



RESEARCH PAPER

Phonological Variation in Verb in Pashto Spoken in District Swat

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ABSTRACT

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The present study seeks to find out the phonological variations in Pashto spoken in district Swat. The aim of the study is to investigate the phonological variation in the form of verb in two varieties of Pashto spoken in Swat, i.e, in Upper and Lower Swat regions. The study used a survey descriptive design to collect data. The data was collected about forms of the verb in Pashto which was further confirmed from the thirty participants, i.e., native speakers (fifteen from Upper Swat and fifteen from Lower Swat) through the research instrument of interview (audio recording) and analyzed for the variation in the form of verb. The findings of the study show that these phonological variations were mostly observed in the form of auxiliary verbs related to tense, aspect and tense and aspect combination.

Introduction

Pashto language is mostly used in Pakistan and Afghanistan besides in many areas in other countries (Iqbal & Rahman, 2016) having at least five major dialects in different areas in Pakistan (Rahman, Bukhari, Ali, Din, & Khan, 2020). Most of the regions where Pashto is spoken are identified on the basis of the linguistic markers along other political and social divisions. Regional identity is formed under the influence of regional characteristics of location and regional languages spoken therein (Fitjar, 2010). The issues for a particular language cross regionally have been investigated in many studies (King, 2016) identifying geographical location and linguistic variations from many perspectives (Kimper, 2011). These regional features are found in the linguistic repertoire of the communities speaking their respective varieties (Androutsopoulos & Ziegler, 2004). The varieties (dialects) are forms of a

particular language spoken by a social group in a specific region (Huang, Guo, Kasakoff, & Grieve, 2016). The perception and attitude towards these varieties are based on prestige for a dialect or the local pride for different dialects and the speakers can be easily localized to their respective cities from the traditional accent features (Strycharczuk, López-Ibáñez, Brown & Leemann, 2020) from the salient markers for social and regional identity in the varieties spoken (Chappell, 2019). This variation may cause difficulty for learners to identify the geographic origin of speaker(s) in the form of speech patterns that regionally vary (Chappell & Kanwit, 2021). The position of words and other regionally patterned variance have been investigated (Grieve, 2012) in many studies but has not been adequately compared cross linguistically (Grieve, 2013). Variability is innate in human language. In different situations, a speaker uses different linguistic forms according to context of discourse. Different speakers use different forms of words, phrases, and sentences, having the same meaning. But these variations are systematic: speakers make choices in pronunciation, words, and structure depending upon different factors for these linguistic expressions (Benjamin, Edwards, & Beckman, 2012). External factors like gender, age, style, register, ethnicity, identity, target audience and social class may cause variation in language use (Anttila, 2007). Variations in different varieties of a language are observed in phonology, being the sound system of a particular language (Cushing, 2016) describing the functions of sounds in any language (Chaer, 2012). These variations can be social, contextual and regional differences in different varieties of a language (Nordquist, 2019). Measuring phonological variation according to geography is difficult because some people are using different localized pronunciations. The studies focusing on phonological variables describe and identify the effects of lexical non-lexical (extralexical) contexts on variation (Brown, 2013) which is the outcome of dialect contacts in the form of phonological variables or specific accent realization (Taqi, 2010) taking into account the dynamic interactions of the lexicon with frequency, formal and functional effects (Walker, 2012).

Pashto is spoken in District Swat as a first language for most of the speakers here. Swat is geographically divided into Upper and Lower Swat. The varieties spoken in these two areas can be identified from variations in these two dialects. The present study tried to identify these phonological variations in the dialects spoken in Upper and Lower Swat. The purpose of the present study was to find out the use of the final ending of verb in both varieties and so to contribute to the understanding of variation in both varieties. The cross-dialectal variation (Eichmann, & Rosenstock, 2014) in the lexical items (verbs) in both varieties in different linguistic environments were investigated. These variations have never been analyzed in the previous studies. The present study tried to find out the linguistic environment for these variations. The study particularly focused on the phonological variations and their relatedness to other grammatical aspects like tense, aspect, tense and aspect combination etc. The selected two varieties were also looked for other phonological phenomena.

Literature Review

Pashto is one of the languages spoken in Swat besides other regional languages. The Yusufzai variety of Pashto is spoken in Swat (Rahman & Bukhari, 2014). Swat district is surrounded by Chitral, Upper and Lower Dir in the West, Gilgit-Baltistan in North Kohistan, Buner and Shangla in the East and South East. Swat is broadly divided into Upper and Lower Swat. There are different ethnic groups in both Upper and Lower Swat. All these ethnic groups (except the non-Pashtuns ethnic groups) are the sub-ethnic groups of Yusufzai tribe. Pashto has been investigated for many phonological, lexical, and grammatical phenomena but most of the studies are about a particular variety of Pashto while the present study is about the comparative analysis of phonological differences in verb form among the two varieties of Pashto. There are many varieties in Pashto, among these varieties, mostly phonological and lexical variations have been focused. According to Azami (2009), in Pashto, the present and past tenses are recognized from the root form of the verb, while verb has no form for future tense. The past and non-past tenses in the perfective and imperfective were recognized for Pashto tense (Rahman, Din, Iqbal & Rashid, 2017). There are six forms of verbs 'to be' in Pashto. Pashto has a gender case in the verb recognized from the bound morpheme attached to the verb (Naqibullah, 2012). Pashto verb is difficult in use than other grammatical categories carrying information about tense, aspect, mood, gender, person, and numbers etc. (Babrakzai, 1999). It also provides information about the accusative and nominative agreement, and the clitics to be placed (Rahman, 2014). Pashto having many varieties (dialects) exhibit different phonological and lexical/syntactic variation. These dialectal division is easily recognized from these variations in different regions.

Regional dialect identify in a language is marked even at the age of 4 to 5 years delaying the performance of the same till adolescence (McCullough, Clopper & Wagner, 2019). These regional features are part of the linguistic repertoire of the speech communities (Androutsopoulos & Ziegler, 2004) identified by everyone (Chappell, 2019) being listed in terms of difficulty for recognizing the regional variable patterns in speech (Chappell & Kanwit, 2021), the perception being influenced from the exposure of learners with regional dialects (Schoonmaker-Gates, 2017). Making exposure and explicit instruction significant for identification and comprehension of regional variation (Wuensch, Springs, & Bolter, 2020). The variable available in different dialects constitute isoglosses or isogloss bundle if more variables (Grieve, Speelman, & Geeraerts, 2011) indicating the boundary between two dialect regions (Huang, Guo, Kasakoff, Grieve, 2016).

The variation could be in terms of the position of words or phrases in sentences in different dialects (Grieve, 2012) and the same can be observed in different dialects of Pashto where words and phrases are positioned differently in different sentences. These regional linguistics variations have not been adequately investigated even in the most studied language like English (Grieve, 2013) with the same treatment for

phonological analyses within contact linguistics (Brown, 2015) except a few studies about lexical alternation (Huang, Guo, Kasakoff, & Grieve, 2016; Taqi, 2010) and phonological variation (Connine & Pinnow, 2006). The phonological variation is conditioned if it occurs in a specific environment, i.e., both non-grammatical factors (Coetzee, 2009) and unconditioned if occurs in all environments (O'Brien & Fagan, 2016). The variable can be because of the socioeconomic status of the speakers (Chevrot, Nardy & Barbu, 2011; Eaton, & Ratner, 2013). The models for phonological part include usage-based model (Lenz & Maselko, 2020) and optimality theory (Kemper, 2011). The phonological rules either in the form of lexical variation or stochastic variation (depending on phonological environment, occasionally seen as exclusive (Linzen, Kasyanenko & Gouskova, 2013) describing and identifying lexical or extra lexical context (Brown, 2013) displaying the influence of structural properties on the phonological system (Eisenstein, 2013) and the dynamic effects of frequency, function and form interacting with lexicon (Walker, 2012).

Material and Methods

Pashto speech community across the country (Pakistan) and even across the border use their language in almost all domains and so, the speakers of this language having vitality have cultural expectations and values of their own (Rahman, Rahman, Jan, Bukhari, Ahmad, Bibi, 2021). At least five major dialects of Pashto are spoken in different areas in Pakistan (Rahman, Bukhari, Ali, Din, & Khan, 2020). Different varieties within these dialects are recognized based on the phonological differences in them (Rahman, 2014). Following the same line, different varieties of Pashto can be identified in Swat district. The current study was an attempt to investigate these phonological variations in the two varieties of Pashto spoken in district Swat. The population for the current study were all Pashto speakers from District Swat. Swat is ethnically divided into seven regions. Apart from ethnicity, Swat is divided into two regions, i.e., Upper and Lower Swat. A non-random purposive and convenient sample of thirty participants (fifteen participants from the Upper Swat and fifteen participants from the Lower Swat) was chosen. They were all native speakers of the Pashto. The present study adopted a survey descriptive design. This design was the most suitable for the present study because it enabled the researchers to collect information from informants about the phonological variation in Pashto spoken in District Swat. This research design was also suitable for the current study because it enabled the researcher to collect the qualitative data used to identify the phonological variation. The data for phonological variation in the form of verb in the Pashto (spoken in Upper and Lower Swat) was collected through audio recording in the form of semi structured interview. The personal observation about phonological variations was confirmed in the form of field notes which were further confirmed in the interviews with the participants. Each participant was interviewed for ten minutes and the interviews were transcribed and the variations were found out in the verb form in these two varieties. The linguistic environment for this variation was analyzed.

Data Analysis

Word order in Pashto is determined by the information status of the nouns (referents) (Rahman, Hamid, Rahat, Khan, & Karam, 2021). The study found out phonological variations according to aspect and tense and aspect combination in Pashto language spoken in Upper and Lower Swat. These variations were recognized in the form of the verb in the two varieties spoken here. The data did not show any variation according to tense only. No variation was found for both present and past simple. The variation was mostly found in terms of aspect. In the imperfective aspect, there was no phonological variation in verb form in both regions. In perfective aspect, variation occurs in the form of verb. The variation is realized at the end of the verb. The following table shows the variation in present perfect aspect.

Table 1
Variation according to the perfect aspect in present

Lower Swat Variety	Upper Swat Variety
Ma kaar karay day. mɑ: kɑ:r kəɽeɪ dɛɪ 1.SG. work done has I have done the work.	Ma kaar kar day. mɑ: kɑ:r kəɽ dɛɪ 1.SG. work done has I have done the work.
Ma karuna kari di. mɑ: kɑ:runə kəɽɪ dɪ 1.PL. works done have I have done the works.	Ma karuna kar di. mɑ: kɑ:runə kəɽ dɪ 1.PL. works done have I have done the works.

The variation is found in the variety spoken in Lower Swat with the additional vowel sound at the end of the verb. The vowel /eɪ/ is attached with the verb showing agreement with singular noun (object) in present perfect tense (past tense), while the vowel /ɪ/ shows agreement with plural noun (object). The variety spoken in Upper Swat uses the verb without these vowel sounds. The verb ending are agreement markers along the auxiliaries. In the variety spoken in Upper Swat, the agreement of the verb with the presiding object is shown by the auxiliary verb only, while in the variety spoken in Lower Swat, the agreement is shown by both verb and the following auxiliaries. The above table shows variations for the masculine object. For the masculine singular object, the verb end with ' eɪ ' and for the masculine plural object, the verb ends with ' ɪ '.

Table 2
Variation in the form of verb perfect aspect in present

Lower Swat Variety	Upper Swat Variety	Variation
Karay kəɾeɪ	Kar kəɾ	eɪ
Kari kəɾɪ	Kar kəɾ	ɪ

The data showed that the variety spoken in Lower Swat uses agreement markers with both verb and auxiliary. The variety spoken in Upper Swat has only agreement markers on the auxiliary and the verb has no agreement markers. Similarly, the variation was found out in past perfect aspect in the varieties spoken in Swat. The following table shows this variation.

Table 3
Variation in perfect aspect in past

Lower Swat	Upper Swat
Mung alak ledale wo. Muŋ ələk lɪɖeɪ wo 1.PL boy see do We had seen the boy.	Mung alak ledale wo. Muŋ ələk lɪɖeɪ wo 1.PL boy see do We had seen the boy.
Mung alakan ledale wo. Muŋ ələkɑ:n lɪɖɪ wo 1.PL boys see do We had seen the boys.	Mung alakan ledale wo. Muŋ ələkɑ:n lɪɖɪ wo 1.PL boys see do We had seen the boys.
Mung jenai ledale wa. Muŋ dʒɪnəɪ lɪɖəlɪ wə 1.PL girl see do We had seen the girl.	Mung jenai ledal wa. Muŋ dʒɪnəɪ lɪɖəl wə 1.PL girl see do We had seen the girl.
Mung jenakai ledale we. Muŋ dʒɪnəkəɪ lɪɖəlɪ we 1.PL girls see do We had seen the girls.	Mung jenakai ledal we. Muŋ dʒɪnəkəɪ lɪɖəl we 1.PL girl see do We had seen the girls.

The construction of the sentence in perfect aspect of the past tense is same as in present perfect aspect but the difference lies in auxiliary verbs. The perfect aspect of past tense can be recognized through the auxiliary verb having /wə/ for singular

and /we/ for plural instead of /d̪eɪ/ and /d̪ɪ/. The form of the verb in past perfect aspect is same for masculine object (both singular and plural forms) but the form of the verb is different for feminine object in past perfect aspect. The above table shows no variation for masculine object(s) and but variation for feminine object(s) in both varieties. The following table shows the variation in both varieties for feminine object(s).

Table 4
Variation for feminine object in perfect aspect in past

Lower Swat Variety	Upper Swat Variety	Variation
Ledali	Ledal	/I/

The above table shows the variation in the form of the verb for feminine object. The vowel /eɪ/ or /ɛɪ/ are not used in the variety spoken in Upper Swat for feminine object in past perfect. This variation is based on the gender of the object in past perfect; while no such variation was observed in the variety spoken in Lower Swat. Most of these variations were observed in derivative verbs. There are many types of verbs in Pashto in terms of its morphological form classified into different classes (Khan, Khalid & Rahman, 2020). These include the simple verb, derivative verb, and doubly irregular verb (Tegey, Robson, 1996). According to Tegey, Robson (1996), derivative verbs are formed from the noun or adjective. Derivative verbs can be transitive or intransitive. The transitive and intransitive in derivative verb depend upon the situation. The intransitive deals with the state of being, while the transitive tends to be causative. The imperfective transitive derivative verb can be represented in [ked-], [kedal] and the intransitive derivative verb can be represented in [kaw-], [kawal]. The auxiliaries when attached to nouns or adjectives form verbs called the derivative verbs. While there are auxiliaries that represent the number and gender of the subject or object to agree with. These attached words with the noun or adjective are also related to the perfective, imperfective aspect and past, present tense.

Discussion

The phonological variations found out in the present study in the two varieties spoken in district Swat were either observed in terms of tense, aspects and tense and aspect combination. There was no variation in term of tense only. Similarly, the study did not find out any variation in term of imperfective aspect only. In the imperfective aspect, there was no variation in verb form (in both present and past imperfective aspect); in both the regions, the same phonological forms were used. On the contrary, variation was found out in perfective aspect. In perfective aspect, variation occur in the form of the verb. The variation appears at the end of the verb only and no variation was found out for the auxiliary (showing either the present or past tense). The agreement marker attached with the verb has variation in both present and past perfect aspect. The variety spoken in Lower Swat had the agreement markers (Rahman, Din, Iqbal & Rashid, 2017), while the variety spoken in Upper Swat had no

such markers. As a result, the agreement with the object is shown by both verb and auxiliary in variety in Lower Swat for present and past perfective aspect, while the agreement in variety in Upper Swat is shown by the auxiliary only. The agreement is shown for number and gender of the object in the past through agreement markers on the verb and auxiliaries in variety in Lower Swat (Rahman and Bukhari 2014) and only through auxiliaries in variety in Upper Swat. The difference between present and past perfect aspect in Lower Swat's variety is shown by the form of the auxiliary only and the rest of the agreement makers appear the same. On the other hand, the difference between present and past perfect aspect in Upper Swat's variety in terms of number and gender behave differently. The agreement markers on the verb in this variety for both number and gender were not found out with in the verb in present perfective but in case of past perfective, the agreement markers on the verb to show gender behaved differently. The agreement makers for feminine object were different form the agreement markers for masculine object. For masculine object in perfective aspect in the past showed agreement markers on verb unlike for the masculine object in perfective aspect in present where there were no agreement markers. For feminine object in perfective aspect in the past showed no agreement markers on verb like for the feminine object in perfective aspect in present where there were no agreement markers. The agreement markers on the verb in past perfective for masculine and feminine were different in the variety spoken in Upper Swat. There were no agreement makers on verb for feminine object, while there are agreement makers on verb for masculine object(s).

Conclusion

The present study tried to find out the phonological variations in Pashto spoken in district Swat. The study investigated the phonological variation in two varieties of Pashto spoken in Upper and Lower Swat. The unofficial division of District Swat can be geographically settled through these linguistic variations along with other variations like ethnicity among others. The previous works on Pashto have just hinted at these types of variation and had mostly focused on the description of linguistic realizations ignoring comparison among varieties. The collected data was analyzed for these variations and the research questions were answered in light of the findings of the present study. The phonological variation in the said varieties were mostly observed in the form of auxiliary verbs. The findings of the study showed that these phonological variations are related to tense, aspect, tense and aspect combination, derivative verbs and other phonological factors. The variation was mostly observed in the present perfect and past perfect tense. The variation was also observed in the derivative verbs. The study further showed how phonological variation constructed the regional identity in district Swat. With the help of the investigated phonological variations, the regional identity was observed in different regions in Swat. The present study would help the students to recognize the phonological variations, and provide a platform to work further on this topic.

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