Language Proficiency in Second Language Learners of Urdu Speaker, reference to Persian Phonology

<blockquote>
</blockquote>

Md.Rizwan, Ph.D

Introduction:

Language functions in communication of those things which are commonly called ideas and feelings. Language can be visualised (a) as a subject and (b) as medium of instruction. The choices and arrangement of the words give language its forms. In written language pronunciation, spelling, and handwriting, contribute additional elements of forms.The ideas and feelings which language communicates may be described as its content/ components.

The rules of grammar definitely describe many items of form. For example, the selection of sounds and their arrangement into patterns constitute the phonology of the language; a verb must agree with its subjects in number and person; pronouns are reflected for person, case, gender and number; and so on. The constituents of education could be broadly categorised into language and non-language subjects.

Language as a subject and language as medium could apply to the First Language (L_1) / Mother Tongue (MT)/ Native Language (NL), Second Language (L_2) and Third Language (L_3)/ Foreign Language (LF) / Other Language (OL). The non-language subjects include science, mathematics, philosophy, civics, technology and a host of other subjects.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com
11 : 9 September 2011
Md. Rizwan, Ph.D.
Language Proficiency in Second Language Learners of Urdu Speaker, reference to Persian Phonology

<240-253>

Language proficiency has been defined in many ways from the framework like:- 'the skills and components'(Lado&Carroll, 1961&1968); 'to the context of discourse and situation' (Halliday, Hasan, Hymes,1976); and 'a communicative language ability of language proficiency' (Bachman, 1990). Language proficiency can be operationally defined in the following ways.

(i) If a test developer uses the skills and components model, the proficiency test could reflect those components, and the language proficiency tests under development would focus on skills and components.

(ii) If a test developer uses communicative language ability model, the proficiency test could reflect the components of the communicative language ability model, and the language proficiency test under development would focus on the communicative language ability components.

Objective:

The paper is going to discuss about language proficiency in Second Language learners of Urdu speaker, with reference to Persian phonology. Language proficiency is the ability of an individual to speak or perform in an acquired language. It is measured in terms of receptive and expressive language skills in the areas of phonology, syntax, vocabulary, semantics, and other areas that demonstrate language abilities. There are four domains to language proficiency: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Language proficiency is measured for an individual by each language, such that the individual may be proficient in First Language and not in Second Language. The proficiency test could reflect here the knowledge of the components attained by the learners.

Main Text:

The natural language refers to the relationship between sound and meaning. There was an instinct in the primitive human being, by which every impression from without received a vocal expression from within. Just as a particular sound is produced when any object is struck by a solid body; similarly human being mind gave a particular response to every impact the world made it. Language evolves because human needed it for the purpose to get information, to convey emotions and feelings, to maintain social contact on a friendly level.

Human beings instinctively understand the pattern of natural language, and manipulate 'structure chunks' of language , eg. they understand that group of words can be ,

Language in India www.languageinindia.com
11 : 9 September 2011
Md. Rizwan, Ph.D.
Language Proficiency in Second Language Learners of Urdu Speaker, reference to Persian Phonology

<240-253>

at times, the structural equivalent of one word. For instance, the boy who proposed me, gave me a bouquet of flowers. He gave me a really beautiful bouquet of flowers. This chunk can be rearranged according to the background rule of the language.

It is relevant here to discuss in brief about the contexts in which different kinds of language are taught as subjects and are made use of as a medium of instruction. To the extent that the First Language (L_1)/Mother Tongue/ Native Language is concerned that the individuals pickup such a language in a natural and informal situation thereby gain control of relevant and reasonable quantum of vocabulary relating to various situations in common day to day life and the sentence patterns related to these situations. Further, the ability/competency that individual gain through such informal and natural environment before entering the formal schooling system relates primarily to the spoken skills viz, understanding and speaking. In most cases, the development of written skills takes place through the formal course of instruction in early stages of schooling.

The Second Languages are important in more than one reason. It is preferred to as a medium of instruction more in comparison to the First Language (L_1), because of wider acceptability and easier mobility beyond the regions. For instance, though English is a Foreign Language, it remains a Second Language to many of Indian people for the reason that it is used intensively in the education system.

In case of my study **Persian** as a Second Language is used in the context that developed languages are richer in comparison to the underdeveloped languages i.e, Mother Tongue (**Urdu)** from the point of view of the vocabulary and the style and registers established for different discipline. The argument for argument sake can be extended from the point of view of its (MT-Urdu) origin and development from the popularity of Persian scholar Amir Khusrau, who led the foundation of Urdu[1] language in India in the medieval past.

The relevance of linguistic concepts and principles for the explanation of various facts about Second Language proficiency has been widely discussed with reference to pronunciation in Second Language learning.The paper has intended to build an understanding of several well known problems relating to phonemic contrasts in the learning of Second Language pronunciation.

---

[1] . Urdu is a Central Indo-Aryan language of the Indo-Iranian branch, belonging to the Indo-European family of languages. It developed as a register of the Hindustani language which arose in the contact situation, from the invasions of the Indian subcontinent by Persian and Turkish dynasties from the 11th century onwards.

<240-253>

The competing influences of SIMILARITY and DIFFERENCE between First Language(L_1)and Second Language(L_2) sound systems, in particular, are central to this understanding, which we believe will show that Second Language phonology is a highly abstract enterprise parallel to the phonologies of primary languages, rather than, as often has been assumed, a mere imitation of the target language's pronunciations.

We start with the assumption that, in order to learn a target language, the second language learner must acquire a lexicon (a set of phonemes, morphemes, and words) along with a way of combining the lexical items into larger utterances, and then pronouncing them.

Focusing particularly on pronunciation, we can identify at least **three** interesting learning situations which involve the Second Language (L_2) having different phonemic contrasts from the First Language:-In the **first**, the First Language has neither of the sounds which contrast in Second Language.The **second** situation is one in which the First Language contains one of the phonemes which are incontrast in the Second Language. The **third** case, where the First Language has both of the phones in question but lacks the contrast, is characterized by a phoneme of the First Language having two (or more) allophones that categorize as separate phonemes in the Second Language. In other words, both the First Language and the Second Language have the same relevant phones, but these constitute separate phonemes in the Second Language whereas they are allophones of the same phoneme in the First Language. The task of the learner here, is to split the two allophones into separate Second Language phonemes.

As per the third case, Urdu is written right to left in an extension of the Persian alphabet, which is itself an extension of the Arabic alphabet.

Only 32 phonemes are in Persian language which all are used in Urdu and their phonemic representation, with sound have given below.

They are ----

ج	ث	ت	پ	ب	ا
/dʒ/	/s/	/t̤/	/p/	/b/	/ı/,/ʊ/,/ə/,/ɑ/[2]
Jim	Se	Te	Pe	Be	Alif

---

[2] .It is not counted as phoneme and its phonemic representation, eg, /ı/,/ʊ/,/ə/,/ɑ/ depending on diacritical marks.

Note:-Phoneme/z/ (/ذ /, / ز /, / ض /, /ظ /. These are the different phonemes but homophonous sounds in Urdu and Persian. Similarly, /s/ (/ث/, /س /, /ص / are the homophonous sounds.

<240-253>

ر	ذ	د	خ	ح(بڑی)	چ
/ɾ/	/z/	/d/	/x/	/h/	/tʃ/
Re	Zal	Dal	Khe	He(bari)	Che
ض	ص	ش	س	ژ	ز
/z/	/s/	/ʃ/	/s/	/ʒ/	/z/
Zwad	Swad	Shin	Sin	Zhe	Ze
ق	ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط
/q/	/f/	/ɤ/	/ʔ/	/z/	/t/
Qaf	Fe	Ghain	Ain	Zo'e	To'e
و	ن	م	ل	گ	ک
/v/	/n/	/m/	/l/	/ɡ/	/k/
Va'o	Nun	Mim	Lam	Gaf	Kaf

ي	ہ (چھوٹی)
/j/	/h/
Ye	He (Choti)

Of these 32 phonemes the following have been taken from Arabic, therefore they are sometimes called Arabic phonemes:-

ط	ض	ص	ذ	ح(بڑی)	ث
/t/dental	/z/	/s/	/z/	/h/	/s/
To'e	Zwad	Swad	Zal	He (bari)	Se
ق	ع	ظ			
/q/	/ʔ/	/z/			
Qaf	Ain	Zo'e			

Four phonemes, namely ------

گ	ژ	چ	پ
/ɡ/	/ʒ/	/tʃ/	/p/
Gaf	Zhe	Che	Pe

are not Arabic. These are called Persian phonemes.

The remaining 19 phonemes are used in Arabic and Persian both.

Leaving aside the 9 Arabic phonemes there remain only 23 phonemes, of which the sounds of the following six are not used in Hindi :-

ق	ف	غ	ژ	ز	خ
/q/	/f/	/ɤ/	/ʒ/	/z/	/x/
Qaf	Fe	Ghain	Zhe	Ze	Ḳhe

<240-253>

The remaining 17 are comprised in Persian and Hindi and these can be called the chief phonemes of Urdu.

There are 14 such sounds in Hindi, equivalent to which there was no letter in Persian, therefore 3 simple phonemes i.e.,

ڑ	ڈ	ٹ
/ɽ/	/ɖ/	/ʈ/
Ṛe	Ḍal	Ṭe

and 11 voiceless aspirated(plosive/stop) phonemes viz,

چھ	جھ	ٹھ	تھ	پھ	بھ
/tʃʰ/	/dʒʱ/	/ʈʰ/	/t̪ʰ/	/pʰ/	/bʱ/
Chha	Jha	Ṭha	Tha	Pha	Bha

گھ	کھ	ڑھ	ڈھ	دھ
/gʱ/	/kʰ/	/ɽʱ/	/ɖʱ/	/d̪ʱ/
Gha	Kha	Ṛha	Ḍha	Dha

have been introduced[3].

Thus, there are altogether 46 phonemes in Urdu. But now-a-days the above 11 voiceless aspirated phonemes are not counted as one phoneme, and therefore not included in the present-day alphabet of Urdu. Of course

ڑ	ڈ	ٹ
/ɽ/	/ɖ/	/ʈ/
Ṛe	Ḍal	Ṭe

are included. Including these 3 and 4 more, i.e.,

ے	ء	لا	ہ
/eː/	/ʔ/	Lam-alif	/h/
Baṛi ye	Hamza		Dochashmi he[4]

which are added in the alphabet, there are 39 phonemes now-a-days in Urdu.

The sound systems of Urdu and Persian languages have been studied here. In which the phonetics part which is chiefly concerned with the physical nature of speech sounds have been discussed.

---

[3] . These are also known as *Hakkari Aawaz* or Aspirated letters (*huruf-e- makhloot*) and also used in *Devanagri*.

[4] . Note :- /لا / and /ہ / are also not considered as separate phonemes.

<240-253>

Accordingly, speech sounds are classified in two categories, eg.Vowels (*Huru'f-e-Illat* or *Huru'f-e-Masawwat*) and Consonants (*Huru'f-e-Sahih* or *Huru'f-e-Masammat*). Urdu vowels have the following sounds:-

I Non –Nasalized Vowels:

(1) Front Unrounded Vowels

Phoneme   Symbol   Sounds

(i) ای   i   (High Front Unrounded Vowel)

Initial	Medial	Final
ایجاد (*ijɑ:d* - invention)	بیمار (*bimɑ:r* – Sick)	قاضی (*qɑ:zi* – Judge)

(ii) اِ   ɪ   (Lower High Front Unrounded Vowel)

Initial	Medial	Final
انکار (*ɪnkɑ:r* - refusal)	ضد (*zɪd* - persistence)	It does not occur in final position.

(iii) اِے   e: (Mid Front Unrounded Vowel)

Initial	Medial	Final
ایک (*e:k* – one)	بیکار (*be:kɑ:r* – useless)	جھولے (*dʒʰule:* - swings)

(iv) اے æ   (Mid Low Front Unrounded Vowel)

Initial	Medial	Final
عیب (*æb* – fault)	دَیر (*dær* – temple)	مَے (*mæ* – wine)

(1) Central Unrounded Vowels:

(i)   آ   ɑ: Low Central Unrounded Vowel

Initial	Medial	Final
آب (*ɑ:b* – water)	نام (*nɑ:m* – name)	ادا (*ədɑ:* – style)

(ii)   ا   ə   (Lower- mid Central Unrounded Vowel)

Initial	Medial	Final
اسباب (*əsbɑ:b* – causes)	بَد (*bəd* – bad)	--------

<240-253>

(2) Back Rounded Vowels:

(i)   اوُ   u   (High Back Rounded Vowel)

Initial	Medial	Final
اُوپر (*upər* – above)	دُور (*dur* – far)	اردُو (*Urdu* – camp)

(ii)   اُ   U   (Lower High Back Rounded vowel)

Initial	Medial	Final
استاد (*Ustɑːd* – teacher)	چُست (*tʃUst* – smart)	---------

(iii)   او   oː   (Mid Back Rounded Vowel)

Initial	Medial	Final
اوس (*oːs* – dew)	دوست (*doːst* – friend)	دو (*doː* - two)

(iv)   اَو   ɔ   (Lower Mid Back Rounded Vowel)

Initial	Medial	Final
اوراق (*ɔrɑːq* – leaves)	دَور (*dɔr* – period)	رَو (*rɔ* – speed)

II Nasalized Vowels:

(i)   ایں   ɑ̃ː

Initial	Medial	Final
اینٹ (ɑ̃ːʈ - a brick)	سینچنا (*s ɑ̃ːtʃnɑː* – to irrigate)	نہیں (*nəh ɑ̃ː* – no)

(ii)   اِن   ɪ̃

Initial	Medial	Final
انتظام (*ɪ̃ntizɑːm* – arrangement)	پنجرہ (*p ɪ̃ndʒra* - cage)	-------

(iii)   ایں   ẽː

Initial	Medial	Final
----	سینکنا (*sẽːknɑː* - to warm) کتابیں (*k ɪtɑːbẽː* - books)	

<240-253>

(iv)   اَیں   æ̃

        Initial   Medial   Final

اینٹھنا($æ̃ tʰɑː$ – to tighten)   پینتالیس($p æ̃t ɑːlis$ – forty five)   میں ($m æ̃$ – I)

(v)   آں   ɑ̃ː

        Initial   Medial   Final

آنسوں($ɑ̃ːsõː$ - tears)   پانچ($p ɑ̃ːtʃ$ - five)   ماں($m ɑ̃ː$ - Mother)

(vi)   اَں   ə̃

        Initial   Medial   Final

انجام ($ə̃ndʒɑːm$ - result)   چند ($tʃ ə̃d$ –some)   --------

(vii)   اُوں   ũ

        Initial   Medial   Final

اُونچا ($ũːtʃɑː$ - high)   مونگ($m ũːg$ – kind of pulse)   جوں($dʒ ũː$ - ant)

(viii) اُن   Ũ

        Initial   Medial   Final

انتالیس ($Ũntɑːlis$ – thirty one)   جنبش($dʒŨmbIʃ$ - motion)   ------

(ix) اوں   õː

        Initial   Medial   Final

      ----   گوند ($gõːd$ - gum)   لڑکوں($lə̃rkõː$ - boys)

(x) اَوں   õ

        Initial   Medial   Final

اوندھا ($õ dʰɑː$ – upside down)   موند ($m õd$ – dumb)   بھوں ($b ʰõ$ – eyebrow)

Persian vowels:

     Similarly, in Persian there are three short vowels, three long vowels and two diphthongs.

The short vowels are:-

(i) ﺍ , ´ /æ/   is Low Front Vowel;

                       Example,   نہ   ($næ$ - no)

(ii) ﺍ , ِ /e/   is Mid Front Vowel; and

                       Example,   کہ   (ke - that)

<240-253>

(iii) و , ٗ , ا /o/ is Mid Back Vowel.

<div align="center">

Example,   تو (*to* - you (singular)

</div>

The Long Vowels are:-

(i) ا , آ / ɑ:/   is Low Back Vowel;

<div align="center">

Example,   تا (*tɑ:*- till)

</div>

(ii) ی /i:/   is High Front Vowel; and

<div align="center">

Example, کی (*ki:* - who)

</div>

(iii) و /u:/ is High Back Vowel.

<div align="center">

Example,   تو (*tu:* - in)

</div>

Similarly, there are three Diphthongs.

 (i)   ی /ej/

<div align="center">

Example,   کی   (*kej:* – when)

</div>

 (ii) و   /ow/

<div align="center">

Example, نو   (*now:* – new)

</div>

Urdu Consonants:

   These are the consonants of Urdu. In the following charts IPA sound symbols has been used to compare with the consonants of Persian.

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental/ Alveolar	Retroflex	Post-alv./ Palato-alv.	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Nasal	m		n	(ɳ)			ŋ		
Plosive	p b		t̪ d̪	ʈ ɖ	tʃ dʒ		k g	(q)	ʔ
	pʰ bʱ		t̪ʰ d̪ʱ	ʈʰ ɖʱ	tʃʰ dʒʱ		kʰ gʱ		
Fricative		f	s z		ʃ ʒ		(x) (ɣ)		h
Tap or Flap			ɾ	(ɽ) (ɽʱ)					
Lateral			l						
Approximant	ʋ					J w			

<240-253>

Persian Consonants:

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Nasal	m	n			[ŋ]		
Plosive	p b	t d			k ɡ	[ɢ/ q]	ʔ
Affricate			tʃ dʒ				
Fricative	f v	s z	ʃ ʒ		x ɣ		h
Tap		ɾ					
Trill		[r]					
Approximant		l		j			

It is important to mention here that the phonemes of Persian and Urdu consonants are similar, except some additional phonemes in Urdu.

بھ پھ تھ ٹ ٹھ جھ چھ دہ ڈ ڈھ ڑ ڑھ کھ گھ

/bʰ/ /pʰ/ /t̪ʰ/ /ʈ/ /ʈʰ/ /dʒʰ/ /tʃʰ/ /d̪ʰ/ /ɖ/ /d̪ʰ/ /ɽ/ /ɽʰ/ /kʰ/ /gʰ/

In linguistics (specially, phonetics and phonology), the term segments are called 'discrete', because they are separate and indivisual, as in consonants and vowels (including dipthongs), that occur in a distinct temporal order. Other units, such as tone, stress and sometimes secondary articulations such as nasalisation, may coexist with multiple segments and can not be discretely ordered with them.These elements are termed 'suprasegmental'. For instance, a syllable is a unit of organisation for a sequence of speech sounds, e.g. the word, */watan/*' 'country'is composed of two syllables:' (CV-CVC) *'wa'* and *'tan'*.

It is diagrammatically shown below.

```
                          Phoneme
            ┌────────────────┴─────────────────┐
        Segmental                    Suprasegmental  Phonemes
    ┌───────┴────────┐          ┌────────┬────────┬─────────┐
Consonants  Vowels (including dipthongs)  Stress  Pitch  Juncture  Intonation
```
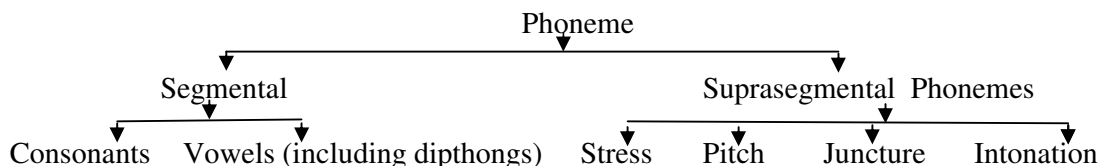
Similarly, allophone is one of a set of multiple possible spoken sounds (or *phones*) used to pronounce a single phoneme. For example, [pʰ] (as in *pin*) and [p] (as in *spin*) are allophones of the phoneme /p/ in the English language. For example /ژ/ or /z/ phoneme is

<240-253>

both in Persian and Urdu.When we pronounce ' زبان ' in Urdu and Persian, both has different allophones as *'zaban'* used in Persian and *'zuban'* or *'zaban'* used in Urdu.

In this paper, qualitative and quantitative description of Urdu and Persian of proficiency level in terms of phonetic and phonological, and syntactic level has been explained. Therefore, the above pre-assumption, we could possible to say that language proficiency in Second Language learners of Urdu speaker, to acquire proficiency in Persian phonology is not much difficult.

References:

1. Beg, MirzaKhalil Ahmad; (1985); Urdu Ki Lisani Tashkil (Linguistic formation of Urdu); Educational Book House, Aligarh.

2. Charles, Alderson J & Beretta, Alan; (1992); Evaluating Second Language Education; Cambridge University Press; New York.

3. Fatihi, A.R (2007); Colloquialism in Urdu; in South Asia Central Scene,UK.

4. Fatihi, A.R & Rasheed, Abdur;(2009); Selected Bibliography of Urdu Language and Linguistics; Aligarh Muslim University; Aligarh.

5. Harley, Bright; Patrick, Allen; Cummins, Jim & Swain, Marrill; (1990); The Development of Second Language Proficiency; Cambridge University Press; New York.

6. Hasnain, H. I ; (1991); Urdu in contact with other Indian Languages; National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language; New Delhi.

7. Kamyar, Taghi Vahidian & Emrani, Gholam Reza; Dastur-e-Zuban-e-Farsi (Persian Grammar); (1384AH); (on bahalf of) Organisation of Studies and compilation of Humanities Books of Universities; Tehran.

8. Khanlari, Zohrayi (Kiya); Farsi wa Dastur; Adara-e-Adabiyat-e-Dilli; Delhi.

9. Koul, N Omkar & Hassan, Nazir; Urdu Phonetic Reader; Central Institute of Indian Languages; Mysore.

10. Kunnan, Antony John; (1995); Test Taker Characteristics and Performance; *Studies in Language Testing Series -2*; Cambridge University Press; New York.

11. Monroe, Walter Scot; Voss, James Clarence De; Kelly, Fredrick James; (1917); Educational Test and Measurements; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston**.**

Language in India www.languageinindia.com
11 : 9 September 2011
Md. Rizwan, Ph.D.
Language Proficiency in Second Language Learners of Urdu Speaker, reference to Persian Phonology

<240-253>

12**.** Mustafa, Khateeb S; (1993); Some Aspects of Urdu Phonology in Information Technology; in *"Language Script and Speech"*; BPB Publication; New Delhi.

13. Narang, Gopi Chand; (1985); Aam Lisaniyat (General Linguistics); National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language; New Delhi.

14. Narasimharao, K.V.V.L; (2000); Explorations in Educational Evaluation; L.B Publications; Sellersburg.

15. Paper, Herbert H; (1964); A Short Sketch of Grammar of Persian; Indiana University; The Hague.

16. Sabzwari, Shaukat; (2003); Urdu Lisaniyat (Urdu Linguistics); Educational Book House; Aligarh.

17. Sims-Williams, Nicholas; (2002); Indo-Iranian Languages and Peoples (edited); Oxford University Press; Oxford.

18. Varshney, Radhey L ; (1998); An Introductory Textbook of Linguistics & Phonetics; Student Store; Bareilly.

19. Zaidi, Shamshad & Hasan, Nazir; (1997); An Introduction to Urdu Script: Reading and Writing; Central Institute of Indian Languages; Mysore.

20. Zaidi, Shamshad; (1989); Studies in Urdu Linguistics; Northern Regional Language Centre (CIIL); Patiala.

Dr.Md.Rizwan
Junior Resource Person
NTS-India(C T& E)
Central Institute of Indian Languages
Mysore (Karnataka)-570006
Email: mdrizwan01@yahoo.com

<240-253>