



## TOWARDS DESCRIPTION OF DERIVATION IN URDU: MORPHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

*After the world has shaped into a global village, the need for inter communal interactions has increased many times. Languages make these communications easy among groups and nations. Urdu (Urdu and Hindi have nearly the same phonemic structures though their scripts are different) is the third most spoken language after Chinese and English (Singh, 2003). The strategic regions where Urdu is spoken have been established as very important politically and economically. Research is being carried on the various dimensions of Urdu language in Japan, Canada, United Kingdom, etc. The undertaken research is a step in this regard to describe Urdu language at the level of derivation from morphological perspective to be added in the rich linguistic resource of Urdu language for language teaching and Urdu grammar books.*

**Key Words:** Urdu, description, derivation, morphology, language

### Introduction

Morphology is a branch of linguistics that studies various process of word formation. It also studies the internal structure of the words and their various functions, determining various roles in language comprehension (Aronoff and Fudeman, 2005). Morphological analysis is executed through a morpheme that is the basic unit of morphology. It is also called the minimal unit of grammar (Hudson, 2000). Though this definition does not cover the entire phenomenon behind morphemic analysis yet it is used as a point of departure. A morpheme may be a complete word as “book” or part of a word as “ed” in “played”. Generally, a morpheme cannot be divided further into chunks. For example, the word “uncomfortable” has three morphemes. “un” is the first; “comfort” is the second and “able” is the third. If terminologically speaking, “un” is the prefix; “comfort” is the root and “able” is the suffix.

Commonly, a distinction is made between bound and free morpheme. According to Arthur (1998), a morpheme that can stand alone semantically and does not need any other morpheme to complete its meaning is called “free morpheme” for example “sky” while a morpheme that needs another morpheme to come into action is called bound morpheme for example “ed”. Another very important distinction is made between derivational and inflectional morphemes (Ljung, 2003). Derivational morphemes are the morphemes that are added to roots to form new words (Baker, 1992).

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These derivational morphemes not only create a word but also change the part of speech of the root as well. For example, by adding the derivational morphemes “er” to the root “play” will create a new word “player” and it also changed the root from verb to noun. While, on the other hand, the inflectional morphemes change only the grammatical functions of the root. For example, by adding the inflectional morpheme “ed” to the root “play” the past form of the verb “play’ has been created (Schmmit, 2000).

### Urdu Derivational Morphology:

Urdu derivational morphology creates morphologically related words. Generally, it causes one or two changes in the root as discussed earlier. The other derivational technique in the Urdu language that is not visible, is the placing of the primary stress in a word. But, this stress placement derivational technique is not the focus of undertaken research as it will out space the research article. The basic derivational process of the Urdu language with the addition of affixes has been discussed in detail.

Derivation is considered with wider aspects of meaning. According to Schmidt (1999), certain affixes i.e. prefixes, suffixes, are added to the root morphemes to form new lexical items that have different meanings from those conveyed by the base forms. For examples *بے* bay (a negative prefix) is used in Urdu to indicate negation as in *حال بے bayhaal* (not in a good condition), *بے زبان bay-zubaan* (tongless), *بے غیرت bay-gairat* (not having self respect), etc. Some Urdu affixes are used to make adjectives e.g. *ناک naak* in *خطر ناک khater-naak* (dangerous). *تابناک tab-naak* (bright) etc.

#### Adjectives to Noun

Adjective + ی	→	Noun
چالاک (clever)		چالاکی (cleverness)
پاک (clean)		پاک (cleanliness)

خوش قسمت (lucky) خوش قسمتی (luck)

بد قسمت (unlucky) بد قسمتی (ill luck)

The Urdu suffix *ی* is quite productive in Urdu language. It is attached with a number of bases. If it is attached with Urdu adjectives, it alters the adjective bases into nouns. It triggers morphophonemic changes due to the addition of a consonant sound at the end of the base.

#### Nouns to Adverbs

Nouns+suffix ًا	→	Adverbs
مزاج		مُزاجاً (by nature)
طبیعیات		طبعاً □ (by nature)
اخلاق		اخلاقاً (morally)

م ر و ت                      م ر و تاً (morally)

حقیقت                      حقیقتاً ( in fact)

The Urdu suffix “ا” is quite productive in Urdu language. It is attached with a number of bases. If it is attached with Urdu nouns, it alters the noun bases into adverbs. It triggers morphophonemic changes due to the addition of a vowel sound at the end of the base.

Verbs to verbs (causativisation)

<u>Verb+infix ا</u>	→	<u>Verbs</u>
بنا نا (to make)		بنو انا (to get a thing knitted)
چرنا (to graze)		چرا نا (to make the cattle graze)
پینا (to drink)		پلا نا (to make some one drink)
چلنا (to walk)		چلا نا (to make some one walk)
اڑنا (to fly)		اڑا نا (to make something fly)

The Urdu infix is quite productive in Urdu language. It is injected with a number of bases. It is attached with verbs. It alters the verb bases into causative verbs. It triggers morphophonemic changes due to the addition of a vowel sound in the base.

Nouns to verbs

<u>Noun+suffix نا</u>	→	<u>Verbs</u>
سمجھ (wisdom)		سمجھنا (to think)
ترس (pity)		ترسنا (to desire)
پکڑ (grip)		پکڑنا (to catch)
کتر (piece)		کترنا (to cut)
تڑپ (pain)		تڑپنا (to feel pain)

The suffix نا is very productive in Urdu derivation. When it is attached with nouns, it converts them into adjectives. It triggers little morphophonemic alterations in the base.

Verbs to Adjectives:

<u>Verb+suffix</u> ک	→	<u>Adjectives</u>
لڑنا (To quarrel)		لڑا کا (quarrelsome)
پڑھنا (to read)		پڑھا کو (studious)

The suffix ک (qaaf) is not so productive in Urdu derivation when it is attached with Urdu verbs. Rather, the suffix cannot be attached to all the verbs. But when it is attached to the base verbs, it converts them into adjectives. It also creates morphophonemic changes as in the first example the consonant ن (noon) is deleted when it changes the base into adjective.

Verbs to Nouns

<u>Verb+suffix</u> ی	→	<u>Nouns</u>
سیکھنا (to teach)		سکھائی (teaching)
چلانا (to drive)		چلائی (driving)
گھسنا (to wear out)		گھسائی (wearing out)
تیرنا (to swim)		تیرائی (swimming)

The suffix ی is quite productive in Urdu language. It is attached with a number of bases. When it is attached with verbs, it converts them into nouns. It triggers morphophonemic changes. The consonant sound ن (noon) is deleted and a vowel sound ا (alif) is added.

### Concluding Remarks

The process of derivation is different from inflection as it produces a new lexical item for various objects. But apart from morphological universals among the leading languages of the world, the principle with which derivation makes impact on the grammatical relationships is a little different in the Urdu language. This difference can be analysed in relations between the base in derivation and the derivate rather in the grammatical structures of different phrases (Jackson, 2002). The undertaken research establishes that derivation of morphological items is executed by independent constituents. Though Urdu derivation is operated through lexical rules yet the phonological racialization is responsible due to an autonomous morphological constituent.

Urdu derivation is often ambiguous from linguistic and especially from morphological perspective (Malik, 2006). Owing to this reason, Urdu derivation is not encouraged in formal settings. However, their position in the noun phrase as an adjective cannot be negated. The



concept of derivation is quite normal with the Urdu native speakers but it is quite complex with the non-native Urdu speakers.

Moreover, there are no hard and fast rules of adding affixes in the derivational process of the Urdu language. In most cases, it is not clear which affix should be added. Further, words are being added consistently in the Urdu language. The undertaken research is an effort to highlight the possible dimensions of derivation in the Urdu language. Anyhow, all the dimensions of Urdu derivation may not have been investigated. The research motivates the Urdu lexicologists and morphologists to further explore the Urdu language on the level of derivation.

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