintain social distance. By applying SFL to the era, we can see the "Tenor" of special scripts representing some certain time period throughout the history of language variations. It was designed to be formal and hierarchical while reflecting a society in its values and traditions in terms of literary legacy over the naturalistic and casual speech of the common person in the society.

As the 1990s approached, the literature highlighted some certain pushback against this conservative formality, sparked by a move toward a social democratic environment. Drama serial Guest House by Abdul Rauf Khalid marked an innovative and revolutionary departure from the poetic standards of the past replaced with the daily-based language of the bazaar that took the street onto the screen. Critically, this gradual shift had represented a functional transformation with "Interpersonal Metafunction" of Urdu began to favour accessibility over ornament. Researchers noted that while the 70s aimed to elevate the audience, the 90s aimed to reflect them and afterwards traditions sharpened with technological advancement and the media uphill. When there was the first time that colloquialisms and regional flavors were added not merely for comedy, but to attend the voice of more diverse, middle-class Pakistani enlightenment experience.

Move forward to the mid-1990s linguistic variations in terms of lexicography along with syntactic and phonological patterns as in drama serial Marvi by Nur-ul-Huda Shah, which utilized the language to address complexity of social issues tending towards the problematic

matter of regional identification. Academic discourse noted this time period when Urdu became a tool for social commentary instead of a medium for high art. In a critical context the language used in Marvi has shown the difference between the "standard" and the "regional" language variations under sociolinguistics. This study argues that the literature has often overlooked that how grammatical structures to follow syntactic and morphological patterns in these dramas has begun to simplify complex subordinate clauses toward a more direct and active syntax; which made social messages more easier to digest for global diaspora of Urdu language in its Isogloss.

With the explosion of private media around the 2010s, the literature changed sides toward the phenomenon of "hybridization." Zindagi Gulzar Hai a novel-based drama serial by Umera Ahmad is serving as a vital case study in this transition. In this serial dialogues remain sophisticated but tend to integrate the realities of globalization, urbanization and modernity. Critics of this period of time complain often about the "dilution" of Urdu, but a critical analysis under SFL reveals a separate story. The "Tenor" in these drama serials reflects a move toward egalitarianism, in which characters from different social backgrounds communicate with a level of linguistic intimacy which we don't see in the 1970s. This suggests that the language was not declining, but was actually becoming more inclusive accordingly.

The late 2010s, "Phir Wohi Mohabbat" by Mansoor Saeed, shows fast quick moves of "Urdish", the seamless high blending of Urdu and English accordingly. Existing work tends to focus on the vocabulary of this part of the era, while counting the frequency of English loanwords. However, this study critically argues for the attention towards the "Social Semiotics" of this alteration. To use English at its extreme level in modern scripts can be the functional choice to meet the demand of specific speech communities with social class and a vast geographical mindset around the globe. Previous researchers have failed to see that the "rhythm" of Urdu dialogue has been rewritten to match the high speed, digital age of contemporary Pakistan; by ignoring the structural patterns of these two languages based on SVO and SOV Syntactical patterns are merged.

This diachronic journey consists of five decades for the analysis of Urdu language variations in Urdu dramas; the most recent landmark a novel-based drama serial Parizaad by Hashim Nadeem which is a unique combination of the literary past and the colloquial present. Most of the recent research works focus on its thematic depth; a critical gap is there to analyze its linguistic variations diachronically. This drama serial uses a highly specific "Tenor" to mark the protagonist's social struggle to prove a high language variety of Urdu that can still be used in a modern context to create emotional and social enthusiastic impact. This study critically locates Parizaad as the culmination of fifty years of language variations where the drama serial proves that ultimately Urdu is adaptable enough to be both poetic and practical within the same period of time.

A major critique of the current body of work is the lack of a "diachronic" or long-term view. Most researchers look at one drama or one decade in isolation, which misses the "evolutionary path" of the language. While looking at all six selected dramas as a sample from Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsane from the past to Parizaad the present one; this study fills that gap. It moves beyond the idea that language change is a series of accidents and a continuous response to the nation's history of literature in this specific genre. The literature has often interpreted what changed; but without a framework like SFL it has put effort into explaining the "social mechanics" of how these variations occurred.

To move forward, the role of the "Interpersonal Metafunction" remains under-researched in the context of Pakistani media. While scholars have studied the "ideals" of Urdu, it has rarely been looked at by them how "power" and "solidarity" are negotiated through dialogues performed

on screen. Critically, the shift from formal honorifics to routine address across these six dramas is a reflection of a society directly which has become less hierarchical.

Additionally, the transition from state-owned media to having private channels has created a "linguistic marketplace" that the literature has only begun to explore. In the era of PTV from the times of Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsane, the language was a "top-down" imposition of socio-cultural environment. In the modern era of Parizaad, the language is a "bottom-up" reflection as per demands of modern consumers. A critical review has shown that the language has become more "dialogic" rather sophisticated and Philosophical speech of prestige. It means it is designed for interaction instead of just declaration. This fundamental shift in the "function" of the language is the key to finding out why modern Urdu sounds are so different from the Urdu of decades before now.

The scholarly discourse encompasses Pakistani televised narratives which was prioritized in the pages of history which is visible social friction over the underlying erosion as a prestige variety of the language. The Marxist critique by Meraj and Khan (2022) gives a vital lens to look deeply at class-based prejudices and colorism, a characteristic of defining modern scripts, moreover the semiotic analysis by W. Batool and Hussain (2025) decodes the signs symbolically which were used to build and to identify characters unique identification. Furthermore, to investigate the patterns and the mode of code-switching and diglossia under the various sociocultural phenomena of sociolinguists, with circumstances of discourse by A. Batool and Akram, 2025. It discovers the facts of hybridization of Pakistani identity through lexical borrowing in the age of world globalization to intermingle culture and social communities after coming in contact growing fastly as a result of quick human trafficking and changing trends of modern media under geosocial aspects. But, this study argues that these geosocial phenomena are the primary drivers of a diachronic collapse. By critically evaluating these research works done previously, it is a solid proof to prove that the "drama" has migrated from the plot into a tragic surrender of the elaborated code of classical Urdu to a restricted code of utilitarian, commercialized dialect with the fulfillments of the modern innovative era. This research expands on these bases to prove that the society has become more fragmented. Where our language loses its communicative competence, becoming a tool of survival in the perspective of linguistics diachronic variations rather than merely a cultural art form.

Research Methodology

For this study, it has been selected a qualitative approach, looking at how Urdu has changed especially in the genre of drama over the last fifty years. Rather than just look at the language as a set of static rules. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is applied to treat it as a living tool that people use to make meaning and to convey the message. This is to allow for seeing how to speak on screen. It is not only a choice by a writer, but a shadow of how our society as whole has shifted between 1971 and 2021.

Theoretical Framework

This research purely falls in the qualitative research paradigm using Holliday's SFL; three metafunctions clearly were discussed in the analysis part. It is following two main paths. First it looked at the "mechanics" of the language, the grammar and the sounds. While it was to note how it has moved away from the heavy, poetic, Arabic and Persian-influenced Urdu of the 70s toward English rooted in a much faster, more direct style of the present. It can be seen as sentences have been shorter and how we naturally mix in English words or local slang unconsciously. The focus is also to see how the "rhythm" of the dialogue has changed from a very formal and stage-like delivery to natural-based use of language showing their day to day life vocabulary items in the way people communicate as an informal ordinary talk now.

Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL)

The second part of this method is to use the "Interpersonal" side of SFL by M. A. K. Halliday, especially looking at the "Tenor" of the conversations. To analyze the relationship between characters. It was to see how the rigid, full of respect hierarchies from the past gave way to a more casual and confidential process of speaking. To look forward, it was deeply analyzed how characters address each other and the tone used by them. It is clear how the "classic" Urdu of the earlier era has been replaced by a more informal conversational register. Of course, this methodology is not about counting words merely rather to show how our dramas underwent language variations and adaptations with the passage of time towards the identity of a present, digitalized Pakistan.

Research Design

Ultimately, this research path is designed both simple and systematic. Through the analysis of samples in the form of selective six dramas side-by-side, this research steps ahead to observe language change in reasoning behind this change. The ultimate objective is showing that the shift in Urdu dialogue is not a loss of culture, but is the part of a natural phenomenon which makes the language more function-based for today's world. To end this analysis is to see the connection between how is spoken on screen and to whom is spoken as a whole in society to depict through dialogues clearly. It was defined while providing a full picture of the linguistic journey of Pakistani television setup.

Research Methodology

The heart of this research lies in six selective dramas which were downloaded directly from YouTube. Three of them to represent the past as an earlier form of Urdu and three to indicate modern times as previously names were mentioned with their writers along with aired dates especially to portray the journey of sociolinguistic variations based on the aspects of Syntax, Morphology, Phonology and Formality changes with passage of time consist of five decades from PTV times to Hum TV . First analysis was started with the classical drama series like "Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsany" from the early 70s, moving through the 90s with "Guest House" and "Marvi", and next it was closed to the modern day with "Zindagi Gulzar Hai", "Phir Wohi Mohabbat", and "Parizaad". It has focused the data collection on specific types of selective scenes from selective episodes like family arguments or from their formal meetings with the reason. These are the moments where a person can really hear the "social distance" and the type of Urdu being used showing reality.

Data Analysis

As Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) Perspective, this study analyzes Urdu language variations diachronically in sociolinguistics perspectives through six selected Pakistani dramas as Marvi, Guest House, Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsanay while traveling from the past towards the present as Zindagi Gulzar Hai, Parizad, and Phir Wohi Mohabbat with the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics by M. A. K. Halliday. The analysis focuses on three metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual, to highlight diachronic sociolinguistic variations of Syntax, Morphology, Phonology and Formality register. It bridged diverse communities (Rahman, 2011). Morphology and syntax (Kachru, 1983) give such a variety that is mixture of English and Urdu. The "Phonological Prestiges" shifted the Qaf and Ghayn with the marks of an educated man under the "Neutralized or Anglicized Phonology" in dialogues. There was the "loss" of the formal Urdu as a "cultural decay." The data critically re-evaluates this "decay" as a "Linguistic Liberation," (Ayres, 2009). Scholars like Mezzera and Sial (2010), have analyzed the era through the lens of political freedom, but they have largely ignored the Linguistic Marketplace.

1. Ideational Metafunction (Representation of experience)

Ideational metafunction is the representation of Experience. The ideational metafunction concerns how language is representative of experience and reality with transitivity patterns and form of lexical choices. Drama serials Marvi and Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsanay early from the PTV era where the ideational function is identified through formal, descriptive, and lexical items strongly from the core of language-social-culture. From Marvi e.g. Nokri Ghulami ki tokri hamari Tu Shan hi Kuch is by a famous dialogue from Shehzadi the Wife of Wadera Hakim Saen, (Job the symbol of slavery, what we have our dignity.) This clause reflects material and feudal relational processes expressed through formal feudal supremacy. While in Zindagi Gulzar Hai and Parizad, there is lots of hybrid lexical choices, combining Urdu with English e.g. "For God sake mom", "men sab Kuch sanbhal loon ga." As Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) Perspective, this study analyzes Urdu language variations diachronically in sociolinguistics perspectives through 6 selected Pakistani dramas as Marvi, Guest House, Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsanay while traveling from the past towards the present as Zindagi Gulzar Hai, Parizad, and Phir Wohi Mohabbat with the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics by M. A. K. Halliday. The analysis focuses on three metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual, to highlight diachronic sociolinguistic variations of Syntax, Morphology, Phonology and Formality register.

2. Interpersonal Metafunction (Social Relations and Interaction)

The interpersonal metafunction reflects social relationships, attitudes, and degrees of formality through mood, modality, and pronoun use e.g. in Guest House, interpersonal meaning is realized through highly formal mood structures and honorifics like "Aap tashreef rakhein" (please sit down), "Janab, agar aap ijazat dein..." (Sir would you allow...), "mehr bani farms Kar..." (kindly or please...) to show humble and polite way. On the other hand in Phir Wohi Mohabbat, interpersonal relations are constructed through informal mood to equalize language e.g. "Tum samajh kyun nahi rahe?", "Yaar, seriously?" A diachronic shift from aap to tum with discourse markers as "yaar" to reduce modality and to increase directness. It is the reduction of social distance and evolving interpersonal norms as a result of urban cultural influence." Karachi to insano Ka sumandar Hy in Parizad ("Karachi is the sea of people.")

3. Textual Metafunction (Organization of Discourse)

The textual metafunction deals with how information is organized within discourse. It includes thematic structure and cohesion. Earlier dramas show highly structured and cohesion with thematic progression clearly e.g. "Aakhir ye Nizam kab take chaly ga jis men hame kuwen k mendak Bana diya Hy?" Showing feudal power Logical connectors (akhir, jis) Complete clause structure but modern dramas are to demonstrate fragmented and conversational discourse patterns e.g. "I mean... tum samajh kyun nahi rahe?" "Bas, yeh theek nahi hai." These examples illustrate: Ellipsis and clauses are not completed. Code-switching within thematic structure and Less rigid cohesion. This reflects spontaneous spoken discourse and media realism. A specific genre of Urdu literature is Urdu drama which has covered his journey of linguistic variation between past and present timeline based on the following prominent linguistics aspect as phonology which lies the study of sound; syntax deals with structure of sentence form and patterns; morphology, to create, coin and add new words in a language and then formality, to map the social distances social distance through honorifics.

Phonological Variations

Phonology covering pronunciation, stress patterns, and intonation, displays marked differences between older and modern dramas. In older productions, pronunciation is carefully articulated, reflecting the Persianized and literary norms of formal Urdu as in "Aik Mohabbat So Afsany" (Mah-e-Kinan) and in "Marvi" lot of words derived from Arabic or Persian for example

Mohabbat(love) or farz(duty) are pronounced fully, often with elongated vowels and precise articulation. Patterns of stress are deliberate with formal pause showing structured intonation under politeness, clarity of the narratives, and social hierarchy. In contrast, modern dramas express more relaxed and colloquial pronunciation as dialogues. In *Zindagi Gulzar Hai* where characters often shorten or contract words to create conversational ease, e.g. “kya kar rahe ho” becomes “kya karre ho”,(what are you doing?) reflecting the patterns of natural speech in contemporary urban Urdu. *Phir Wohi Mohabbat* further demonstrates casual intonation in romantic dialogues of Alishbah and Waleed with high frequency of English phrases and sentences. The “Marvi” drama serial reflects regional dialectal phonology, incorporating Sindhi-influenced sounds and intonation. Simplification of Phonology can be seen easily in contracted pronunciations and the incorporation of English stress patterns. As an instance, speakers may reduce clarity in rapid speech or shift intonation in code-switched phrases like “seriously?” or “okay” are witnessed within the discourse of Urdu genre of dramas.

Syntactic Variation

Various syntactic forms and patterns differ from past to present where they are based on prominent temporal Variations. Earlier drama serials prefer complex sentence structures with cohesive series of dialogues. There was smooth speaking performance which often comprises subordinate clauses and multiple phrases along with one or two independent clauses. In “Guest House”, for example, dialogues like “Agar aap ne yeh kaam poora nahi kiya, to phir hamari zimmedari aur bhi barh jaayegi” (If you did not work this our responsibility will increase more.) exhibit layered syntax with subordinate constructions and formal connectors in the form of transitional devices or conjunctions e.g. in “Marvi” Wadera Hakim Saen says: “han Marvi ko Kari Kar k marna ho ga ye hamary bachon ki izzat ka sawal hy aur wo chokhri bhi tu apna mohn band nahen karti na”, “Yes Marvi should be killed harshly because this is the matter of our honour and the lives of our children and that young girl does not shut her mouth even”. Such structures demonstrate cultural rooted emphasis on literary-classic Urdu. It provides clarity and narrative depth. In *Marvi* compound-complex sentences to articulate moral and social thoughts with institutional requirements to maintain syntactic formality as a reflection of traditions and customs of the society. Modern dramas use simpler, more conversational style of syntax in contrast. Sentences are shorter and clauses are often independently joined with connectors like *aur* (and) or *lekin* (but) are used sparingly. In “*Zindagi Gulzar Hai*”, a character might say, “Mujhe yeh pasand nahi” instead of a longer, more formal equivalent. In “*Phir Wohi Mohabbat*”, casual exchanges, interruptions, and incomplete sentences mimic real-life speech, enhancing relatability. Parizad blends narrative sentences with dialogues to use occasional complex constructions for dramatic effect, but overall syntax aligns with modern colloquial norms. This reflects a shift toward efficiency, clarity, and absorption towards viewership. Diachronic journey of Urdu language variations shift from complex constructions and formal register towards the more conversational and fragmented forms.

Variations of Morphology

Morphology deals with word formation, prefixes and suffixes along with lexical choices. Noticeable differences across eras can be measured easily. Older dramas based on classical morphological forms included Persian and Arabic-derived words. They consisted of honorifics, and formal suffixes. For instance, in *Marvi*, expressions such as *aap ki mehrbani* (your compassion) or *muqaddar* (destiny) retain their original morphological structures. “*Sahab*” (Mr.) and “*Junab*” (Sir) with “g” frequently used in *Aik Mohabbat So Afsany*. In old dramas Lexical richness is emphasized while morphological complexity is maintained to align with the formal literary standards. Modern dramas show a trend toward simplified and colloquial morphology as in *Zindagi Gulzar Hai* and *Phir Wohi Mohabbat* often get shortened and simple

verbs with casual suffixes and informal derivations, e.g., karke rather kar ke, or using terms like yaar (friend) to address informally. There is a blending of poetic construction and morphological patterns of casual life in drama serial Parizaad. It resonates with modern viewers to retain expressive depth. This illustration of morphological democratization of Urdu is very accessible to retain stylistic flexibility.

Drama serials from past as Aik Mohabbat Sau Afsanay and Marvi, language was used to reflect classical Urdu morphology as a result of Persian and regional languages e.g. “Sahib ji” to address and expressions like “mehr bani farmaiye” (please be kind) and “ijazat dijiye” (allow me kindly) demonstrate the use of polite constructions of verb and affixation. In contrast, Contemporary dramas such as Zindagi Gulzar Hai and Parizad frequently show code-switching, code-mixing and hybrid morphological forms. Expressions like “adjust karna”, “over react kar rahi hai”, and “plan banana” are combining English lexical roots with grammatical structures of Urdu. It is to indicate emerging effects of linguistic globalization and the influence of English on word formation process in Urdu.

Variations of Formality and Register

Formality is the most important sociolinguist aspect of variations as we move from past to present. In older dramas politeness, social hierarchy, and deference can be seen as prominent parts of formality and register. It was dominant equally in both urban and rural sides to show respect and to give honour to elders as compared with modern drama serials. Characters in Guest House and Marvi frequently use aap instead of tum or tu polite pronouns. Those were culturally appropriate phrases to convey respect. Even in casual interactions, it was necessary to maintain a tone of decorum because of societal values reflecting the societal values of the 1990s. The noun “Sahib”, “Junab” and the verb “farmana”, “tashreef rakhna” instead of “kehna” and “bethen” often used to get attention as compared with modern dramas where conversational and relatable registers are dominant because of local languages influence (Rai, 2001). Characters in “Zindagi Gulzar Hai” alternates often between formal and informal speech depending on the state of context, societal relations, and the state of emotions attached. Phir Wohi Mohabbat prioritizes colloquial, romantic, and expressive language, on the other hand “Parizad” blends sophisticated narratives with conversational ordinary speech. This trend is common because of modern urban influence and market demand of the present time that gives preference to realism in media language. It suggests that contemporary Urdu is adaptable and capable of maintaining cultural relevance while engaging diverse viewership.

Comparative Insight

A systematic pattern of linguistic variations is shown easily, while comparing earlier and modern dramas. There is demonstration of formal phonology we see in dramas depict the community of past times with complex syntax and rich morphology with high formality to reflect educational and social norms of sociolect e.g lexical items like domestic items, means of transportations as Tanga, rehri (horse cart), huqqa, zebaish (decoration), dastoor (law), Jamia (university), farsooda (old), chach (uncle), sukhan (literature), guftagu (conversation) is with other so many extinct dictionary words that are completely unknown or about to die in present times. Modern dramas, while retaining certain formal elements for dramatic effect, emphasize flexibility, simplicity, and relatability are the linguistic variations based-changes with certain formal elements that time; where life was not used as commercial, materialistic and capitalist. The diachronic shift suggests that language used in media is adapting community required expectations, social change, and cultural modernization. It highlights the role of television as both an influencer of language practices and as a mirror of upgradation with sociolinguistic variations.

Findings

The findings recommend that the language variations in the highlighted linguistic aspects are not only stylistic-switch but also reflecting a prominent conversion in Pakistani social interactions. Because the language replacement is from high-register formality to low variety I mean more individualized one and daily-routine expressions, so it depicts societal negotiations towards new identities and authority based structures. This study gives a structured map of diachronic changes with the passage of time. It offers extensive comprehension of how the functional usage of Urdu in the field of media reflects social semiotics of the nation.

Conclusion

Urdu language variation diachronically in Urdu dramas as SFL-based analysis reveals that the language in Pakistani dramas has undergone some certain significant sociolinguistic transformation that consists of five decades. Three metafunctions are as an evidence to prove that the language has shifted from literal, classic purity, formal formation, poetic and philosophical structures, hierarchical power, syntactic complex cultivation, feudal power, conservative fundamentalism, idiomatic-proverbial approached, scenario of localization, rural purity of hustle and bustle, slow-moved life pattern, importance of relations, regional localization, human worth and structural complexity based on conceptual old grammar towards colloquial, materialistic modernity, urban digitalization, scientific-based more logical, brain anxiety, mental depression, democratic community, functional based, departmental demands, globalization, modern enlightenment, innovative technological advancement, individualism, and short simple patterns of Syntax based on modern grammar having a more informal, hybrid, and dynamic forms. These changes reflect broader socio-cultural developments to be the part of linguistic variation from the past to the present. In short, moving from the past 1971 with high honorifics, complex metaphors, idioms and proverbs, more literary devices and poetic figures with Perso-Arabic roots toward the present 2026 with high interference of English, simplified Urdu, and "Street colloquial Urdu" grammar associated strongly with the bulk use of social media.

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