

## **A Study of Cognate Relationship between Urdu and English and its Impact on the Learning of English as a Second Language in Pakistan**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper is a study of the cognate relationship between Urdu and English. It examines the effects of cognate relationship between Urdu and English in the learning of English as a second language. It also attempts to draw distinction between the effects of cognates and non cognates. As English language is an inseparable part of Pakistani linguistic repertoire, its learning or acquisition as a second language is a need of time. Pakistani English teachers and learners face lots of problems regarding the teaching and the learning of English which demands the exposure of new methodologies of teaching and learning of English. Qualitative approach is used to find out cognates of Urdu and English through the content analysis of some reference books. Results of the study are according to the expectations that the relationship between Urdu and English exists and this relationship affects the quality of learning of English as second language. The study also suggests future research about the effectiveness of loanwords in the learning of English. The results indicate that loanwords are easier to learn than cognate words.

**KEYWORD:** COGNATE, URDU, IMPACT, LEARNING, LANGUAGE, PAKISTAN

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Like human beings languages have relationship with one another and this relationship can be genetically, historically and politically. Cognate relationship is like blood relationship among human beings, in which languages are relatives to one another via common mother language or common root. For example, the word “seek” in English and the word “seekhna” in Urdu are cognate relatives via common root or mother language the Proto-Indo-European language that is Sanskrit.

It is admitted that Pakistan has historical and political relationship with English language since the arrival of East India Company. Furthermore, Pakistan from its creation received English as a heritage from British Empire. So, English has been the language of politics, education, business, administration, judiciary, army and the elite class of Pakistan for decades. It is, now, a compulsory subject in all the educational institutions of Pakistan even in madaaras. Trainers, teachers and stakeholders are striving to make easy learning of English through different methodologies. Internationally, experts have conducted researches regarding cognate relationship between languages. The researches like French-English cognate relationship (Devonish, 2001, and Midgley, et al, 2011), Spanish-English cognate relationship (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005, Beltran, 2006, Colorado, 2007, Kohnert, 2004, Lubliner&Hiebert 2011, Nagy, et al 1993), German-English cognate relationship (Agarwal, & Adams, 2007, University of South Florida, 1995) Turkish-English cognate relationship (Uzun, &Saldhoglu, 2009) and Arabic-Hebrew cognate relationship (Ibrahim, 2006) provide evidences that this relationship have positive effects in second language learning.

So, this study is also a step toward finding the cognate relationship between Urdu and English which have interactive to each other for decades. Firstly, it has to be searched whether this relationship exists between Urdu and English. If it exists, what are the effects of this relationship in learning of English as a second language in Pakistan and to what extent the cognate relationship is different from non-cognate relationship.

Most societies in the world are either bilingual or multilingual who learn or acquire second language apart from mother tongue. For languages represent cultures, bilingualism abets in emerging a multicultural society and globalization. It also accelerates learning in general education. It is also opposed by those who prefer monolingualism “In the United States, monolingualism traditionally has been the norm. Bilingualism was regarded as a social stigma and liability” (Grosjean, 1982 & McLaughlin, 1984 cited in Clark, 2000, p. 183). However,

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Pakistan is a multilingual society with inheritance of 69 local languages (Rahman, 2006) apart from English language which is still called a “foreign language” but it has dominated politically over all other local languages. Although English has been adopted as a compromised candidate (Khalique, 2007) since the creation of Pakistan with the longing that it would be replaced by Urdu when time would come but this “time” is still being awaited for and English is still in currency with its main and might.

Although English has been taught and studied since the creation of Pakistan and it has been an official language of this country (Mansoor, 2009 & Rahman, 2010) yet the pedagogical skills of English teachers and the four language skills of English learners are not satisfactory. Prescriptive grammar is in use instead of descriptive grammar but the competence in language skills is still far from the desired targets. The rules are crammed and structures are parroted for the sake of getting good marks in exams. Listening and speaking are the foremost components of language but they are ignored while listening and speaking are (Spooner & Woodcock, 2010) fundamentals to success in reading and writing because (Winsor, 2009) reading and writing is complex process which is based on listening and speaking skills.

In this study, the researcher is also concerned with the relationship between different languages especially with the cognate relationship between Urdu and English. So, this study has focused on the cognate relationship exists between Urdu and English language.

#### Review of Literature

Second language acquisition refers to the language that is acquired in addition to an individual’s mother tongue. It relates with two disciplines applied linguistics and cognitive psychology. Second language acquisition is considered (Schütz, 2011) the process of natural assimilation, involving intuition and subconscious learning by the interaction with people and environment in natural context. Actually, SLL is an action of non-native speaker where he does not learn a language as a primary language. It is a (Gass, 2009) learning of a language beyond the native language (Klein, 2003) in many ways, at any age, for many purpose and at different levels (Ellis, 2008) inside or outside classroom.

In the beginning of the development of SLL in the nineteenth century, the emphasis was on the main features of the traditional methods of language learning where language was taught and learnt by reading and writing skills. The banishment of the first language from classroom is also supported theoretically in our country. However, practically (Halai, 2007) the first language is used, in spite of theoretical antagonism against the first language. Actually, this antipathy based upon the two arguments (Cook, 2011) that children do not have the second language available when they are learning their mother tongue and that both the first and second languages should be separate in the learners minds rather than linking them. This point of view is not supported by some researchers. For example, Brisbois (1995) says that linkage between the first and the second language is helpful in learning the second language. Cook (2010) puts that the first language is necessarily which remains in the minds of learner and it is accepted that the first language should forcibly be prevented in classroom but he says:

The avoidance of explicit grammar is also a main feature of SLL. The revolution that grammar should be taught implicitly provides conditions for learner in which they are encouraged to learn grammar naturally and unconsciously. In this case, linguists debate this notion as Andrews (2007) indicates that the explicit demonstration is better than the implicit and (Ellis, 2006) the explicit grammar helps in understanding the implicit grammar. So, the both methods should be used because they are effective for simple and complex rules. Ellis, (2006) supports this idea as under:

Teaching explicit knowledge can be incorporated into both a focus-on-forms and a focus-on-form approach. In the case of a focus-on-forms approach, a differentiated approach involving sometimes deductive and sometimes inductive instruction may work best (p.102).

But, whenever a language is mentioned whether it is L1 or L2, it is learnt through lexis or vocabulary. No doubt, (Laufer, 2003) other factors like predicting the context of a language or text, guessing the unknown words in context, making inferences, recognizing the type of text and text structure, and grasping the main idea of a paragraph play an important role to comprehend a language. It is believed that language learning is based upon lexis and vocabulary learning. However, the lexical approach is different from the vocabulary learning approach; in which individual words are considered with fixed meaning while in lexical approach (Moudraia, 2001) the emphasis is on mental lexicon instead of single words. Here, language is considered as meaningful chunks and (Wu, 1996) collocations, when they are combined, they produce continuous coherent text. Thus, the grammar based approaches are replaced by lexical approaches. Zimmerman (2003) indicates the historical developments of vocabulary learning in SLL from the Grammar Translation Method to the Direct Method, from the Reading Method or the Situational Language Teaching to the Audio Lingual Method and from the Communicative Language Teaching to the Natural Approach leading to Lexical Pedagogy. And now lexical learning (Curado Fuentes, 2007, Huang, 2007 & Niyogi, 2005) has been incorporated into a computational programs which not only have the evidence (Curado, 2007) of

improving lexical knowledge but also make learners active participants of a lexical learning program. There are some problems regarding lexical learning.

Like human beings languages also have families and relatives. They live and die. They give birth to their children and have forefathers and ancestors. There are some famous relationships like Semitic and Indo-European. The relationship between the words of languages in meaning and form is cognate relationship. For example the word "cow" in English "gai" in Urdu are cognate to each other because they are derived from Sanskrit (Pickett, 2008) word "gwou".

According to Richards and Schmidt (2010):

A word in one language is similar in form and meaning to a word in another language because both languages are related. For example English brother and German Bruder (p.90).

However, there is also relationship which is not like sharing blood but it is like adopted relatives which have not same ancestors and motherhood but they are adopted as relatives. This kind of relationship between languages is borrowing. The borrowed words from other languages are used like as their own words. Richard and Schmidt (2010) observe in this way:

Sometimes words in two languages are similar in form and meaning but are borrowings and not cognate forms. For example, *kampuni* in the African language Swahili is a borrowing from English *company* (p. 90).

Pakistan is linguistically a multi ethnic country (Rahman, 2010) with 69 languages of which Pashto, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Balochi, Punjabi, Hindco and Siraiki are main languages. Punjabi speakers are (Sudhir k. Singh, 2001) 54.4%, Pashto 20%, Sindhi 14%, Sarieki 7.9%, Urdu 9.7%, Baluchi 3.8%, Hindco 3.1%, Brahi 1.5% and others 3.6%. Urdu and English are official languages.

The notion stated above is supported by Rahman (2006) that Urdu was not the mother tongue of the majority but it dominated over all other languages of Pakistan due to its legal protection as a national language by the constitution of 1973. However, now, it is used across the county with numerous political issues. English was the colonial heritage in the all government systems of Pakistan. But struggles to oust English started in the early days after the creation of Pakistan. So, (Mansoor, 1993) the promotion of Urdu was the foremost preference of all the governments to get national unity through syllabus and curriculum and through Urdu as a medium of instruction. In the National Education Policy of 1978-79, the policy about promotion of Urdu was once in bloom and all the private English medium schools were forced to adopt Urdu as a medium of instruction. In spite of all these endeavors English was not replaced by Urdu because of its poverty to fulfill the national needs. In 1986, English was allowed as a medium of instruction for science and mathematics. However, Urdu is still wrestling with English for prestige and supremacy with its dominance over all other local and regional languages of Pakistan. As part of some heritage from the British Empire, English has been dominating a high status in all domains of power in Pakistani society since the establishment of Pakistan in 1947. It is being used in (Mansoor, 2005) civil administration, bureaucracy, country's legal system, courts, defense forces, media and education. As stated above, the struggle to replace English with Urdu have been performed by all the governments of Pakistan but English could not only maintain its status in all fields of Pakistan but it also superseded its antagonists in every crack and cranny of society.

As cited in the literature above this relationship between Urdu and English started to develop when British arrived here as a trader or ruler. Khalique (2007) notes a very interesting discussion regarding language policy in Pakistan. He quotes the statement of Muhammad Ali Jinnah about Urdu "state language of Pakistan" that does not mean national language. If Jinnah would have made the other languages of Pakistan as national language and Urdu as a state language, the issue would have been solved over there. However, Urdu became clearly the national language and English as an official language sometimes "stated in clear terms and sometimes only practiced not stated (p.101)". It seems that English was promoted as a compromised candidate:

It remains a compromise candidate, as it were, for the multilingual intelligentsia in India and is promoted as such in today's Pakistan. However, we shall see how true it is in the latter's case (Khalique, 2007, p. 101).

Ross (2010) asserts the relationship (see Figure 1) between languages on the systematic theory when Sir William Jones, "Oriental Jones," in 1786 presented that Latin, Greek, classical languages of Europe, Sanskrit and classical languages of India had descended from the common source. He observes that this relationship had already been presented by in 1768 by Gaston Cœurdoux. Sanskrit grammar has lot of similarities with Greek and Latin while the Semitic languages like Arabica, Hebrew and Turkish have interposed between Europe and India.

Thus, "father" in English compares to "Vater" in German, "pater" in Latin, "patêr" in Greek, "pitr." in Sanskrit, "pedar" in Persian, etc. On the other hand, "father" in Arabic is "ab," which hardly seems like any of the others.

## METHODOLOGY

The researchers have done the content analysis for the current study to know the impact of cognates and their impact on learning. From ten famous dictionaries or reference books four dictionaries the American Heritage

Dictionary of the English Language, 4th edition, Oxford English Dictionary Mayrryam Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged Merriam-Webster and Ferozlughat Urdu Dictionary were selected to find out the cognates of Urdu and English. These reference books of English and Urdu were studied by the researcher under the qualitative approach.

The researchers had to rely upon the content analysis of some etymological references books like the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th edition, Oxford English Dictionary Mayrryam Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged. Merriam-Webster and Ferozlughat Urdu Dictionary.

Content analysis refers to (Kothari, 2004) the analysis of the content documentary materials; magazines, dictionaries, books and newspapers. It also includes the analysis of verbal or written and printer materials. To find out the cognates, content analysis was performed on the basis of contents of these books. The reference books were used as secondary sources of information. Because the primary sources are difficult to find, so the dependence upon secondary sources is frequent in this kind of approach. This scenario makes qualitative research under attack. There is external and internal criticism about this approach to determine whether the document is authentic, accurate or original, is characterized as external criticism. Apart from external criticism whether document is original, accurate or related to the actual writer or editor is not the concern of researcher.

### ANALYSIS

It has been discussed in the methodological section that this research is based upon post positivism/naturalistic/interpretive/hermeneutic (Cohen, et al, 2007 and Guba&Yvonna, 1998) due to the nature of inquiry which includes two types of research questions. The research question posed in this research is related the post positivism paradigm in which qualitative approach is used to collect the data:

- Does cognate relationship exist between Urdu and English?

In this question the assumption is made whether there is cognate relationship between Urdu and English languages. The collected cognates are as under:

#### 4.1.1. Words from Indo-European roots via Sanskrit

بنگلہ	Bunglow .1	
کاکٹ	Cot .2	
گرو		Guru .3
چمخانہ	Gymkhana .4	
جنگل	Jungle .5	
لوٹ	Loot .6	
پائیجامہ	Pyjama .7	
سنتری	Centry .8	
شیمپو	Shampoo .9	
ابالنا	Boil .10	
پابند	Bound .11	
ادھر	There .12	
ادھر	Hither .13	
یہاں	Here .14	
نام	Name .15	
افسانہ	Fiction .16	
آن	Un .17	
کاکٹ	Cut .18	
کوٹ	Coat .19	
گائے	Cow .20	
گروہ	Group .21	
لو	Love .22	
نہا نہ	No .23	
دن	Day .24	
ڈبل	Dual .25	
ڈاٹ	Dot .26	
رو	Row .27	
ستارہ	Star .28	
سیل	Cell .29	

Safe سیف .30  
Valley وادی .31

#### 4.1.2. Words from Semitic roots via Arabic

سُكَّر، شکر Sugar .32  
ساش Sash .33  
عَفْریت Afreet .34  
مونسون Monsoon .35  
ایڈمرل Admiral .36  
الکوحل Alcohol .37  
عنبر Amber .38  
خلیفہ Caliph .39  
سیفر Cipher .40  
قہوہ Cofee .41  
جن Genie .42  
جن Jinn .43  
میگزین Magzine .44  
میٹ Matress .45  
مینارہ Minaret .46  
مسجد Mosque .47  
ریکٹ Racket or Racquet .48  
سفری سفاری، iSafar .49  
سائن Satin .50  
سکارلٹ Scarlet .51  
صوفہ Sofa .52  
ٹیرف Tarrif .53  
زیرو Zero .54  
مساج Massage .55  
کمپ Camp .56  
سوڈا Soda .57  
جار، مرتبان Jar .58  
حشیش Hashis .59  
کاک Cork .60  
الجبرا Algebra .61  
حوّا Eve .62  
فوقیت Focus .63  
عدن Eden .64

#### 4.1.3. Words from Semitic roots via Persian

دروازہ، در Door .65  
آرڈر Order .66  
برادر Brother .67  
کمربند Cmmerbund .68  
اندر Ether .69  
اوپر Over .70  
بد Bad .71  
بم Bomb .72  
بھورا Brown .73  
پاؤں Paw .74  
تمباکو Tobacco .75  
جھٹکا Jolt .76  
چم، چومنا Chum .77  
بلبل Bulbul .78  
کیلنڈر Calendar .79  
کافتان Caftan .80  
کینڈی Candy .81

کارواں	Carava .82	
شکیش shCa	.83	
چیک		Check or Cheque .84
دیوان	Dewan .85	
مادر، مادرزاد	Mother .86	
جاسمین	Jasmine .87	
کوٹہ	Quota .88	
لاکھ	Lac .89	
لیموں	Lemon .90	
میجک	Magic .91	
ممی	Mummy .92	
نہیں	Nay .93	
اورنج	Orange .94	
پیرا	Para .95	
پارسی	Parsee .96	
پری	Fair or Peri .97	
پستہ	Pistachio .98	
رینک	Rank .99	
سینٹل	Sandal .100	
شرم	hame .101	
شال	Shawl .102	
تار		tar.103
ٹائیگر	tiger.104	
طوفان	Typhoon .105	
آریہ	ryaA .106	
بازار	Bazar .107	

#### 4.1.4. Words from Indo-European roots via French

آرٹ	Art .108
آملیٹ	Omelet or Omlette .109
تبور	Tabor .110

As it can be seen in the data cited above data that the researcher found thirty one(31) cognate words from Indo-European roots via Sanskrit .Thirty three(33) cognates from non-Indo-European languages e.g. Semitic languages like Arabic, forty three 43 cognate words from Indo-European languages via Iranian Persian and only three cognates from Indo-European languages via French. Actually, (Deutscher, 2005) Sanskrit and Iranian Persian correlate via Indo-Iranian languages and then to English via Proto-Indo-European language.

## DISCUSSIONS

All the findings regarding the research questions or hypotheses were according to the expectations. The researcher could found only 110 cognates between Urdu and English languages probing the question which was under the post positivistic or interpretive paradigm. It was possible through extensive content analysis of different etymological dictionaries. Although content analysis includes three kind of content analysis; conventional, directed, and summative yet the researcher used only summative content analysis that involves “counting and comparisons, usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1277). However, it is (Government Accountability Office U.S. (GAO), 1996) an authentic research method to analyze the textual information to infer real meaning. The results did not show only the significant effects of cognate relationship between Urdu and English languages in second language learning but they also indicated the difference in the learning frequencies of cognate and non-cognate words. This kind of positive relationship was also presented by (Ibrahim, 2006) and Nagy, et al (1993). So, the effectiveness of cognate relationship proved in the shape of difference in the learning frequencies between the cognate and non-cognate words.

The new explorations have been discovered by the content analysis of the tests used in data collection of this study. Actually, in the translation equivalents there have been also used some English loanwords with cognates. For Example, “They live in a jungle, so, they are in danger” and “I read fiction but he reads poetry”. In these

sentences two words are cognates “jungle” and “fiction”, and two words “danger” and “poetry” are borrowed words from English that are used frequently in Urdu as loanwords or borrowed words. The usage of borrowed words was accidentally and unconsciously by the researcher. After the extensive analysis of the content of the tests the researcher found something unexpected which was not plan of the study.

Furthermore, along with the unexpected results from the loanwords relationship, the evidence of more effectiveness than the cognate relationship is also recorded by Anthony (2006) who argues comparing the cognates with loanwords that loanwords are more useful than cognates because pedagogically loanwords are currently in use and are new ones which have not been changed lexically till now while the cognates are older than them and have crossed a process of changes lexically. Thus, usefulness of cognates depends upon the recognizability which depends upon the length of the time in which they have faced the changes.

The Effects of cognate relationship.. From the results cited above, now, it is dead sure that cognate relationship between Urdu and English exists historically and genetically. But the question is how it is useful in second language learning. What kind of benefits can be achieved from this relationship to the Urdu speakers in learning of English as second language? The other studies on cognate relationships provide evidence of its usefulness. Caplan-Carbin (1994) explores the benefits of cognate relationship between English and German. He argues that this relationship is useful in “increasing ‘guess-power’ in vocabulary”, in sound shifts of German language and its historical considerations can be beneficial in “basic code-breaking tool for deciphering New High German vocabulary by English speaking students”. Colorado (2007) understands that this relationship is in primary language is a tool for understanding a second language. Ibrahim (2006) assumes that it strengthens “the lexical associations between translation equivalents” of Hebrew and Arabic. Surly the cognate relationship is useful in any language in vocabulary building, lexical association, sheltering and in other vocabulary tasks. Thus, cognates are considered (August & Carlo, 2005) very important in activation of vocabulary of person. Anthony (2006) sees the usefulness of cognates in two ways; linguistically and pedagogically. He says that the definition of cognates in view of relationship, where relationship is traced in the remote past and that cognates play an important role in the reconstruction of the languages which is not present in written records, is linguistically important. But for the pedagogical linguist who is concerned with their teaching in second language, this view of definition is insufficient, he would not heed on the historical background but he would think about the status of cognates in use. If they are synonymous morphologically and in syntax with the words of other language then they are useful.

### **Recommendations**

1. Since the cognate relationship between Urdu and English and their effectiveness have been proved by finding 110 cognates, some new more cognates can be explored, it would be new idea to approach English in perspective of cognate relationship. Because speakers of English language in Pakistan are unaware of this relationship, so, opening a new a chapter in the field of English language/literature and teaching of English will motivate speakers, teachers as well as learners of English. This new chapter should be approached in two ways:
2. It should be approached pure linguistically in finding the relationship between Urdu and English in their remote historical and genetic relationship that has played an important role in reconstruction of languages in the blind and dark pages of history.
3. The second approach is pedagogical in which the methodologies of teaching cognates should be discussed. How can they be useful in learning/acquisition of second languages in vocabulary building and comprehension reading etc? The linguists, trainers, stake holders, language teachers should start debates related to this topic.
4. Regarding cognate relationship between Urdu and English there should be special introductory courses at every level of study of English whether it is related to the teaching of English pedagogy or regarding the history and literature of English and Urdu. Now, English is the destiny of Pakistan. Pakistani society cannot get rid of this language. Now, English is one of Pakistani languages and there is also existence of Pakistani English like Singaporean or Indian English. Thus, cognate relationship between English and Urdu should be one of the main subjects of English studies.
5. Although some of famous writers like Rahman (2006) and Mansoor (2009) have done a lot of work on historical, political and social background of languages of Pakistan including English yet, little struggle has been made on genetic relationship between Urdu and English. May be, this study would be one the pioneer studies about cognate relationship between Urdu and English. So, there is need of more research on linguistic background of cognate relationship.
6. Pedagogical endeavors about teaching of English have dominated the educational world. Thousands of books and articles have been written in this field. Most of the educational institutions offer courses regarding English language teaching methodology. Besides this, methodology of cognate teaching has been introduced in many languages by different educationists. So, the teaching of cognates between Urdu and English should be given

attention pedagogically. The cognates should be taught from lower classes to upper classes. This adventure will not only accelerate learning of English language but it will also create a sense of ownership in the mind of learners of English who are scared from English as a foreign language.

7. The evidences have provided the usefulness of loanwords in Urdu language. English as an international language is the greatest host of borrowing and loanwords and still this process has not been stopped but it is continuing. This process makes language comprehensive, rich and universal. So, when new cognates cannot be created, they have been created and will be created but through the interaction of hundreds of years while loanwords, on the contrary, can be inserted through cultural borrowing and core borrowing.

8. With the benefits of making language rich and universal, the loanwords can be an effective tool in second language learning. It is clear that loanwords are easier to learn than cognates because they have been currently inserted and are still in currency, so, they are more new than cognates while cognates have been changed lexically through ages. Thus by the insertion of new English words, teaching and learning of English will be more easy as a second language. This process will help in shaping Urdu as a rich language as well as an international language. Urdu will be able to reach the status of richness which has been awaited since the creation of Pakistan and English will become the second language of Pakistan in real sense.

9. For enterprise of increment of loanwords stake holders, teachers, writers, trainers and electronic media should play an effective role. But before starting this enterprise all these promoters should be briefed regarding be usefulness of loanwords so that they perform this job ardently.

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