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The Phonemic Value of Pashto Language Special Letters

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ABSTRACT

This academic paper assists its readers in the field of Pashto Language phonetics insight that in the future study it can be used as a source for its users. Phonetic is one branch of linguistics because phonetics studies the human's practical sound scientifically. Phonetics provides some approaches for description of classification and writing of sounds. This paper is regarding the rules of Pashto Language productive phonetics in order to prove whether there is such grapheme and phonemes in other world languages or not? Therefore, the diversity of Afghanistan language, particularly Pashto Language is counted as the cultural heir and rich wealth for current globe. Hence, in this academic paper Pashto Language phonemics rules are studied and linguistic study of it opens a door for Afghan users. For this reason, phonetic is the basic study of linguistics and literature is depended on grammar and grammar is relied on morphology and morphology is depended on phonology and phonology is the base and important element of phonetics. The other spot of this paper is the similarity of some phonetics letters of Pashto Language alphabet with Indo-European because Pashto Language is on branch of Indo-European family and has its own alphabet with special features that the speakers use it. The phonemic rules of aforementioned language is like other Indo-European languages.

Keywords: Pashto phonemes, dialect, dental affricates, retroflex nasal, retroflex oral stops, retroflex palatal fricatives.

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1. Introduction

The universal inducement of Allah is language. It's the big resource of communication between people apart from language understanding is difficult. Therefore, it is critical for people of the world to understand the uses of language and use it in proper manner.

Afghanistan is a country with unique languages. It has a great diversity of languages. Pashtu is particularly counted as the cultural heir and rich wealth for its people and in general in South Asia. Pashto language is one of the East Iranian classes of languages widely spoken in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pashto is also spoken in India, Iran, Tajikistan, United Arab Emirates and the U.K. (Aslamzai et

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| Pashto | IPA | X-SAMPA | Pashto | IPA | X-SAMPA |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| ب | b | b | ض | z | z |
| پ | p | p | ث س ص | s | s |
| د | d | d | ژ | ʒ / dʒ / ʒ / z | Z / dZ / Z / z |
| ت ط | t | t | ش | ʃ | S |
| ډ | d̪ | d̪ | ځ | ʒ / g / ʒ / ɟ | z' / g / Z / j̄ |
| ټ | t̪ | t̪ | پښ | ɟ / x / ʃ / ɸ | s' / x / S / C |
| ج | dʒ | dZ | ف | f | f |
| چ | tʃ | tS | ح ه | h | h |
| خ | dx / z / dx / z | dx / z / dx / z | غ | ɣ | G |
| څ | ts / s / ts / s | ts / s / ts / s | خ | x | x |
| ق | q/k | q / k | و | w / o | w / o |
| ک | k | k | ی ی | j | j / i |
| گ | g | g | ی ی | j | j - offglide |
| ع | (?) | (?) | ا | a | A |
| م | m | m | ې | e | e |
| ن | n | n | اَ | a | a |
| ن | ɲ | (N) | اِ | ɪ | i i: |
| ن | ɳ | n' | اُ | u | u u: |
| ل | l | l | اَ | ə | @ |
| ر | r | r' | اَ | (no vowel) | (+) |
| ر | r | 4 | | (primary/strong stress) | “ |
| ذ ز ظ | z | z | | | |

The 36 special Pashto phonetic alphabet has been created by the eastern professors in the early 20s of twentieth century. It used in the Afghanistan literature field for Atlas (ALA) under the leadership of Prof. Moor in 1962. From all those 36 letters, every phonetic was given one symbol and 10 of those got double sound or diphthongs. (5-37).

Pashto phonetic are mostly used from Arabic language and there are few other letters used from unknown languages. The Arabic alphabet is included but it's not clear what letters were used before Arabic letters. However, according to Qazia Abdul Rahim in his book 'Pashto Adaab' wrote that the Pashto writing rules were used before Islam. In justification of the previous statement, it has been found in Pali linguistics research that eight Pashto alphabet letters have been used in Pali language as well. This language was used five thousand years before Christ in northern area of India among Aryan nation. This language was called the most valid language of that time of Buddha.

Following are details on the 8 special letters with examples.

2.1 C c- څ (in English it sounds like SAY)

The sound of this letter stands on the categories of affricates. From a phonetic point of view, the mentioned letters are consonant, the way of reading is <<thi>> mild sound and <<seen>> sound and the sound come are at one time from one outgo. Some of the examples can be seen in table 1.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|----|--------|--------|-----|--------|-------|-------|--------|----------|-------|-------|--------|-----|
| څوکه | څه | څوری | څاروی | څار | څوکی | څادر | څنگه | څرمن | څارنوال | څبرمه | څرمه | څبرنه | څوک |
| Cānga | Cə | Cwaray | Cārway | Cār | Cawkəy | Cādar | Cənga | Carman | Cāranwal | Cerma | Cərma | Ceṛəna | Cok |

The phonetic investigation has proven that these letters of Pashto exist in other languages but its Grapheme is different. Technical characteristics of this letter is that it should be pronounced and Alveolar, consonant and with friction. It is the 9th alphabets of Khairul Bayan and its Russian equivalent << U >>.

The academic opposition of Pir Roshan, Akhund Darwiza didn't specify the difference in his book Makhzan-ul-Islam between Sei and Zei and he used this letter for both Lmons (prayer) and Salour (four). In the orientalist, I know only one person who differentiated between these two letters. He is Major George Walter Gillbetson who wrote his book called, "Pakhto Idioms Dictionary". (4,32,33).

The upper letter <say >> sometime make the sound of <<zay >> or <<khi >>. These letters are evaluated according to the new linguistic and should be pronounced to their phonetic value, otherwise, it will gradually lose its value.

2.2 j -ج (in English it sounds like ZAY)

This letter of Pashto depends on phonetic value pronounced consonant Alveolar. Its mixed make up sound of (day) and (zay) (5,33). The historical grammatical investigations shows that every phonetic letter has the grapheme value because phonetic sound becomes clear form grapheme and this letter is becoming as (zay) and (day). Example of the phonetic sound for this letter is shown in the Table 2.

Generally, this letter is pronounced Alveolar and articulated when the tongue touches the

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-------|-------|------|-----|-------|---------|-----------|----------|------|----|-------|-----|-----|
| منخته | ختیخ | خمکه | ورخ | خاخ | لمونخ | ترمنخ | پلورنخی | پوهنخی | خاله | خو | خولی | خان | خای |
| Manjta | Xatij | jməka | Wraj | JāĴ | Imunj | Tarmanj | ploranjay | Pohanjay | Jāla | ju | jolay | jān | jāy |

upper teeth or maxilla. This letter of Pashto (ج) is similarly pronounced in Russian and Indian languages.

Peshawer people or people in Pakistan pronounce this letter as "zeem". This letter is the 14th letter of Khair Ul Bayan, located between (dal) and (Dol). The new alphabet of Pashto is the 9th letter that located between (chay) and (say). It shows that like (ج-Ĵ) but there is phonetic change and new it is pronounced as "seen" (7—125).

2.3 ډ -D (in English it sounds like Dol)

This alveolar sound is consonant and it heavily reads like (dol) or (ta). The top parts of the tongue touch the upper gum and moves only one times. (5-29). Example of sound for "dol" is given in Table 3.

This letter is mentioned in Khair Ul Bayan for instance in the page 67 its stated that (Ka jama na

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-------|--------|-----|
| دالی | دغر | دولچه | دال | دبل | دنده | دوز | دول | دول | دودی | دیری | دیره | دېر |
| Dālay | Dagr | Dulĉa | Dal | Dabal | Danda | Doz | Dawal | Dol | Doday | Deray | Dabara | Der |

momi, no namonz bar band ka) which means that if you didn't find clothes, so you can pray nude. The word used here for nude is "bar band". In another poem from Babo Jan, you can easily see the usage of "dol" sound.

This letter is clearly shown in the phonetic of the other languages. However, its grapheme is different. For example, you can see this sound in English food and its equivalent in Pahsto is Dodai. In both of these words' "d" sound is available.

بښانه شپې چې وړنې نرمنده
روح، سورت، دهغه وگایسې منده

2.4 ټ -T (in English it sounds like tea)

This letter has retroflex sound and the special letters of Pashto (72 :9). The letter also exists in other languages of the word, but grapheme is different. This letter is mentioned in page of 33 of Japani Kamos such as (tea) in the word of (tokar "cloth") and the plural form is (tokarona. However, grammatically "tokaran" is correct plural form. Examples are shown in Table 4.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|------|------|-----|--------|-------|------|--------|--------|------|-----|-----|------|-------|-----|
| ټن | ټبر | ټغر | ټوپ | ټومبل | ټمبل | ټبسر | ټولنيز | ټولنه | ټاير | ټال | ټوک | ټوته | ټوپک | ټول |
| Ṭun | Ṭabr | Ṭgar | Ṭup | Ṭombal | Ṭmbal | Ṭesr | Ṭolniz | Ṭolana | āṬya | Ṭāl | Ṭuk | ṬoṬa | Ṭopak | Ṭol |

This letter is used by a German called Johann Anton Guldenstadt in his Pashto Dictionary. However, he has not shown any difference between “thea and tea”. For example, he wrote that “rothi vs. roti - bread”, “Pathi vs. pati – ground” (2.2’3). Therefore, for better understanding, when regular “thi” is pronounced deeply with tongue touching upper gum, this sound of “tea” will come.

2.5 ټر-Ṭ

This letter is produced flapped and is consonant and it is pronounced when the top part of the tongue touches the middle part of the gum (3-32). Examples are shown in Table 5.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|
| ټرنگ | اړين | اړتيا | وړتيا | وړ | وياړ | مور | مړ | دور | دور | تور | لور |
| TaṚng | AṚin | AṚtyā | wṚtyā | waṚ | wyāṚ | moṚ | maṚ | DawṚ | DoṚ | TuṚ | lwaṚ |

It is 15th letters of Pashtu and used in particular phonetic value. When it pronounces the top of the tongues must touches the middle parts of the gum. Peer Roshan in his book on page 63 used word “Jawhar” and you can see it the Pashtu text below (3- 73).

هغه جوهر چې یوړخ اوبه یې وکوزوي، او بل رخ اوبه یې نه کوزي

According to Khair Ul bian, it’s the 10th letter and it is having it special grapheme value. In Awista language it is “ṭ” used a semi consonant.

2.6 ټر-Ṭ (in English it sounds like Gay)

It contains the Retroflex sound and this sound us used in Pashtu language and have special pronunciation system. This sound is like (Gay) or pronounced like retroflex. Examples are given in Table 6.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|-----|--------|-------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| ټیره | مونږ | ټورل | کور | اورمیر | میری | میره | ردن | ورر | خواره | اوره | اورد | اوره | رلی | ریره |
| Tīza | moṛ | Toṛal | koṛ | ormeṛ | meṛay | meṛə | ṛdən | warṛ | xwāṛə | uṛə | Oṛd | Oṛə | ṛaləy | ṛira |

This letter is used in Khair Ul Bayan instead of “Ji” sound and it is used page of 117 and (ټبه) رب on page pf (74) “Gwandoon”, Page 28 “Pezhandgalwi” and others.

Doulat Lavoni and Karim Dad used the same letters with same phoneme however, the letter Ji is used interchangeably. Phonemic use is ṛ and its grapheme is ž.

2.7 ټش-Ṣ (in English it sound like Sheen)

This letter is consonant and the 23th letter of Khair Ul Bayan, has especially phonetic sound and outgo. On the 25 page of khair Ul bain come, “Preshowani di sari di halal siz pak di” which means that left of human is halal. And you can see the sound of “sheen” in Preshowani. Table 7 provides some examples of the relevant sounds.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|---------|---------|-------|-----|-------|-----|---------|------|-----|--------|-------|-------|------|
| پنه | بارو | پنستانه | پنایسته | پنالی | پوښ | پنښتو | پښ | پښور | پښه | خوښ | پنکاري | پنادي | پنوره | پنار |
| paṣa | Ṣāro | pṢtānə | āṢysta | āṢli | puṣ | paṣto | pəṣ | peṣawar | peṣa | xwṢ | Ṣkāri | āṢdi | Ṣora | Ṣār |

This phoneme of Pashto is pronounced in different way in different style. For example, in the Eastern parts of Afghanistan, this is Alveolar and consonant but in the Southern parts it is pronounced like sheen while in East it is like Kheen.

2.8 N̄ - ن̄

This special phoneme of Pashto makes sound in nose and has variety of origins. This letter exists in the Indian languages. In Indian languages sound which produced in nose and mouth change in to the sound which is produced in nose like (n̄). Examples of this letter is given in Table 8.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|--------|-----|------|-----|---------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| آتن | بادن | بنوال | کون | کانه | کین | خورلنه | گنه | رون | رنا | منه | بانه | بنه | پنه | بن |
| ātəṅ | BāḌḡ | Baṅwāl | kuṅ | kāṅə | kiṅ | xuralṅa | gaṅa | Ruṅ | Raṅā | Maṅa | Bāṅə | Baṅa | paṅa | Baṅ |

This letter of Pashtu alphabet is used in Khair Ul bayan. It is also used in the dictionaries of Dowlat Lovani, Mirza khan Ormar and Karim Dad Roshani. All of them kept this character in their writings. This letter is also used in Tazkiratul Awalia of Darkhistani. In the hand written Makhzan ul Islam it is used as Noor. Gul Pacha Ulfat writes that in Makhzan ul Islam this letter is used as Noor rather than noon.

According to the phonetic value, this letter is ton gully consonant when is pronounced the middle parts of the tongue bending and the top parts of the tongue touches the upper middle gum. The phonetic resemblance describes the systemically and historical changes in language.

3. Conclusion

There were lots of controversies among the native speakers while working on the place of articulation and articulators regarding consonants. This paper provides a basic description of the phonetic system in Pashto, an Indo-Iranian language spoken in Afghanistan. Although there are descriptive resources on Pashto, very few are based on acoustic analysis, and conclusions are often complicated by issues pertaining to dialect and orthography. Contra previous work, it does not look like vowel length is phonemic, and in particular the length implied in the orthography is mostly orthogonal from vowel duration, a fact that may seem obvious but has been a point of confusion for applied and computational work on Pashto. This study has revealed some of the typical discrepancies between phonemes and conventional writing-systems. Some phonemes are not adequately differentiated.

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