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Communication Difficulties Due to Lexical Differences in Adjectives: A Comparative Study of Yousafzai and Banuchi Dialects

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Abstract

This study aims to present the vocabulary differences between Yousafzai and Banuchi dialects of Pashto language. As there are different words in both dialects which are used for the same things due to which speakers of both dialects face communication difficulties. The objective of the current study is to find out communication difficulties in both dialects in the use of adjectives through a comparative study. The researcher has conducted focused group interviews and used audio recording as a tool to collect data from the respondents. The data was collected from both male and female to fulfil the integrity of the research. The data was analyzed and presented in tabulated and graphical form. The results of the research illustrate the level of lexical differences between both dialects. It is expected that the findings of this research will present a set of general ideas for the solution of communication difficulties among Pashto speakers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Keywords: Yousafzai, Banuchi, Dialects, Communication Difficulties, Lexical Differences

Introduction

Linguistics is the scientific study of language, which formally pacts with a language. Different branches of linguistics deal with language differently. For example, the sound system of a language is related to the branch of linguistics, which is formally called phonology. When it concerns with the structures of words, it is known morphology. Similarly, when it deals with the study of sentence structures and its forms then it is called syntax and the study of meanings in language system refers to semantics. Furthermore, when it studies language with the relationship of society and its actual use then it is given the name of sociolinguistics. (Rickford, 2002 and Sajjad et al., 2023). Therefore, sociolinguistics is the branch of linguistics, which is a vast field, studies the wide diversity of dialects across a given region, to the analysis of the different social variables influencing the speaker's language. It often shows the humorous realities of human language and how a dialect of a given language can often describe the age, gender, and social class or level of education of the speaker. (Ammour, 2012). Sociolinguistics is also called the derivational term, because this word is shaped by the



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combination of two words *sociology* and *linguistics*. Sociology studies the science of society; and linguistics discusses the science of language. It deals with the association among languages and the environment where language exists. It discusses the communal roles of language and the methods; it is used to deliver social meaning (Ammour, 2012). Every language has different dialects but the speakers of these dialects understand each other conversation, as their dialects are the branches of a same language. Dialects of any language can be different due to regional and social aspects and these differences refer to the variations in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. For instance, the speakers of the dialects of Northern England and the Midlands, use the past tense of “to be” by using “I were, you were, he, she and it were, we were and they were”, which shows that the verb is unmovable for a person. But in Standard English, the speakers use the verb “was”. For example, “I was and he, she and it was”. The given examples show that the grammar of a standard language is influenced by differences in regional dialects. Moreover, the speech pattern of different social classes and groups are different, which shows the social variation. This means that the speaker's speech pattern is highly controlled by both social status and region of origin of the speakers (Behravan, 2012, p 7 and Habib et al., 2025).

In phonological variation, the change occurs in the sounds of a language, as phonology is the study of sound system, therefore, the variation affects its three types of phonetics which are articulatory phonetics, acoustic phonetic and auditory phonetics. The grammar of any language deals with the structure of words (morphology) and with the structure of sentence (syntax). Grammar is a theory which arranges the words to form a language. Language is the source of communication while grammar is the means of words construction. Grammar of a language concerns both the receptive and productive skills of communication. It starts with the meaning of the words to the creation of a word, while receiving the speech; grammar forms a meaning in order to comprehend the word. These are vocabulary differences among dialects of a language due to geographical and regional variations. As “a carbonated soft drink” can be called “pop” in North and West of the United States, “soda” in the Northeast, “tonic” in the Eastern New England and “cold drink” or “dope” in various parts of the South. These differences show lexical variations among the varieties of a language (Rickford, 2002, p.12).

Research Questions

1. To what extent lexical differences exist in Banuchi and Yusufzai dialects, particularly, in terms of adjectives?
2. What problems are faced by the speakers of the two dialects due to the lexical differences?

Literature Review

Dialects of Pashto language are classified into two groups as a southern variety and northern variety. Southern variety consists of Kandahari dialect (or Southern dialect), Kakar dialect (or Southeastern dialect,) Mandokhel-Shirani dialect, Marwat-Lodi-Bettani dialect, Southern Karlani group Khattak dialect, Banuchi dialect, Dawarwola dialect, Masidwola dialect Wazirwola dialect. Northern variety covers Northern Karlani group Taniwola dialect, Khost dialect, Zadran, Mangal dialect, Bangash, Orakzai, Turi and Zazi dialect, Afridi dialect, Khogyani dialect, Wardak dialect, Kharoti dialect, Central Ghilji dialect (or Northwestern dialect) Northern dialect (or Eastern dialect) Yusufzai dialect (or Northeastern dialect) Wanetsi dialect (David, 2014 and Sajjad et al., 2023).



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The Pashto tribes have been kept apart geographically. The rivers and mountains keep a distance among these tribes, due to this distance every tribe used to speak in their own way, which formed different dialects (Jazab, 2009). According to Penzl (2009) Pashto as the difficult language to learn, perhaps the most difficult language. Linguists say that there are six major dialects of Pashto which are different from the standard Pashto. According to Mackenzie (1987), Differences among dialects of Pashto are primarily phonological, which deal with the different sounds of different dialects. But there are other differences as well like morphological, grammatical and lexical differences which are comparatively few. Hallberg (1992) stated that the Pashto dialects spoken in KP are different considerably in accent, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Pashto is the principal language of Kohat District, except in Shakardarra and the belts with Indus. According to Grierson (1877) and (Ishtiaq et al., 2022) the northern tribe of the Afghans speaks South – Western dialect of Pashto is that of the Khattaks. They are strongest in the district of Kohat, but are also found in Peshawar and in Bannu. A settlement of the Saghrī Sept of this tribe is found near Makhad on the banks of the Indus in the south – west corner of the Attock district of the Punjab. These also speak the south western dialect of Pashto, while the Chachh Pathans of the same district speak the north eastern dialect.

The Akora Khattaks reside near Peshawar. In the Western or Teri district, they run into the Bangash, who occupy the North West, speak the North Eastern (Pakhto) dialect of Pashto. Khalil (2008) considers those speakers of the South Western dialects are the Pathan tribes as Marwats, Bannuchis and Waziris. The Waziri dialect is spoken over a large area. There is close resemblance between Bannuchi and Waziri dialects, specifically in the pronunciation of the vowels.

According to Khalil (2008) the Yusufzai inhabit the country to the north east of Peshawar and there are 654,940, people who speak this dialect of Pashto in Peshawar district. The dialect spoken by the people living in the north and south west of Hazara district is also very similar to the Yusufzai dialect, with little differences. The people who are the inhabitants of Swat valley and Bajor also speak Yusufzai dialect but in these areas almost five types or patterns of the actual Yusufzai dialect are spoken (Khan et al., 2025).

Hewadmal (as cited in Jazab, 2009) states that Pashto is a language which has several dialects. These dialects are more than 71 in numbers which increase with the passage of time, while exploring each one. The dialects are divided into different groups, on the basis of different sounds, which are classified as the dialects of Pashto language on the basis of the sounds. According to Adelvi (1998) in the southern region of Bannu, a dialect is spoken by the people living in Bannu is called Banuchi or Banusai dialect. Banuchi dialect is the variety of the standard Pashto called Yusufzai or Peshawar Pashto. Both, Banuchi and Yusufzai dialects are quite different. There are differences between both dialects. Banuchi the speakers of Banuchi dialect, are familiar with Yusufzai dialect as it is the standard dialect and in the written form as well but the speakers of Yusufzai dialect do not understand Bannuchi dialect (Mir, 1983 and Gul et al., 2024). There are many lexical differences between Banuchi and Yusufzai dialects, as in Yusufzai dialect 'yard' is called 'gholey' but in Banuchi dialect it is called 'thalai', similarly 'tom' (male of cat) in Yusufzai dialect as 'narghut' but in Banuchi it is called 'bali pash' (Bannusai, 1993). Banuchi variety of Pashto has many lexical items related to its own environment which is totally different from the standard Pashto or Yusufzai dialect and the comparison of which is difficult for the speakers of other localities. But words travel in the sense that they become colloquial speech in the adjacent regions and



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with the passage of time harmony takes place between these areas and hence, it is difficult to claim that the specific lexeme belongs to this or that region. Nevertheless, sometimes the lexical items have signs which clearly identify their place of origination (Jazab, 2009).

There are several views regarding the word “Banuchi” (Jazab, 2009). The very first view about this word is that there was a person, who named as “Sheetak, the founder of Banuchi”. The name of his wife was Bano, and their kids were called as “Banuchi”, which means the offspring’s of Bano. The offspring’s of Bano shifted to an unknown place for living, and with the name of their mother Bano, that area was called Bannu. Before the rise of Islam, an Indian person, named “Sath Ram Nomedra” was the prince of this area. The name of this daughter was Bano, due to which the area also got the name Bano, later on which became Bannu and the residents of Bannu were called as “Banuchi”. The word “Banuchi” has connection with a person who named Bana. There were four Indian brothers, who got scattered in different areas, and started making their families. One of them was “Bana” who started living in the area, which is now called as Bannu. Therefore the word “Bannu” is derived from his name “Bana” and his children were called the “Banuchi”. There was a place, named Aakra, which was the possession of Rustam, the son of Iranian king. Rustam gifted this area “Aakra” to her daughter “Bano” as her dowry. Therefore “Aakra” got a new name “Bannu” connected to Bano, and the residents of Bannu were called as Banuchi. Among all the above mentioned views, the first view is more believed. (Jazab, 2009).

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There are many studies which were conducted comparatively on two languages, dialects and accents, but no one has conducted a comparative study on these two dialects, Yusufzai and Banuchi. In this sense, this is primary research and the research will use first handed data for the analysis of this comparative study and will provide a gap for other scholars too who are interested to conduct research on more dialects in Pashto language. Comparative analysis of two languages, dialect or accent seem the most appropriate technique for analyzing the differences, similarity and the changes in the status of language or dialect.

Methods



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The objective of the study mentioned in the introduction chapter is to investigate the dialectical differences between the Yusafzai and Banuchi dialects. For the purpose of identifying the dialectical differences in the present study the researcher used descriptive statistics tools to measure the magnitude of differences and similarities in the two dialects. For the dialectical comparison between Yusafzai and Banuchi dialects, the translations of one hundred nouns were collected from both dialects through interviews. The researcher has used MS Office Excel 2010 to compute dialectical differences. After collecting data, the researcher placed the nouns and adjectives in tables, bar chart and pie chart in order to analyze them statistically. In table the researcher identified the lexical items which are completely different, little different and similar with each other. The differences, little differences and similarity have been shown in the form of charts (bar chart and pie chart) and in the form of tables. After sorting the status of noun from each of the two dialects, the researcher has computed the percentage of differences, little differences and similarities between the Yousafzai and Banuchi dialects on the basis of noun separately. Then the researcher combined the percentage of noun, and presented them through pie and bar chart as a whole after sorting them in an Excel sheet and computing the percentage, and finally the researcher has presented the percentage in separate tables, and displayed the status in the form of bar chart and pie chart.

In this study the researcher has used mixed research approaches that are both qualitative and quantitative. The mixed research contains two schools of social science, which have different features. As two dissimilar approaches, the quantitative approach is an effort of analyzing association between two variables, while qualitative research typically deals with observation and explanation. It also makes suggestion in spite of verifying or refuting it (Silverman, 2001).

Peshawar and Bannu are the two districts of KP province, Pakistan, where the researcher has conducted the research. In Peshawar people of different speech communities are residing. Among Hindko, Urdu and Persian speech communities, the major population of this area is speakers of Yusafzai dialect of Pashto language. The native speakers of this area are the L1 Pashto speakers and the selected respondents were the residents of Peshawar district with 20 college students from two colleges of L1 Pashto speakers and 10 people as the speakers of both dialects selected from the public places as markets. Among the respondents some of them basically belonged to Mardan, Charsada and Nowshera.

The second area which has been selected for the research is Bannu district, where Banuchi dialect is the mother tongue of its residents. But some of the residents are speakers of Waziri, Khatak and Marwat dialects as well. The speech community of Hindko language is also living in Bannu. But as a whole Bannu is the land of Bannuchi people, who speak Banuchi dialect of Pashto language. For Banuchi dialect 20 respondents from colleges and 10 random people as Banuchi speakers were taken from Bannu area. These respondents belonged to Bannu city and the villages nearby Bannu like Ghoriwala, Mandan and Bazar Ahmad Khan.

The researcher has used focus group interviews as a tool for data collection. The focus group interview is a qualitative method for information analysis (Muhammad, 2010). A focus group is a group comprising of people with certain characteristics who emphasis on discussions on a given matter or topic, the group of people is usually between six and ten in number, who are fetched together by a trained moderator (the researcher) to discover attitudes and insights, moods and notions about a topic (Muhammad, 2010 and Gul et al., 2023).



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Data Analysis

The collected data from the speakers of both dialects, based on adjective words is given in the following table. The table contains translations of the given list in Yusafzai and Banuchi dialects. It specifies the statuses of the words too, which were achieved after the comparison of both dialects in the use of adjectives.

Table 1

Adjective words	Yusafzai dialect	Banuchi dialect	Status
Lonely	Yawaze	Gusha	Different
Cold	Yakh	Serr	Diffeent
Wide	Plan	Thaparr	Different
High	Uchat	Pos	Different
Clean	Pak	Pijawu	Different
Lazy	Narasta	Shial	Different
Curly	Gorrguthey	Gorrguthi	little different
Dry	Och	Och	Similar
Bald	Ganjey	Ganjai	little different
Obedient	Thaabedar	Thabedor	little different
Sticky	Inkhaly	Leshnok	Different
Thick	Ting	Ting	Similar
Talkative	Krratu	Jabbrri	Different
Tall	Dang	Chig	Different
Sleepy	Oda	Khebiaula	Different
Scary	Daran	Daran	Similar
Swollen	Parrsedaly	Dad	Different
Rude	Shadal	Badarwakha	Different
Clumsy	Sharrshaparr	Napeya/Wawel	Different
Thundering	Garrgorr	Kanrghrab	Different
Aggressive	Ghusanak	Ghusanok	little different
Cute	Khkuly	Khwazshika	Different
Hardworking	Mehnati	Khorikash	Different
Shiny	Chamkeela	Chanrkavina	Different
Proud	Kabrjan	Kubrjan	little different
Colorfull	Rangina	Rangdor	little different
Coward	Daran	Daran	Similar
light(weight)	Spak	Alak	Different
Chewy	Shwand	Zshewula	Different
Plain	Negh	Seekh	Different
Little	Warkoty	Warika	little different
Spicy	Trikh	Thrikh	Similar
Different	Badal	Badal	Similar
Shallow	Nizdey/Kam	Dragai	Different
Fast	Tez	Chabak	Different



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Barren	Khushey	Wuch/Sra/Baati	Different
Full	Dak	Dak	Similar
Gray	Saleti	Erey rang	Different
Heavy	Drond	Drind	little different
Misty	Rrund/kharr	Thath/Garrdman	Different
Slippery	Khwindarry	Shweindok	little different
Twins	Braghuney	Braghini	little different
Many	Der	Der	Similar
Funny	Tokmar	Toki	little different
Smoky	Logewaly	Ligiwala	little different
Wrong	Ghalat	Ghalat	Similar
Pure	Socha	Shicha	little different
Tight	Klak	Klak	Similar
Eager	Showqeen	Shawqman	little different
Hollow	Dad	Tash	Different
Dirty	Khiran	Khiran	Similar
Leafy	Panro wala	Ponrriawar	little different
Open	Khlas/Kulao	Khlos	little different
Tired	Stharey	Sthara	little different
Bad	Baad	Baad	Similar
Short	Land	Land	Similar
Soon	Zar	Zar	Similar
Right	Sahi	Sahi	Similar
Fruity	Mewadar	Mewador	little different
Soft	Naram/pos	Pesth	little different
Loose	dheela/shrrath	Khlos	Similar
Lively	Masth	Masth	Similar
Sandy	Shagey,Shagy	Shaglan	little different
flat nose	Chita poza	Binda poza	Different
Sharp	Thera	Thera	Similar
Noisy	Chagho wala	Ghurezshi	Different
Wet	Lund	Lind	little different
Married	Wadakarrey	Wadgera	little different
Beauty	Khkulwaly	Kshulwola	little different
Blunt	Pas	Pas	Similar
Melt	Weeli	Wuley	little different
Active	Tez/Takrra	Chabak	Different
Naughty	Wran	Weron	little different
Patient	Sabarnak	Sabera	little different
Fat	Ghat	Ghat	Similar
Melancholic	Ghamjan	Ghamjan	Similar
Round	Ghund	Grrad	Different
Hairy	Babar	Wishtonawar	Different



Purple	Batingarri	Jamu	Different
Fresh	Taza	Awtewan	Different
Miser	Shum/Kanjus	Ting	Different
Thin	Narey	Narai	little different
Ancient	Pakhwaney	Wakhtinai	little different
Blind	Rrund	Rrind	little different
Deaf	Konrr	Kinrr	little different
Dumb	Gung	Gung	Similar
Disable	Mazura	Mithoz	Different
Ill	Bimar	Bimor	little different
Hot	Tod	Ted	little different
Hungry	Ugey	Uzsha	little different
Lame	Gud	Gud	Similar
Sour	Thriw	Thriw	little different
Left	Gass	Gass	Similar
right side	Khi	Shai	little different
Double	Duwa	Duwa/Duwabragha	little different
Sweet	Khog	Khwezsh	little different
Salty	Malgeen	Molgejan	little different
Red	Sor	Seer	little different
Yellow	Zyer	Zyer	Similar

Like the previous table of nouns, the above table too presents hundred words which are adjectives. This table also indicates three statuses as similar, little different and different. In the light of these statuses the researcher has presented their values and percentages in the following table 18.

Table 2

Status	Value	Percentage %
Similar	25	25
Different	36	36
Little Different	39	39
Total	100	100

After comparison of adjectives of both dialects, twenty five percent of lexical similarity is found in the use of adjectives between these two dialects of Yusafzai and Banuchi in the table 18. Speakers of both Yusafzai and Banuchi dialects use twenty percent of adjectives similarly. This similarity is the sign of mutual intelligibility between the two target dialects, indicating that the speakers of both dialects can understand each other's speech to twenty five percent out of hundred, when it is based on adjectives. For example, a word *sour* is an adjective for which the two target dialects have same word *threw*. Therefore, blockage of communication breaks here between both dialects and the speakers of these dialects can easily understand the speech among them. The similarity



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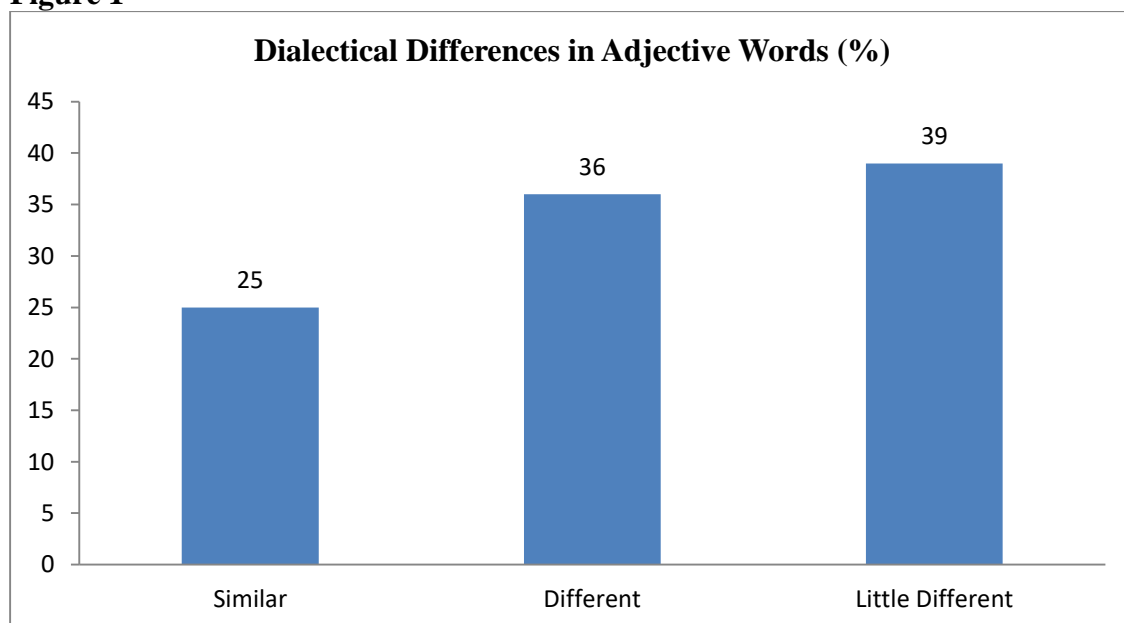
of adjectives is more in percentage than that of the nouns with the same status in both dialects. Therefore, the level of speech understanding in the use of adjectives between both dialects is little bit more than the use of nouns.

The same table shows thirty six percent lexical differences between Yusufzai and Banuchi dialects. Thirty six percent adjectives are those words which are totally different in both dialects. Here the difference brings mutual unintelligibility between the target dialects of Pashto which leads to communication barriers between the speakers of both Yusufzai and Banuchi dialects. For instance *hallow* is called *dad* in the dialect of Yusufzai while the speakers of Banuchi dialect use word *tash* for this adjective. This difference of *tash* and *dad* create communication barriers which unable the speakers of both dialects to understand the conversation between them.

Thirty nine percent out of hundred percent words are those adjective which show little difference between Yusufzai and Banuchi dialects in the use of adjectives. They are comprehensible for the speakers of both dialects. But this change can be referred to phonological variance because the little difference between these dialects here in use of adjectives is the difference of sounds. For example the adjective *tired* is *stary* in the dialect of Yusufzai and *sthara* in Banuchi dialect. Thus in this portion speakers of both dialects do not face any serious issue while communicating each other. In the following Bar chart, percentage for lexical differences and similarities in the use of adjectives is presented.

The differences, similarity and little difference in the use of adjectives between both dialects are shown in percentage in bar chart below. The following bar chart also consists of three blue bars with three different statuses.

Figure 1





Conclusion

This study hoped to answer the questions and objectives of the research. The first question was that what problems are faced by the speakers of the two dialects due to lexical differences? It is clearly noticed in the analysis chapter of the present study that speakers of both dialects face conversational problems due to the high level of variations while communicating with each other. These lexical differences are the problems faced by the speakers of both dialects. As the researcher has given the example of word *sheerak* and *brasthan* too in the chapter of literature review, which created confusion between the Banuchi speaker and speaker of Yusafzai in grasping each other's discourse properly. Therefore the main problems are the comprehension of speech between speakers of both dialects. The percentage of this difference in the analysis chapter proves the difficulties between both dialects.

The second question was that to what extent lexical differences exist in Banuchi and Yusafzai dialect? It is noticeably clear in the present study through interviews that both dialects are lexically different from each other. This difference between both is noticed more in the use of noun than adjectives. The use of adjectives shows smaller lexical differences between both dialects. But the overall difference between both dialects is too much and bar graph of difference is high than similarity between these two dialects. Therefore, the reason for communication difficulties between both dialects exists at a higher level.

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