

A Glance at Linguistic Development of Modern Sindhi Language during British Rule in Sindh

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Abstract

This research paper aims to explore the linguistics development of modern Sindhi language, during British rule in the Subcontinent. Sindhi language is regarded one of the ancient languages of the world. It has developed in modern form in British period. This paper briefly explores the linguistic development of Modern Sindhi language during British rule. The study shows that British period was regarded as a glorious period of Sindhi Language.

Key words: Sindhi, linguistic development, British rule.

Introduction

Sindhi language is classified as a member of Indo-Aryan group, part of Indo-European family of languages. “Sindhi is one of the ancient languages of the World. It is an original language of Indus Valley people, which possess all the peculiarities of the developed languages of the World” (Sindhi Language Committee, 2010).

Stack (as cited in Abro, 2011, p.31) viewed that “I was hither proud of English language as I considered, it was more beautiful and very copious language in the World, but it was vain of me. When, I learnt Sindhi. I found reduplicated causal verbs and other points that give Sindhi, beauties distinct from most Indian languages”. Besides this, Richard Burton said that “when we

conquered Sub-Continent. We saw a huge educational and literary stock only in Sindhi language”.

Sindh was conquered by British Government in 1843, after defeating Talpur rulers on the battle of Miani. Lighari (2010) said that British rulers followed the policy of “direct communication” with common masses of Sindh. That is why, their attitude towards Sindhi language was very much positive. Therefore, Sindhi language has witnessed different developmental stages in the field of language and literature.

Linguistic Works

Development of Sindhi Typewriter

Sindhi language saw different developmental stages during British rule. The first development of Sindhi language was the development of Sindhi Typewriter. It was named as “Monarch” and it was manufactured by Remington, an American Company. That Typewriter was recovered from a person in Shahdadkot, District, Qamber-Shahdadkot, Sindh. It is preserved in the museum of Sindhology, Jamshoro (Pirzado, 2010).

Sindhi as an Official Language

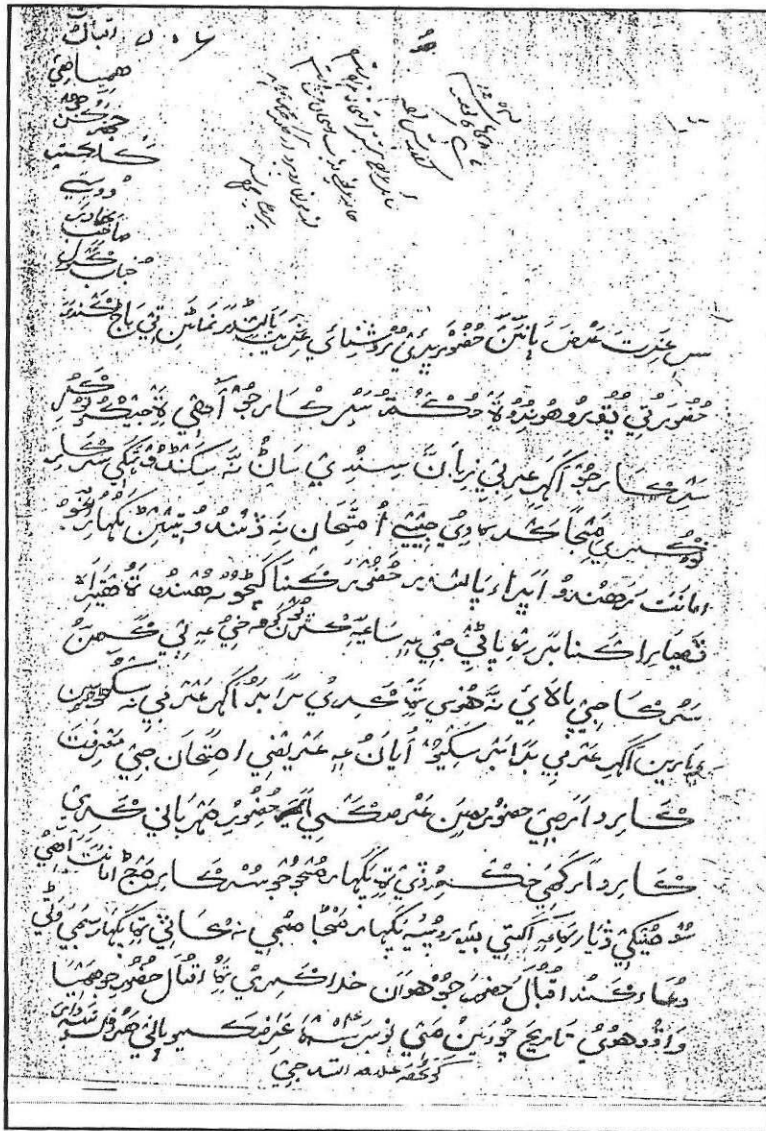
After conquering Sindh, British Government preferred Sindhi instead of Persian language and they decided to declare Sindhi as an Official Language and Language of Education. According to Mallah (2008), it was because of the importance given by the British Government that Sindhi language got the status of Official language in Sindh, first time in the history of Sindh. Further, he said that in this regard, Governor of Bombay, Sir George Clerk issued order to the Commissioner of Sindh in 1848, to declare Sindhi Vernacular as an Official language. Owing to the implementation of that order, Sir Barter Fearer ordered to Government employees to learn Sindhi and qualify in the Examination of Sindhi language.

Balouch (as cited in Sheikh, 2010, p.71) wrote that Bombay Government issued circular no 1852 on 6 September, 1851. According to that circular Sindhi is regarded as an official language of Sindh. Besides this, they also decided that they have to learn Sindhi language along with local masses for posting of any officer in any region of Sindh or for monthly salary and

other pragmatic benefits. This is because the government thought that if a person could not understand one's problem then how he would solve it. Therefore it was mandatory for all to qualify in the examination of Sindhi language. Owing to this, Government started 4 to 6 month courses in Sindhi language for foreigners. Otherwise, one would not get any posting, monthly salary or any other pragmatics benefit from Government.

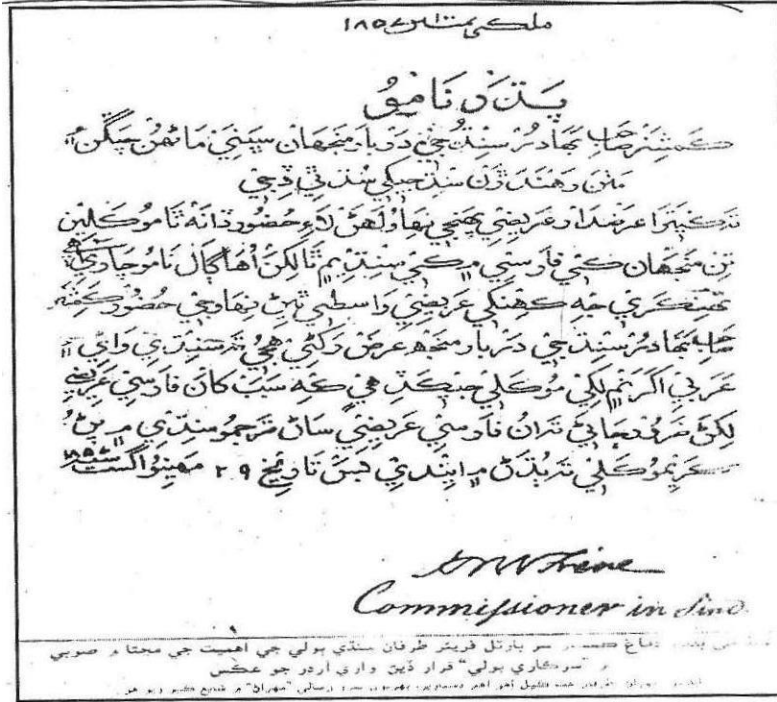
Here is an application of Tapedar Haroo Mal. This application was written by Haroo Mal in 1854. He had written an application to Deputy Collector of Jherik (Thatta) in which he wrote that as "I have not learnt Sindhi due to some reasons, owing to this; I have not collected my monthly salary. Now I have learnt Sindhi and appeared in examination. So, it is requested to you that kindly order to Mukhtiarkar to issue me, my monthly salary". This application is authentic evidence, which shows that Sindhi language learning was mandatory for Government employees during British rule.

The scanned copy of that application is taken from Sheikh (2010, p. 74).



Moreover, according to Sheikh (2010), 1857 was the lucky year for the people of Sindh as well as Sindhi Language. In that year, the Commissioner of Sindh issued the notification that, now all applications must be written in Sindhi Language. After that notification Sindhi language was practically accepted as an Official Language. Further, on that notification it is clearly mentioned that due to some reasons, if one could not write application in Sindhi language, then it must be translated into Sindhi language.

The scanned copy of that notification is taken from Sheikh (2010, p. 72). It was issued on 29, August, 1857.



Development of the New Script of Sindhi Language

In addition to Sindhi as Official language, British Government had issued orders to develop a new Script for Sindhi language. In this regard, Government formed a committee to develop a new script of Sindhi language. In 1852, The Arabic Sindhi script was developed and it consisted of modified Arabic Alphabet. It has 52 letters and was approved by the Board of Director of East India Company on 8 December, 1852. The Devanagari script uses an adapted extra four letters to accommodate certain Sindhi Alphabet. This script proved immensely valuable to promote efforts to preserve Sindhi literary and cultural heritage (Memon, as cited in Mallah, 2008).

Research on Sindhi Language

After 1843, a number of researchers have conducted research to explore linguistic characteristics of Sindhi language. In this regard, Sir George Stack, Dr. Ernest Trumpp, George Shirt, Sir and George Abram Grierson were the prominent Scholars of that time. Stack (1849) was a first scholar, who composed a book on Grammar of Sindhi language, in English. The name of the book was “A Grammar of Sindhi Language”. In addition to this, he also composed two

English–Sindhi dictionaries. Further, George Shirt was also a prominent Scholar of that time. In 1866, he authored a book of grammar in Sindhi language, named as “Akhar Dhatoo”. In that book, he had discussed the roots as well as relations of Sindhi language with Sanskrit, Semitic, and Dravidian. Furthermore, he also compiled English-Sindhi dictionary (Pirzado, 2010).

Compilation of *Shah Jo Risalo*

Sindhi people must be thankful to Dr. Ernest Trump, who had done great work in Sindhi language. In 1866, he compiled “Shah Jo Risalo”. He printed it first time on lithography from Leipzig, Germany. It was a big achievement in the history of Sindhi language. Besides this, Trump (1872) composed Grammar of Sindhi Language. Dr. Trump’s Grammar has pivotal importance in Sindhi language because it is the inclusion of Shah Latif’s Language and its novelties in it.

Shah Jo Risalo was composed by renowned poet of the World Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. Gurbuxani (2005) said that there are two theories regarding *Shah jo Risalo*, few historian says that Shah Abdul threw whole the Shah jo Rislo into Kirar Dhandh (Kirar Lake), because he thought that if his faqeers may not understand the core meaning of his poetry then they may follow the wrong direction. Owing to this, he threw it into Kirar Dhand (Kirar Lake) and few historian Says that half of the *Shah jo Risalo* was memorized by shah’s faqeer. But there is no authentic evident regarding history of *Shah jo Risalo*. It is also unbelievable that how a poet can through his piece of literature into lake. Moreover, people say that Shah’s faqeers requested to Shah latif for the recollection of his risalo , because, they mourned, when shah latif threw his risalo into lake. Due to this, Shah latif ordered to “Mai Niyamat” to memorize shah’s poetry to his faqeers. Hence, the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai was collected by Shah’s faqeers with the help of “Mai Niyamat” and shaped it in the form of different “SURs” according to the theme and nature of poetry. After the approval of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, it was handed over to the Shah’s Chief Khalifa “Tamar Faqeer”. It is called as a “Ganj”. Still, it is preserved at Bhit Shah. Finally, Dr Ernest Trump was the person, who complied *Shah jo Risalo* and printed it form Leipzig Germany. In addition to this, he also wrote research papers on Sindhi books and on Sindhi language.

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Grierson (1919) conducted research on 500 languages of the subcontinent. His work is entitled as “Linguistics Survey of India” in which he discussed Sindhi in detail. In the Linguistic Survey of India, he claimed that Sindhi is an Indo-European language, belonging to the northwestern outer circle of Indo-Aryan group of languages. In that survey, he also compared Sindhi language with all other languages of Indo-Aryan origin.

Conclusion

To sum up, the British colonial period in Sindh is regarded as a glorious period of Sindhi language. This is because of the development of Sindhi Typewriter. In addition to this, Sindhi Language was declared as an official Language. Moreover, Sindhi alphabet was developed on Arabic script and compilation of *Shah Jo Risalo* was done. Furthermore, the development of Sindhi Grammar, linguistic survey of India, publication of Grammatical books on Sindhi language, English Sindhi dictionaries and vast research have done on different feature of Sindhi language.

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