

# On Grammatical Borrowing: The Case of Arabic Plurals in the Urdu Language

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**Abstract**—The Urdu language, which represents a large-scale borrowing situation, has not only borrowed thousands of Arabic lexical items but also some grammatical aspects of Arabic. This paper deals more specifically with Arabic plurals in Urdu in terms of grammatical borrowing that is mediated by lexical borrowing. The paper supports the view that, though scarce, grammatical borrowing does nevertheless occur. The evidence is drawn from Urdu where some significant Arabic structures are adopted. The case of Arabic plurals has been taken as an example. The incorporation of Arabic plurals into Urdu plays an important role in plural formation in the language, particularly the use of Arabic broken plural (BP) patterns. BPs represent almost 86% of the collected data (150 items out of 175). However, it is worth mentioning that plural inflection is only restricted to those noun stems which have been already borrowed from Arabic. It is, then, a clear indication that Urdu has benefited from the richness of Arabic not only in the domain of beliefs and philosophy but also in the structure of Arabic grammar.

**Index Terms**—grammatical borrowing, lexical borrowing, Urdu, Arabic, morphological patterns, broken plural

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Urdu language belongs to the Indo-European language family. It came into existence due to the interaction of Muslim soldiers with the native speakers of the region. In this regard, Katzner (2002) states that “Urdu is the official language of Pakistan and is also widely spoken in India. In Pakistan, it is the mother tongue of about 10 million people, but is spoken fluently there as a second language by perhaps 100 million more. In India, where it is spoken by some 50 million Muslims, it is one of the official languages recognized by the constitution.” (p. 174)

During the process of its growth, Urdu underwent many influences. The words taken from Turkish, Prakrit, Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian, and of course Arabic are now Urdu's own and very much urdunized. It is this remarkable process in which foreign words are accommodated and adapted in a manner and fashion that it seems as if they were its own by origin. The efforts made by the scholars and lexicographers of the standard Urdu for enriching it and making it dynamic and culturally open are really appreciated. It can be easily claimed that the Urdu of today is a good amalgamation. The process of lexical innovation in the Urdu language is still very fast and continuous in comparison with other languages.

Arabic, being the language of Islam, has deeply penetrated all the Muslim nations, Turkish, Persian and Hindustani. It has also contributed to the enrichment of European language vocabularies. In this sense, Arabic is considered a major donor language of the world. It is generally thought that the Arabs came into contact with India only after the rise of Islam when Muhammad Bin al-Qasim invaded Sindh. However, the complete Muslim domination over the subcontinent took place only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, during which “a large number of Persian, Arabic, and Turkish words entered the language via the military camps and the marketplaces of Delhi.” (Katzner, 2002, p. 175)

It is no denying fact that Persian has the main role in crystallizing and standardizing Urdu, but all through, Arabic has been playing an important role in enriching Urdu with its own vocabulary as well as some of its own morphosyntactic rules. A respectable number of scholars have conducted several studies on the influence of Arabic language and literature on Urdu (Hasan, 1949; Zaidi, 1989). So far as the Urdu literature is concerned, the impact of Arabic literature on Urdu is not only strong, it has sustained dominance as well. It is not only in the domain of beliefs and philosophy that Urdu has benefited from the richness of the Arabic language, rather Arabic has influenced the very core of Urdu grammar. It is worth mentioning here that the Urdu not only has a direct link with Arabic, but Persian also serves as a strong link between the two. The contribution of these two dominant languages of West Asia, i.e. Arabic and Persian, to Urdu is so deep and powerful that Urdu would perhaps lose its existence without them. In building its vocabulary, Urdu is dependent on Arabic and Persian to a great extent, though, during the post-independence period, as Zaidi (1989) emphasizes, “Perso-Arabic influence is being reduced day by day and Sanskritized Hindi is influencing Urdu more and more”. (p. 102)

## II. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

It is commonly believed that grammar serves as the foundation of a language. The Urdu grammar has borrowed a few, but valuable classical structural rules from Arabic. One of these rules is the adoption of Arabic plurals by the Urdu

language, which is the focus of the present paper. Many linguists studied Arabic plurals in Urdu by only providing lists of those plurals as their aims of such studies were to prescribe and discuss the grammatical structure of the Urdu language. Of these researchers are Beg (1988, 2000), Platts (1990), and Schmidt (1999), with Platts' account being the most comprehensive one. I would argue that this paper is the first to deal with Arabic plurals in Urdu in terms of grammatical borrowing that is mediated by lexical borrowing.

In the literature on linguistic borrowing and contact linguistics, there is almost an anonymous agreement that despite the fact that grammatical borrowing is so rare, it does occur; some structural, syntactic and functional elements of the borrowing language may be incorporated into the structure of the recipient language (Haugen, 1950 & 1992; Mithun, 2007; Poplack, Sankoff, & Miller, 1988). This descriptive study, therefore, is an attempt to seek out more evidence to confirm this view. To achieve this aim, the pluralization process in the Urdu language, as a recipient language, is investigated.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW: GRAMMATICAL BORROWING VS. LEXICAL BORROWING

Linguistic borrowing, by definition, is the incorporation of foreign elements into the native language by the speakers of that language. The expression "foreign elements" here may either refer to the lexical items (vocabulary), grammatical particles or even to the syntactic rules that might be borrowed. So, based on the nature of materials borrowed, we have two types of borrowing: lexical and grammatical. Lexical borrowing is referred to as the integration into a recipient language of both form and meaning of a lexical item originating in another language, while grammatical borrowing involves the incorporation of foreign rules into a recipient language. It is a well-known fact that as the latter rarely occurs in a language contact situation, the former is the common practice (Appel & Muysken, 2005; Haugen, 1950 & 1992; Mithun, 2007; Poplack, et al., 1988; Weinreich, 1966; Winford 2003). Urdu has adopted a large number of lexical items from Arabic such as *qalam* 'a pen' (Ar. qalam), *kursi* 'a chair' (Ar. kursi), *tasvīr* 'a picture' (Ar. taṣwīr), *taqrībān* 'approximately' (Ar. taqrībān), *šauq* 'a hobby' (Ar. šawq), and so on. In this paper, I limit myself to the notion of grammatical borrowing for which the evidence is drawn from Urdu as a recipient language.

The adoption of structural elements (e.g. prepositions, inflectional affixes, etc.) and syntactic rules has been among the most resistant features of language to contact-induced change. According to Weinreich (1966), "the fuller integrated (i.e. structurally coherent or bound) the morpheme, the less likelihood of its transfer". (p.35) Languages vary considerably in their receptivity of grammatical borrowing. In incorporating English loans in its lexicon, Modern Standard Arabic, for example, shows a great resistance against such kind of borrowing (Al-Athwary 2004). Arabic never borrows verbs directly and there is no room at all for function words like pronouns, prepositions or any structural rules. The overwhelming majority of the borrowed materials is only nouns (Al-Athwary, 2004, pp. 126-29). On the contrary, other languages are found receptive to foreign grammatical rules to some extent. McCarthy (1985), for instance, notes "Arabic and Persian grammatical rules were brought into Turkish" (p. 13). Among others, McCarthy provides the example of Arabic endings for feminine gender and dual number, which had to be attached to Turkish adjectives to make them agree with the noun. Similarly, exotic relative clauses are argued to occur in such languages as Konkani, Turkish, Quebec French, and Bolivian Quechua from Kannada, Persian, English, and Spanish, respectively (Appel & Muysken 2005). On the whole, grammatical borrowing does occur but at the same time it is limited and rare. The scarcity of this kind of transfer is due to certain semantic and structural constraints. Semantically speaking, content words (nouns, verbs, etc.) have a clear link to cultural content whereas function items (like articles, prepositions, affixes, etc) do not. Among content forms nouns rank as the form with the most lexical content whose role is to extend the referential function of the language. Nouns are the only category to which reference of various new inventions, discoveries and concepts is essentially made. Structurally, Nouns are transferred as such because they are less integrated or less coherent in the structure of the recipient language than function words or even other content words, hence being more easily to be borrowed. In other words, nouns are said to cause fewer disturbances to the paradigmatic and syntagmatic coherence of the borrowing language.

In effect, Appel and Muysken (2005, pp. 154-62) suggest that there are five "scenarios" in which grammatical borrowing could potentially take place. They are repeated below for convenience:

- a) Through gradual convergence due to prolonged coexistence
- b) Through cultural influence and lexical borrowing
- c) Through second language learning
- d) Through relexification
- e) Through imitation of prestige patterns

Scenarios (a), (b) and partially (e) seem to be mainly responsible for the influence of Arabic and Persian as the languages of cultural and political superiority on Urdu since the Islamic conquest of the Indian subcontinent. During its historical development, Urdu has shown to be more inclined than any other languages to swallow foreign elements raw, so to speak, instead of preferring to translate them into some native equivalents. Therefore, it is through such rapid process of massive lexical borrowing, Perso-Arabic constructions like Arabic plurals have found their syntactic slots in the structure of the Urdu language. This transitive influence of lexical borrowing has been found operative cross-linguistically. Based on the intensity of contact, Thomason & Kaufman (1988), as cited in Nuckols (2003, pp. 109 -110), provide a similar account on possibilities of structural borrowing by devising a scale of five levels of intensity of

contact. They believe that the more intense the cultural pressure is, the higher the degree of the structural borrowing will be. During the Islamic rule in India, the subcontinent was intensively influenced by the Arabic culture and Arabic Language.

In the most interesting studies on grammatical borrowing, King (2000, 2002), in his analysis of English borrowings in Canadian French, argues for the centrality of lexical borrowing to grammatical change, i.e. contact-induced grammatical change is usually mediated by the lexicon. He further points out that small differences in the inventory and properties of borrowed lexical items account for a wide range of structural variation in the recipient language. King's view is supported by Winford (2003) who confirms that certain structural innovations in a recipient language appear to be mediated by lexical borrowing, and are therefore not clear cases of "pure" structural borrowing. Mithun (2007) adds the factor of "time" which affects the susceptibility to borrowing of grammatical structures. He concludes that "an appreciation of the diachronic dimension in studies of language contact permits to enlarge our view of the kinds of grammatical developments that can be attributed to contact" (p. 164). Mithun (2007) and Winford (2003), however, both agree that "direct" grammatical borrowing is only possible provided that the two languages involved are "typologically" very similar. Therefore, it can be concluded that the adoption of Arabic plurals in Urdu grammar is induced by lexical borrowing and there is no direct transfer of Arabic structures into Urdu due to the fact that Arabic and Urdu are typologically dissimilar languages.

In fact there are many works which are conducted on the issue of Arabic borrowings in Urdu. The most recent ones that the researcher has come across include (Ahmad 2011); (Khan & Alward 2011); and (Khan, Koka, & Anwar 2013). Using a relatively large corpus of Arabic loanwords, Ahmad (2011) is purely lexical, focusing on the semantics of such borrowings and analyzing them from a point of view of the theory of semantic fields. He comes out with eleven semantic domains of Arabic elements used in Urdu including the domains of religion, language and literature, society, medicine, education and politics. The data collected for the present study belong to almost all these domains. This indicates that Arabic loanwords are usually adopted in the literary/ written variety of the Urdu language. Similar to this study, though much smaller in corpus and scope, is the work conducted by Khan & Alward (2011). In addition to discussing briefly the lexical fields of Arabic loanwords in Urdu, the authors focus on the morphological aspects of these loans; they provide and illustrate a list of Arabic prefixes, suffixes and infixes in the morphology of Urdu. None of these aspects, however, is tackled in detail as the present paper does with the issue of Arabic plurals in Urdu. When exemplifying the plurality of some Arabic loans like *masajid* 'mosques', *mahāfil* 'gatherings', and *tarātib* 'arrangements' (p. 35), they claim that such plural nouns are formed by inserting the Arabic infix -ā- to the singular forms. This is not the case, however. What is involved here is a totally different process of plural formation. As will be discussed in the subsequent sections, the three Arabic plurals stated above are called broken plurals, and formed by following specific morphological pattern in Arabic. It is fəəlil in this case. As also another example from Urdu, the plural of the Arabic *ālim* is *aulama*; no infix is added here; it is formed by vowel change according to another morphological pattern, that is fuəalā?. Finally, (Khan, Koka, & Anwar 2013) is a sociolinguistic study which traces diachronically the Arabs' contact with the population of the Indian sub-continent and discusses the socio-cultural circumstances under which word-borrowing has taken place. Many of the points mentioned in (Khan & Alward 2011) are repeated, but a little bit elaborated here.

The present study differs from the studies reviewed above in that it deals with grammatical borrowing rather than lexical borrowing, focusing on one specific aspect of grammar, i.e. the Arabic plurals in Urdu. In doing so, it seeks a supporting evidence for grammatical borrowing which takes place through lexical borrowing.

#### IV. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS

The data of the present study is a list of 175 Arabic plurals which are used in Urdu. The data have been collected from two online Urdu newspapers: the Daily Express (Pakistan) and the Daily Urdu Times (India) from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2014. The list of the 175 items was given to six native speakers of Urdu from both India and Pakistan. The informants were asked some questions in order to check and verify the pronunciation, meaning and plurality of these items. Their feedback to the list was so significant and helpful, especially in the verification of the transcription and lexical meaning of these loanwords (see Appendix A). In addition, the researcher draws on his own observations as a native speaker of Arabic.

The data collected include all types of Arabic plural, namely masculine sound plural (mas.SP), feminine sound plural (fem.SP) and broken plural (BP). With regard to BP, the patterns of Arabic BP found in Urdu are checked with the thirty-two basic Arabic patterns (the so-called ?awzān in Arabic) of BP stated in Wright (1995) in order to know which BP patterns, out of the thirty two, are in actual use in the grammar of Urdu. The whole data, therefore, are statistically analyzed and critically described in order to provide a clear-cut account of the phenomenon.

The concept of "morphological pattern", as a key-term in this paper, needs some elaboration. According to pattern-to-root morphology approach (Neme and Laporte, 2013, p. 222), a pattern is defined as "a template of characters surrounding the slots for the root letters" and "between and around the slots, patterns contain short vowels, and sometimes consonants or long vowels." In Arabic morphology, a distinction is usually made between two abstract terms: root and pattern. The root generally consists of three consonants and carries the core lexical meaning, while the word pattern contains vowels and conveys syntactic information. Thus, the Arabic BP *hijārah* 'stones' will consist of the root

/ħjr/ and the word pattern fiĕālah, where the letters f-ĕ-l- indicate the slots into which the root consonants map. Similarly, the pattern of Arabic PB sufūn ‘ships’ is fuĕul, the pattern of kawākib ‘planets’ is faĕālil, and so on. In the Arabic BP pattern system, the consonantal root is usually the trilateral f-ĕ-l- or the quadrilateral f-ĕ-l-l-. Both types of patterns are found in the data collected from Urdu, though the former is much larger in number than the latter.

## V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Plural Formation in Arabic and Urdu

There are three numbers in Arabic: singular, dual and plural. Dual is usually formed by suffixing -ān to masculine and feminine singulars (e.g. walad ‘a boy’ waladān, bint ‘a girl’ bintān). Traditionally, Arab grammarians distinguish two types of plural formation: the sound plural (SP) and the broken plural (BP). SP is usually formed by suffixation to internally unchanged nominal stems. SP is either masculine marked by the suffix -ūn (murāsīl ‘a correspondent, reporter’ murāsīlūn) or feminine marked by the suffix -āt (ṭālibah ‘a female student’ ṭālibāt). BP, on the other hand, involves internal vowel manipulation and thus assumes various fixed morphological patterns as in the native nouns (kalb ‘a dog’ kilāb on the pattern fiĕāl, and walad ‘a boy’ ?awlād following the pattern ?afĕāl).

Modern Urdu, on the other hand, has two numbers: singular and plural. Broadly speaking, Urdu makes use of two kinds of plural, one is native and the other is borrowed. The former is related to the indigenous plural system commonly found in languages of the Indo-Aryan origin. In this system, the formation of plurals in the direct case depends on the termination and gender of the singular. The following plural markers are used: a) -∅ (zero morpheme): with masculine ending in a consonant, or the vowel ā, ū, or ī, (ghar ‘a house’ pl. ghar, motī ‘a pearl’ pl. motī, sahrā (Ar.) ‘a desert’ pl. sahrā), b) -e: with masculines ending in /ā, a/ (laṛkā ‘a boy’ pl. laṛke, parda (Per.) ‘a curtain’ pl. parde), c) -(y)ā with feminine ending in /ī/ (laṛkī ‘a girl’ pl. laṛkiyā, saxtī ‘a difficulty’ pl. saxtiyā), and d) -ĕ: with feminine ending in any sound rather than /ī/ (bahen ‘a sister’ pl. bahenĕ, kitāb (Ar.) ‘a book’ pl. kitābĕ). All these plural inflections are equally applicable to both native as well as foreign nouns, mainly those of Perso-Arabic origin.

The latter plural system used in Urdu, i.e. the borrowed one, is adopted from Arabic and Persian, with Arabic plurals being the most common. They will be discussed in the subsequent section.

### B. Statistics of Arabic Plurals in Urdu

The data of 175 loanwords is analyzed statistically. The numerical data in Table (1) show that the overwhelming majority of Arabic plurals in Urdu belong to BP (85.7%), while SP (both mes. and fem.) represents only 14.3% of the data. This finding is very interesting. It explains how borrowing languages behave towards grammatical borrowing; when grammatical borrowing is inevitable, they tend to incorporate those aspects of lending language’s grammar which are received with less resistance on the part of the recipient language. In the process of forming plurals in Arabic, and as discussed in the earlier section, SP, which is considered the “regular” plural form, involves attaching certain suffixes to the singular noun, but BP, which is the irregular plural form, is formed by changing the internal structure of the singular nouns. The incorporation of the SP suffixes and using them productively to form plurals in Urdu seems very difficult. So, Urdu prefers to borrow BPs and their singulars through the process of lexical borrowing.

TABLE 1.  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ARABIC PLURALS IN URDU

Type of plural	frequency	percentage
Mas. SP	8	04.6 %
Fem. SP	17	09.7%
BP	150	85.7%
Total	175	100%

Table (2) presents the 150 Arabic BPs used in Urdu. They are analyzed statistically in terms of the morphological patterns they follow in the process of plural formation. It is obvious that out of the thirty-two basic Arabic BP pattern, twenty of them are in use in Urdu. Seven of them are the most frequent; their frequency is ranging between 39 and 10 patterns in the collected data. The remaining thirteen patterns are less common; some of them, especially those which have only one or two examples in the data, are rare even in Arabic (McCarthy and Prince 1990, Wright 1995). There are three BPs attested in the data, but they don’t match with the 32 Arabic patterns, namely saḥāba ‘prophet Muhammad’s companions’, nās ‘people’, and ʿagāni ‘songs’. In the same time, the BPs mudun and madāen, meaning ‘cities’ refer to one and the same stem, madīna ‘a city’. The same can be said about ġilma and ġilmān, meaning ‘boys’, which are two BPs of the singular ġulām ‘a boy’. The twenty patterns of Arabic plurals attested in Urdu will be elaborated more shortly.

TABLE 2.  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ARABIC BPS IN URDU BY PATTERNS

Pattern	fucala	faċāʔil	fawāʔil	ʔafāla	ʔafāl	fucāl	faċāl	faċāl	faċāla	fucul	faċil	fīrāl	fucūl	ʔafāl	fīlān	ʔafāla	fīrāl	faċala	fucala	fīla	TOTAL
Frequency	12	20	11	5	39	4	10	10	3	3	2	4	13	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	147
percentage	8.2	13.6	7.5	3.4	26.5	2.7	6.8	6.8	2.0	2.0	1.4	2.7	8.8	0.7	1.4	2.0	1.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	100%

### C. The Analysis of Arabic Plurals in Urdu

Arabic plurals are very well-marked in Urdu. It is an obvious linguistic need and practice to express the ideas. As stated above, Arabic has the dual as well as the plural numbers, and plural is of two types SP and BP. Dual and SP are used in Urdu but they are not very frequent. Examples of the dual are *vāldain* ‘parents’ < *valid*, *kaunain* ‘the two worlds’ < *kaun*, and *jānibain* ‘two sides’ < *jānib*. SP or the so-called regular plural is formed either by attaching the Arabic suffix *-īn* to mas. singulars as in *nāzirīn* ‘beholders’ < *nāzīr*, and *mauminīn* ‘believers’ < *maumin* or by the suffix *-āt* to fem. singulars as in *taḥqīqāt* ‘researches’ < *taḥqīq*, and *maxlūqāt* ‘creatures’ < *maxlūq*. In case of dual and mas.SP, the suffixes added are always those of the Arabic accusative-genitive case; the nominative form, *-ān* (for dual) and *-ūn* (for mas.SP), don’t exist in Urdu.

Arabic mas.SP used in Urdu should be dealt with as purely lexical borrowings because they are very few and their occurrences are generally limited to literary or sophisticated styles. In less Arabicized styles the same word will be found with an Urdu plural suffix. Hence, the Arabic mas. Sp suffix *-īn* doesn’t have a significant grammatical status in Urdu structure. On the other hand, Arabic fem. SP suffix *-āt* is more common in written Urdu and in more sophisticated styles of spoken Urdu also. It is attached to Arabic loanwords of all sorts (including some to which it cannot be added in Arabic) and also to many purely Persian words: examples of adding *-āt* to Arabic loanwords in Urdu have been given above; examples of adding *-āt* to Arabic loanwords to which it cannot be added even in Arabic are *makanāt* ‘buildings, ‘houses’ and *savalāt* ‘questions’, in Arabic these plural forms are odd and not used and *ʔamākin/ʔamkinah* and *ʔasʔilah* are used instead, respectively; finally examples of adding *-āt* to purely Persian loanwords are *kaḡzāt* ‘papers’ and *begmāt* ‘ladies’.

As for BP, it is the most frequent Arabic plural form in Urdu. BPs in Arabic are formed by modifying the stem ((Neme and Laporte 20130), that is by changing the vowel pattern of the singular nouns and assume many morphological patterns or measures (ʔawzān). Wright (1995, pp.199-231) provides a complete list of thirty-two BP patterns in Standard Arabic (see Appendix B) including both those which are derived from trilateral as well as quadrilateral (or more) verbal roots. As the data show, twenty of these are in the actual use in modern Urdu, out of which only seven are very common and constitute day-to-day conversation and writing and thirteen are considered the less common ones. An account of these patterns adopted by Urdu are elaborated below.

#### 1. The common patterns

TABLE 3.  
THE COMMON PATTERNS OF ARABIC BP IN URDU

S. No.	Pattern	Examples of Arabic BP in Urdu	Singular form and gloss
1.	ʔafāal (39)	<i>axbār</i> <i>autān</i> <i>arbāb</i>	<i>xabar</i> ‘a piece of news’ <i>vatan</i> ‘a homeland’ <i>rab</i> ‘a lord’
2.	faċāʔil (20)	<i>rāsāel</i> <i>fāzāel</i> <i>dālāel</i>	<i>risāla</i> ‘a letter’ <i>fāzīla</i> ‘a virtue’ <i>dālīl</i> ‘a proof’
3.	fucūl (13)	<i>buhūr</i> <i>šuhūd</i> <i>sutūr</i>	<i>bāhar</i> ‘a sea’ <i>šāhid</i> ‘a witness’ <i>sātar</i> ‘a line’
4.	fucalāʔ (12)	<i>fūqara</i> <i>aulama</i> <i>hākama</i>	<i>fāqīr</i> ‘a poor’ <i>ālim</i> ‘a scholar’ <i>hākīm</i> ‘a wise man’
5.	fawāʔil (11)	<i>qavālib</i> <i>fāvaed</i> <i>hāvādis</i>	<i>qālib</i> ‘a pattern’ <i>fāeda</i> ‘an advantage’ <i>hādīsa</i> ‘an accident’
6.	faċāʔil (10)	<i>šayātīn</i> <i>tāsvīr</i> <i>sultān</i>	<i>šaiṭān</i> ‘a Satan’ <i>tāsvīr</i> ‘a picture’ <i>sultān</i> ‘a sultan’
7.	faċāʔil (10)	<i>māqāsīd</i> <i>kāvākib</i> <i>mādrās</i>	<i>māqsad</i> ‘a purpose’ <i>kāvkab</i> ‘a planet’ <i>mādrasa</i> ‘a school’

## 2. The less common patterns

TABLE 4.  
THE LESS COMMON PATTERNS OF ARABIC BP IN URDU

S. No.	Pattern	Examples of Arabic BP in Urdu	Singular form and gloss
8.	?afēilā? (5)	<i>ambiya</i> <i>aqrība</i>	<i>nabī</i> 'a prophet' <i>qarīb</i> 'a relative'
9.	fuccāl (4)	<i>kuffār</i> <i>aššāq</i>	<i>kāfir</i> 'an infidel' <i>āšiq</i> 'a lover'
10.	fiḥāl (4)	<i>riyāz</i> <i>jibāl</i>	<i>rauza</i> 'a garden' <i>jəbāl</i> 'a mountain'
11.	faḥālilah (3)	<i>asātiza</i>	<i>ustāz</i> 'a master, teacher'
12.	fusuul (3)	<i>kutub</i>	<i>kitāb</i> 'a book'
13.	faḥāla (3)	<i>fatāwi</i>	<i>fatwa</i> 'a religious ruling'
14.	?afēilah (3)	<i>amsila</i>	<i>māsāl</i> 'an example'
15.	fiḥlān (2)	<i>sibyān</i>	<i>sabī</i> 'a boy'
16.	fiḥal (2)	<i>qisas</i>	<i>qissa</i> 'a story'
17.	?afēul (1)	<i>ahruf</i>	<i>haraf</i> 'an alphabet letter'
18.	faḥalah (1)	<i>tālaba</i>	<i>tālib</i> 'a student'
19.	fuccalāh (1)	<i>qazāt</i>	<i>qāzi</i> 'a judge'
20.	fiḥlah (1)	<i>ḡilma</i>	<i>ḡulām</i> 'a boy'

The existence of the twenty Arabic BP patterns in Urdu indicates the great grammatical influence of Arabic on this language. But, it is important to note that these patterns are only applied to Arabic loanwords which are in tens if not in hundreds. At the same time, many of Arabic borrowed nouns may be inflected for both Urdu and Arabic plural forms (e.g. *kitāb* 'a book' may be pluralized as *kutub* or as *kitābē*). Furthermore, some of Arabic plural patterns are treated as singulars and consequently assigned the native plural marker, as *aulama* 'religious scholars' becomes *aulama ā ashāb* 'companions' becomes *ashābō*, etc. The reason why Arabic BP forms are much more frequent than Arabic SP forms in Urdu can be explained as follows. As mentioned in the literature review above, the adoption of bound and structural morphemes has been among the most resistant features of language to contact-induced change. Unlike BP, the formation of SP involves the attachment of the bound morphemes *-īn* and *-āt* to singulars. So, the transfer of these plural suffixes into Urdu seems to be so difficult in comparison with BP forms which only involve change in the internal vowels of these forms, and hence emerging with lexical patterns rather than adding any suffixes. In this regard, Haugen (1950) notes, "in the lexicon, foreign patterns may predominate over the native, but the structural elements persist". (p. 225) So, Arabic BP patterns are borrowed along with their singulars and keep the singular-plural function within, at least, the circle of Arabic loanwords, while SP forms with the suffixes *-īn* and *-āt* remain as lexical borrowings since they have no organic function in the Urdu language.

BP patterns, like other Arabic loans in Urdu, undergo phonological adaptations so as to conform to the sound system of Urdu. It is well known that Arabic has a number of throaty and emphatic phonemes such as /ʔ/, /ɛ/, /ḡ/, /ħ/, /x/, /q/, /ʃ/, /t/, /d/, and /z/, most of which are characteristic to Arabic and lack in other languages of the world. What is interesting here is that such Arabic sounds appear in their original form only in the Urdu script (i.e. the written form) since Urdu has adopted the Perso-Arabic writing system. However, almost all Arabic loanwords together with Arabic plurals used in this paper are transcribed according to their spoken form, not as they are used in the written form of the language. In the spoken form, they are pronounced differently. They are adapted in the following way (examples given below are only from the collected data of BP):

- /ḡ/, /z/, and /ḏ/ become homophonous and are pronounced as /z/, e.g. *aḡrāz* 'purposes' (Ar. *aḡrād*), *nāzirīn* 'beholders' (Ar. *nāzirīn*), and *zunūb* 'sins' (Ar. *ḏunūb*); note that *nāzirīn* is an example of SP; it is used here because no BP containing Arabic /z/ is attested in the data.

- /ʃ/, and /θ/ become homophonous and are pronounced as /s/, e.g. *taṣāwīr* 'pictures' (Ar. *taṣāwīr*), and *amsila* 'examples' (Ar. *amṡilah*).

- /ʔ/ and /ɛ/ become homophonous and are pronounced as /a/, e.g. *axbār* 'news' (Ar. *?axbār*), and *aššāq* 'lovers' (Ar. *euššāq*)

- /w/ is pronounced as /v/, e.g. *vāsāeq* 'documents' (Ar. *waṡāʔiq*), and *jəvanib* 'sides' (Ar. *jawānib*).

- /ħ/ is pronounced as /h/, e.g. *haḡāeq* 'facts' (Ar. *ḡāʔiq*)

- /t/ is pronounced as /t/, e.g. *tālaba* 'students' (Ar. *ṡalabah*)

The Arabic uvular /ḡ/, /x/, and /q/, which are not usually used in the languages and dialects spoken in Indian subcontinent, are maintained in Urdu as confirmed by the informants. The original pronunciation of the ten Arabic sounds stated above is, however, maintained to some extent by highly educated speakers of Urdu and those who are bilingual in Arabic to show prestige and social status. For example, the pharyngeal /ɛ/ and the emphatics /t/ and /ʃ/ are obviously uttered in words like *eulama* and *ṡalāʔīn* instead of pronouncing them as *aulama* and *salāʔīn*.

As for the morphological make up of the patterns (1-20) above, there are some morphophonemic alterations that may take place as shown below:

- In patterns 4 & 8: These patterns originally end with a glottal stop /ʔ/ in Arabic, i.e. fuʕalāʔ and ʔafʕilāʔ. In Urdu, the final glottal stop of the Arabic patterns is not pronounced for the sake of linguistic simplification, though Urdu has the hamza grapheme in its alphabet.

- In patterns 11, 14, 18, and 20, the Arabic tā marbūṭah (which is realized as the glottal -h in pause forms and as -t in connected speech) is omitted. In pattern 19, however, tā marbūṭah is retained in *qəzāt* (< Ar. quḏāh ‘judges’) in the form of -t. In other contexts also, the Arabic tā marbūṭah, when occurred in Urdu, is always realized as -t, not as -h, even in the pause forms as in *jannat* ‘paradise’ (Ar. jannah), *kisbat* ‘dress’ (Ar. kiswah), *mahabat* ‘love’ (Ar. mahabbah), etc.

- In pattern 13, faʕāla is modified into *faʕāli* in Urdu, so instead of fatāwa we get *fatāwi* (final a > i).

- All the above patterns of BP adopted from Arabic shown in Tables (3) and (4) are derived from Arabic “trilateral” verbal roots. Only three patterns (6, 7, and 11) are patterns of BPs that are based on “quadriliteral” or more roots.

Finally, it can be inferred that the use of Arabic plurals is usually typical of a formal and literary style. In fact, the intake of Arabic language and literature in Urdu is largely of religious (Islamic) nature. The Islamic scholars of India and Pakistan generally write in Urdu, but due to their religious content it becomes compulsory for them to use Arabic elements (including Arabic plurals) in great numbers as, for example, while mentioning and explaining a verse from the Holy Quran or a piece of the prophet’s saying. It could be unnatural if some of the Arabic elements are not used. In this regard, I would like to mention only one book in support of my claim and that is of course written by none other than a towering and a giant scholar of *Islamiyyaat* (Islamic studies), Abul Kalam Azaad. His book “*Tazkira*” contains Arabic elements quite frequently and delicately in a way that I do not think that anybody without the background of Arabic will be able to read. In a nutshell, it can be said that the plural of both natures (SP and BP) are mostly used by the Islamists and religious preachers as well as poets out of their poetical compulsion and necessities.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This paper supports the view that, though being so scarce, the grammatical borrowing does occur. The evidence is drawn from the Urdu language where some significant Arabic structures are adopted. The case of Arabic plurals has been taken as an example. As the discussion has shown, the incorporation of plural rules of Arabic into Urdu plays an important role in plural formation in the language, particularly the use of Arabic BP patterns. However, it is worth mentioning that plural inflection is only restricted to those noun stems which have been already borrowed from Arabic. Still, the immense use of such Arabic plural patterns, though restricted to nouns of foreign origin, is a clear indication that the influence of Arabic language and literature is deeply rooted in both lexicon and structure of the Urdu language.

This attempt leaves the door open for further investigations within the framework of grammatical borrowing, especially in the domains of Arabic prepositions (*fī* ‘per’ as in *fī sadī* ‘per cent’ and *fī sāl* ‘per year’, etc.), Persian genitive case inflection (*hukūmat-e-pākistan* ‘the Government of Pakistan’, *jazba-e-dil* ‘emotion of the heart’, and *dīvān-e-xās* ‘private hall of audience’), and loan hybridization (Arabic words like *sāhib* ‘companion’ and *sadr* ‘chest, upper part’ are prefixed productively in the form of hybrid loanwords, e.g. *sāhib khana* ‘drawing room’, *sāhib takh* ‘place of sitting’, *sadr bazar* ‘main market’, *sadr board* ‘committee of heads’, etc; loan hybridization is also clearly manifested in the prefixation of the Arabic negative marker *bila* to Urdu words like *bilazarūrat* ‘unnecessarily’ and *bilachuk* ‘unmistakably’).

## APPENDIX A

The following is a list of 175 Arabic plurals used in the Urdu language which have been collected from two online Urdu newspapers: the Daily Express (Pakistan) and the Daily Urdu Times (India) from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2014. The loanword data are presented alphabetically in Urdu script along with their phonetic transcription in Roman characters. A gloss of their meaning in English is also provided.

ائمة <i>aema</i> 'imams' آباء <i>abā</i> 'fathers' ابرار <i>abrār</i> 'pious believers' أبطال <i>abṭāl</i> 'heroes' أبعاد <i>abād</i> 'dimensions' أبواب <i>abvāb</i> 'doors' آثار <i>asār</i> 'ruins' اجناس <i>ajnās</i> 'races' احاديث <i>ahādīs</i> 'talks' احباب <i>ahbāb</i> 'sweet hearts' احرف <i>ahraf</i> 'alphabets' احكام <i>ahkā</i> 'judgments' اخبار <i>axbār</i> 'news' ادوار <i>advār</i> 'eras' ادوية <i>advia</i> 'drugs' انكياء <i>azkia</i> 'smart people' آراء <i>arā</i> 'opinions' ارباب <i>arbāb</i> 'lords' أزواج <i>azvāj</i> 'pairs/ spouses' اساتذة <i>asātiza</i> 'instructors' اسانيد <i>asānid</i> 'references' اسرار <i>isrār</i> 'secrets' اشعار <i>asār</i> 'poems' اصحاب <i>ashāb</i> 'friends' اصول <i>asūl</i> 'principles' اضداد <i>azdād</i> 'opposing forces' اطراف <i>atrāf</i> 'sides/ parties' اطفال <i>aṭfāl</i> 'children' اعوان <i>avān</i> 'assistants' اغاني <i>agāni</i> 'songs' اغراض <i>agrāz</i> 'purposes' اغنياء <i>agnia</i> 'rich people' أفلت <i>āfāt</i> 'pests' افراد <i>āfrād</i> 'individuals' افعال <i>afāl</i> 'actions, verbs' افواج <i>afvāj</i> 'groups of army' افواه <i>afvāh</i> 'mouths' اقارب <i>aqāreb</i> 'relatives' اقدار <i>aqdār</i> 'fates' اقدام <i>aqdām</i> 'feet' اقرباء <i>aqriba</i> 'relatives' اقوال <i>aqvāl</i> 'sayings' اقوام <i>aqvām</i> 'nations' اكابر <i>akāber</i> 'elite' آلام <i>alām</i> 'pains' امثلة <i>amsila</i> 'examples'	امراء <i>amara</i> 'princes' انبياء <i>ambia</i> 'prophets' اوتال <i>avāel</i> 'ancestors' اوراق <i>aurāk</i> 'papers' اوزار <i>auzār</i> 'sins' اوزان <i>auzān</i> 'weights' اوطان <i>autān</i> 'homelands' اوقات <i>auqāt</i> 'times' اوقاف <i>auqāf</i> 'endowments' اولاد <i>aulād</i> 'kids' اولياء <i>aulia</i> 'guardians of God' اوهام <i>auhām</i> 'illusions' بحور <i>buhūr</i> 'seas' بصائر <i>bāsāer</i> 'insights' تجار <i>tajār</i> 'merchants' تحقيقات <i>tahqīqāt</i> 'investigations' تحويلات <i>tahvilāt</i> 'transfers' تحيات <i>tahiyāt</i> 'greetings' تصاوير <i>tasāvīr</i> 'pictures' تفاسير <i>tafāsīr</i> 'interpretations' تفاصيل <i>tafāsīl</i> 'details' تكاليف <i>takalīf</i> 'pains/ costs' تواريخ <i>tāvārīx</i> 'dates' جبال <i>jābāl</i> 'mountains' جوارح <i>jāvarih</i> 'raptors' جوانب <i>jōvanib</i> 'sides' جواهر <i>jāvahir</i> 'jewels' حدائق <i>hadāeq</i> 'gardens' حروب <i>hurūb</i> 'wars' حصص <i>hāsas</i> 'shares' حقائق <i>haqāeq</i> 'facts' حقوق <i>haqūq</i> 'rights' حكام <i>hakām</i> 'rulers' حكماة <i>hakama</i> 'wise men' حوادث <i>havadis</i> 'accidents' خدمات <i>xidmāt</i> 'services' خصائل <i>xāsāel</i> 'features' خلفاء <i>xulafa</i> 'caliphs' خنازير <i>xanāzīr</i> 'pigs' خيام <i>xayām</i> 'tents' دفاتر <i>dāfātīr</i> 'notebooks' دلائل <i>dālāel</i> 'evidences' ذرات <i>zarāt</i> 'atoms' ذنوب <i>zunūb</i> 'sins' رسل <i>rusul</i> 'messengers' رسائل <i>rāsāel</i> 'messages'	رؤساء <i>ruasa</i> 'presidents' روابط <i>rāvābit</i> 'connections' رياض <i>riyāz</i> 'gardens' زعماء <i>zuama</i> 'leaders' سامعين <i>sāmīn</i> 'listeners' سطور <i>sutūr</i> 'lines' سلاطين <i>sālātīn</i> 'sultans' سوالات <i>səvalāt</i> 'questions' شرائط <i>šarāet</i> 'conditions' شرفاء <i>šurafa</i> 'noble people' شركاء <i>šuraka</i> 'partners' شروح <i>šuruh</i> 'explanations' شمائل <i>šamāel</i> 'features' شهود <i>šahūd</i> 'eye-witnesses' شياطين <i>šayātīn</i> 'devils' صبيان <i>sibyān</i> 'boys' صحابه <i>sahāba</i> 'companions' صدقات <i>sədaqāt</i> 'charities' صفحات <i>səfahāt</i> 'pages' صلوات <i>səlavāt</i> 'prayers' طلبة <i>təlabā</i> 'students' عزائم <i>azāem</i> 'determinations' عساكر <i>asākir</i> 'soldiers' عشاق <i>aššāq</i> 'lovers' عضلات <i>azlāt</i> 'muscles' علماء <i>aulama</i> 'scholars' علوم <i>ulūm</i> 'sciences' غلمان <i>gilman</i> 'boys' غلماة <i>gilma</i> 'boys' فتاوى <i>fātāva</i> 'fatwas' فرائض <i>fōrāez</i> 'ordinances' فصحاء <i>fəshāh</i> 'eloquent speakers' فصول <i>fusūl</i> 'seasons/ chapters' فضائل <i>fāzāel</i> 'virtues' فقراء <i>fukara</i> 'poor people' فقهاء <i>fuqaha</i> 'jurists of Islam' فلاسفة <i>fālāsifa</i> 'philosophers' فنون <i>fumūn</i> 'arts' فهارس <i>fəhāris</i> 'contents' فوائد <i>fāvāed</i> 'benefits' فواحش <i>fāvāhīš</i> 'obscenities' قبائل <i>qəbāel</i> 'tribes' قصص <i>qisas</i> 'stories' قضاة <i>qəzāh</i> 'judges' قضايا <i>qəzāya</i> 'issues' قطع <i>qəta</i> 'pieces'	قواعد <i>qəvāid</i> 'rules' قوالب <i>qəvālib</i> 'templates' قوانين <i>qəvanīn</i> 'laws' قيود <i>qiyūd</i> 'restrictions' كائنات <i>kaenāt</i> 'the world' كبائر <i>kəbāer</i> 'deadly sins' كتب <i>kutub</i> 'books' كرام <i>kirām</i> 'generous people' كفار <i>kuffār</i> 'atheist' كواكب <i>kəvākib</i> 'planets' قناديل <i>qanādīl</i> 'lamps' لطائف <i>lātāef</i> 'nice jokes' لواحق <i>lavāhiq</i> 'appendices' لوازمات <i>lavazimāt</i> 'needs' مجاهدين <i>məjāhidīn</i> 'jihadists' مخلوقات <i>məxluqāt</i> 'creatures' مدارس <i>mādāris</i> 'schools' مدائن <i>mādāen</i> 'cities' مدن <i>mudun</i> 'cities' مراجع <i>mārāja</i> 'references' مراحل <i>mārāhil</i> 'stages' مسائل <i>māsāel</i> 'issues' مساجد <i>māsājīd</i> 'mosques' مسلمين <i>muslimīn</i> 'Muslims' مشايخ <i>māšāhīx</i> 'sheikhs' مشاهير <i>māšāhīr</i> 'celebrities' مفردات <i>māfradāt</i> 'vocabulary' مقاصد <i>məqāsīd</i> 'intentions' مكانات <i>məkanāt</i> 'places' ملائكة <i>mālāeka</i> 'angels' مواصلات <i>māvāsəlāt</i> 'telecom.' مؤمنين <i>muminīn</i> 'believers' ناس <i>nās</i> 'people' ناظرين <i>nāzirīn</i> 'bholders' نواقض <i>nəvāqīz</i> 'nullifiers' وثائق <i>vāsāeq</i> 'documents' وزراء <i>vazāra</i> 'ministers'
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## APPENDIX B

The following list is the 32 patterns of BP as used in Arabic adopted with examples from Wright (1995). All patterns are derived from three radicals (consonants) except the last three patterns which are derived from quadrilateral or more radicals. Patterns in bold represent those 20 forms used in the Urdu language.



PATTERN	SINGULAR	PLURAL
fūcal	qubbah 'a dome'	qubab
fūel	?aṣfar 'yellow'	ṣufr
<b>fūcul</b>	safīna 'a ship'	ṣufun
<b>fīcal</b>	xaymah 'a tent'	xiyam
<b>fīcāl</b>	bahr 'a sea'	biḥār
<b>fūcūl</b>	jayš 'a military force'	juyūš
fūccal	sājjid 'prostrating oneself'	sujjad
<b>fūccāl</b>	ḥākīm 'a judge'	ḥukkām
<b>faecalāh</b>	sāḥir 'a conjuror'	saḥarah
<b>fūcālāh</b>	jāni 'a sinner'	junāh
fīcalāh	ḍik 'a cock'	diyakah
<b>fīcālāh</b>	fata 'a youth'	fityah
<b>?afeul</b>	lisān 'a tongue'	?alsun
<b>?afeāl</b>	ʿīd 'a festival'	?aʿyād
<b>?afeilāh</b>	zamān 'time'	?azminah
<b>fawāʿil</b>	nādirah 'a joke'	nawādir
<b>faʿāʾil</b>	risālah 'a letter, massage'	rasāʾil
<b>fīcālān</b>	jār 'a neighbour'	jīrān
fūcālān	balad 'a country'	buldān
<b>fūcālāʾ?</b>	?amīr 'a prince'	?umarā
<b>?afeilāʾ?</b>	nabī 'a prophet'	?anbiyā
fāʿla	qatīl 'a slain'	qatla
fācāl	Layl 'a night'	layāl
<b>faʿālā</b>	fatwa 'a judicial opinion/ fatwa'	fatāwā
fāʿil	ʿabid 'a slave'	ʿabīd
fūcūlāh	ʿamm 'an uncle'	ʿumūmah
fīcālāh	ḥajar 'a stone'	ḥijārah
faʿal	xādim 'a servant'	xadam
fāʿel	ṣāḥib 'a companion'	ṣaḥb
<b>faʿālil</b>	kawkab 'a planet'	kawākib
<b>faʿālil</b>	ṣulṭān 'a sultan'	ṣalāṭīn
<b>faʿālilāh</b>	mulhid 'a heretic'	malāḥidah

## APPENDIX C

In transliterating Arabic forms, the following reading conventions are used:

ʔ	glottal stop
ħ	voiceless pharyngeal fricative
x	voiceless uvular fricative
ṣ	emphatic voiceless alveolar fricative
ʦ	emphatic voiceless denti-alveolar plosive
ḍ	emphatic voiced denti-alveolar plosive
ẓ	emphatic voiced interdental fricative
ġ	voiced uvular fricative
ʕ	voiced pharyngeal fricative
q	voiceless uvular plosive

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