Urdu

An Essential Grammar

Ruth Laila Schmidt

ESSENTIAL GRAMMARS

URDU: AN ESSENTIAL GRAMMAR

Urdu: An Essential Grammar is a reference guide to the grammatical structures of modern Urdu.

The complexities of Urdu are set out in short, readable sections, which are conveniently grouped under major topical headings. Explanations contain minimal jargon and emphasis has been placed on the aspects of Urdu that pose a particular challenge for English-speaking students.

Features include:

- language examples throughout in both Urdu script and romanization
- user-friendly layout
- network of cross-references between sections
- detailed contents list
- comprehensive index.

Urdu: An Essential Grammar presents a fresh and accessible description of the language. It will prove invaluable to students at all levels in schools, colleges, universities and adult classes. Its clear explanations make it ideal for independent learners too.

Ruth Laila Schmidt lectures in the Department of East European and Oriental Studies at the University of Oslo, Norway.

URDU: AN ESSENTIAL GRAMMAR

Ruth Laila Schmidt

London and New York

First published 1999 by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2009.

To purchase your own copy of this or any of
Taylor & Francis or Routledge's collection of thousands of eBooks
please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk.

© 1999 Ruth Laila Schmidt

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book has been requested

ISBN 0-203-97928-1 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-415-16380-3 (hbk)
ISBN 0-415-16381-1 (pbk)

This book is dedicated to
Bruce R. Pray
in recognition of his four decades of service
to the Urdu language, and his contribution
to the study of Urdu
through the establishment of the
Berkeley Urdu Language Program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of tables xx

Preface by Gopi Chand Narang xxi

Introduction xxiii

Symbols and abbreviations used in the text xxvi

1 NOUNS **1**

Gender and marking 1

Gender;

marking;

marked nouns;

unmarked nouns;

natural gender;

some other clues to gender of nouns

Noun plurals 5

Forms (nominative case);

non-count (mass) nouns

Inflection of nouns 8

Nominative case;

oblique case;

oblique nouns resulting from dropping of **kō;**

expressing totality;

vocative case of nouns

Repetition of nouns 14

Simple repetition;

repetition with an echo word

Nouns as units of measure 15

Other parts of speech used as nouns 16

2 PRONOUNS **17**

Demonstrative pronouns 17

ye, ‘this’ and **vo,** ‘that’

Personal pronouns 19

Forms;

honorific levels in second person pronouns;

ham used as a first person singular pronoun;

omission of personal pronouns;

lōg as a plural specifier;

nominative pronouns;

oblique (inflected) pronouns;

the suffix **ē~(h)ẽ̇** replacing **kō;**

pronouns before the postposition **nē;**

possessive forms of personal pronouns

Reflexive pronouns 27

The reflexive possessive adjective **apnā;**

xud and **āp,** 'self';

apnē āp, xud baxud,

āpas mẽ̇,'among'

Interrogative pronouns 29

kyā, 'what?';

kyā marking questions and exclamations;

kaun, 'who?';

oblique forms of **kyā** and **kaun**

Indefinite pronouns 32

kōī, 'some(one)', 'any(one)';

kuch, 'some(thing)', 'any(thing)'

Relative pronoun 34

jō

Repeated pronouns 34

kyā kyā;

kaun kaun;

kōī kōī, kōī na kōī;

kuch kuch, kuch na kuch

3 ADJECTIVES **36**

Marking 36

Marked adjectives;

unmarked adjectives

Agreement 38

Agreement in gender and number;

agreement in case;

agreement with noun sequences of different gender;

attributive and predicate adjectives

Pronouns used as adjectives 43

Interrogative pronouns;

indefinite pronouns

Symmetrical y-v-k-j word sets 43

The categories NEAR—FAR—INTERROGATIVE—RELATIVE

Adjective phrases formed with sā and vālā 46

The adjectival particle **sā (~sē~sī);**

the suffix **vālā**

Repeated adjectives 50

Simple repetition;

repetition with an echo word

Comparison of adjectives 51

Comparison of adjectives with **sē;**

comparison of adjectives with **tar, tarīn;**

zyāda, ‘more’, ‘most’ and **kāfī,** ‘quite’, ‘too’;

superlatives with adjective+**sē**+adjective

Adjectives with other grammatical functions 54

Adjectives used as adverbs;

adjectives used as nouns

Adjectives discussed in other chapters 55

Participles used as adjectives;

possessive adjectives;

the reflexive possessive adjective **apnā;**

numbers

4 ADVERBS **57**

Symmetrical y-v-k-j adverb sets 57

The categories NEAR—FAR—INTERROGATIVE—RELATIVE

Adverbs of time 57

ab-ab-kab-jab;

is vaqt-us vaqt-kis vaqt;

calendar and clock time

Adverbs of place 61

yahāṁ-vahāṁ-kahāṁ;

idhar-udhar-kidhar;

is jagah-us jagah-kis jagah;

is taraf-us taraf-kis taraf;

obliques as adverbs of place;

adverbial phrase or compound postposition?

Adverbs of manner 65

yūṁ-kyōṁ-jūṁ;

aisā-vaisā-kaisā-jaisā;

is tarah-us tarah-kis tarah-jis tarah;

adverbial phrases of manner with the postposition **sē;**

participles used adverbially

Adverbs of degree 67

Modal adverbs 68

The negative words **nahīṁ, na, mat;**

bhī, ‘also’, ‘too’;

‘both…and’, ‘neither…nor’;

phir, ‘again’, ‘then’

Arabic adverbs ending in -an 72

Repeated adverbs 72

Simple repetition;

idiomatic repetition

Interrogatives and indefinites used with irony 73

Interrogative adverbs used with irony;

indefinite adverbs used with irony;

interrogative pronouns used with irony

5 POSTPOSITIONS **76**

Grammatical postpositions 76

kā~kē~kī expressing possession;

kā marking objects;

inflected **kā** in compound postpositions;

kō and its alternate forms;

kō marking objects;

kō marking subjects;

kō showing movement in a direction or to a destination;

kō after days and dates;

kō following infinitives;

nē marking subjects

Spatial-temporal postpositions 81

sē with ablative function;

sē marking the instrument;

sē in comparison of adjectives;

sē in adverbial phrases;

sē marking objects;

sē forming postpositional sequences;

tak showing extent or limit;

tak as an emphatic particle;

mēṁ with locative function;

infinitives followed by **mēṁ**;

par with locative function;

par showing movement to a destination;

par following oblique infinitives;

oblique infinitive+**par bhī;**

par marking objects;

collocations of verbs with postpositions

Compound postpositions 90

kā+oblique noun+postposition;

kā+oblique noun;

kā+oblique adjective;
kā+adverb;
(kā)+Persian preposition+oblique noun;
noun+**izāfat**
Postpositional sequences 94
Spatial-temporal postpositions+**sē**
Expressing possession ('to have') 95
Inalienable possession: **kā (~kē~kī);**
alienable possession: **kē pās;**
intangible possession: **kō**
6 VERBS **97**
Forms of the verb 97
Root;
infinitive;
imperfective participle;
perfective participle
The verb hōnā, 'to be' 102
The conjugation of **hōnā;**
hōnā as an auxiliary verb
Denominative verbs 106
Verb forms based on the verb root 107
Subjunctive;
conditional sentences;
request forms;
future tense;
conjunctive participles;
repeated roots in conjunctive participles;
continuous tenses;
continuous present;
continuous past;
other continuous tenses;
root+**saknā** (ability, possibility);
root+**pānā** (possibility);

root+**cuknā** (completion);
compound verbs
Verb forms based on the imperfective participle 131
Imperfective participles alone;
habitual present;
habitual past;
other habitual tenses;
imperfective participle+**rahnā** (iterative);
imperfective participle+**jānā** (progression);
imperfective participle used as an adjective
Verb forms based on the perfective participle 137
Agreement in perfective tenses;
simple past;
immediate past;
remote past;
other punctual tenses;
derived passive;
incapacity;
perfective participle+**karnā** (habit or practice);
perfective participle+**rahnā** (continuation);
perfective participle used as an adjective
Infinitives 147
Infinitives as verbal nouns;
infinitives as request forms
Constructions with nominative case infinitives 149
Impersonal constructions;
infinitive+**hai** (necessity);
infinitive+**cāhiē** (advisability);
infinitive+**paṛnā** (obligation, lack of choice)
Constructions with oblique case infinitives 154
Oblique infinitive+**vālā;**
oblique infinitive+**kō;**
oblique infinitive+**lagnā** (commenced event);

oblique infinitive+**dēnā** ('let');
oblique infinitive+verb of motion (purpose);
oblique infinitive+**kā** (negative assertion)

7 COMPOUND VERBS **159**

Compound verbs and simple verbs 159
The structure of compound verb phrases;
the difference between compound and simple verbs

Intransitive vector verbs 162
The vector verb **jānā;**
the vector verb **paṛnā;**
the vector verb **nikalnā;**
the vector verb **uṭhnā;**
the vector verb **baiṭhnā**

Transitive vector verbs 165
The vector verb **dēnā;**
the vector verb **lēnā;**
the vector verb **ḍālnā;**
the vector verb **rakhnā**

Mixed transitivity in compound verbs 167
Transitive main verbs with intransitive vectors;
intransitive main verbs with transitive vectors

Restrictions on occurrence of compound verbs 169
Constructions based on the verb root or infinitive;
participial constructions;
passive constructions;
negative sentences

Perfective participles as main verbs 171
Nominative perfective participles;
oblique perfective participles

Denominative verbs in compound verb sequences 173

8 INTRANSITIVE, TRANSITIVE AND CAUSATIVE VERBS **174**

Intransitive and transitive verbs 174

The difference between transitive and intransitive verbs;

agreement of verbs;

the increment **-ā;**

transitives derived with the increment **-ā;**

double transitives derived with the increment **-ā;**

transitivity with compound verbs;

transitivity with denominative verbs;

verbs which function both intransitively and transitively;

exceptions: transitives without **nē,** intransitives with **nē**

Causative verbs 186

Direct causatives derived with the increment **-ā;**

indirect causatives formed with the increment **-vā;**

causative denominative verbs;

causative verbs in requests

9 PARTICIPLES AS QUALIFIERS **195**

Imperfective participles 195

Adjectival use of imperfective participles;

adverbial use of imperfective participles;

imperfective participle+**vaqt,** 'while (VERB)-ing';

imperfective participle+**hī,** 'as soon as (VERB)';

repeated imperfective participles;

imperfective participles used as nouns

Perfective participles **200**

Adjectival use of perfective participles;

adverbial use of perfective participles;

adverbial perfective participles in expressions of time;

repeated perfective participles;

perfective participles used as nouns;

perfective participles in compound verbs

Conjunctive participles **205**

Conjunctive participles used adverbially;

repeated roots in conjunctive participles

10 WORD ORDER AND AGREEMENT IN SENTENCES **207**

Word order 207

Word order in sentences;
objects;
noun phrases;
adverbs;
negative sentences;
interrogative sentences

Agreement 212

Subject-verb agreement;
verb phrases;
agreement with mixed subjects;
agreement with transitive verbs;
agreement with impersonal verbs;
mixed transitivity;
adjective-noun agreement

11 RELATIVE-CORRELATIVE SENTENCES **217**

The structure of relative sentences 217

Relative words and their counterparts;
deep structure of relative-correlative sentences;
order of clauses in relative-correlative sentences;
stipulative relative clauses;
correlatives specified by **hī**

The relative pronoun jō 220

Nominative form of **jō;**
oblique and plural forms of **jō**

Relative adjectives 222

jaisā; jitnā

Relative adverbs of place 224

jahāṁ, jis jagah;
jidhar, jis taraf

Relative adverbs of time 225

jab;

jab tak+negative, ‘until, ‘unless’;

jab ke, ‘while’;

jis vaqt

Relative adverbs of manner 227

jaisē;

jaisē hī;

jis tarah;

jūṁ

Indefinite compounds and repeated relatives 229

Relative words followed by indefinite words, ‘-ever’;

relative words followed by **bhī,** ‘-ever’;

repeated relative words

12 PARTICLES, INTERJECTIONS AND CONJUNCTIONS **232**

Particles 232

The contrastive emphatic particle **tō;**

tō introducing result clauses in conditional sentences;

nahīṁ tō;

tō introducing correlative clauses;

the exclusive emphatic particle **hī;**

sequences of nouns and pronouns+postpositions+**hī;**

hī occurring as a suffix;

kahīṁ expressing improbability or apprehension;

oblique imperfective participle+**hī,** ‘as soon as’;

bhī as inclusive emphatic particle, ‘even’;

emphatic and concessive phrases ending in **bhī;**

hī nahīṁ…bhī in parallel clauses;

oblique infinitive+**par bhī,** ‘despite’;

indefinite pronouns+**bhī,** ‘at all’;

relative words followed by **bhī,** ‘-ever’;

the adjectival particle **sā (sē~sī)**

Interjections 240
Vocative interjections; free interjections
Leaders and tags 241
The leaders **kyōṁ** and **kyōṁ na;**
acchā introducing sentences;
the concessive tag **sahī;**
the rhetorical tag **nā**
Conjunctions 243
Coordinating conjunctions;
correlative conjunctions;
causal conjunctions;
concessive conjunctions;
subordinating conjunctions;
ke introducing subordinate clauses;
ke introducing coordinate clauses;
ke introducing quotations and reported facts
13 NUMBERS AND TIME **252**
Numbers 252
Cardinal numbers;
ordinal numbers;
fractions;
'once', 'twice', etc.;
multiplicatives ('twofold', 'double', etc.);
repeated numbers;
numbers with the oblique plural
Calendar and clock time 262
Months;
days;
writing the date;
telling the time
Money 269
Contemporary currency;
old currency

14 PERSIAN ELEMENTS IN URDU **271**

The enclitic **izāfat** 271

Word-forming affixes 273

Nominal suffixes;

prefixes;

prepositions;

plural suffixes

Verb forms 279

Present and past verb stems

Compounds 279

Miscellaneous 282

Comparison of adjectives with **tar, tarīn;**

Persian numbers

15 ARABIC ELEMENTS IN URDU **284**

Triliteral root structure of Arabic words 284

Arabic derived verb forms;

Arabic verbal nouns and participles

Noun duals and plurals 291

Dual form of Arabic nouns;

plural forms of Arabic nouns

Arabic prepositions and particles 294

Prepositions;

negative particles

Misceilaneous 295

The definite article;

nouns of place;

nouns of instrument;

elative;

suffixes

16 CEREMONIOUS AND PIOUS SPEECH **298**

Greetings and introductions 298

Greetings;

introductions and polite exchanges

Formal and ceremonious speech 302

Formal polite requests;
thanking someone;
congratulations

Pious phrases and exclamations 304

Mentioning holy prophets;
phrases for planning or beginning something;
phrases invoking protection and short prayers;
phrases of repentance and requests for forgiveness;
phrases for sad occasions;
phrases for happy occasions

Bibliography 310

Index 312

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Plural of nouns 7
Table 2: Oblique case of nouns 11
Table 3: Vocative case of nouns 13
Table 4: Persons and cases of personal pronouns 19
Table 5: Oblique pronouns+alternate forms of **kō** 23
Table 6: Forms of pronouns before **nē** 25
Table 7: Possessive forms of personal pronouns 27
Table 8: Oblique and plural forms of **kyā** and **kaun** 31
Table 9: Gender and number suffixes of adjectives 38
Table 10: Case suffixes of adjectives 39
Table 11: Symmetrical **y-v-k-j** word sets 43
Table 12: Symmetrical **y-v-k-j** adverb sets 58
Table 13: Overview of aspect, tense and mood 99
Table 14: Irregular perfective participles 101
Table 15: The present, past, subjunctive and future forms of **hōnā** 102
Table 16: Forms of the subjunctive 107
Table 17: Irregular request forms 116
Table 18: Forms of the future 118
Table 19: Continuous present tense of **karnā** 124
Table 20: Continuous past tense of **karnā** 126
Table 21: Habitual present tense of **karnā** 132
Table 22: Habitual past tense of **karnā** 134
Table 23: Immediate past of **jānā** 141
Table 24: Remote past of **jānā** 142
Table 25: Relative **(j)** words and their 'far' **(v~u)** counterparts 218
Table 26: Oblique and plural forms of **jō** 221
Table 27: Personal pronouns+bound forms of **hī** 235
Table 28: Adverbs+bound forms of **hī** 236
Table 29: Cardinal numbers from 1 to 100 254
Table 30: Numerals from 1 to 100 255
Table 31: Forms I–VII and X of فَعَلَ **faʿala** 285
Table 32: Verbal nouns and participles of فَعَلَ and its derived forms 286

PREFACE

by Gopi Chand Narang

Urdu is a major language of South Asia which has been gaining in popularity since the advent of independence of India and Pakistan. It is one of the eighteen national languages listed in the Constitution of India, as well as the national language of Pakistan. Unlike Arabic and Persian, Urdu is an Indo-Aryan language akin to Hindi. Both Urdu and Hindi share the same Indic base, and at the phonological and grammatical level they are so close that they appear to be one language, but at the lexical level they have borrowed so extensively from different sources (Urdu from Arabic and Persian, and Hindi from Sanskrit) that in actual practice and usage each has developed into an independent language. This distinction is further marked at the orthographic level, where Hindi uses Devanagari and Urdu uses the Arabo-Persian script indigenously modified to suit the requirements of an Indo-Aryan speech. With this context in view, although the grammars of these languages cover much common ground, nevertheless in order to do justice to the differing sociolinguistic paradigms, separate materials have to be developed for each of these languages, which taken together form the fourth largest speech community in the modern world.

The grammatical tradition of Urdu and Hindi is now almost three centuries old, beginning with Ketelaar in the seventeenth century and continuing through Schultze, Forbes, Fallon, Platts, Shakespear, Gilchrist and others down to the nineteenth century. While Platts' work has become a classic and is reprinted time and again, the others have fallen into disuse. Lately, with inputs from modern linguistics, and the fresh impetus given by Urdu's new status as a national language as well as a cultural vehicle of the Indo-Pakistani diaspora, the need for new teaching materials is ever on the increase. The work of scholars such as Barker, McGregor, Russell, Shackle, Glassman, Pray, Naim and others has met some of the present need, however most of them have developed languageteaching books in which a discussion of the grammar is included as part of the pedagogical requirement. As far as I know, no reference grammar of Urdu (or Hindi) has so far been written, and it is precisely this gap which the present volume attempts to fill.

I have known Ruth Laila Schmidt for more than twenty years, since her study of Dakhini Urdu appeared. She is widely travelled in India and Pakistan, spending years in research and teaching. Her research in the Dardic language Shina, and her *Practical Dictionary of Modern Nepali,* Have in particular been well received. She belongs to that brand of South Asian linguistic scholars who deserve attention for their sense of dedication and thoroughness. It has been my pleasure to interact with her on this grammar, and I found the work fulfilling. Though the volume is called a reference grammar, I am sure it can profitably be read from cover to cover in a systematic way. As such it breaks fresh ground, and I do hope it will serve as a model for future intrepid scholars in the difficult terrain of South Asian grammatical studies.

New Delhi
14 June 1999

INTRODUCTION

What is Urdu?

Urdu is widely spoken not only in South Asia but also in the West. Worldwide, there are nearly 55 million Urdu speakers.[1]

In Pakistan it is the national language and is used in instruction in most government schools, at the lower levels of administration, and in the mass media.[2] The number of Urdu speakers in Pakistan has been estimated at almost 11 million with the largest number in the province of Sindh, followed by Panjab.

Urdu is also one of the one of the 18 national languages of the Union of India. There are almost 44 million Urdu speakers in India, with the largest numbers found in the state of Uttar Pradesh, followed by Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Delhi is also a significant centre not only of Urdu speakers but of Urdu literature and publishing.

Urdu is also spoken in Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Nepal, and has become the culture language and lingua franca of the South Asian Muslim diaspora outside the subcontinent, particularly in the Middle East, Europe, the United States and Canada.

Historically, Urdu developed from the sub-regional language of the Delhi area, which became a literary language in the eighteenth century. Two quite similar standard forms of the language developed in Delhi, and in Lucknow in modern Uttar Pradesh. Since 1947, a third form, Karachi standard Urdu, has evolved.

What does this work cover?

Urdu: An Essential Grammar is intended to present as complete a description of the grammar of Delhi Standard Urdu as is possible in the space available. It does not cover Urdu phonology or the writing system. The inventory of grammatical structures has been compiled from existing textbooks as well as from texts typically read in second-and third-year Urdu classes.

This work is a reference grammar rather than a pedagogical grammar. Grammatical constructions are grouped by topical headings: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, etc., with a network of cross references to other sections. It is intended to serve a resource to which to refer as one reads texts; to look up complex grammatical constructions, or review more elementary constructions; and with the help of the table of contents, index and cross-references, to look up individual sentences and analyse them without reading the whole book. Ideally one should be able tostartanywhere in *Urdu: An Essential Grammar* and find the information one needs.

1 Sources: The Summer Institute of Linguistics *Ethnologue,* Census of India 1991, Census of Pakistan 1981, *Encyclopedia Britannica (Britannica Online)*.

2 Tariq Rahman, *Language and Politics in Pakistan,* Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Although one can certainly read this book from cover to cover, and the author has kept that kind of reader in mind, that is not its primary purpose. This means that some constructions must be looked up in several different places. If a person wishes to make a comprehensive review of the use of **nē** with perfective tense transitive verbs, he or she must consult all the following sections: §211, §510, §629 and §809, because the **nē** construction involves a postposition, verb constructions, special forms of pronouns, and the notion of transitivity; and each of these is dealt with under its own heading. Cross references are provided to make the search easier.

Transcription system

The primary purpose of the transcription system, which is adapted from that presented by R.S.McGregor,[3] is to provide a guide for pronunciation. The two main departures are: (a) the Arabic letters ث ح ژ ص ض ط ظ ع ء are not distinguished, and (b) long and short **e** and **o** are distinguished as: **e ē/o ō** (even thoughshort **e, o** are allophones of /**i a u**/). The purpose for transcribing them in this way is that the environments of short **e,o** are many, complex and often require a knowledge of the spelling of the word, or its origin; thus this convention is expected to be helpful to the reader.

How should this book be used?

This work is most useful to students who already have a basic knowledge of Urdu. The reader may begin by skimming the table of contents to get an overview of what is covered and how it is organized. A reader who knows what he or she is looking for may find it here. Alternatively, one may look up key words in the index. For example, the uses of the adverb **bhī** 'also' are listed in the index under **'bhī',** 'emphatic particles', 'modal adverbs', 'both…and', 'neither…nor' and 'relative words followed by **bhī**'. Finally, look up any reference and follow the network of cross-references.

In the example sentences, the grammatical topic under discussion is highlighted by italicization of words in the Urdu transcription and the corresponding English translation. Occasionally, a literal translation holds the italicized equivalent. The following examples illustrate italicization.

دفتری کام	اُس کا نام مجھے معلوم ہے۔
***daftarī* kām**	**us kā nām mujhē *mālūm* hai**
official work	I know his name (his name is *known* to me).

If there is no italicization in an example, it is because the structure of the Urdu original and the translation are too disparate to permit the technique, because the entire sentence would need to be italicized, or because the relevant Urdu word is not expressed in the translation. For example, **kyā** in the sentence below merely introduces a question, and is not translated.

3 R.S.McGregor, *Urdu Study Materials,* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.

kyā ye gharā hai?
Is this is a water pot?

Acknowledgements

The author thanks Professor Gopi Chand Narang of the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi (formerly of Delhi University and Jamia Millia Islamia) for checking the example sentences and for providing guidance during the writing process. Without his sharp-judgement and insight into Urdu, this would have been a much poorer work. The grammatical analysis based on the example sentences is my own, and only I am responsible for any errors.

Dr. Elena Bashir and Professor Christopher Shackle read the entire manuscript and offered criticisms and suggestions. I am grateful to them both, and solely responsible for any errors or omissions which may remain.

Numerous colleagues responded to my queries for information during the three years it has taken to produce this grammar; there is not room to mention them all by name, but they are remembered with gratitude. I also wish to thank the tutors and programme evaluators of the University of California's Berkeley Urdu Language Program in Pakistan for patiently answering my many questions.

The Department of East European and Oriental Studies of the University of Oslo provided sabbatical leave as well as resources for the production of the manuscript and funds for the visit of Professor Narang to the University of Oslo.

The roman text in this book is set in the Norman font, except for the examples in Chapter 15, which are set in Jerome Bauer's South Asia Times Bold. Urdu is set in the Jawhar font produced by Kamal Mansour of Monotype, U.S.A., which was provided by Monotype as a courtesy.

SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

x→y	**x** becomes **y**
x<y	**x** is derived from **y**
x+y	**y** is added to **x**
x~y	**y** is a variant or inflected form of **x**
f.	feminine
int.	intransitive
lit.	literally
m.	masculine
pl.	plural
sg.	singular
tr.	transitive
AP	active participle
PP	passive participle
VN	verbal noun

1
NOUNS

Urdu has two grammatical genders: masculine (m.) and feminine (f.). Nouns may have special gender suffixes (marking), or be unmarked for gender. Nouns are inflected to show number (singular or plural) and case (nominative, oblique or vocative).

GENDER AND MARKING

101 Gender

All Urdu nouns belong to one of two noun genders, masculine and feminine.

MASCULINE		FEMININE	
لڑکا	**laṛkā,** boy	لڑکی	**laṛkī,** girl
بچّہ	**bacca,** (male) child	چڑیا	**ciṛiyā,** bird
گھر	**ghar,** house	میز	**mēz,** table

102 Marking

All Urdu nouns may be additionally divided into two groups: those which are marked for gender (marked nouns), and those which have no special gender suffix (unmarked nouns).

Plural nouns, excepting masculine unmarked nouns, have distinctive gender suffixes. See §107.

103 Marked nouns

Nouns ending in the masculine gender suffixes **-ā** ا, **-a** ہ and **-aya** یہ are masculine:

لڑکا **laṛkā,** boy	بچّہ **bacca,** (male) child
مرغا **murɣā,** rooster	روپیہ **rūpaya,** rupee, money

Extremely rarely, the suffix **-ā** is nasalized.

کنواں **kūāⁿ,** well

Nouns ending in the feminine gender suffixes **-ī** ی or **-iyā** یا are feminine.

لڑکی	**laṛkī,** girl	بچّی	**baccī,** (female) child
مرغی	**murγī,** hen	چڑیا	**ciṛiyā,** bird

104 Unmarked nouns

Nouns which do not end in the above gender suffixes are unmarked, and their gender must be learned.

گھر	**ghar,** house (m.)
کام	**kām,** work (m.)
کتاب	**kitāb,** book (f.)

Special attention should be paid to nouns that look like marked nouns, but are not. A number of common masculine nouns end in **-ī**. They are either suffixless nouns that happen to end in **-ī,** or nouns formed with the occupation suffix **-ī**.

پانی	**pānī,** water (suffixless)
جہازی	**jahāzī,** sailor (جہاز **jahāz,** ship+occupation suffix)

Some feminine nouns end in **-ā, -a** or **-ām̐.** They are either suffixless words that happen to end in **-ā, -a, -ām̐,** or Arabic nouns in which the final **-a** ہ results from an Arabic suffix **-t** ۃ which derives a feminine noun from a masculine one:

ہوا	**havā,** wind, air (a suffixless Arabic noun)
جگہ	**jaga,** place (colloquial pronunciation of جگہ **jagah**)
والدہ	**vālida,** mother (term of reference) (<Arabic والد **vālid,** father)
امّاں	**ammām̐,** mother (term of address)

Feminine nouns formed with the suffix **-iyā** should not be confused with masculine nouns.

چڑیا **ciṛiyā,** bird (چڑا **ciṛā,** male sparrow+diminutive suffix)

105 Natural gender

The biological gender of people or animals denoted by a noun usually determines the gender of the noun.

ماں **māṁ,** mother (term of address) (f.)
باپ **bāp,** father (term of address) (m.)
ڈاکٹر **ḍāktar,** doctor (masculine if a man, feminine if a woman)
دستکار **dastkār,** artisan (masculine if a man, feminine if a woman)

106 Some other clues to gender of nouns

Some other suffixes or noun patterns help to identify the gender of nouns.

Arabic loanwords

Arabic nouns ending in **-at** اَت **-iyat** یت and **-ā** ا are usually feminine.

قیمت **qīmat,** price
حیثیت **haisiyat,** status, capacity
حیا **hayā,** modesty
دوا **davā,** medicine

Verbal nouns of the pattern **taf^ʿīl** تفعیل are feminine.

تکلیف **taklīf,** trouble
تصویر **tasvīr,** picture

Arabic nouns ending in **-a** ہ are usually masculine.

حملہ **hamla,** attack
قصّہ **qissa,** story

However, **vālida** والدہ ,'mother'; **tāliba** طالبہ , 'female student'; **dafa** دفعہ, 'time', are feminine. Note also that not all masculine nouns ending in **-a** are borrowed from Arabic, as there is an increasing tendency to write **chōṭī hē** ہ in place of final **alīf** ا: **ghanṭa** گھنٹہ for **ghanṭa** گھنٹا, 'hour' (indigenous Urdu); **pata** پتہ for **patā** پتا , 'address' (Persian); **kamra** کمرہ **kamrā** کمرا, 'room' (Portuguese).

Persian loanwords

Nouns ending in the place suffixes **-gāh** گاہ and **-āē** ائے are feminine.

عبادت گاہ **ibādatgāh,** place of worship

خاکنائے **xāknāē,** isthmus

Nouns ending in the noun-forming suffixes **-ī** ی and **-gī** گی are feminine.

دوستی **dōstī,** friendship

زندگی **zindagī,** life

Nouns ending in the place suffix **-istān** or **-stān** ستان are masculine:

پاکستان **pākistān,** Pakistan

ریگستان **rēgistān,** desert

Indigenous Urdu words

Most indigenous nouns ending in **-ū** or **-ō** و are masculine.

بھاؤ **bhāō,** market price

آلو **ālū,** potato

ڈاکو **ḍākū,** robber

However, personal names in rural areas are often formed by adding **-ū** for men and **-ō** for women:

تاجو **tājō** (a woman's name)

رمضانو **ramzānū** (a man's name)

Nouns ending in the noun-forming suffixes **-pan** پن and **-pā** پا are masculine.

بچپن **bacpan,** childhood

لڑکپن **laṛakpan,** boyhood; childishness

بڑھاپا **buṛhāpā,** old age

Nouns ending in the diminutive suffix **-ī** ی - ~ **-iyā** یا and the noun-forming suffix **-i** ی are feminine.

پہاڑی **pahāṛī,** small hill (from **pahāṛ** پہاڑ, mountain)

چڑیا **ciṛiyā,** bird (from **ciṛā** چڑا, male sparrow)

سلائی **silāī,** seam, sewing (from **silnā** سلنا, to be sewn)

لمبائی **lambāī,** length (from **lambā** لمبا, long)

Nouns ending in the abstract noun-forming suffixes **-āhaṭ** آہٹ, **-āvaṭ** آوٹ and **-yat** یت are feminine.

گھبراہٹ **ghabrāhaṭ,** confusion

رکاوٹ **rukāvaṭ,** obstacle

NOUN PLURALS

107 Forms (nominative case)

There are different plural suffixes for masculine marked, feminine marked and feminine unmarked nouns. Masculine unmarked nouns have no plural suffixes.

(a) The suffixes **-ā** and **-a** (masculine marked) change to **-ē:**

لڑکے ← لڑکا **laṛkā → laṛkē,** boys

بچے ← بچہ **bacca → baccē,** children

If the suffix **-ā** is nasalized **(-āṁ),** the plural suffix is nasalized as well.

کنوئیں ← کنواں **kūāṁ → kūēṁ,** well

(b) The suffix **-aya** (masculine marked) changes to **-aē ~ -ē:**

روپے ، روپئے ← روپیہ **rūpaya → rūpaē, rūpē,** rupees

(c) Masculine unmarked nouns have no plural suffix:

گھر ← گھر **ghar → ghar,** houses

(d) The suffix **ī** (feminine marked) changes to **-iyāṁ**

لڑکیاں ← لڑکی **laṛkī → laṛkiyāṁ,** girls

(e) Indigenous feminine nouns ending in **-iyā** take the plural in **-iyāṁ.**

چڑیاں ← چڑیا **ciṛiyā → ciṛiyāṁ,** birds

(f) Feminine unmarked nouns add the plural suffix **-ēṁ:**

کتابیں ← کتاب **kitāb → kitābēṁ,** books

دوائیں ← دوا **davā → davāēṁ,** medicines

Reduction of penultimate short vowel

When suffixes consisting of long vowels, including the nominative and oblique plural and the vocative, are added to roots containing two or more short vowels, the penultimate short vowel of the root is reduced or lost.

عورت **aurat,** woman+**-ēṁ → aurtēṁ,** women

بہن **bahen,** sister+**-ēṁ → bahnēṁ,** sisters

عورت **aurat,** woman+ **-ēṁ** → **aurtēṁ,** women

بہن **bahen,** sister+ **-ēṁ** → **bahnēṁ**, sisters

Table 1: Plural of nouns

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
MASC. MARKED	لڑکا	**laṛkā**	لڑکے	**laṛkē**
	کمرہ	**kamra**	کمرے	**kamrē**
	روپیہ	**rūpaya**	روپئے ، روپے	**rūpaē, rūpē**
	کنواں	**kūāṁ**	کنوئیں	**kūēṁ**
MASC. UNMARKED	گھر	**ghar**	گھر	**ghar**
FEM. MARKED	لڑکی	**laṛkī**	لڑکیاں	**laṛkiyāṁ**
	چڑیا	**ciṛiyā**	چڑیاں	**ciṛiyāṁ**
FEM. UNMARKED	کتاب	**kitāb**	کتابیں	**kitābēṁ**

108 Non-count (mass) nouns

Non-count (mass) nouns do not have plural forms.

بہت پانی

bahut *pānī*
a lot of *water*

ہمارے پاس کافی چینی ہے ۔

hamārē pās kāfī *cīnī* hai
We have plenty of *sugar*.

If one has occasion to speak of more than one variety of non-count nouns, they may be pluralized. However plural amounts of non-count nouns are usually qualified by the measure or container used to hold them. See §116.

ہمارے پاس دو طرح کی دالیں ہیں ۔

hamārē pās dō tarah kī *dālēṁ* haiṁ
We have two kinds of *lentils*.

INFLECTION OF NOUNS

Nouns may occur in the nominative, oblique or vocative case.[1]

109 Nominative case

Nominative nouns most commonly occur as the subjects of verbs. (In perfective tenses, however, the subjects of transitive verbs take the postposition **nē,** and are in the oblique case. See §629.)

لڑکا یہاں رہتا ہے ۔
laṛkā yahāṁ rahtā hai
The boy lives here.

روپیہ کل ملے گا ۔
***rūpaya* kal milē gā**
The money will be available tomorrow.

A nominative noun may occur as the direct object of a sentence.

میں کام کرتا ہوں اور روپیہ کماتا ہوں ۔
maiṁ kām kartā hūṁ aur *rūpaya* kamātā hūṁ
I work and I earn *money*.

110 Oblique case

Whenever a noun is followed by a postposition (for example, **kō** کو, 'to'; **kā** کا, 'of'; **mēṁ** میں 'in'; **sē** سے 'from', etc.), it occurs in the oblique case. The ergative postposition **nē** نے also takes the oblique case of nouns. (See Chapter 5 for information about postpositions; see §211 for pronouns before **nē**.)

1 The term 'case' is used in this work to refer only to bound nominal suffixes (nominative, oblique and vocative) described below and in Chapter 2. Other grammarians treat grammatical postpositions (Chapter 5) as case markers. According to this school of thought, a noun followed by the ergative postposition **nē** is in the ergative case; a noun followed by **kō** is in the dative case, and a noun with no postposition is in the nominative-accusative case.