

## Reflection of Pak-Afghan Border in Pashto Literature, Its Impacts on Pashto Language and Linguistic Research

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### ABSTRACT

*Pashto language is spoken in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It enjoys the status of official language in Afghanistan. It has also remained the official language of former Swat state. In Pakistan, after Punjabi, it is the second largest language. Pashto has rich literary tradition of both written literature as well as of folklore. In various literary genres of Pashto, the impact of Pak-Afghan border, has been reflected. Lack of uniformity in linguistic policy regarding Pashto language, in both of the countries, has also affected the development and planning of Pashto language as well as linguistic research. Development of Pashto language has been affected in terms of establishing a standard and literary dialect and a unified orthographic system in both countries. This article attempts to explore various themes of the impacts of Pak-Afghan border as reflected in Pashto literature. It will also find out border impacts on Pashto language planning and linguistic research.*

*Key Words: Pak-Afghan border, Durand Line, Pashto language, Pashto poetry, Pashto dialects, Border studies.*

### INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan and Pakistan are situated in a location where geographically and culturally three different regions 'India with its monsoons, Central Asia with its steppes, and the Iranian Plateau meet (Kieffer, 1985:501). Pakistan and Afghanistan shares a long border known as Durand Line. Numerous ethnic groups living on both sides of the border in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pashtuns are main ethnic group living on both sides of the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan. They speak Pashto language which has been an official language in Afghanistan since 1936. It also remained official language of former Swat state since June 1937 (Dinakhel, 2020:70). Pashto is 'prolific in dialects (Mackenzie, 1959:231). As a result of specific phonemes, the four-type division of Pashto dialects is popular. These dialects are; South Western (Kandahar), South Eastern (Quetta), North Western (Central Ghilzai), and North Eastern

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(Yusufzais) (Mackenzie, 1959:232). In these four dialects two dialects are spoken in one side of the border and the remaining two are spoken on the other side of the border. The matter of the standard and literary dialect is still not resolved. People consider the dialect of Kandahar as prestigious dialect while others consider the Yusufzai or north eastern dialect as standard. Similarly, speakers of each dialect consider their dialect as old and conservative. Mackenzie concluded the discussion of old and conservative dialect of Pashto and stated that ‘the Kandahar dialect has preserved all the consonant phonemes and the North East (Yusufzai) dialect has ‘confirmed the vowels in their morphological positions (Mackenzie, 1959:235). The border between Pakistan and Afghanistan has ‘weakened the tribal and ethnic ties as well as the process of establishing the standard and literary dialect of Pashto and establishing a unified orthographic system of Pashto (Spain, 1990:2). Similarly, various views exist about the place of origin of Pashto literature on the both sides of the border. Herbert Penzel considers Kandahar as the ‘cradle of the Pashto alphabet (Penzl, 1955:9-10). Morgenstierne considers the north eastern people as the ‘creators of the Pashto literature (Morgenstierne, 1932:17). However, main classical figures in Pashto literature, like Khushal Khan Khattak, Rahman Baba, Abdul Hamid Momand etc. belongs to the areas which are now the parts of Pakistan.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework used in this study comes from sociolinguistics. Rules and theories of dialectology and ethno-linguistics have also been applied. In sociolinguistics context it has been discussed that how the border between the same ethnic group has affected the Pashto as well as the linguistic research of Pashto. Another question which has been attempted is regarding the establishing of standard and literary dialect of Pashto on both sides of the border.

## REFLECTION OF PAK-AFGHAN BORDER IN PASHTO POETRY

Pashto literature reflects issues and problems faced by Pashtuns from time to time. Similarly, Pashto poets have also highlighted the Durand Line in their poetry. Various poets have viewed the border from their own point of view. Some poets considering this border as a hurdle in the development of Pashtuns. According to Charless Miller this treaty of the border created more problems than it solved (Miller, 1977:241). Major problems were solved by the Pak-Afghan border agreement but it further created minor problems (Khan, 2005:149). Dodwell has also described certain drawbacks and ethnic absurdities of Pak-Afghan border (Dodwell, 1932:462). He further says that “In all probability the political issues at stake occasioned this sacrifice of ethnological requirements (Dodwell, 1932:463). From ethnographic point of view, efforts are being made to make it disputed but all in vain because it has been recognized by the international community as an international border between

Pakistan and Afghanistan. Many poets and writers have criticized the very existence of this border. A Pashto poet from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa expresses his views in the following verses (Lewanay, 2004:41).

څوک که په دې خپله خاوره خپله وداني غواړي  
نه کيږي ويريا دا به عظيمه قرباني غواړي  
دا خلق بي پته دي څو کسه پخواني غواړي  
يو شئ روڼو يو شئ ختمول دا خان خاني غواړي

Translation: If someone wants prosperity on this land. It demands great sacrifice. These people [of present time] are without dignity and respect, it demands brave people of past. Be united, o brothers! be united, this disunity and dissension needs to be ended.

Another poet Sarwar Khattak says (Khattak, 2004:131).

د ايشيا زړه کبني د چترال نه تر بولانه پوري  
د ورورولي دعوي کونکي پښتانه پراته دي  
هيڅ يو طاقت نور دغه قام دباواولې نه شي  
دغه عظيمه ورورولي څوک وړانولې نه شي

Translation: In the heart of Asia from Chitral to Bolaan, there are lying Pashtuns who believe in brotherhood. No force can suppress this nation anymore. No one can demolish this great brotherhood of Pashtuns.

As already mentioned, on ethnographic and geopolitical reasons, Charles Miller termed it illogical because it divided tribes and nation into two (Miller, 1977:241). From the very beginning, Pashtun poets and writers have expressed their diverse views about this border as depicted in the following verses.

پېښور او کابل دواړه دوه ياران دي  
لکه دوه سترگي په يو مخ د جانان دي

Translation: Peshawar and Kabul are like two friends/ they are like two eyes of one beloved.

Another poet says in this regard.

د خيبر دره خو لار د تلو راتلو ده  
په کابل او په سرحد کبني افغان يو دے

Translation: The Khyber valley is just a passage for going and coming/ The Pashtuns in Kabul and Sarhad ( Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) are one.

A contemporary Pashto poet Mumtaz Awrakzai says:

زه د لاسونو او تندي کرښي هم نه منمه  
ته په ما کرښه د ډيورنډ مني ما زغه دي نشته

Translation: I don't accept even the interpretation of lines on palms and forehead/  
Your struggle to get recognition of Durand Line shows your insanity.

Another poet also describes the same idea in these verses.

درنه ځمه ځدائے په امان شه پېښوره  
خفه نه شي لږ په خان شه پېښوره  
بيلوي ما او تا نه شي دنيا ټوله  
غږ اوچت كره او افغان شه پېښوره  
نوره بس دے له پردو نه جدا كيږه  
زه دې روح او ته مي خان شه پېښوره  
زه پوهيږم چي خفه مي په خفگان يي  
مخ تورن دي دښمنان شه پېښوره  
اباسين او امو تل غاړه غږي دي  
بيا يو كيږو راروان شه پېښوره  
د ډيورنډ تور مخي ليكه به وړانيزي  
ور په دې عهد او پيمان شه پېښوره

Translation: O Peshawar! I am leaving you. God may protect you, think a bit about yourself O Peshawar. Even the whole world can't separate us from each other. Raise your voice and be Afghan O Peshawar. It is enough, separate yourself from the aliens/ I will be your soul and you will be my body O Peshawar. I know that you are worried about my unhappiness/ o Peshawar! May your enemies be disgraced. Indus River and Amu River are always embracing/ let's come o Peshawar! We should unite. The black line of Durand will be demolished/ let's promise about it o Peshawar.

## REFLECTION OF BORDER IN PASHTO FOLKLORE

Pak-Afghan border has so much influenced Pashto literature that even it has been reflected in various genres of Pashto folklore as described in the following tappas.

بېلتونه څومره زورور يي  
چي پښتانه دي لروبر وپشلي دینه

Translation: O Separation you are so much powerful/ that you have divided the Pashtuns in upper and lower regions.

Another tappa says:

خدایه ډيورنډ په سېلاب يوسي  
چي روژه ماتي د کابل په اذان شينه

Translation: O God take Durand [border] with a flood so that the ifatari may be made with azan from Kabul.

## IMPACTS OF PAK-AFGHAN BORDER ON PASHTO LINGUISTIC RESEARCH

Pashto is 'prolific in dialects (Mackenzie, 1959:231). As a result of specific phonemes, the four-type division of Pashto dialects is popular. These dialects are; South Western (Kandahar), South Eastern (Quetta), North Western (Central Ghilzai), and North Eastern (Yusufzais) (Mackenzie, 1959:232). In these four dialects two dialects are spoken in one side of the border and the remaining two are spoken on the other side of the border. The matter of the standard and literary dialect is still not resolved. People consider the dialect of Kandahar as prestigious dialect while others consider the Yusufzai or north eastern dialect as standard. Similarly, speakers of each dialect consider their dialect as old and conservative. Mackenzie concluded the discussion of old and conservative dialect of Pashto and stated that 'the Kandahar dialect has preserved all the consonant phonemes and the North East (Yusufzai) dialect has 'confirmed the vowels in their morphological positions (Mackenzie, 1959:235). The border between Pakistan and Afghanistan has 'weakened the tribal and ethnic ties as well as the process of establishing the standard and literary dialect of Pashto and establishing a unified orthographic system of Pashto (Spain, 1990:2). It is not only limited to Pak-Afghan border but the rest of the boundaries of Afghanistan also separated language groups in different nation states who in turn were exposed to different socio-political and economic developments (Schiffman, 2014:311).

As already mentioned, Pak-Afghan border has also affected Pashto language in terms of language planning and standardization, when a border divides the same language speakers into two, it creates many problems for the language spoken on the both sides of the border. The bigger impact of border on Pashto language is the issue of standard dialect. Mackenzie and others classified the following four major varieties of Pashto.

Sw				
(Kandahar)	SE			
(Quetta)	NW			
(Central Ghilzai)		NE		
(Yusufzai)				
1	c [ts] چ	C	(s)	(s)
2	J [dz] ج	J	(z)	(z)
3	ž [ʒ] ژ	ž	ž	(j)
4	z [ʒ] ز	(ž)	ž 3 [j]	(g)
5	š [ʃ] ش	(š)	š 4 [c]	(x)

There are many dialects in Pashto but the above four dialects are commonly known. In these four dialects two are spoken in Pakistan while the remaining two are spoken in the Afghanistan. Establishing a standard Pashto dialect and unified orthography,

have certain issues when one language is spoken in two different countries and both of the countries having diverse language policies towards that particular language.

### DIFFERENT LANGUAGE PLANNING POLICIES

Pakistan and Afghanistan have different language planning policies regarding Pashto language. In Afghanistan it has been given the status of official language while in the constitution of Pakistan, Pashto along with some other languages has been termed as regional language. Although it is being taught in schools, colleges and universities in Pakistan but still Pashto language authority does not exist in Pakistan. Lack of proper coordination between the institutions of two countries also has its impact on Pashto language.

### TRANSBORDER DIALECT STUDIES

As already mentioned, Pashto is prolific in dialects. The linguists and dialectologists have divided these dialects into many groups but among these groups four-part division is commonly acceptable. In these four groups of dialects, the one is southern dialect of Pashto which is spoken in the southern Afghanistan and southern parts of Pakistan. The other main dialect is called eastern dialect. It is also called the dialect Yusufzai dialect. In Pakistan it is considered a standard and literary dialect. The other dialect is called the central dialect which is spoken in the central parts of Afghanistan. Border has also created problems in the study of these dialects. Because linguists study these dialects within the political boundaries instead of natural linguistic boundaries.

### THE POLITICAL BORDER AND LINGUISTIC RESEARCH

As described earlier that the political boundary has created problems in linguistic research. In this case, the main problem emerged regarding the unified script and orthography. Still there is no unity in orthographic system of Pashto among the writers of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Even they are not agreed upon some alphabets in the Pashto script. In this regard, many seminars and meetings have been arranged from time to time since 1948, in Afghanistan and Pakistan but till now they have not agreed upon the one and the same orthographic system. In the last meeting held at Bara-Galai in 1991 by Pashto Academy, University of Peshawar, the Afghan scholars also participated but later on they did not follow the decisions taken in that meeting. Linguistic researchers, have also, sometimes studied dialects within the political borders of the countries which further divided the dialects and such types of researches remained incomplete. Thus almost all of them have failed to present an overall picture of dialect landscape and dialect mapping of Pashto. In this case when someone is defining the boundaries of a dialect, he only reach to the border of a dialect region and

thus cannot differentiate the regional and dialect border because he tries to define a dialect boundary within a given area.

## CONCLUSION

Political border between the same ethnic group creates a sense of competition in the development of literature but at the same time it also influences the same language spoken in two different countries as well as linguistic research. Lack of orthographic unity and standard literary dialect are two main impacts of the border on Pashto language and literature. Pashto literature has reflected various aspects of Pak-Afghan border. Pashto language planning policies in Pakistan and Afghanistan are differently treated which subsequently influence Pashto language planning and Pashto linguistic research in both of the countries.

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