THE PROS AND CONS OF TEACHING HINDI AND URDU AS HINDI-URDU

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Abstract

Since the rise of India as an economic powerhouse in the world scene, more and more North American Universities have started taking interest in South Asia. In the catalogue of courses offered on South Asia, Hindi-Urdu as a foreign language is a prominent one. Are Hindi and Urdu two languages? Or one? If two, then what are the grounds to offer them as one course. And if one, then why many universities teach them as separate languages or teach only one of them. Without going into details of the socio-political and linguistic dimension of the Hindi-Urdu controversy, in this paper I would only deal with the rationale behind bringing Hindi and Urdu into one course offering, what are the pros and cons of such academic move and how such move can be justified. I would also discuss some of the challenges the Hindi-Urdu teachers face; lack of textbooks, Hindi (Devanāgarī) first/Urdu (Nastaʿlīq) first approach, assessment etc.

1 Introduction

The presence of South Asia in academia is not a novelty. European and American Universities have been engaged in the study of classical India of Antique times for centuries. Under the banner of "Indology" (Academic studies of India) some western universities have been academically investigating into classical languages such as Sanskrit language, its literature; both fictional and liturgical. In modern times American universities have adopted a geographically neutral term "South Asian Studies", which is also a politically correct expression.

With the rise of globalisation in early nineties of the last century India emerged as a economic powerhouse in the increasingly globalised world. The significance of India in the world economy started reflecting in the world of academia too. Along with the classical India, the present day Indian (South Asian) society also started becoming the points of interest in academic circles. The shift of Academic interest towards the modern India resulted into offerings of courses related to present day South Asian society. Modern languages are usually the first one to enter into the catalogue of any area studies programme. In case of South Asia, Hindi being the biggest language the biggest language is more or less always the first modern language to be offered in South Asian studies program. The rise of popularity of Hindi in North American universities is discussed in fairly detailed account by Bhatt (2012).

Hindi has a sister language (I should rather say an "identical twin sister language") Urdu which is mainly spoken by Muslims of urban north India and later after the partition of India

in 1947 by a substantial part of the population in Pakistan. The statuses of Hindi and Urdu have raised polemics in almost all the field of human interaction in the society; mundane, academic, political, linguistic etc. Different sides have taken different positions on Hindi and Urdu; as one language or as two different languages or one language with two different varieties or two languages with a lot of commonalities. There has been abundance of literature written on both sides of the argument (Bhatia, 1987; Brass, 2005; Khan, 2006; King, 2001; Lelyveld, 1993; Rai, 1984, 2005; Rahman, 1996 and many more). The scope of this paper is not Hindu-Urdu controversy, rather the rationale behind teaching Hindi-Urdu as one (foreign) language in western universities. For that reason I would not go deeper into the controversy, its complexities and ramifications and would rather show differences and commonalities and on the basis of them I would analyse the justification of teaching Hindi and Urdu as Hindi-Urdu. I would also discuss challenges of teaching Hindi-Urdu together.

2 Hindi and Urdu

Hindi and Urdu both languages belong to Indo-Aryan branch of Indo-European family of languages. Hindi is usually associated with Hindu population of North India and Urdu with Muslim and in post-partition India Hindi has started to be associated with India and Urdu with Pakistan[1]. In this section I will give common linguistic features of Hindi and Urdu and also will discuss the features that make them different form each other.

1.1. Hindi and Urdu: Differences

1.1.1. Scripts

The evident distinction between Hindi and Urdu is the script. Hindi is written in Devanagari and Urdu in Perso-Arabic script[2]. Devanagari is an indigenous script in South Asia, and Perso-Arabic script is brought to India by Muslim conquerors. As it happened with the Islamic conquest in other parts of the world, a new writing system i.e. script is introduced to the local languages, many indigenous South Asian languages too had to go through the similar fate. With the introduction of a new script to the already exiting language, some orthographical compromises needed to be reached and invention of new graphemes were also needed to represent the phonemes the indigenous languages had, but the introduced script did not. The new script had to adjust to the sound system and orthographical peculiarities the language spoken. Although the language spoken was not yet called Hindi or Urdu, rather Hindavi, Hindui, Dehlavi, Gujri, Dakani, Rekhtah etc. for convenience sake we will call the indigenous language "Hindi". Here are the few examples of adjustments the Perso-Arabic script had to make to properly represent the full range of phonetic representation of Hindi sounds.

1.1.1.a. Wide range of vowels and diphthongs

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[1] Nothing can be further from the truth. In fact, Urdu was a language of north Indian urban areas of Delhi, Lakhnow, Agra etc. that were the hub of Muslim aristocracy.

[2] There are two types of Perso-Arabic Scripts; Naskh and Nastaleeq. Although Urdu can be found written in both, but overwhelming majority of Urdu texts are published in Nastaleeq. Naskh is more often used to write Arabic language. The Unicode standard for Urdu is Naskh.

The indigenous languages in South Asia, including Hindi has a wide range of vowels and diphthongs phonetic counterparts of which do not exist in Perso-Arabic script. The Perso-Arabic script has three short vowels; zabar (a), zer (i), pesh (u) and few semi vowels such as short and long ye (ye) and vao (v sound) that can function as vowels to represents the vowel sounds of South Asian languages. All the vowel and diphthong sounds of the Hindi language are represented with the combination of short vowels and the semi-vowels. Although it is possible to precisely represent all the vowel and diphthong sounds of the Hindi language, however, in practice a grapheme can represent different sounds depending on the context. This happens because short vowels in Urdu, as in many languages that use Perso-Arabic script, are rarely written.

This unique feature of Perso-Arabic script hence Urdu makes the indigenous words not represented precisely in written form, but people who know the language do not pronounce them incorrectly.

1.1.1.b. Retroflexion

Hindi has 6 retroflex sounds, ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṛa ṛha for which Perso-Arabic script did not have any corresponding sound, hence and letter to represent them. Urdu had to add a diacritic, which is called "choti toy" to closest sounds ta, tha, da, dha, ra and rha to represent retroflex sounds. This way all the indigenous sounds get representations and no compromise or contextual references were needed as in case of 1.1.1.a.

1.1.1.c. Aspiration

Every plosive consonant in Hindi has its aspirated counterpart i.e ka and kha, ta and tha, pa and pha etc. The Perso-Arabic script does not have individual graphemes to represent these sounds, but just like Roman transliteration the Perso-Arabic script combines two sounds to aspirate the plosive sounds. As the Roman transliteration uses "h", the Perso-Arabic script uses "do chashmi he (ھ)" to represent aspirated consonants. Here too all the indigenous sounds get representations and no compromise or contextual references were needed as in case of 1.1.1.a.

Do different scripts make a language two languages? In the linguistic diversity of the world and history of the languages often times a language is written in more than one script. Merely different scripts are not enough to describe a language into different languages. For instance Serbian language has been written historically in both Cyrillic and Latin script and the tradition of using two scripts is still continuing. Many Indian languages have been simultaneously written in different scripts; Punjabi is written in Gurumukhi and Shahmukhi and also sometimes in Devanagari. Konkani was written in more that three scripts for a long time until it was standardised in Devanagari. There have been instances in the history one same language is written in different scripts. Different scripts are not strong enough basis to classify a language into different languages.

1.1.2. Pluralisation

Both Hindi and Urdu have standard forms of plural driven by same rules for Hindi and Urdu. Such pluralisation according to the rules comprises majority of cases in Urdu. However, in the

high register of the language Urdu often uses Persian and Arabic words and its pluralisation that is not recognisable in Hindi. For instance the word "natija (نتیجہ)" (result) has its plural from "natije (نتیجے)" which is derived through the common rules of plural formation in Hindi and Urdu. In majority of the cases "natije" would be used. However, it is not uncommon to hear nataiej (نتائج), especially if there is a political or philosophical discourse. Some other rules of Perso-Arabised plurals (such as sawal (سوال) – sawalat (سوالات)) in Urdu is not uncommon, but quite alien to Hindi.

1.1.3. Some spelling conventions

I would like to remind the reader that the pronunciation of مزہ میں (mazah mẽ) will always be pronounced مزے میں (maze mẽ).

Although in more or less all the time the corresponding spellings of both Hindi and Urdu are same, but in many words the last long a "ā" of Hindi is written with "h" sound in Urdu. i.e زیادا (zyādā) vs. زیادہ (zyādah). This specific spelling rule applies only in non indigenous South Asian words. Interestingly when such spelling needs to be declined into the oblique case, in Hindi it almost always follow the Hindi/Urdu grammar conventions, but in case of Urdu in the written form one can find both declined and non-declined form. On the other hand in oral Hindi and Urdu such declension are always uttered without failure. i.e

Here I am taking a common word mazā (fun/happiness) and using it in oblique case too.

मज़ा	mazā	مزہ	mazah
मज़े में	maze mẽ	مزہ میں / مزے میں	mazah mẽ / maze mẽ

1.1.4. Izafat

The genitive case construction for possession in Hindi and also in Urdu is made by the postposition kā, kī and ke. The overwhelming majority of possession in Urdu is expressed by the these postposition which is part of the common grammatical rules of Hindi and Urdu. However, there are constructions that are called Izafat also express possession is typical of Urdu and very rarely used in Hindi as well, For instance Sher-e-Punjab (Lion of Punjab) or Hukumat-e-Pakistan (Government of Pakistan). The ordinary construction according to the Hindi-Urdu grammar rules these construction would reverse the order of nouns ie. "Punjab ka Sher" and "Pakistan ki Hukumat". The Izafat construction in Urdu comes from Persian language and follows Persian grammar rules. In Urdu they are more or less used as phrases. The presence of Izafat is very common in high register of Urdu and it can be often heard in political and religious discourses in television, radio in newspapers. The use of Izafat in Hindi is extremely rare and used only of very few phrases that have some connection with Mogul or Muslim history of India.

1.1.5. Vocabulary

Another evident distinction between Hindi and Urdu is vocabulary of high register. Although the common day-to-day language is extremely similar in Hindi and Urdu, in fact it is not

possible to separate them on that level, but when it comes to the high register of political, philosophical, religious etc. discourses, the vocabularies diverge. Hindi draws its high register vocabulary from Sanskrit and Urdu from Persian and Arabic. A common example of use of such high register vocabulary would be the political discourses on televisions in India and Pakistan or newspapers in Hindi and Urdu. A Sanskritised Hindi would be as incomprehensible to a native Urdu speaker as Persianised and Arabised Urdu to a speaker of Hindi who has had education and training in Hindi.

To conclude the section on differences between Hindi and Urdu one can say without any hesitation that the differences between Hindi and Urdu arise only when the external (non-South Asian) component influenced by the Islamic culture and history is added to the native language, whatever they may be; script, grammatical components (pluralisation or genitive constructions) or simply vocabulary.

1.2. Hindi and Urdu: Commonalities

1.2.1. Grammar

The modern Hindi and the modern Urdu, both developed from the same idiom which was earlier called, as mentioned above Hindavi, Hindui, Dehlavi, Gujri, Dakani, Rekhtah etc. In fact, according to Faruqi (2003) the old names of Urdu are Hindvi, Hindi, Dihlavi, Gujri, Dakani and Rekhtah. The further development of the language into Hindi and Urdu is the product of late 19 century politics. Although the Perso-Arabic script was introduced to an indigenous language which already had a script, it did not deal with the structural grammar or made any changes to it. The Perso-Arabic script needed to adjust to the sound system of the language, but it did not attempt to completely redefine the grammar, although some Perso-Arabic grammatical elements managed to get into the grammar of the language.

Apart from the few elements, that are described above in 1.1.2 -1.1.4. Hindi and Urdu have exactly the same grammar patterns; morphological and syntactical, in inflexion, conjugation, declension etc. The distinctions that are mentioned above are rare and mainly used in the high register of both languages. For instance, pluralisation as mentioned in 1.1.2. has its indigenous pattern too and that indigenous pattern in more commonly used than the one mentioned in 1.1.2. The spelling convention that are mentioned in 1.1.3. is restricted in Urdu to orthographical level only, the oral representation of the language neutralises this distinction and decline the nouns as they would have been written in Hindi with proper declension. In fact in majority of cases even in Urdu and even in the written form, this type of declension follows the indigenous pattern. And izafat (1.1.4.) are only used as phrasal construction, here too the indigenous pattern overwhelmingly dominates in usage both orally and in the written form.

1.2.2. Mundane language

The mundane Hindi and Urdu languages do not differ a lot. A native speaker of Hindi and a native speaker of Urdu would not need a third language to make a conversation on any mundane topic. The vocabulary related to everyday life is on very high percentage is same and the grammar as we explained in 1.2.1. is exactly the same unless the languages, Urdu in particular uses higher register and makes non-indigenous plural or uses izafat for phrases. The

biggest part of the differentiating vocabulary in Hindi and Urdu is represented in nouns and adjectives. The other types of words such as pronouns, postpositions, numbers, verbs etc. to an extremely high degree are the same. It is no surprise that the higher register of Hindi and Urdu mainly comprise the differentiating nouns and adjectives and rest of the words in the sentences remain the same.

I conducted a small scale experiment with my students from a course "Language, Religion and Identity in South Asia" This content courses discusses various language conflicts and issues from South Asia. The major body of the students in the course are from India and Pakistan, who know Hindi and Urdu as mother tongues. There are two non-South Asian students there too, a Canadian of European descent and an Arab Canadian. While taking the topic of "Hindi-Urdu controversy", I asked these two non-South Asian students to write down any three sentences in English. I did not restrict them to any topic, they could choose any sentences they wanted. As I expected they chose very common sentences from everyday life. Then, I asked the students who knew Hindi to translate these 6 sentence into Hindi, and I asked the same to the Urdu speaking students. To my expectation the translation to both Hindi and Urdu were exactly the same. Although this was not any scientific experiment, but it is representative of the common perception of extreme closeness of the languages.

1.2.3. Culture

Although Urdu is associated with Muslims and Hindi with Hindus of South Asia, there are many cultural elements that are common to both Hindi and Urdu speakers. These cultural elements are independent of any religious affiliations, for example, folk songs and dances, folktales, some wedding rituals, some common attire, some festivals i.e. kite flying festival of Basant Panchami. The modern pop culture is in fact outright independent of any religious affiliation as so forth any Hindi or Urdu affiliation. The popular culture of Bollywood is equally claimed by both Hindi and Urdu speakers, and it is used in Hindi-Urdu classroom for teaching them as foreign languages.

As there has been a lot of research on incorporating cultural elements in a foreign language classes, Hindi and Urdu both can to a great extent utilise the same material for cultural component of the Hindi-Urdu Culture.

3 Hindi and Urdu vs. Hindi-Urdu

The rise of interest in South Asian studies in Academia in western universities corresponds to the rise in South Asian language courses. Hindi is the biggest south Asian language, it is natural for universities to start offering Hindi as a first language in the catalogue of South Asian languages. Most of the universities started teaching Hindi as the first modern south Asian language. Even if the language taught was Hindi, most of the programs in the North American Universities were called "Hindi-Urdu" language program and when Urdu was taught the program would be called Urdu language program. In a nutshell the "Hindi-Urdu" meant Hindi in general.

In last decade and so the "Hindi-Urdu" program which meant Hindi only started to become real Hindi-Urdu. More and more universities in fact started teaching Hindi and Urdu both under one foreign language of Hindi-Urdu. A variety of reasons such as social, political,

academic, emotional, financial etc., were offered to explain the rationale behind merging Hindi and Urdu to Hindi-Urdu.

One of the main reasons that the south Asian academic world likes to offer Hindi-Urdu as one foreign language is the idea itself that Hindi and Urdu are not two different languages, but just one single language with two different varieties. The wider context behind such statement is the common ties between Hindus and Muslims; mainly cultural, but also historical. This ideological stance is driven more by the emotional argument, than the ground reality of mutual relationship between Hindus and Muslims i.e. Hindi and Urdu speakers. Though there are very strong linguistic grounds to back their statement of Hindi and Urdu being one single language with two different varieties.

Apart from the ideological grounds for merging Hindi and Urdu into one foreign/second language there is an academic position too. For the study of modern (north) South Asia both Hindi and Urdu are equally important. Until the partition of India and also few decades later, Hindi and Urdu literatures were not clearly distinguished. Many of the writers were claimed by both languages, hence language speaker. Their writings were published in both Devanagari and Nastaliq with a little bit of editing to make them comprehensible for the respective readers. In fact most of the native speaker readers would not know that a particular author was Hindi or Urdu one. Premchand, Manto, Krishan Chandar, Ismat Chugatai are vastly read in both languages.

Scholars who study other aspects of south Asia would certainly find knowledge of both languages handy for their field work, for example most of the text of religious Bhakti movements can be found in Devanagari script, at the same time most of the archived documents are in Urdu because the lower level bureaucracy of Colonial India was conducted in Urdu. For anyone to study modern south Asia, specially the colonial times, the knowledge of both Hindi and Urdu is indispensable.

There are other practical reasons for this merger. As it happens, while discussing the demographic make-up of "the" language, Hindi and Urdu is lumped together into "Hindustani" to make it one of the biggest languages in the world. Since the term "Hindustani" does not exist officially exist, Hindi-Urdu is the closest to the linguistic reality of Hindi and Urdu as one language. And it can be used to make the sales pitch to a bigger clientele. The merger can make students interested in both Hindi and Urdu come together.

On the flip side of the merger, one cannot be careful enough not to alienate the potential students who are interested in only one of the languages. A big part of the student body who come to learn Hindi or Urdu or Hindi-Urdu in the north American Universities are so called "heritage students", second or third generation of south Asian immigrants. The chances of personal or familial inclination of a student for a particular language, Hindi or Urdu or rejection of the other as a matter of fact, is not inconceivable.

So far, in my personal experience of teaching Hindi-Urdu in the University of Toronto, Mississauga the combined course is more an attraction, than a reluctance to take the course.

4 Approaches to teach Hindi-Urdu

Since the idea of teaching Hindi-Urdu is relatively new, different universities use different use different approaches to deal with two different scripts. There hasn't been a standard approach in this regard. As many top universities teach Hindi-Urdu in a single course, here I will be surveying their teaching approaches.

4.1 Devanagari first approach

An overwhelming majority of the universities offering Hindi-Urdu apply this approach. The students are taught Devanagari (Hindi) script first and later, once they are fairly comfortable with Devanagari, Nastaliq (Urdu) script is gradually introduced. The time of introduction of also Nastaliq varies in universities. The most common approach is to introduce Nastaliq is in the middle of first semester, which is usually 6th or 7th week. Some universities start Urdu with second semester. In some universities Urdu is introduced as a small component of the course and is not given equal amount of time and grade points.

The rationale behind this approach lies on the level of difficulty of the scripts. Devanagari is comparatively easier script and more precise for the language (Hindi-Urdu). It also is more intuitive (Delacy) in comparison with Urdu script. The language and its sound system, i.e. the wide range of vowel and consonantal sounds, can be more precisely represented in Devanagari script. As we have seen in 1.1.1.c that in Urdu the short vowel of the language are usually not written, and other vowels and diphthongs are made in combination with the short vowels. A word written in Urdu without short vowels can be uttered in two ways or sometimes three or four ways. Some letters behave like both consonant and vowel depending on the context. Only the context makes a reader know what exactly is that word.

With this complexities of Nastaliq script, a foreign language learner when comes across a new word, he does not know its exact pronunciation. On the other hand with Devanagari the pronunciation is more or less the same as the word is written following the pronunciation rules. Since Hindi and Urdu on the basic (foreign language) level do not differ much and share a very high percentage of common vocabulary, it is helpful for the student to learn the basic vocabulary with Devanagari and later when Nastaliq is introduced, the student already know the word and it helps him to correctly pronounce the word. In other words, for learning Urdu as a foreign language a small corpus of basic words already known to the student can be helpful and increase the pace of learning.

4.2 Nastaliq first approach

Nastaliq first approach is rare, but some schools such as Harvard University rely on this. In Harvard University the course starts with the introduction of Nastaliq for first three weeks and in the beginning of second semester Devanagari is introduced.

Introducing Nastaliq first has some sort of psychological advantage. Learning the so called tougher script gives them a better grounding in it, and later when Devanagari, the so called easier script is introduced the students had already achieved a big milestone. When Devagnagari is introduced first, some kind of reluctance from students' part is often seen to learn Nastaliq.

The choosing of this or that script to start with also depends on the training of the instructor. If the instructor is a native speaker, he must have learnt the other script only as an adult and he feels comfortable teaching the other script though his first script. There are very rare native speakers-teachers of Hindi-Urdu who have learnt both scripts from the beginning. The non-native speakers-teachers also bring their training to the classroom. If they are trained to teach this or that script first, they prefer to teach the same way.

Higher level of Hindi-Urdu classes are usually separated or if they are taken together the students are given choice to focus on only one script.

5 Challenges to teach Hindi-Urdu

Although historically, culturally and also according to the linguistic proximity between the two languages make sense to teach them both as one course. However, there are some serious challenges in combining Hindi and Urdu into one language and organising them in one classroom.

5.1 Lack of text book

There are fair number of books to learn and teach Hindi and comparative a little less number for teaching and learning Urdu, but there is not a single book to teach Hindi-Urdu. The closest to having a book to teach both Hindi and Urdu is a twin books of "Beginning Hindi"(2015) and "Beginning Urdu"(2011), both of them written by Pien Joshua and Faruqi Fauzia. Both books follow the same organization in terms of number of units, lessons, and exercises except the sound and script section. Sometimes some Hindi as a foreign language books (Pořízka, 1972) towards the end also introduce Nastaliq script briefly. They usually give some examples, but rarely go beyond that. The idea of briefly introducing Nastaliq is to give learners the information that the language is also widely written in Perso-Arabic script.

All the teachers of Hindi-Urdu have to rely mainly on the material developed personally by them. In fact the teachers usually use a book for teaching Hindi (Devanagari) or Urdu (Nastaliq) first and then after introducing the second script in due time start converting and adjusting the book and material into the second script.

Since Hindi and Urdu individually are not very popular foreign languages beyond academia, the teaching/learning material for both languages is scarce. In the market driven economy the publication of HFL or UFL books is not a lucrative business. The combining Hindi and Urdu further shrinks the market. It will be very hard to expect a publisher to take interest in publishing Hindi-Urdu text book. Unless some university decides to publish a combined Hindi-Urdu textbook, the teachers will have to rely on their own material or combine different material to teach Hindi-Urdu.

5.2 Pace of learning

Studying of Hindi-Urdu together literary means learning of two vastly diverse scripts. A substantial part of classroom and beyond classroom time is required to master both very uncommon scripts. This hinders the pace of learning the foreign language. It significantly slows down the covering of material and with it overall knowledge base in the language.

Depending on the aim of the university the combining of Hindi-Urdu can be seen as both positively or negatively. If the Hindi-Urdu language program plans to create future scholars on modern South Asia, the combining of Hindi-Urdu is indispensable. On the other hand, if the university subscribes to the communicative language teaching approach, where the students are more interested in learning the language for communicative purposes so that they can travel in India and Pakistan, interact with local people, watch Bollywood films, the combining of two languages would not be a very good idea. The learning of two scripts will require time that could have been used to learn spoken/ communicative language.

5.3 Reluctance to learn two script

This is further expansion to the 3.2 from the perspective of Hindi. The popularity of Hindi in academic world along with other is also due to the economic rise of India with globalisation. The expansion of academic interest on South Asia from classical to modern India is also the product of India's new position on the world stage. The interest in modern Indian languages; mainly Hindi lies on the idea of modern vibrant India that could be penetrated through the main Indian language i.e. Hindi.

The vast majority of the students who take Hindi do not have a strong academic interest in India, they rather want to learn the language to travel and have first-hand experience of living India, they want to get deeper into the society and culture. Their reluctance to learn a second script can be anticipated. The main purpose of these students is to acquire communicative skills which they can use in the country. For them adding another script is not fulfilling the main purpose of their learning Hindi, rather that time and resources can be used to further expand their (communicative) language skills.

5.4 Heritage learners

Apart from globalisation and India's strong position in the globalised world, another factor that made Hindi-Urdu popular in North American academia is South Asian diaspora. A big part of student body that comes to learn Hindi-Urdu is second or third generation of South Asian immigrants. Their aim to learn Hindi-Urdu is make and maintain the cultural ties with the ancestral land, communicate with the grandparents and relatives from India and Pakistan, enjoy Bollywood films without subtitles and know the meanings of Bollywood songs that they have already memorised, but do not understand fully. Just like the group above they are also reluctant to learn another script. Acquiring knowledge of another script is a hindrance and delaying factor in achieving their purpose to learn communicative Hindi or Urdu. The motivation to learn Hindi-Urdu is in fact similar to the one with non-heritage learners.

The ethno-religious divide sometimes also plays an important factor to chose Hindi or Urdu or Hindi-Urdu. Since Hindi is associated with Hindus and Urdu with Muslims, and further with India and Pakistan, the choice of the language to learn in university can be influenced by this factor. And reluctance can be anticipated by both communities to not learn the other language or even a combined version.

6. Conclusion

The rationale behind combining Hindi and Urdu into Hindi-Urdu or keeping them apart depends on the aim that the university wants to achieve or ideology it subscribes too. If the decision of combining them into one is ideologically driven that the people of South Asia (especially of North India) apart from being followers of different religions i.e. Hinduism and Islam do not have any other difference and culturally and linguistically they are the same people, the university authorities i.e. academics and administrators of South Asian studies departments prefer combined course of Hindi-Urdu. This stance indirectly also expresses the approach the department has towards its future plan. Combining Hindi and Urdu into one language has some significantly scholarly advantages. A future scholar on Modern North India will miss a lot if he is equipped with only one language. The manuscripts of many important documents are often found only in one script which could be important for the research scholar, but he would not be versed on it. The use of a particular script was not very strictly associated with this or that religion. The is a heap of Bhakti literature (A Hindi religious movement) found in Perso-Arabic (Nastaliq) script. Similarly Sufi literature which is associated with Islam can be found in Devanagari script too. If the South Asian studies department of a university aims to equip their students for future research on India (South Asia), a combined Hindi-Urdu course can be considered a logical step.

Since the popularity of India related courses is on the rise because of India's new position in the global world, the universities want to capitalize on language courses. In such situations, the aim of the university is to get high enrollment rather than teaching Hindi or Urdu as a subject that will lead to some scholarly achievements. In such scenario the university prefers to offer Hindi and on some rare occasions Urdu separately independent of each other.

The student's perspective is also quite similar. If the student has a scholarly interest on South Asia, one can see the enthusiasm to learn Hindi-Urdu, because it can cover India and Pakistan, and Hindu and Muslim heritage of India. If the aim is only to learn a language to communicate with the people, any of the languages is sufficient and in fact, learning an additional script is a hindrance to acquiring the language fast. In case of heritage students they overwhelmingly prefer only one language; their own, so that they can make connections with the ancestral land and communicate with the relatives. They find leaning another script is, in fact, an additional burden, which does not have any use in their lives.

Regardless of different associations with different religions communities in South Asia, Hindi and Urdu are very similar languages and it makes perfect sense to have them together. At the same time the university must also be very clear about its position with regard to the language (Hindi-Urdu in particular here) teaching. Hindi-Urdu will have less students, but very enthusiast especially for doing research. On the other hand, Hindi alone and to certain extent Urdu alone will have bigger number of students, but their interest will not go very far beyond the language.

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