

## GRAMMATICAL GENDER AND ITS EFFECTS ON COGNITION: THE CASE OF PASHTO BILINGUAL SPEAKERS

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### *Abstract*

*This paper is an attempt to explore the relationship between words and their gender in the two gendered languages: Pashto and Urdu. Gender is an issue that has long preoccupied linguists and puzzled language learners. The opposite grammatical gender differences between Pashto and Urdu languages affect the way Pashto bilingual speakers speak Urdu language. These differences are reflected in the syntax of utterances when Pashto speakers speak Urdu. The researchers used the mixed method, relying both on quantitative and qualitative approaches as a list of 20 words with opposite grammatical gender, including both natural and artificial objects, was created. The purpose was to test whether the grammatical gender of the first language affects the way of speaking in another language. So, Pashto bilingual speakers were asked to make sentences first in Pashto and then in Urdu. The results obtained from the analysis of the data show that gender is dictated by the general morphological and phonological patterns of a language, and that it goes ahead of suffixes or word endings. This in turn gives support to Sapir Whorf's hypothesis that grammatical gender of first language affects the cognition of bilingual speakers when they speak in another language, specifically when these languages have opposite grammatical gender, in this case, Pashto and Urdu.*

**Keywords:** grammatical gender, bilingualism, cognition, syntax.

## 1. Introduction

It was in the mid of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when Sapir Whorf hypothesis made a strong claim that the language that people use, determines their world view. But it went out of favor when Chomsky and his followers came up with the innate theory. However, recent research in the field of relationship between language and thought has rekindled interest in the Whorfian hypothesis. The concept of time, space and color perception varies across languages, and it has offered a lot for the research work in these areas. Similarly, languages of the world organize nouns into classes in different ways. Grammatical system across the world languages is not the same. There are differences in the ways these languages assign genders to objects; to the natural objects and the artifacts. Moreover, there are languages where the grammatical gender is restricted to masculine and feminine genders, but there are some others in which the speakers are also required to assign neuter, vegetative and other more obscure genders (Boroditsky et al. 2003, p. 63-64). This phenomenon is interesting in the sense that the speakers of gendered languages have to mark, not only the objects according to their gender, but they are also supposed to adjust the articles, adjectives and even verbs and auxiliaries to agree in gender with nouns. These issues raise questions like: Could marking objects as masculine and feminine also influence people thinking while talking in another language? How far does the opposite grammatical gender of language affect the syntax when the speakers produce sentences in another language? These questions need to be addressed and the present study is an attempt in this regard. The languages selected for the present study are Pashto and Urdu.

Pashto language makes a sharp contrast with Urdu language in terms of classifying inanimate objects into masculine and feminine. For example, in Pashto language, those words which end with /a:/ sound are feminine in grammatical gender but they are masculine in Urdu language. Such types of words are also different in their morphological structures, especially with the extended ending in Pashto language.

## 2. Significance of the Study

Grammatical gender system among languages of the world is one of the most significant areas which have been the focus of research in linguistics. Undoubtedly, the diversity among languages in terms of languages has provided a wide scope for research. However, there is a paucity of research on our local languages. Cultural

similarities among the speakers notwithstanding, Pashto and Urdu languages stand in strong contrast specifically in terms of grammatical gender. It is significant to note that Pashto speakers are sometimes made fun of by Urdu native speakers or Punjabi speakers because of grammatical deviation when they speak in Urdu. However, no research has been carried out so far in this regard. The present research is an attempt to identify the areas where grammatical gender of native language could influence speaking in the second language.

### **3. Delimitation**

Grammatical gender is a vast area that can be explored in a variety of ways. For example, there are ways in which the speakers of the two languages are studied simultaneously. They are tested in both linguistic and non-linguistic tasks. However, keeping in view the scope of research, the present study is delimited to Pashto and Urdu languages only. Similarly, this study is delimited to grammatical gender of 20 Pashto words and their equivalent Urdu words as used by Pashto bilingual speakers in the respective languages.

### **4. Research questions**

1. To what extent is the conceptual grammatical gender of Pashto bilingual speaker reflected in the sentence making in Urdu language?
2. How far is the syntax of the sentence affected because of the gender differences between the two languages?

### **5. Literature Review**

Grammatical gender assigned to names may appear arbitrary. In this context, Mark Twain describes an interesting case of German language where a young girl is grammatically without gender, whereas a turnip has a gender (as cited in Hartmann, 2004, p. 4). Similarly, a tree is masculine, but its sprouts are feminine, and its leaves are genderless. Moreover, in animals' species, horses have no sex, but dogs are masculine in gender and cats are feminine, including tomcats (Boroditsky et al 2003, p. 64). But still, it is debatable whether people think about grammatical gender as something meaningful? According to Boroditsky et al, the majority of philosophers especially the young philosophers agree on the point that the fundamental attributes of the objects are reflected in the grammatical gender systems of languages... (p.64). Boroditsky's argument has been supported by the research work conducted in different languages. Konishi (1993) opposes the claim that grammatical gender is

meaningless. She argues that the research on grammatical gender indicates that grammatical gender has affective meanings of femininity and masculinity in the Greek language.

It has been found that the connection between word form and its related gender is mainly based on the morphological and phonological components of a word ending. To test native speakers' attitudes towards the role of noun endings in gender of objects, various studies have been conducted in different languages. For example, Forbes, Poulin-Dubois, Rivero and Sera (2008) tested French-English bilingual speakers in a non-linguistic activity to find out grammatical gender impacts bilinguals' cognition of gender. Similarly, Vigliocco, Vinson, Paganelli and Dworzynski (2005) examined the cognitive significance of grammatical gender of Italian nouns denoting animals.

One feature of grammatical gender is its relationship to meaning. Grammatical gender affects meaning as people assign grammatical gender to objects, they keep in mind some attribute of that object that may render it as masculine or feminine. For instance, if 'sun' is masculine in a language such as Urdu, one might conceive it in terms of associating it with masculine properties. Like the object 'sun' is feminine in another language such as Pashto, people may focus on associating stereotypically feminine qualities to the sun like warming and nourishing.

In this connection, Slobin (1996) is of the view that even when people learn grammatical gender of nouns, still their native language may affect their thought. For example, when speaking about objects, people may need to assign definite articles to mark their gender. In some languages, the speaker needs to alter auxiliaries as well as main verbs according to the grammatical gender of the noun he/she uses in the sentence. This argument also applies to Pashto language where /*da*/ is used as auxiliary after feminine noun whereas /*dae*/ is used after a masculine noun. But the question arises; does talking about the grammatical gender of objects as if they are masculine and feminine, actually make people think about them as masculine or feminine? Preliminary evidence suggests that it may. As Boroditsky et al refer to Jakobson (1966) who states that in a study Russian speakers invariably personified the days of the week as females when they were asked to personify them, although they did not explicitly explain the reason as to why they did so.

All these studies have shown that speakers' conceptual gender associated with the native language is also reflected in their thinking for speaking in another language. Acknowledging that experience with a language influences thought in a broader sense, need examining cross-linguistic differences, particularly in linguistic specific tasks. In the present study, Pashto bilingual speakers are examined to find out how they use words of opposite grammatical gender by making sentences in Pashto and Urdu. The purpose of the study is to analyze whether the grammatical gender of Pashto words also affect the speakers' thinking when they speak in Urdu language. This approach allows the researcher a chance to assess the effect of participants' native language on their thinking in a more meaningful way.

## 6. Pashto language and its grammatical gender classification

Pashto has long been acknowledged as the most important language of North-West Frontier Province of British India, now Pakistan, says Mackenzie (cited in Bernard Comrie, 1987 p. 547). Pashto is spoken by ninety percent of the total population in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to Mackenzie, Pashto language became popular in the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, at the time of Mughal rule. Mackenzie is of the view that the writing system of Pashto language, "has always been written in Persio-Arabic, with certain modified letters to represent the peculiar consonant phonemes of Pashto". However, he states that some modifications have occurred since the time it became a national language of Afghanistan. (p.552-553). Grammatical gender classification in Pashto is not similar to the gender classification of animate objects in the sense that the former is well defined whereas the latter seems to be arbitrary. As Bukhari (n.d.) is of the view that the grammatical gender of inanimate objects is unreal but he acknowledges that it existed since the time Pashto language was known.

It is also true about the names assigned to different objects are analyzed in terms of morphological as well as phonological components. This is quite helpful for the categorization of objects as masculine and feminine. For the identification of feminine objects, the following principles have to be taken into account:

- Those names of objects which end with *ai* sound will be considered as **feminine** like *spogmai* (moon), *tokrai*(basket), *dodai*(meal) *saplai* (sandals), *marghai* (bird), etc.

- Those names of objects which end with *alaf*, like *zharah* (weeping) *khanda*(laughter) *bala* (calamity), *saza* (punishment), *jaza* (reward).
- Those names of objects which end with *ha*, like *veena* (blood), *khatta* (soil), *khaza* (wife), *lakhtah*(stick), *malga* (salt). However, there are some exceptional cases for some words. These include such words that end with long *yae* where this rule could not be applied.
- Those names of objects which end with inactive *wao* like *zango* (cradle), *chendro* (hip-hop), etc.
- Names of quality which end with *ee* like *dosti* (friendship), *naiki* (virtue), *wrori* (brotherhood) and there can be many other examples.

For the identification of **masculine objects**, the following principles have to be taken into account:

- Those names of objects which end with soft *ha* like, *weekhta* (hair), *zrhah* (heart), etc. Words like *charhah* (knife), *khola* (mouth), *tiara* (darkness) have an exception from this rule.
- Names of objects which end with long *yae* are also considered to be masculine. Words like *kanrhae* (stone) and *largae* (wood) are the examples.
- Those names of objects which end with *maroof wao* like *jadoo* (magic), *kandoo* (digging), and *Bhadon* (name of the month that comes between Sawan and Assu).
- Those names which end with *wao* and have *aw* sound at the last syllable such as *kandaw* (slope), *pilaw* are masculine.

## 7. Urdu language and its grammatical gender classification

Urdu is not only the national language but it also acts as a binding source in the sense that it connects the speakers with their different local languages. Its writing system starts from right to left in the Perso-Arabic script. But apart from the influence of Arabic and Persian languages, it has also borrowed from Turkish and English. Urdu has a free word order and follows the SOV syntactic pattern. The grammatical gender system in Urdu is different from English. linguistically speaking it makes the system of noun classes. Like Pashto language, here too, nouns are either masculine or feminine i.e. *Muzekke* and *Muennis* in Urdu respectively. The first is called ‘marked’ and the second ‘unmarked’. “There are, therefore, four

categories of nouns, masculine marked, masculine unmarked, feminine marked and feminine unmarked” (Shafi, n.d., p. 1).

Grammatical gender is arbitrary, but the biological one can be determined by the sexes of the living things; for example, /*mān*/, /*bāp*/ (mother, father). There are some other cases in which the female gender is used to suggest the smallness of the things. These include /*churha*/ dagger, /*churi*/, small knife, /*dabbah*/ /*dabbi*/, /*paharh*/, /*paharhi*/.

## 8. Theoretical Framework

The idea that thought is shaped by language is attributed to Benjamin Lee Whorf. Indeed, the strong version of the hypothesis has long been discarded. However, Slobin (1996) proposed that language and *thought* be substituted with *speaking* and *thinking* and *thinking* be replaced with *speaking*. This replacement seems quite useful as it allows us to differentiate between linguistic and non-linguistic thought. But there is a point beyond thinking for speaking: the habits which are developed as a result of speaking a particular language are manifested even when the speakers are not planning to speak in that language (Slobin, 1996). How do then particular languages exert influence over other types of thinking? Research on how people conceptualize more abstract domains like time has revealed significant cross-linguistic differences in thought (Boroditsky, 2001). These results are opposite in the sense that they show universality in color perception, but diversity in thinking about time needs to be explained. Furthermore, physical experience does not restrict such perception and changes freely among languages.

## 9. Collection of Data

To test what qualities the speakers of Pashto and Urdu languages associate with objects of opposite gender in the two languages, firstly, a list of 20 words was created by the researchers. 10 Pashto bilingual speakers were selected. Their first language was Pashto but they could speak Urdu fluently. The participants were asked to use these words by making Pashto sentences. Secondly, the same words with their Urdu equivalents were used by those participants in Urdu sentences. The selected words included names both natural and artificial objects. The purpose was to add variety to the collection of data. The data was analyzed in terms of gender differences and their effect specifically on the syntax of Urdu language.

## 10. Methodology

The researchers used the mixed method, relying both on quantitative and qualitative approaches. A List of 20 words was created. The selected words were opposite in

gender in Pashto and Urdu languages. Firstly, the Pashto bilingual speakers were asked to make sentences in Pashto and then in Urdu. The participants were not informed about the purpose of using sentences to arouse their natural response as well as to achieve authentic and meaningful results. The list of words with gender assignment in Pashto and Urdu is shown in the table. The table also contains both Pashto/Urdu sentences.

No	English	Pashtu	Urdu	Sentences in Pashto	Sentences in Urdu
1.	Rain	<i>Baraan</i> (M)	<i>Baarish</i> (F)	<i>Da Shpae Baraan</i> <i>shawae dae</i>	<i>Raat ko barish hwa</i> <i>hai</i>
2	Life	<i>Zhwand</i> (M)	<i>Zindgi</i> (F)	<i>Zhwand domra</i> <i>asaan na dae</i>	<i>Zindagi itna asan</i> <i>nahe</i>
3	Death	<i>Marg</i> (M)	<i>Mawt</i> (F)	<i>Marg akhir</i> <i>ratlonkae dae</i>	<i>Mawt akhir ana hai</i>
4	Fire	<i>Oar</i> (M)	<i>Aag</i> (F)	<i>Oar bal sho</i>	<i>Aag jal gia</i>
5	Spring	<i>Sparlae</i> (M)	<i>Bahaar</i> (F)	<i>Chaman ka bahar</i> <i>raghae</i>	<i>Chaman ma bahar</i> <i>aya hai</i>
6	Sunlight	<i>Nmar</i> (M)	<i>Dhoop</i> (F)	<i>Bahar nmar</i> <i>rakhatae dae</i>	<i>Bahar dhoop nikla</i> <i>hai</i>
7	Marriage	<i>Wada</i> (M)	<i>Shadi</i> (F)	<i>Zama pakwah wada</i> <i>shawae dae</i>	<i>Mara shadi kab ka</i> <i>hwa hai</i>
8	Lamp	<i>Dewa</i> (F)	<i>Charagh</i> (M)	<i>Tha dewa mrha krha</i>	<i>Aap na charagh</i> <i>buja dia</i>
9	Charpoy	<i>Kat</i> (M)	<i>Charpai</i> (F)	<i>Da kat loai dae</i>	<i>Yae charpai barha</i> <i>hai</i>



10	Sleep	<i>Khoab</i> (M)	<i>Neend</i> (F)	<i>Mala khob raghae</i>	<i>Muja neend agia</i>
11	Salt	<i>Malga</i> (F)	<i>Namak</i> (M)	<i>Da kama malga da</i>	<i>Yae kawnsi namak hai</i>
12	Pillar	<i>Stan</i> (F)	<i>Satoon</i> (M)	<i>Da stan ghatta da</i>	<i>Yae satoon barhe hai</i>
13	Bus	<i>Bus</i> (M)	<i>Bus</i> (F)	<i>Bus raghae</i>	<i>Bus agia</i>
14	Proverb	<i>Matal</i> (M)	<i>Kahawat</i> (F)	<i>Da dacha matal dae</i>	<i>Yae kahawat kis ka hai</i>
15	Ego	<i>Ghairat</i> (F)	<i>Ghairat</i> (M)	<i>Ghairat dar loai sifat dae</i>	<i>Ghairat bahut barha sifat hai</i>
16	Hope	<i>Umed</i> (M)	<i>Umed</i> (F)	<i>Zama loai umed dae</i>	<i>Muja barha umaid hai</i>
17	Obligation	<i>Minat</i> (M)	<i>Minnat</i> (F)	<i>Da cha minat nadae kawal pakar</i>	<i>Kisi ka minnat nahe karna chahia</i>
18	Garlic	<i>Ooga</i> (F)	<i>Lehsan</i> (M)	<i>Zama Ooga khwakha da</i>	<i>Muja lehsan achi lagti hai</i>
19	Curd	<i>Masta</i> (F)	<i>Dahi</i> (M)	<i>Masta trawa di</i>	<i>Dahi katti hai</i>
20	Wall	<i>Dewal</i> (F)	<i>Dewar</i> (M)	<i>da dewal loi dae</i>	<i>Yae dewar lamba hai</i>

### 11. Data Analysis

1. The word *baraan* consists of two syllables. The first syllable consists of *ba* sound and the second syllable consists of *raan* that ends up with consonant *n* which is

pronounced as *noon*. It is interesting to note that *baraan* (rain) is masculine in Pashto but the word cloud (*wriaz*), is feminine. The equivalent of *baraan* is *barish* in Urdu which shares the first syllable *ba* with the Pashto word *baraan*. But *barish* is feminine in Urdu. The Pashto speaker used the word *baraan* as masculine by using the auxiliary *dae* at the end of the sentence. He uttered the statement in Urdu by using the verb *huwa hai* instead of *hui hai*. It means that he used the masculine grammatical gender of Pashto language in Urdu sentence instead of using Urdu grammatical gender as commonly used by Urdu speakers.

2. The word 'life' is translated as *zhwand* in Pashto and its equivalent in Urdu is *zindgi*. The initial *zee* sound is the same in both languages. However, the word *zhwand* is consistently used as masculine in Pashto. The Pashto speaker uttered a sentence using the word *zhwand* with adjective *asaan* and auxiliary *dae*. The word *itna* was used as the adverb of quantity in Urdu. The word *zindgi* is feminine in Urdu which means that it would require the adverb *itni* to agree with the noun *zindgi*. But Pashto speaker used the masculine grammatical gender in the Urdu sentence which means that the first language influences his thinking while speaking Urdu language.
3. The Pashto word *marg* (death) is masculine in gender. Similarly, there is consistency in the grammatical gender of the word *mawt* because it is feminine in gender like its counterpart *zindgi*. When Pashto speaker was asked to say something about death (*marg*), he said: *Marg akhir ratlonka dae*. Pashto speakers retained the same grammatical gender assigned to the noun *marg* in Pashto language, while he was actually uttering the Urdu sentence *Mawt akhir ana hai* instead of saying *Mawt akhir ani hai*.
4. The English word 'fire' means *oar* in Pashto and it is masculine in gender. But it has feminine gender in Urdu. When Pashto speaker was asked how he would say if the fire has been burnt, he said: *Oar bal sho*. When he was asked to translate the same sentence into Urdu, he said: *Aag jal gia*.
5. The word 'spring' has the equivalent word *sparlae* in Pashto. It is masculine in Pashto but has the opposite gender in Urdu. When Pashto speaker was asked to say something about the beauty of the spring season, he said: *Chaman ka bahar raghae*. The same statement was expressed in Urdu as *Chaman ma bahar aya hai*.

6. The English word ‘sunlight’ is translated as *nmar* in Pashto which is masculine in gender. In Urdu, the word *dhoop* is used as the equivalent of *nmar* in Pashto. In Urdu language, the word *Suraj* is masculine but its Pashto equivalent *starga* is feminine in gender. The Pashto speaker said: *Bahar nmar rakhata dae* which means that there is sunlight outside. He replied in Urdu: *Bahar dhoop nikla hai*. As the sentence shows that the main verb used by the Pashto speaker in Urdu sentence is masculine (*nikla*), not feminine (*nikli*) which should have been the case because the preceding noun *dhoop* is feminine in Urdu.
7. The word ‘wada’(marriage) in Pashto is different in morphology from its Urdu equivalent ‘shadi’. When Pashto speaker was asked in Pashto to tell whether he was single or married. He replied: *Zama pakhwah wada shawa dae* (He had long been married). Because the word ‘wada’ is masculine in Pashto; therefore, the speaker used the auxiliary *dae* at the end of the sentence. And when he was asked to tell the same thing in Urdu, *Mara shadi kab ka hwa hai*. The Urdu sentence uttered by Pashto speaker shows that both the pronouns *mara* and the verb *huwa* are masculine which should have been feminine *mari* and *huwa*.
8. The Pashto word *dewa* (lamp) is feminine because of the final ‘a’ sound. However, the Urdu word for the same object is *charagh* which is masculine. In his reply, he said, *tha dewa mrha krha?* (did you blow out the lamp?). Both the main verb *mrha* and *krha* used at the end of the sentence shows the feminine grammatical gender in Pashto. Again he was asked to reproduce the same sentence in Urdu, he said: *Aap na charagh buja di*.
9. The word *charpoy* is a loan word which is used in English. It is also pronounced in almost the same way as *charpa* in Urdu. As for the etymology, this word has been borrowed from Persian in the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century. In Urdu, it is used as feminine. However, in Pashto, the word *kut* is used for the same object which is masculine. When Pashto speaker was asked how he would describe the size of a charpoy, he said: *Da kat loi dae*. Again he was asked to reproduce the same statement in Urdu, he said: *Yae charpai barha hai*.
10. The word *Khob* (sleep) is masculine in Pashto. If someone wants to sleep because he is tired and feels sleepy, he would say, *mala khob raghae*. On the other hand, the Urdu word *neend* is feminine in gender. Pashto speaker said: *muja neend agia*. This again shows that the opposite grammatical gender of

Pashto language affects the way when the same word is used in another language i.e. Urdu.

11. “The word ‘salt’ is named as *malga* in Pashto and is assigned a feminine grammatical gender. In Urdu, however, the word *namak* is assigned masculine grammatical gender. The interrogative pronoun *kama* and the auxiliary *da* shows that the Pashto speaker used the word *malga* as masculine. Therefore, when Pashto speaker was asked to say the same sentence in Urdu, he said: *Yae kawnsi namak hai*. As the adjective *kawnsa* associated by the Pashto speaker with the word *namak* shows that he used it as feminine rather than masculine.
12. The Pashto word *stan* (pillar) is feminine in grammatical gender. However, its Urdu equivalent, with somewhat modified form, is *satoon*, which is masculine in gender. When the same speaker expressed the same sentence in Urdu, he said: *Yae satoon barhe hai*. As the adjective *barhe* shows, Pashto bilingual speaker assigned the same grammatical gender to the Urdu word *satoon* which he assigned to the Pashto word *stan*.
13. The word ‘bus’ is a loan word from English in both Pashto and Urdu languages. It is interesting to note that the word *bus* is assigned opposite grammatical gender in these languages despite the fact that it is used in the same morphological form. It is assigned masculine gender in Pashto language, but in Urdu it is feminine. The final morpheme of the verb *raghae* indicates that the speaker assigned masculine grammatical gender to the word *bus*.
14. The English word ‘proverb’ means *Kahawat* in Urdu and it is feminine in gender. The Pashto equivalent of the *kahawat* is *matal* which is masculine in gender. When Pashto speaker was asked how he would say about an anonymous proverb, he replied: *Da dacha matal da*. The same sentence was translated as *Yae kahawat kis ka ha*.
15. The English word ‘ego’ is translated as *ghairat* in Pashto and Urdu. But despite having the same form, it is pronounced in a bit different way in the two languages. In Urdu, the stress falls on the first syllable whereas, in Pashto, the stress falls on the second syllable. When Pashto speaker was asked to say what comes first to his mind about the word *ghairat*, he said: *Ghairat dar loi sifat dae*. He was asked to say the same sentence in Urdu and he said: *Ghairat bahut barha sifat hai*.

16. The English word ‘hope’ is translated as *umead* in Urdu. But in Pashto, it has somewhat modified form, being pronounced as *umaid*. Similarly, it has the opposite gender in the two languages. In Urdu, it is feminine, but in Pashto, it is masculine. When the Pashto speaker was asked how he would express himself by using the word *umaid*, he said: *Zama loi umaid dae*. He was asked to translate the same statement in Urdu, he said: *Muja barha umed hai*.
17. The English word ‘obligation’ has the Pashto equivalent *minnat* in Pashto which is masculine in gender. The stress falls on the second syllable. It has the same form in Urdu but with opposite grammatical gender. However, in Urdu, the stress falls on the first syllable. When Pashto speaker was asked to say something about the word *minnat*, he said: *Da cha minnat nade kawal pakkar*. He reproduced the same sentence in Urdu as *Kisi ka minnat nahe karna chahia*.
18. The English word ‘garlic’ has the Pashto equivalent *ooga* which is feminine in gender because of the final /ga/ sound at the end. However, in Urdu language, the word *lehsan* is used to refer to the same object, which has masculine gender. When Pashto speaker was asked whether he likes garlic, his answer was: *Zama ooga khwakha da*. When he was asked to utter the same sentence in Urdu, he said: *Muja lehsan achi lagti hai*.
19. The Pashto word *masta* (curd) in Pashto which is feminine in gender. But *dahi* in Urdu is masculine. So, when the Pashto speaker was asked how he would describe the taste of curd if it has gone sour, he said: *Masta trawa di*. And when the same sentence was reproduced by him in Urdu, he said: *Dahi katti ha*.
20. The word ‘wall’ in English is described as *dewaal* in Pashto and *dewar* in Urdu. A closer analysis of these two words reveals that there is the only difference of l and r sound at the end. The word *dewaal* is masculine in Pashto; therefore, it requires the auxiliary *dae* at the end of the word. The Pashto speaker did exactly the same thing. But when he was asked to describe the length in Urdu, he used the adjective *lamba* instead of *lambi* which should have been the case, keeping in view the feminine grammatical gender of the word *dewar* in Urdu.

## 12. Discussion

The analysis of data shows that grammatical gender assigned to a particular object is not restricted to its name. Pashto speakers made a variety of sentences in both languages which clearly indicate that the category of an object to be used as

masculine or feminine changes the whole structure of the sentence. Moreover, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns also show variation according to the gender of nouns which precede them. Verb changes occur when verbs/auxiliaries like *dae* (1,6,7) *sho* (4) *raghae* (5,10,13) showing past tense inflections are replaced by the verbs like *huwa*, *gia* and *agia* in the Urdu sentences. It implies that the nouns with masculine gender change the following verbs and auxiliaries which are retained accordingly in the Urdu sentences as well. In sentence no.1, the speaker used the verb *huwa* instead of *huwi*. Similarly, in the sentence no.3, it is clear that Pashto speaker organised Urdu sentence by using the word *mawt* according to the masculine grammatical gender assigned to *marg* (death) in his native language. Therefore, he used the verb *ana hai* instead of *ani hai*. Sentence no. 4 shows that the masculine gender to the noun *oar* (fire) in Pashto agrees with the following auxiliary ie *bal sho*. On the other hand, *aag* is feminine in Urdu. So if an Urdu speaker utters a sentence about a fire which is burned already, he would say: *aag jal gia*. However, the Pashto speaker retained the same grammatical gender in Urdu sentence *jal gia* which he used in the Pashto sentence *bal sho*.

In 5, the masculine grammatical gender of the noun *sparlae* agrees with the verb *raghae*. But the grammatical gender of the noun *bahaar* is feminine. Therefore, according to the rule of syntax, the verb following the noun should be *ai hai*. This is not the case in the sentence produced by the Pashto speaker as he has put the verb *aya hai*. Sentence at serial no 6 also relates to the natural object i.e. sunlight. Sunlight is assigned masculine gender in Pashto language. However, instead of using the true grammatical gender assigned to the noun *dhoop* in Urdu language, he transferred the same masculine gender associated with *nmar*. This again shows that the Pashto Speaker's thinking for speaking was influenced by his native language. The noun at serial no 7 is about *wada* (marriage).

Likewise, when the Pashto speaker was asked about whether his marital status, he replied: *zama wada shawae dae* which means that he used the masculine grammatical gender as the following verb *wada shawae dae* shows. The word *shaadi*, on the other hand, is feminine in Urdu as it ends with the sound /ee/ which is feminine. But the Urdu sentence uttered by Pashto speaker '*huwa hai*' means that the opposite grammatical gender of Pashto language supercedes the actual grammatical gender used in Urdu language.

In 13, the word ‘bus’ is a loan word from English in both Pashto and Urdu languages. However, it is the opposite grammatical gender in these languages despite the fact it is used in the same morphological form. In Pashto language, it is masculine, but in Urdu it is feminine. Pashto speaker uttered the sentence, *bus raghae*. The final morpheme of the verb *raghae* indicates that the speaker assigned masculine grammatical gender in Pashto. However, keeping in view, the feminine gender of the bus in Urdu, the same sentence should have been *bus agai* but the verb *agia* shows that the masculine gender assigned to the noun bus is transferred in Urdu sentence. In 14, the noun used in Pashto sentence is *matal* which is masculine in gender. However, when the same sentence was translated as *Yae kahawat kis ka hai*; the possessive *ka* shows that Pashto speaker thinks of the same idea as masculine in Urdu as well assigning it the same masculine grammatical gender which he assigned to the same object in Pashto language as well.

Adjectival changes occurred when the speakers associated some attributes of the nouns like *loi* (9, 15 and 16) *ghatta* (12) and *trawa* (19). If the noun is masculine in gender, it also changes the following adjective accordingly, and if it is feminine, it changes the adjective coming after it. For example, the object at serial no. 9 is *kut* (*charpoy*). The Pashto speaker used the sentence describing the length of the object (*kut*). Because the sentence is about the size of *kut*; therefore, the adjective *loi* is used which indicates its masculine gender. *Charpai*, on the other hand, has a feminine grammatical gender in Urdu. So, by making a sentence, describing the size of *charpai*, the adjective following the noun should be *barhi hai* instead of *barha hai*. It shows that Pashto speaker goes for the grammatical gender assigned to the same object in Pashto language while speaking in Urdu. In sentence no 13, the word *stan* (pillar) is assigned masculine gender in Pashto language, but in Urdu it is feminine. The final ‘a’ sound also changes the following adjective. So the Pashto speaker did the same when he said: *Da stan ghatta da*.

In 19, the Pashto word *masta* with the feminine gender, is assigned the same grammatical gender when the Pashto speaker used the adjective *trawa* and the verb *di*. The same grammatical gender goes for the word *dahi* when Pashto speaker uttered the sentence: *Dahi katti hai* even though *dahi* is masculine. The actual adjective following the noun *dahi* should have been *katta* instead of *katti*. Finally, the word ‘wall’ in English is described as *dewaal* in Pashto and ‘*dewar*’ in Urdu. A closer analysis of these two words reveals that there is the only difference of ‘l’ and ‘r’ sound at the end. However, in the former case, it is masculine and in the latter

case, it is feminine. The Pashto speaker described the length of the wall as *da dewal loai dae* which means that “this is a lengthy wall”. The word *dewal* is masculine in Pashto; therefore, it requires the adjective *loai* and the verb *dae* at the end of the word. The Pashto speaker used the adjective *lamba* instead of *lambi* which should have been the case, keeping in view the feminine grammatical gender of the word *dewar* in Urdu.

## 8. Conclusion and further research

Grammatical gender assigned to the natural objects as well as to the artifacts has a role to play in terms of how people think about these objects. Pashto speakers assigned the same grammatical gender in Urdu which they gave to those things in their mother tongue i.e. Pashto. It clearly shows how the mother tongue with the opposite grammatical gender affects thinking while speaking in another language. Moreover, as the analysis has shown, the nouns with opposite grammatical gender in Pashto and Urdu languages modify the syntax when they are used in sentences. These changes occur in all four categories: verbs adjectives, pronouns and adverbs. As evident from the example of the word ‘bus’, the tendency to assign opposite grammatical gender is not only restricted to those words which are specific to Pashto and Urdu languages, but it also occurs in those words which have been borrowed from English.

The present research was mainly focused on how the gender system of the mother tongue affects thinking while speaking in another language. However, it will be interesting to see how the opposite grammatical genders of these two languages influence the speakers’ performance in non-linguistic tasks like matching Pictures and assigning gender to objects without names.

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