

PERSO-ARABIC LOANWORDS IN HINDUSTANI

PART II. LINGUISTIC STUDY

AGNIESZKA KUCZKIEWICZ-FRAŚ

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Preface

This book constitutes the second part of the two-volume monograph dedicated to the phenomenon of Perso-Arabic lexical borrowings in Hindustani (by some scholars also named Hindi-Urdu or Hirdu). It is a linguistic study of their adaptation, meant to demonstrate how the analyzed loanwords function in the contemporary system of the Hindustani language, through detailed examination of the adaptation processes, which occurred on all the levels of this system: graphemic, phonetic and phonological, morphological, lexical and semantic. The first part, published in 2008, is a substantial dictionary of borrowings (*Perso-Arabic Loanwords in Hindustani. Part I. Dictionary*), encompassing over 5500 entries, which over the centuries (starting approximately from the 11th-12th c.), entered into the languages and dialects of North India* as a result of the contacts between local communities and Muslim incomers. The lexical material gathered in the *Dictionary* was taken as the corpus for this study.

The analytical part of the book is preceded by a substantial theoretical introduction, in which, along with a brief explanation concerning the aim of the work and its methodical and formal assumptions, two issues, crucial for further considerations, are discussed in a synthetic but at the same time meticulous manner. The first – specifying the language of origin for the studied linguistic material, which was the basis for further analysis – is an attempt to display and scrutinize the ambiguous appellation “Hindustani” in its manifold meanings and scopes – especially in respect to two other terms, with which it is inseparably connected, namely Hindi and Urdu. Discussing the range of their meaning and

demonstrating how they have been understood by particular users, researchers, and various official bodies in different periods, helped to outline the background for both constructing a definition of Hindustani and drawing its boundaries that are in force in the presented study: the linguistic continuum current in the common speech – a *lingua franca*, unofficially, but fully functioning as a link language on the Indian subcontinent. The second problem discussed in the Introduction is the situation of linguistic contact between the Persian and Indo-Arian languages. It is described in a broader context of intercultural encounters, which intensified after the 12th c., when the Muslims took over vast parts of the Indian subcontinent, establishing their domination not only in the sphere of politics and administration but also in that of culture.

In the subsequent part of the study two areas were given special attention: an analysis of graphemic adaptation (Chapter 2) and phonetic and phonological changes (Chapter 3). The reason for this type of approach was the fact that both these areas of the Hindustani linguistic system are of a binary character, i.e. Hindustani employs two writing systems equally – the Nagari and the modified Perso-Arabic script (which was also used for original notation of the borrowed words). This dichotomy in the script can immensely influence the kind and degree of phonological changes and the phonetic realization of given lexemes. All this greatly complicates the process of studying lexical borrowings because, for example, the same lexemes can simultaneously undergo the processes of adaptation and adoption – depending on the language register. In Chapter 4, the analyzed loanwords are described in terms of their adaptation to the Hindustani morphological and syntactic system. This part of the book also includes information on the borrowed morphosyntactic phenomena, introduced into Hindustani during the process of immense lexical borrowing, and their influence on the native system. The last Chapter 5 is an attempt to categorize the discussed lexical material according to

various criteria employed in both diachronic and synchronic linguistics.

The analyses of Perso-Arabic loanwords in Hindustani presented in the book, although comprehensive, did not exhaust the whole extent of the issue – if only because of limiting the studied material to a definite set of lexemes and their sources. However, they provided a solid theoretical basis by showing and explaining the general mechanisms, which rule this phenomenon at all the levels of the language system. It is to be hoped that this work may be an inspiration for further – general or detailed – research, dedicated, for example, to such questions as the contextual functioning of the borrowings (depending on the kind of text/ethnolect/language register), intentional “macaronization” (here: Persianization or Arabicization) or the purification of language in the diachronic and synchronic approaches; internationalisms, doublets and calques (which are only briefly mentioned in the book), etc. The work may also prove useful to researchers engaged in similar studies on other Indo-Aryan languages, as it can be assumed, with a high level of probability, that at least some of the phenomena and processes described in Hindustani are analogous to those occurring in other South Asian linguistic substrata.



* Here and in most of the work, for practical reasons and in accordance with the usage found in most reference texts, “India” is used synonymously with “South Asia”, implying an older meaning of the word, not influenced by present-day circumstances and divisions. However, the name is occasionally used to denote the contemporary state (Republic of India), and in such cases the reader can infer it from the context.