

Linguistic influence of Persian on South Asian languages: Special reference to Urdu



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Abstract

Iran has a rich linguistic and cultural heritage. The history of the development of Iranian languages from Old Persian to Avesta, Pahlavi and finally Persian goes back to time immemorial. Over this vast period, Iranian languages contributed a significant influence on South Asian languages. Lexicographic affinities and thematic likeness between the Avesta and the Rig-Veda suggest a prolonged cultural and literary relationship between Iran and the sub-continent. The constant traveling of the port cities in South Asia by the Iranian merchants and Sufis through sea-routes paved the way for development of the Persian language in the land since millennium BC. After the establishment of Muslim rule in Delhi, the Persian language begun to flourish in the region and gradually spread throughout the subcontinent. Urdu language developed mainly based on Persian. Bengal fell to Muslims in 1203 AD, which resulted in the replacement of the court language from Sanskrit to Persian. Muslim courts became a meeting place for both local and Iranian poets and intelligentsias during this period. The practice of Persian, Bengali, as well as Arabic as a religious language, begun to thrive promptly in the land. Many Sufis such as Nur Qutb-e Alam, Shaikh Sharafuddin Abu Tawwama contributed a lot in this process of development: the Bengali language and literature now received the full assistance of the Muslim rulers. The presence of more than 10000 Persian words in Bengali suggests a clear linguistic influence of Persian on the language. The proposed paper will attempt to elucidate the sequential developments of Persian language in the subcontinent and its impact on local vernacular languages.

Keywords: Linguistic influence, Persian, Bengali, South Asia, Bengal, Avesta, Rig-Veda

Introduction

South Asia, especially the subcontinent, has been in close contact with Iran for millennia. Over this period, both the lands have been influencing each other in many fields. Persian influences on South Asian languages and literature is an obvious phenomenon, which is evident in literary specimens related to ancient, medieval and modern periods. A number of Persian elements are present in most of the contemporary languages of South Asia, especially of the subcontinent, as a consequence of the prolonged cultivation of Persian with Medieval Indo-Muslim culture. Indeed, Safavi writes: “Mughal kings patronized Iranian poets and scholars and the impact of Persian culture and language is discernable on all aspects of intellectual and socio-cultural life of India. Indian officers and nobles employed at the

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court, wore Iranian dresses, spoke Persian language and enjoyed Persian poetry” (Safavi, 2006: ix). She continues: “From the East to West this synthesis of two cultures can be observed in architecture, painting, music, and poetry. Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, the Deccani mosques and mausoleums, Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s forts, many Gurdwaras, Akbar’s tomb at Sikandra and of course the *Tāj Mahal* are eye-catching examples of the Persian influence”(Ibid.). Jawharlal Nehru, regarding this historical and cultural relationship observes:

Among the many people races who have come in contact with and influenced India’s life and culture, the oldest and more persistent have been the Iranians. Indeed the relationship precedes even the beginning of Indo-Aryan civilization, for it was out of some common stock that the Indo-Aryans and the ancient Iranians diverged and took their different ways (Nehru, 1947: 112; cited in Billah, 2014: 25).

Lexicographic affinities and thematic likeness between the Avesta and the Rig-Veda as well as thematic and linguistic influences of Persian language and literature on South Asian languages and literature (such as Sanskrit, Prakrit, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali,) suggest an existence of a prolonged historical relations between Iran and South Asia. Persian not only helped the evolution and development of local vernacular languages, but also helped many literary traditions of South Asia, especially the romantic tradition, which got its form and shape either on the basis of the thematic influence of Persian literary sources or on the basis of the translation of Persian origins. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Shaping language, literature and culture

Languageⁱ, literature and culture shape the identity of the people of a particular region or locality. Generally speaking, the legacy of the development of a language is based on multiple processes of linguistic evolution throughout the history of the development of human civilization. A process of construction and deconstruction has always been taking place over this course of evolution (Billah, 2014: 56). Thus, we find many reminiscent elements or forms – pictorial (Egyptian hieroglyph), Cuneiform (Farsi Bastan), Avesta and Pahlavi in Iran, Vedic and Devanagari as well as Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramshas (corrupt languages) in India. Daily life communication, wit, desire, love, affection, emotion, and finally, relations among the people of a community actually procured the evolution process of dialects and languages and finally of literatures which has also been nurturing the identical culture of relevant groups of people or societies. This process was affected by experiences of the influx of people from varied destinations. People, since the initiation of human civilization, have been inherently migrating from one place to another on varied interests: a) travelling for better livelihood, b) for businesses, c) for invasion etc. All these factors had influences on linguistic development. In addition, transmigration is another very significant feature in the course of development and shifting from one paradigm to another. The emergence and development of language, literature and culture were not beyond this progression of metamorphosis.

Persian: Linguistic affiliation

Persian is one of the most influential languages of the West Iranian languages group, which includes those closely associated to the Persian languages of Dari and Tajik, the narrowly related languages of Luri, Bakhtiari, and Kumzari, and the non-Persian dialects available in Fars Province. The languages more remotely related to this group

include: Kurdish, spoken in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran; and Baluchi, spoken in Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Yet more vaguely related languages of the East Iranian group include: Yagnobi, spoken in Tajikistan, Pushto, spoken in Afghanistan; Ossete, spoken in North Ossetian, South Ossetian, and Caucasus. Other Iranian languages of note are Old Persian and Avestan, the sacred language of the Zoroastrians related to the Indo-European family of languages. Indo-Iranian languages are spoken in a widespread region, extending from parts of eastern Turkey and eastern Iraq to western India. The Indo-Aryan languages are the other main division of Indo-Iranian, in addition to Iranian, which included many languages of South Asia. This includes Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Assamese, Oriya, and Sindhi.

Gleason (1961) regarding the extent and intensity of Indo-European Language family observes:

Indo-European is the largest and most important language family, from the point of view of both the social importance of the major language in the group, and their interest to linguists. The term Indo-European is applied to the family of languages that spread initially throughout Europe and several parts of south Asia and that are in modern times used in every part of the world. This family is divided into several sub-families or branches or groups, each of which comprises several languages "(cited in Varshney, 1998: 403).

Persian, as one of the branches of Indo-European languages, has had a major linguistic and literary influence on South Asian Languages. Safavi remarks: "all Indian languages like Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, and Hindi etc. contain a great number of Persian words and phrases for which they have no synonym" (Safavi, 2006:ix). This paper, with a brief background of the origin and development of Persian Language and literature in Iran and South Asia, elucidates the linguistic impact of Persian on the languages of South Asia as well as of Bengal, exemplifying salient elements from both Persian and vernacular languages.

Development of Persian language and literature in Iran

We can initiate the present discussion through a statement on linguistic unity, delivered by William Jones during his historic lecture in 1786 AD, "The linguistic unity between Asia and Europe indicates that the speakers of these languages descended from common ancestors. The primitive unity of speech points to the primitive unity of race (Aryan and Aryan, 1998: 27)." Yet, I personally believe that this unity was developed more on the basis of a reciprocal principle that sometimes people of various lands or places come close to each other through struggle and conflict, or personal interests, as tourists or merchants. People got settled in the new land and on the basis of the requirement of their everyday lives they are mixing with locals over the ages, which resulted in the appearance of alien words in the languages of that locality. In addition, the influence of nature was also very active in this process. Very often the natural objects were being used by people as stimuli which made a confluence of adjustment and reconstruction, contesting the sublime challenges between the notion of the new settlers and the indigenous ambiance.

In my view, this process gave impetus to develop language, culture and society; and it is the real cause behind the linguistic unity. Therefore, it is hard to establish that the languages are being tracked back to one common ancestor as

marked by William Jones. It is possible that there might have been multiple sources behind the development of the languages throughout the development process. However, there is a necessity of substantial research to reach a conclusion on the issue.

The cases of Iranian Aryans also signify this reality. After their arrival on the plateau, they came across and at least partly displaced or absorbed local populations like Elamites, Kassites, and others, but the only local language about which we have abundant information is Elamite. So it is not unlikely that Elamite elements were incorporated in the Iranian Languages spoken on the plateau, especially that of the Persians, who took over administrative centres of the Elamites i.e., Anzan and Susa. But the number of these elements is very few. A number of Mesopotamian "culture words" are recognizable foreign words in Old Persian, like *dipi*, an inscription from Sumerian via Elamite, *tuppi* and *mashkā*- "inflated cow's hide" (used for ferrying) from Aramaic. Non-Iranian elements in Iranian languages hence shed little light on the migrations and contacts of the early Iranians (Erdosy, 1997:157).

However, there was an affirmative change in culture and language on the basis of co-existence among the new settlers: the Aryans and the local Iranian people. Consequently, a new language and new culture took shape in Iran. The process of the development of Persian language was basically based on the following four phases: (1) Avesta language (2) Old Persian (3) Middle Persian (4) Modern Persian.

Avesta language: Avesta received the status of a religious language since Zoroaster, the ancient religious Master and founder of the doctrine of Zoroastrianismⁱⁱ, who composed his book "*Kitāb-e-Avestā*" in this very language. This language originated in Media region of North Iran. According to historians, the monarchs of "Mad" community, ruled in Media area during the Pishdadi and Kiani eras,ⁱⁱⁱ were used to using this language (Nisary, 1328 HS: 1). Avesta contains various religious issues such as hymns dedicated to the God "Ahura Mazda", worship of the creator, positive reception for good deeds, condemnation of bad deeds and so on (*Tarikhe Adabiate Iran*, 1349 HS: 13 – 16).

Old Persian: This was a cuneiform system of writing. This language was in use and practice during the period of the Achaemenid kings around 550 BC. It was only for royal inscriptions; few people could read it. These are contained in the cuneiform inscriptions engraved on the rocks of Bisotun and *Naqsh-i-Rustam*, and on the walls and the massive columns of *Persepolis*. It is highly inflectional, and possesses most of the grammatical peculiarities of the Avesta, Sanskrit, and other ancient languages of the Indo-European family (Nisary, 1328 HS: 28).

Middle Persian: *Pahlavi* originated in Iran during Parthian (Ashkanide) era (249-226 BC). Basically, it was the simplified form of Avesta and Old Persian. So it has also been introduced as Middle Persian. Later, during the reign of Sassanid (226 BC-652AD) remarkable developments took place in pronunciation and form of this language. Innumerable lyrical compositions, diary, short stories, poems, songs and finally many epics of the kings and so on were available in Pahlavi, some eminent ones of which were later rendered into poetical composition in Persian by a group of Persian poets. Pieces worth mentioning of these kinds are *Khusrau va Shīrīn*, *Iskandarnāmah*,

Bahramnāmah, Rustamnāmah, and Haāar Dastān, a collection of a thousand stories of Sassanid era (Nisary, 1328 HS: 8).

Modern Persian: History reveals that after the fall of the reign of last Sassanid emperor Yazdgard III (634-652 AD), the Sassanid-introduced Pahlavi language, under the influence of Arabic, began to transform gradually into Persian. People's fascination towards Pahlavi language was reduced since it lacked Islamic spirits and beliefs. Hence, at that time many books of Pahlavi literature were abolished and by this way gradually, Pahlavi language became obsolete (Shafaq, 1974: 14, 105). The Arab Philologists, finally, tried to preserve the Pahlavi literary heritage and they took the initiative to replace the Pahlavi letters by Arabic alphabet. Due to the lack of some alphabetical substitutes to the Pahlavi alphabet, they made the later "Pe" (پ) by adding another two dots with "Be" (ب) and the letter "Che" (چ) by adding another two dots with "Zim" (ج) and the letter "Jhe" (جھ) by adding another two dots with "Je" (ج). Likewise, the letter "Gaf" (گ) by using another strait mark on "kaf" (ک). In this way, the Pahlavi alphabet was abolished and the Persian alphabet as well as Modern Persian language and literature were born.

Modern Persian: As language of common people

It is noteworthy that Pahlavi was not the language of the common people; the priest and the ruling classes mostly used it. But Persian became a language for common people within a very short period of time and spread over the land by the initiative of Arab and Persian poets, writers and linguists. That is why a revolutionary development of Persian literature took place within a few centuries of emergence of Islam in this land. In this regards Adriano V. Rossi observes:

Persian has acted as a superstratum for other Iranian languages on at least three occasions: during the Sasanian expansion, 3rd-4th century A.D.; at the time of the establishment of Arabo-Persian bureaucracy, 7th-9th century A.D.; during the introduction of a pan-Islamic scientific prose by Arabo-Persian bilingual scholars in the 10th-12th century A.D. (Rossi, 2013).

Persian was used as language of communication in the Middle Eastern regions, and South Asian countries approximately from 1000 AD to 1850 AD.

Modern Persian: As one of the languages of South Asia

Persian Language and literature entered into South Asia primarily through the sea-route: through the vessels and ships of the merchants who had been a regular contact from Bengal to Persia. Along with businessmen, Sufis and Dervishes, mendicants also used to come to the region to preach Islam centering *Khānqāh*, i.e. the seat of a Dervish, *Dargāh*, i.e. meeting palace of Sufi. Their daily lives, contacts with local people and their *murīdān* strongly influenced the spread of the language in the localities. In addition, the Sufis and Muslim intelligentsia, over the period of more than a millennium (since the introduction of Muslim rule in Sind by Muhammad bin Qasem in 711 AD) wrote countless literary texts, many of which are being preserved in the libraries across South Asia as well as in many important libraries of the world, as a huge treasure in the form of letters, autobiographies, books, dictionaries, learning texts, historical as well as geographical documents, Arts and calligraphies etc. Shaikh Sayyed Ali ibn Usman Hujwiry (R), Khawaja Muinuddin Chishti (R), Shaikh Bahauddin Zakarya Multani (R), Sayyed Ashraf Jahangir Simnani (R), Ami Sayyed

Ali Hamadani (R), Shaikh Jalauddin Tabrizi (R) etc. were among the most celebrated religious, spiritual and literary contributors to South Asian regions of the period. The first specimen of Persian text written in the region is *Kashful Mahjub* by Ali Ibn Usman Hujwiry who came to Lahore after 1040 AD and wrote the book (Billah, 1993: 186). Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi (R), renowned as Mujaddid-i Alfe Thani, Shah Wali Ullah Muhaddith Dehlavi (R), Abdul Haq Dehlavi (R), Abdul Aziz Muhaddith Dehlavi (R), Qasem Nantavi (R), Rashid Ahmad Gangui (R), Hedayatullah Sahrampuri (R), were among the personalities who wrote their various texts in Persian which had a remarkable influence on the Sufis and intellectuals throughout the subcontinent (Billah, 1993: 187; *Mīrath-i Jāvīdān*, Vol, I, 1370 HS: 12). It is worth mentioning that Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi (*Mujaddid-i Alfe Thānī*) used to maintain contact with his followers as well as intellectuals all over the South Asia, which later appeared as a printed book completely in Persian with the title of *Maktūbāte Rabbānī* (*Islāmī Vishvakosh* (Encyclopedia of Islam), 1986, Vol. I: 478; Vol. II: 238).

Secondly, after the fall of the Subcontinent and finally of South Asia to Muslim rulers, Persians reached the region and flourished gradually over the land which led to the development of Persian literature (Billah, 1993: 187-198). During the period of Mughal rule in the subcontinent, the culture and education of land was remarkably influenced by the Persian language. During this period, more or less all local languages of the region have been influenced by Persian in both Indian literature and the speech of the common people. Hence, South Asia appeared to be the cradle of Persian language and culture in one hand, and it also became influential on the vernacular languages and literature on the other. In 1837, Persian was replaced by English by enacting a degree by the then British rulers. Until 1837 AD, Persian was a spoken language for the people from Sind to Bengal. In addition, it was used among the regional people as the common language among them, while the local languages differed from group to group and the people had various dialects throughout the South Asia. This issue will be addressed in later sections of this paper.

Persian and South Asian languages

South Asia, the vast region of the Indian subcontinent, is characterized by great linguistic diversity. The diversity of indigenous spoken languages has, however, always been well-adjusted by the corresponding use of trans-regional standard languages in religious and secular as well as literature royal administration. During the initial period of Indic civilization, the standard language was Sanskrit, conserved by the Brahminical elite as an erudite classical language, a task which it continues to preserve in the religious perspective of traditional Hinduism (Shackle, 2012).

Persian language, with its spiritual might and literary splendor, mesmerized and enthralled the people of South Asia even, as it has been mentioned above, since long before the establishment of Muslim rule over the land. Yet, the initiation of Muslim rule in the region changed the entire course of history such that, from then on, Persian became the court language by replacing Sanskrit. As a court language, Persian appeared to be the most influential language and Sanskrit gradually lost its glory. People from various communities, including the Hindus, had begun to learn Persian to maintain social and official status. Persian, for the first time, appeared as the major language of administrative, literary and cultural traditions in the Ghaznavid dynasty in Lahore. The presence of thousands of Iranians in Ghaznavid army brought the Persian language, culture and custom to this land, which resulted in the strengthening of the

existing historical relations between the people of Iran and South Asia. During this period, Lahore became renowned as the Centre for knowledge, Literature, Arts and Gnosticism (Billah, 1993: 187). The victory of Sultan Shahabuddin Ghorī over the Indian King Prithviraj Chauhan at the battle of *Tarain* in 1192 AD brought the Persian language from Lahore to Delhi. The commanders of Ghoriid Dynasty extended their victories up to Bengal. During this period onwards, Persian language, literature and Muslim culture became influential over the most important parts of South Asia through the continuing immigration of Muslims from Central Asia and the larger Persian world of Iran. This trend was continued by the periods of succeeding Khalji (1290-1330 AD), Tughlaq (1330-1414AD), Lodi (1489-1517AD), and Mughal (1526 – 1857AD) dynasties (Billah, 1993: 178-194).

The main position of Persian in the Mughal Indian education system confirmed its extensive diffusion as a pan-Indian standard language amongst the native elite and court officials and other service classes, including significant groups of Hindus along with Muslims. Mughal Persian was somewhat distinguished from the Persian of Iran both by the influence of Indian languages, and by its greater conservatism. This Indo-Persian influence remained culturally dominant until the consolidation of British rule in the 19th century, which led to its substantial replacement by English, the transnational elite language of all the countries of modern South Asia (Shackle, 2012).

The natural feature and linguistic survey suggests a noticeable presence of Persian elements in the various languages of the South Asia. Linguistic interactions have obviously been greatest between Persian and the Indo-Aryan languages (Ibid.; see also Cardona and Jain, 2003) of the northern plains which are linguistically associated with Iranian language, chiefly the languages of the northwestern regions like Panjabi and Sindhi; these languages are included in the Indo-Iranian Linguistic group (Shackle, 2012). On the whole, the exchange of Persian elements reduces with progressive distance from that border, whether towards the south, where Persian elements are markedly less prominent in Marathi than in Gujarati, or towards Bengali at the eastern end of the vast Indo-Aryan area. Persian elements are unsurprisingly much less well represented in the Dravidian languages spoken in Indian Peninsula.

As mentioned earlier, during the earliest centuries of Muslim rule in South Asia, Persian language and culture became most influential. People from varied interests had begun to learn Persian language as well, as to become familiar with Persian arts and cultures. Hence, a *Lingua franca* thrived, amalgamating Persian elements with an Indian linguistic base, which has been recognized as a combination deriving from the indigenous dialects of the Lahore-Delhi region. In this regards Christopher Shackle observes:

This mixed *lingua franca* is conveniently given the traditional label “Hindustani,” in distinction from “Urdu” (q.v.), defined as the highly Persianized language of the elite which evolved from it as a literary language written in the Persian script, first in Hyderabad and the Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan and then in Delhi, Lucknow, and other centers of Muslim courtly culture in northern India (Shackle, 2012).

Persian is most prominent in formal Urdu, remarkably present in the North and West Indian languages such as Sindhi or Gujarati or Punjabi, especially by the Muslim speakers. Hindustani has itself acted as a medium for the transmission of Persian loan

words into other Indo-Aryan languages (Steever, 1998: 237). Except for Telegu, Persian elements are, however, rather thin in other Dravidian languages, although Brahui is an exception (cf. Rossi, 1979):

Around two third Brahui speakers are bilaterally bilingual in Brahui and Baluchi, Brahui developed getting elements from several South Asian languages. As per the conservative estimate, roughly 35 percent is of Persian/Arabic origin, chiefly through Indo-Aryan or Baluchi (Elfenbein, 1989).

However, Persian, along with English, still provides the Indo-Aryan languages with their most significant set of non-Indian elements.

Persian elements in South Asian languages

Following the overall contextual discussion above it will be befitting to address the issues related to the Persian influence on the phonology and the morphology and syntax of South Asian languages, before concluding with a study of the major Persian impact on vocabulary.

Phonology: Phonological similarities have enhanced the assimilation of Persian loans into South Asian languages. In terms of the 10 vowel system, Indo-Persia, like Indo-Aryan, is phonologically conservative. It also retains the *majhūl* vowels *ē* and *ō*. While Indo-Aryan vowels are *a ā e i ī u ū ē ai ō au* the modern Persian vowels are *a ā e i o e [i] ey [u] ow*). In terms of word phonology, also, modern Indo-Aryan shares the Persian preference for simple patterns of the CVCVC form. In the case of consonantal account, fricatives are less well represented in Indo-Aryan than in Iranian. It is the effect of Persian which predominantly accounts for the existence in contemporary South Asian languages of *z, sh, f* (for which *j, s, ph* normally substitutes everyday speech). Unlike the recognitions *kh, g, k* characteristics of common speech, Persian phonemes *k̄, ġ, q* is a mark of exclusive speech in Urdu and other languages (Shackle, 2012).

Morphology and syntax: Like Persian, the Indo-Aryan languages are of the same subject-object-verb (SOV) type, with the verb placed at the end of the sentence. Indo-Aryan has, however, the order modifier-noun-postposition within the construction of the noun phrase while the Persian order preposition-noun-modifier, with elements typically linked by the *eżāfe*. Hence, Urdu *mazīd imdād kē taur par* “by way of additional assistance” versus Indo-Persian *ba-taur-i imdād-i mazīd*. The Persian type noun phrases are quite generously used in Modern Urdu. Persian *khwāneh barā-ē farūsh*, translating English “house for sale,” or *sāzemān-ē malal* “United Nations” versus Hindi *samyukt rāšṭr*, with preceding adjective. The use of inflected Persian nominal forms, e.g., noun plurals in *-ān* or (less commonly) *-hā* or superlative adjectives in *-tarīn* is typically restricted to phrases of this type. But, Persian comparative *tar* and superlative *tarīn* are being used more frequently in Urdu (see Shackle, 2012). Regarding the characteristics of more elaborate syntax, Shackle remarks:

The use over many centuries of Indo-Persian as a formal standard language characterized by a more elaborate syntax than the typical parataxis of Indo-Aryan is reflected in the ubiquitous borrowing of Indo-Persian *ki* “that” to introduce reported speech, as well as in numerous other conjunctions, illustrated by such Urdu examples

as *lēkin* “but,” *bā īn hama* “nevertheless,” *čūnki* “because,” *bā-wujūdē-ki* “in spite of the fact that,” for all of which Sanskritic substitutions are plentifully represented in other languages (Shackle, 2012).

As seen above, Urdu language, in comparison to other languages of South Asia, has been influenced more by the Persian language. Many Persian books such as *Laylī va Majnūn*, *Shīrīn va Farhād*, and *Yūsuf va Zulaikhā*, *Gūlstān*, *Bustān*, *Mathnavī*, etc. have been translated into Urdu language. Many Urdu poets such as Mirza Ghalib, Wali, Mir, Sauda and Insha used the Persian vocabularies extensively in their poems.

Many Urdu infinitives (مصدر) are formed using Persian infinitives (مصدر) – by replacing the Persian verb marker *dan* (دن) into *nā* (نا). For example: Persian *kardān* (کردن) is formed as *karnā* (کرنا). Accordingly, many Urdu compound verbs formed using Persian compound verbs – simply by replacing the Persian verb marker *dan* (دن) into *nā* (نا). For example:

	Persian		Urdu	English
	<i>Safar karndān</i>	(سفر کردن)	سفر کرنا	to travel
	<i>Negāh kardān</i>	(نگاه کردن)	نگاه کرنا	to look
	<i>Salam kardān</i>	(سلام کردن)	سلام کرنا	to say
salam				
	<i>Qabūl kardān</i>	(قبول کردن)	قبول کرنا	to accept
	<i>Raham kardān</i>	(رحم کردن)	رحم کرنا	to
compassionate				
	<i>Shak kardān</i>	(شک کردن)	شک کرنا	to suspect
	<i>Mahrūm kardān</i>	(محروم کردن)	محروم کرنا	to deprive

It is worth mentioning that many of these types of verbs or compound verbs are being used in Hindi with the Hindi script. Urdu language is written in a modified script following Perso-Arabic scripts, whereas Hindi is written in the Devanagari script. The main difference between Hindi and Urdu is Urdu usage of Perso-Arabic elements while Hindi, on the other hand, in many respects those from Sanskrit, or the Apabhramsha derived from Sanskrit. Bahri notes that “the most important influence of Persian on Hindi, it has been recognized, was the growth and development of Urdu language and literature (Bahri, 1960:9).” Like Urdu, significant numbers of Persian words are available in Hindi language used among the people in South Asian society as well as in other parts of the world

In addition, many other Indian languages such as Gujarati, Telugu, and Punjabi have been influenced by Persian language during the period of Muslim rule in the subcontinent. Many Iranian texts and books have been translated into Gujarati, Telugu, and Punjabi languages. Today, the impact of Persian language can be seen in written and spoken languages and Persian words still exist in Bengali, Gujarati, Telugu, and Punjabi etc. A selection of corresponding words as well as word-phrases will be enumerated in the following sections.

Vocabulary: Thousands of vocabularies as loanwords are unequivocally found in South Asian languages. These naturally include Persian as well as Arabic and Turkish words borrowed through Persian and words of Persian etymological origin. Some common vocabularies used in Urdu (many of such words are also used in

Hindi, Bengali, and Assamese etc.) will be listed categorically as per their usages in in different occasions below:

Words related to –

- a. religion – Islam like like *namāz* “prayer,” *masjid* (> popular *masīt*) “mosque,” *pīr* “Sufi master,”
- b. distinctive Muslim practices like the eating of meat, as in *gōsh* “meat,” *qaṣāī* (probably) “butcher,”
- c. the preference for tailored clothes, e.g., *qamīz* (< *qamīṣ*) “shirt,” *pājāma* “trousers,” *qaincī* “scissors,” *darzī* “tailor.”
- d. the urban orientation like *shahr* “city,” *bāzār* (> popular *bazār*) “market,”
- e. education by words like *kāgāḍ* “paper,” *qalam* “pen,” *siyāhī* “ink.”
- f. administration, e.g., *bādshāh* “king,” *zila* “district,” *qānūn* “law,” *fauj* “army,”
- g. to form nominal compounds with simple formants like *karnā* “to do” for transitives and *hōnā* “to be” for intransitives, e.g., Urdu *shurū* ‘*karnā* “to begin (trans.),” *shuru* ‘*hōnā* “to begin (intrans.)”
- h. in the choice of marker, e.g., Urdu *khānā* “to eat” in *shikast khānā* “to be defeated,” reflecting Persian *shekast kardan*,
- i. in honorific formations as Urdu *far-māiyē* “please say” or *tashrif rakhiyē* “please sit down,” which keep to characterize the role of Persian in South Asia as the linguistic symbol of the modification related to the courteous traditions of Indo-Muslim culture (see Shackle, 2012).

Some more Iranian words which are commonly used in Urdu, Sindhi, Punjabi, Hindi, Bengali, Assamese etc. are as follows:

- a. Words relating to the name of the male and female names: Hushang, Kaiqubad, Nur Zahan, Khan Bahadur.
- b. Some names of Hindu People are also found completely in Persian like’ Chaman Lal, Sher Bahadur, Lal Bahadur, Rawshan Lal.
- c. Some names of Shikh people are following the same process such as: Gulab Sing, Iqbal Sing, Khushwant Sing, etc.
- d. Words relating to the body-organs: *jegar*, *pahlū*, *badan*
- e. Words relating to relatives: *dāmad*, *shādī*, *hamzulf*, *shawhar*.
- f. Words relating to name of the foods: *sabjī*, *koftah*, *biryānī*.
- g. Words relating to the garments: *ackān*, *Jobbā*, *chādor*, *poshāk*.
- h. Words relating to place: *Aḥmedābād*, *Ḥaidarābād*, *Punjāb*, *Habigānj*, *Rāmpūr*.
- i. Words relating to arts and crafts: *takht*, *tāk*, *kursī*, *dalān*.
- j. Words relating to kitchen: *tasht*, *sīnī*, *dīgh*.
- k. Words relating to fruits: *sharīfe*, *ānār*, *angūr*, *sīb*.
- l. Name of the flowers: *zafrān*, *gulāb*, *chenār*, *henā*.
- m. Words relating to behaviour and custom: *bī hayā*, *aḥmaq*, *baddhāt*.
- n. Words relating to inspiration: *khushāmdīd*, *zindāhbād*.

Apart from this, some Persian Proverbs are also used in Indian languages like: *be salāmat rave O bāj auye*, *himmate mardān madade Khudā*, *jāyi ustād khālī ast*, *gurbe kushtan rūzī awwal*, *dīvar ham gūsh dārad*, *yak anār va —ad bimār*.

[*Translation: Go with a good health, and come back, the will/efforts of men is the help of God, the place of the Professor is empty. Kill the cat in the first day, the wall has also ear. One diner and a hundred patients.*]

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that there is a clear linguistic influence of Persian on South Asian languages. The historical and cultural as well as political relations between the two great lands constitute this influence, which was started primarily by the traders and Sufis and finally by the initiation of Muslim rule in South Asia. The official influence of Persian was started with the establishment of Muslim Rule in Delhi and ended with the fall of the Muslims to the British. For over eight centuries, Persian played an influential role in south Asia. Over this vast period, Persian had an impact on many languages and literatures such as Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujarati, and various cultures of South Asia.

Bengali language flourished within the domain of Persian-influenced Islamic culture. We find in the above-cited examples that Persian and Bengali are very close to each other, and their affinities are very apparent in both formation of words and making sentences. Bengali language, nowadays, has reached the modern period. Yet, we can still observe the usage of thousands of Persian words in Bengali and many other South Asian languages like Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu, Assamese, Sindhi etc. language and literature. The copies of translated books from Persian into local languages as well as thousands of manuscripts written in Persian in South Asia are being preserved in regional libraries and many other libraries throughout the world.

This study concurs with the historical point of one of the most renowned South Asian scholars, Jawharlal Nehru:

The Persian language, like French in Europe, became the languages of cultured people across wide stretches of Asia. Iranian art and culture spread from Constantinople in the west right up to the edge of Gobi Desert (Nehru, 1947: 113).

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ⁱ Language is human speech, either spoken or written. It comes from Latin word *lingua*, meaning *tongue*. And a language still is often called a *tongue* [*The World Book Encyclopaedia*, 1990, vol. 12: 64]. The makeup of language includes (1) a sound-pattern, (2) words, and (3) grammatical structure. The makeup of a language does not remain the same over long period of time. Grammar and vocabulary as well as sound – patterns all change with usage over the period. Most scholars believe that language developed very slowly from sounds, such as: grunts, barks, and hoots, made by pre-human creatures. The first real evidence of language is writing. But scholars believe that writing did not appear until thousands of years after the origin of spoken language. The earliest known written records are Sumerian word – pictures made about 3500 B.C. and Egyptian hieroglyphics [*The World Book Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 9: 227] that date from about 3000 B.C. Written Chinese dates from perhaps 1500 B.C., Greek from about 1400 B.C. and Latin from about 500 B.C. [*The World Book Encyclopaedia*, 1990, Vol. 12: 65-66]. And Persian from about 660-1500 B.C. [Dehkhoda, 1956-1979, Vol. I: 27-28] and Bengali from about 975-1026 A.D. [Anissuzzaman, 1987: 393].

ⁱⁱ Zoroastrianism is a religion founded between 1400-1000 B.C. by a Persian Prophet named Zoroaster. Zoroaster is the Greek form of the Persian name Zartosht or Zardosht. He is also known as Zarathustra, which means Golden Star or Golden Light. Zoroastrianism teaches a belief in one God, Ahura Mazda, who created all things. Devout people must seek and obey Ahura Mazda, who will judge everyone at the end of worldly time after their bodies have been resurrected. (*The World Book Encyclopedia*, op.cit, Vol. 21, P. P. 619-621)

ⁱⁱⁱ Pishdadi era-Monarchs worth mentioning were: Kiumars, Zamshed and Zohak; Kiani era- Monarchs worth mentioning were: Kaikaus, Kaikobad, Kaikhasraw and great valiant hero Rostam. It is mentionable that the appropriate time period of the above mentioned two eras and correct details of events could not be determined properly and, as such, historians provided only some serialized narrations. Basically, historical evaluations are available from Hakhamanshi (Achaemenid) era (from 550 BC).