

INTERRELATION BETWEEN ARABIC, PERSIAN AND URDU LANGUAGES

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ARABIC:

The Arabic language is the largest member of the Semitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family (classification: South Central Semitic) and is closely related to Hebrew and Aramaic. It is named after the Arabs, a term initially used to describe peoples living from Mesopotamia in the east to the Anti-Lebanon Mountains in the west, in northwestern Arabia, and in the Sinai Peninsula.

Arabic has influenced many languages around the globe throughout its history. Some of the most influenced languages are Persian, Turkish, Spanish, Maltese, Urdu, Kashmiri, Kurdish, Bosnian, Kazakh, Bengali, Hindi, Malay, Maldivian, Indonesian, Pashto, Punjabi, Tagalog, Sindhi and Hausa and some languages in parts of Africa. Conversely, Arabic has borrowed words from other languages including Greek and Persian in medieval times, and contemporary European languages such as English and French in modern times. It is spoken by perhaps as many as 422 million speakers (native and non-native) in the Arab world,^[1] making it the fifth most spoken language in the world. Arabic is written with the Arabic alphabet, which is an abjad script and is written from right to left, although the spoken varieties are sometimes written in ASCII Latin from left to right with no standardized orthography.

PERSIAN:

Persian is an Indo-European language; it is part of the Iranian branch of the Indo-Iranian language family. The vast majority of modern Persian text is written in a form of the Arabic alphabet. In recent years the Latin alphabet has been used by some for technological or internationalization reasons. Tajik, which is considered by many linguists to be a Persian dialect influenced by Russian, is written with the Cyrillic alphabet in Tajikistan. Modern

Persian is normally written using a modified variant of the Arabic alphabet with different pronunciation of the letters. The Persian alphabet adds four letters to the Arabic alphabet, due to the fact that four sounds that exist in Persian do not exist in Arabic, as they come from separate language families. Some people call this modified alphabet the Perso-Arabic alphabet.

The Persian language is classified as a continuation of Middle Persian, the official religious and literary language of the Sasanian Empire, itself a continuation of Old Persian, the language of the Achaemenid Empire.^[iii] Its grammar is similar to that of many contemporary European languages.^[iiii] Persian gets its name from its origin at the capital of the Achaemenid Empire, Persia (modern-day Fars Province), hence the name Persian (*Farsi*). A Persian-speaking person may be referred to as *Persophone*.^[iv]

There are approximately 110 million Persian speakers worldwide, with the language holding official status in Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. For centuries, Persian has also been a prestigious cultural language in other regions of Western Asia, Central Asia, and South Asia by the various empires based in the regions.^[v]

URDU:

Urdu is an Indo-European language of the Indo-Aryan family that developed under Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Hindi, and Sanskrit influence in South Asia during the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire (1200–1800). Urdu is written in a derivative of the Persian alphabet (Nasta'liq), which is itself derivative of the Arabic alphabet.

RELATION BETWEEN PERSIAN AND URDU:

The **Persian language** historically influenced many of the modern languages and dialects of Eastern Europe, Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia including the standard register Urdu, the national language of Pakistan and an official language in eight states in India.^[vi]

Following the Turko-Persian Ghaznavid conquest of South Asia, the speech based in Delhi's Khariboli dialect and other dialects of South Asia received a large influx of Persian, Chagatai and Arabic vocabulary. The subsequent Turko-Afghan Delhi Sultanate gave way for a further continuation of this. The basis in general for the introduction of Persian language into the subcontinent was set, from its earliest days, by various Persianized Central Asian Turkic and Afghan dynasties.^[vii]

This lexically hybrid language, of the Hindustani language, emerged in the northern subcontinent, was commonly called *Zaban-e Urdu-e Mualla* ('language of the exalted city') and eventually replaced Persian, the court language,

and its name was shortened to just "Urdu". It grew from the interaction of Persian and Turkic-speaking Muslim soldiers and the native peoples.^[viii] Under Persian influence from the state, the Persian and Nastaliq scripts were adopted, with additional figures added to accommodate the Indo-Aryan phonetic system.

Unlike Persian, which is an Iranian language, Urdu is a variant of an Indo-Aryan language, written in the Persian alphabet, and contains literary conventions and specialized vocabulary largely from Persian. Some grammatical elements peculiar to Persian, such as the enclitic ezāfe and the use of pen-names, were readily absorbed into Urdu literature both in the religious and secular spheres.

Modern Persian has three major variants: Western Persian (spoken primarily in Iran, known by its native speakers as "Farsi", the literal Persian word for itself), Dari (spoken as a lingua franca by a large minority of Afghans) and Tajik (spoken by the Tajiks of Tajikistan).^[ix] These variants are almost entirely mutually intelligible with one another.

RELATION BETWEEN URDU AND ARABIC:

Arabic is the sacred language of all Muslims around the world and it is the script that has been used in the holy Quran as well. Arabic includes both the ancient script as well as the modern standard form of the language as it is spoken in the Arab World. In entire Middle East and North of Africa, Arabic is the lingua franca. Urdu is another language spoken by Muslims, mostly from South East Asia. There are some similarities in the spoken version of the language though there are glaring differences in their written versions reflecting their different origins and influences. This article attempts to take a closer look at some of these differences.

When we talk of Arabic, we have to remember that being an ancient language, there are many versions of spoken language and these versions are different from the written script of Arabic language. Written version is more conservative and reserved for official functions while spoken version is liberal and has assimilated influences of languages of different areas where Arabic is spoken. These differences, on a continuum, make for two very different languages on two extremes but for political reasons, these differences are set aside and the languages are grouped together as Arabic.

Urdu is a language that is spoken by Muslims in South East Asia and is a language that came into existence because Mughal rulers and officials needed a language to communicate with subjects and local inhabitants of central India. The language that Mughals spoke was a Turkish language containing Arabic and Persian words. The language that so developed had a base of Indo Aryan languages (Sanskrit in particular) but retained Arabic

and Persian words for literary and technical uses. Soon, the language became a court language of the Mughal Sultanate and a language that even inhabitants gladly accepted as another language. Urdu is today a fully developed language with a script of its own that is a derivative of Persian alphabet that in itself is a derivative of the Arabic language. Urdu is written from right to left. Urdu is a language that contains a base of Hindi and Sanskrit words though superimposing Arabic and Persian words with a splash of Turkish and even English words. Urdu is considered to be one of the most beautiful languages of the world having various influences though having a base and grammar belonging to Hindi language. Urdu poetry is world famous with Ghazals written in Urdu being appreciated by poetry lovers in all parts of the world.^[x]

RELATION BETWEEN FARSI AND ARABIC:

Arabic is a language that is spoken in the Arab world, and it includes the written language that is referred to as Modern Standard Arabic. People in the other parts of the world get confused between the Arabic and Farsi languages because of their similarities. In fact, there are many under the misconception that Arabic and Farsi are same languages. This article attempts to highlight the differences between these two great languages to enable students desirous of learning either of the two great languages.

Some of the important differences between these two languages are written as under:

- The word Farsi itself is Arabic form of Parsi that happens to be the language of Persia or modern Iran. This is because Arabic does not have P in its alphabet.
- Though Persian had its own script in ancient times, it was forced to adopt Arabic alphabet a few centuries ago, and the two languages today have the same alphabet giving rise to almost similar scripts.
- It is possible for a person who knows Arabic to read Farsi easily without even understanding what he is reading. However, there are words unique to Arabic just as there are words unique to Farsi.
- Farsi or Persian is spoken in Iran, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan and by people in Pakistan, Iraq, and some other countries, as well. On the other hand, Arabic is spoken in more than 25 countries of the world.
- There are nearly 71 million speakers of Persian or Farsi, whereas there are nearly 245 million speakers of Arabic language.

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