

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology
of Egypt / Egyptology

**LINGUISTIC AND PARALINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT
PRODUCED BY HIJRA (TRANSGENDER) COMMUNITY LOCATED IN
LAHORE, PAKISTAN**

**Neelam Nazir¹, Syeda Rida Zahara², Paras Akhtar³, Ghulam Abbas Balti⁴, Muhammad
Bashir⁵**

¹English Language Lecturer, ELC University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Email: neelam.nazir@ucp.edu.pk

²English Language Lecturer, ELC University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Email: syeda.ridazahara@ucp.edu.pk

³English Language Lecturer, ELC University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Email: paras.akhtar@ucp.edu.pk

⁴English Language Lecturer, University of Baltistan, Skardu, Pakistan

Email: ghulam.abbas@uobs.edu.pk

⁵English Language Lecturer (Visiting Basis), University of Baltistan Skardu, Pakistan

Email: skardvian@gmail.com

Neelam Nazir , Syeda Rida Zahara , Paras Akhtar , Ghulam Abbas Balti ,
Muhammad Bashir , Linguistic And Paralinguistic Analysis Of The Text Produced
By Hijra (Transgender) Community Located In Lahore, Pakistan , Palarch's Journal
Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(10), 3068-3077. ISSN 1567-214x.

Keywords: Hijra, Eunuch, Hermaphrodites, Language, Farsi.

Abstract

This study is an attempt to shed a light on the linguistic and paralinguistic attributes of the text produced by the Hijra (eunuch or hermaphrodite) communities through different discursive practices while constructing their social discourse. These particular communities are mostly established in the suburb of Lahore from where a sample comprised 25 members of the hijra communities was selected to carry out an in-depth analysis of their distinctive text. The data was elicited through interviews and observations and it was discovered that they communicate through a vernacular dialect of Punjabi, may be labeled as hijra vernacular. They claimed switching into the garbled Urdu sometime for communication outside their group. Their community of practices cover registers (e.g., khol for home, luri for girl, khondi for mother, santla for clothes, jog for hair and so on) are exclusive to them. Gender is not a fixed category for hijras and they use masculine and feminine pronouns according to the masculine or feminine roles assigned to them in their groups. In addition to linguistic features, they express themselves through paralinguistic features (e.g., clapping, facial expression, and gaze) as a meaning making source in their discourses.

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to explore that what kind of text is produced by the hijra community living in the suburb of Lahore. The text is generated through the different discursive practices by the hijras while constructing their social discourse within the hijra community. Their social discourse is reflected through the various activities and events of their lives which are related to their profession, group formation, genital surgery, punishment system, education system, relation with other groups, gender orientation, roles of male and females, familial structure, clapping, cursing, new born hijra and system of hijra code language. The study also aims to explore the linguistics properties of the text produced by the hijra community and the paralinguistic features of the hijras which make them distinguished and unique from the non-hijra world. The primary purpose of the study is to critically analyze the linguistic features of the text produced by the hijras while they are communicating within their community. The secondary purpose is to bring a new perspective on referring to their unique identity as they use highly contextualized gendered pronouns. It also aims to highlight all those paralinguistic features of the hijras which are distinguished and unique from the non-hijra world.

Literature Review:

A person is considered deviant who tries to deviate from the normative beliefs regarding sex and gender. (Sharma, 2000; Winter, 2002). When the people around these deviants like friends and family try to snub their deviant behavior because it is condemned by the society. In a normative society deviant gender roles are considered taboo. Different types of deviant identities exist in every society (Kessler & McKenna, 1978; Coway, 2002; Winter, 2002) and such a deviant community also exists in the Indo-Pak subcontinent known as 'Hijras' (Ali, 2003; Zafar, 2004). In the present study the word 'Hijra' is being used for a transgender or eunuch due to the socio-cultural background of the study. In Pakistan, the hijras have socially excluded themselves because of the biased and discriminatory behavior of the public in general (Talwar, 1999; Sharma, 2000; Winter, 2002). The study is being conducted in Lahore where 'Hijra' is a unique form of gender, which is considered neither male nor female but possesses the elements of both (Talwar, 1999).

As far as their linguistic affiliation is concerned hijras speak the language of the regions of Pakistan in which they were born and lived before joining the community but within their community they have developed a secret code language called 'Farsi'. The fear of a hostile majority is at the root of feeling this need to develop a secret language. They have developed this language as a weapon/tool to defend themselves against any encroachment on their secured space (Ali, 2007, p. 7). Farsi has kept a secret language as the hijra community is very protective about it. Even Rehman (1996) has brought into light almost all the languages of Pakistan but makes no mention of Farsi. However, a few (e.g., Khattak, 2004; Khilji, 2008, etc) have mentioned it as the language of hijra community. On the other hand, Hall (2005, p. 129) and Nagar (2008, p. 11) assert that it is a lexical code and a code language. Academic research validates the claim that Hijra Farsi is indeed a language and not simply a collection of secret code-words. A research paper by Islamabad-based scholars, Muhammad Safeer Awan and Muhammad Sheeraz (2011), who studied the language spoken amongst Pakistan's hijra community, shows that the language contains its own unique vocabulary. It has its own syntax that differs from other mainstream languages, making Farsi "as good a language as any other." Another academic paper by Himadri Roy, professor at Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi, shows that, much like any other language, the language of the hijras has nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and other parts of speech, with verbs used to complete a sentence. Furthermore, Hall and Zimman (2006) worked on the language, embodiment and identity in which they used the term "third gender" for those people whose sexual identity doesn't fall in the category of men and women and they articulate their thirdness by their actions. They demonstrated that how body language and paralinguistic features help to build a relationship between language and identity among third gender group. Their research described that the relationship that exists between body and language is recursive, language shapes the conceptualization of the body and their actions are implemented as an important part of the body. Bucholtz (2004) and Livia (2003) have also explored discursive performances of hijras which are considered strange for the people outside from the hijra community e.g., clapping is a discursive practice which they carry out if they are indulged in some heated argument or they have to emphasize some point while interacting with others. It is also considered as the signature style of hijras.

Methodology

Data Collection

For data collection, the researcher went to five different communities of hijras, living in Lahore, to take their interviews. The researcher spent three hours a day with them in order to observe them in detail.

The method of this survey was **face to face** administration of interviews. This survey consisted of **open-ended questions**, formulated to ensure that in-depth information was provided. Face-to-face administration of interviews and observations provided the direct contact between the respondents and the researcher.

Population and Sampling

This study seeks to select such accessible sample that will be the true representative of all the target population. Five communities of hijras are taken as the population of this research and group of five people is selected as sample from each population. Thus, sample size is 25.

Appropriate sampling techniques are used to select the sample from various areas of Lahore, Pakistan. In order to get true representative sample, the researcher used stratified random sampling design of probability sampling.

Research Tool

The following two types of research instruments have been used to collect the data.

- Naturalistic Observation
- Unstructured Interview (In-depth interview)

The items of interview are based on the important aspects of discursive practices of hijra community which serves a source of producing text. The researcher had face to face interaction (conversation with a purpose) with the subjects in order to obtain required detailed information regarding the topic of the study. Other than interviews, the researcher also observed them in their natural setting so the spontaneous behavior of the participants can be studied while doing their routine tasks in order to get a picture of their paralinguistic features.

Nature of the data

This study deals with the qualitative paradigm as it is concerned with an in-depth analysis of the text produced by hijra community while constructing their discourse. So, it cannot be compacted into the restricted realm of quantitative paradigm. The data also comprises words of three languages in it, i.e., Urdu, Punjabi and English. In order to provide reliable and precise data, the data was collected under natural setting.

Results and Discussion

Linguistic Analysis of the text produced by the hijras

Properties of the Language used as a medium for producing text

Dialect

The text is the product of the processing analysis but the medium of the production is the language which is being used by the hijras in order to communicate during the interviews. During the interviews they communicated mostly through a vernacular dialect of Punjabi. They spoke informal “Mahji Dialect” of Punjabi which is predominantly spoken by the people of Lahore and referred to as the standard dialect of Punjabi language.

The hijras also claimed to switch into the garbled Urdu sometime for communication outside their group. But during their communication within the group they were not speaking the Mahji dialect in its full formal form but they were code switching and code mixing of other languages as well such as Urdu, English and Farsi and that is why that dialect may be labeled as hijra vernacular. Not only they switch to the common spoken languages but they also used their secretive language Farsi.

The Hijra Code Language

The hijras have claimed to develop a complete system of a code language which is called ‘Farsi’ in order to communicate secretly in the presence of non-hijra community which they refer as ‘duniya dar’ [worldly people]. No one can understand this language other than hijra community. Even the researcher could not understand it and they translated the Farsi language for her. It

seems that they have created this language as a survival mechanism after the social desertion. They claim their language to be unchanged and pure and runs from generation to generation as it is as it was at the time of their ancestors. Every hijra community from all over the Pakistan can understand that language. They do not share it with non-hijra community in for keeping its secrecy maintained. This practice of hijra community regarding the use of their code language within their community has a significant place in constructing the social discourse of hijra language. The results show that Farsi plays various important and unique roles for hijras by becoming a tool for solidarity, privacy, secrecy, identity, and livelihood and even for social revenge. The role of language as a source of earning livelihood and a tool of social revenge is unconventional and unique with Farsi.

Table 1: Some examples of Farsi language from the conversations of hijras

Farsi	Urdu	English
Luri	Larki	Girl
Surmi	Behan	Sister
Surma	Bhai	Brother
Khol	Ghar	Home
Panki	Khana	Meal
koond lo	Kha lo	To eat
Santla	Chadar	Shawl
Firka	Kapray	Clothes
Jog	Baal	Hair

Code Mixing

Code mixing is the most prominent feature of hijras discourse. There are many instances of code mixing has been observed during the conversation of hijras. The hijras were not doing it consciously when they were speaking in Urdu and Punjabi but while explaining about their secret code language, they mixed some words of Farsi in their conversations. This study examines those lexemes of three languages which have been used in these conversations i.e. Urdu, English and Punjabi. The code mixing is done at lexical, phrasal and sentential level. In the present analysis, Lexical code mixing refers to insertion of lexemes of English or Punjabi language in Urdu clauses; phrasal code mixing refers to the insertion of two or three lexicons of English or Punjabi language in Urdu clauses while sentential code mixing refers to the insertion of whole clause of English or Punjabi in Urdu clauses. However, in some conversations, the text structure of clause is Punjabi and Urdu or English lexicons have been added to it.

Lexical code mixing

Hijras have used lexical code mixing frequently in their conversation because they claimed to use Farsi language within their group and they have learnt Urdu, Punjabi and some words of English in order to communicate with non-hijra people. They couldn't speak Urdu and Punjabi language perfectly so they had to mix codes of two or three languages in order to convey their message. Most of the English words which are used in conversations are those English words which are commonly used by people e.g. system, thank you, please, bell etc. For an instance an example of lexical code mixing in the hijra conversations is as follow:

As in the speech of Tara she used: **“Aj kal kuj machinen...”**, it is an Urdu clause in which lexicons of three languages has been used, i.e., Urdu, Punjabi and English. “Kuj” and “Val” are Punjabi lexicons while “laser” is an English lexicon. In another speech of Sawera, a different kind of lexical code mixing has been found as she used: **“Par jadu tak Ye hmara style ha”**, it is a Punjabi clause in which lexemes of three languages has been used i.e. Punjabi, Urdu and English. “Jadu” is a Punjabi lexicon; “khara” is an Urdu lexicon whereas “style” is an English lexicon. So, different levels of lexical code mixing have been found in the conversations of hijras.

Phrasal code mixing

In the conversations, code mixing is mostly found on phrasal level. An example of phrasal code mixing in conversations is as follow:

As in the speech of Anjali she used: **“....wo guru foat ho gy tay aggu mein....”**, it is an Urdu clause in which Punjabi phrase “apo apnay wakh wakh” phrase has been used. At another instance in Anjali’s speech she said: **“Jais group day botay chelay hon o zaida bhra group ay”**, it is a Punjabi clause in which Urdu phrase “zaida bhra group” has been used. In the conversations of hijras only these types of phrasal code mixing has been used.

Sentential code mixing

Sentential code mixing has been done only in two languages, i.e., Urdu and Punjabi because they did not know much about English language. An example of sentential code mixing in conversations is as follow:

As in the speech of Sawera she used, **“Jiwen mistri di kandi hundi ay, aik hatyar hota ha us k pas...”**, it is a Punjabi clause in which code mixing has been done between two languages (Urdu and Punjabi) at sentential level. Here, the Urdu clause “aik hatyar hota ha us k pass” has been used within Punjabi clause. Whereas in the speech of Anjali a different type of sentential code mixing has been observed as she said: **“Acha salook karty hein aan aik dujay nu”**, it is an Urdu clause in which Punjabi clause “nai tay asi taaliyan maran lag painday aan aik dujay nu” has been used. In the conversations of hijras only these types of sentential code mixing has been used.

Distinguished Textual Properties Produced by the Hijra Community

During the analysis of the text, many distinguished textual features have been observed which are of lexical and structural nature. These linguistic contents are exclusive to the hijra community and are not found in the text of the non-hijra community.

Noun

Hijra text contained many distinguished nouns which were used when they referred to their Farsi language. It contains both masculine and feminine gender nouns.

The key findings regarding the nouns after the analysis of the selected speech of hijras are mentioned in the Table 4.

Table 4: Key findings of distinguished nouns in hijra text

Noun	Masculine/Feminine	Urdu	English
------	--------------------	------	---------

Luri	F	Larki	Girl
Surmi	F	Behan	Sister
Surma	M	Bhai	Brother
Suddi	F	Bhuri	Old lady
Sudda	M	Bhura	Old man
Khondi	F	Maa	Mother
Khonda	M	Baap	Father
Khol	M	Ghar	Home
Panki	M	Khana	Meal
Santla	F	Chadar	Shawl
Firka	M	Kapray	Clothes
Jog	M	Baal	Hair
Daira	M	Hassar	Circle

Pronoun

Mostly used pronouns in these conversations are our, my, mine, you, your etc but hijras used highly contextualized masculine and feminine pronouns in their conversations. In the speech of Ranngo she said: “**Tou mein kehti hu k me a ri mein ja ri hu**”, she has claimed that she uses feminine pronoun for herself. But it was observed that if they have to address their superiors like guru or other elders, they use masculine pronoun for them as in the speech of Chammki she said: “**Guru kenda ay kay achi zaban sy bolo**”, here she is talking about her guru in the masculine gender. They use masculine and feminine pronouns according to the roles assigned to a hijra within their groups. In one context they claimed to perform the role of a brother but in other context they are called an aunt because they are neither man nor woman. But it was found that they are more inclined towards using the feminine pronoun for themselves rather than the masculine pronoun.

Adjective

Though the comparable forms of adjective have also been used in these conversations but the hijra text contained some distinguished adjectives which were extracted from their Farsi language. The adjectives of hijra language do not have any comparative degree of adjective. The key findings regarding adjectives after the analysis of the selected speech of hijras are mentioned in the Table 5.

Table 5: Key findings of distinguished Adjectives in hijra text

Adjectives	Masculine/Feminine	Urdu	English
Suddi	F	Bhuri Aurat	Old lady
Sudda	M	Bhura Mard	Old man
Chandni	F	Chand ki roshni	Moonlight
Chisi	F	Khubsurat	Beautiful

Verb

Hijra text contained many distinguished verbs which refer to their Farsi language. That shows that hijra community has verbs of their own which do not exist in other common spoken

languages. The key findings regarding verbs after the analysis of the selected speech of hijras are mentioned in the Table 6.

Table 6: Key findings of distinguished Verbs in hijra text

Verbs	Masculine/Feminine	Urdu	English
Lugrina	Both	Marna	To die
koondna	Both	Khana	To eat
Khootna	Both	Karna	To do
Seghna	Both	Gaya	Went

Syntax

Like all languages in contact, and unlike English where S + V + O combine to form a sentence, the hijra language follows the general syntactic pattern of S + O + V (subject+ object+ verb). See the example given in the following Table 7.

Table 7: Key findings of distinguished Syntax in hijra text

Sentence	Urdu	English
Khol jiss?	Ghar me sab kaisa hai?	How is everything at home?
Lugri sega	Wo mar gaya	He died

Distinguished Paralinguistic Properties Produced by the Hijra Community:

Hijras have used many paralinguistic features in order to communicate their meaning during the interviews. Hijras are usually recognized by their body language. They have an unusual and distinguished style of walking which is neither like a man nor woman. Their facial expressions were very unique; they were usually having a smile on their face while conversation and sometimes very flirt expressions in their eyes. There were also a lot of hand movements of hijras observed by the researcher. The most important paralinguistic feature was the ‘clapping’. According to them, clapping of hijras can be referred as a communicative device of hijras as mostly the hijras communicate with each other by clapping. The clap of a hijra is not like any other clap but it can be called a kind of ‘Hallow Clap’. They produce that clap by keeping a hallow space between the palms while clapping. So, whenever you hear the sound of such a clap you will instantly know that the clapper is a hijra. This is purely the signature style of a hijra. They used a clap before starting and after ending the sentence. If they have to stress on something while communicating, they clap loudly than usual, e.g., during their fights with each other they do not indulge physically but rather they clap loudly in front of the other hijras. It is considered as the matter of great insult if some junior hijra clap in front of the senior and this act is considered punishable.

They claimed they are not born with these features and these gestures are actually a part of learning at the elementary stage of becoming a part of hijra group. This stage includes the complete learning of hijras life style, how they walk, talk, and behave like a hijra. They have to learn all this because before becoming a part of one of the hijra community most of the hijras are raised as boys by their birth families but after entering into the group, the guru keeps a strict eye

on them and teach them how they have to behave and talk softly like a woman. The new member learns all these things by observing the others as well and ultimately behaves as one of them.

Conclusion

The study revealed after the linguistic analysis of the text produced by the hijra community the researcher found that the dominant code used in these conversations is Urdu in which most of the Punjabi words from and phrases Mhaji dialect were inserted for their convenience. English words have also been used but in a very small ratio because no participant was educated enough. Only few of them could read and write Urdu. Mostly they used those English words which have become very common in our spoken nowadays e.g., style, field, system, duty, laser, bell, secret, master, change, group. It was found that they speak a secret code language named as 'Farsi' in order to maintain the secretive nature of their society, e.g., if they have to tell other hijras in the presence of a non- hijra person that someone is dead then they will say 'lugri segha' which means 'he is dead'. No one can understand that language but only hijras. Code mixing was found to be the most prominent feature of hijras discourse. In these conversations, code mixing is mostly found at phrasal and lexical level as compared to the sentential level. A coherent text has been produced by the hijras as a logical relationship between the statements was seen. Sentences were found to be connected to each other in their meaning. It created coherence in the text which means during the conversations, the hijras has presented the facts about their lives in quite a coherent way. The ideas were not distorted but they were well complied. Distinguished linguistic features has also been found as hijra text contained some nouns (e.g., khol for home, luri for girl, khondi for mother, santla for clothes, jog for hair and so on), adjectives (e.g., chisa for beautiful, suddi for old lady, sudda for old man and so on), verbs (e.g., lugirna for dead, khoodna for eat and so on) and syntactic structures (e.g., lugri segha for He died and so on) which do not exist in the non-hijra language. The findings also show that many distinguished paralinguistic features were found in the communication of hijras Such as, they have a different walking style and different facial expressions. They have a special way of clapping which is considered as the signature mark for hijras. they also use it if they have to emphasize on something, communicative device and tool in fight. The purpose behind the development of all these distinguished paralinguistic features seemed to be the establishment of their identity as a hijra rather than labeled as a confused creature: neither woman nor man. In a nut shell, this study has contributed to the understanding the means of text production while building their discourse and also the distinguished linguistic and paralinguistic features they use during that discourse. However, the qualitative analysis is integrated to present an in depth and detailed descriptive analysis of the study.

References:

- Ali, S. 2003, July 6. Khawajasaraoon Ki Dunya. Nawa-e-Waqt: Sunday Magazine: p.27.
- D. Muhammad Safeer Awan and Sheeraz. 2011. Queer but Language: A Sociolinguistic Study of Farsi.
- Hall, K. 1995. "Hijra/Hijrin: Language and gender identity."
- Kessler, M., & McKenna, W. 1978. Gender: An ethno methodological approach.
- Kessler, Suzanne J. 1990. The medical construction of gender: Case management of intersexed infants. Signs: Journal o f Women in Culture and Society 16.1:3-26.
- Khattak, S. 2004. Self esteem of hijra community. (Unpublished master's thesis. Quad-e-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan)

- Khilji, T. 2008. The world of zenanas. Plainspeak: Talking about Sexuality in South and Southeast Asia. <http://www.tarshi.net/asiasrc/plspk/dloads/issue-3-2008.pdf>.
- Livia, Anna. 2003. Disloyal to masculinity. In Anna Livia and Kira Hall (eds.),
- Mitra, Nirmal. 1983. The making of a hijra. Onlooker, February 18: 18-25.
- Nagar, I. 2008. Language, gender and identity: The case of kotis in Lucknow, India. http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Nagar%20Ila.pdf?acc_num=osu1222102359.
- Reddy, G. 2003. "Men" Who Would Be Kings: Celibacy, Emasculation, and the Reproduction of Hijras in Contemporary Indian Politics'. Social Research 70(1): 163-200.
- Reddy, G. 2005. With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Riaz, H. 1996. Socioeconomic organization of khusras. Unpublished M.Sc. Routledge.
- Sharma, S. K. 2000. Hijras: The labelled deviance. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
- Talwar, R. 1999. The third sex and human rights. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
- Winter, S. 2002. Transgender Asia. Retrieved June 21, 2016 from <http://web.hku.hk/~sjwinter/TransgenderAsia/index.htm>
- Zafar, R. 2004, Sep 19. Hijroon Ki Pursarar Duniya: dukhon Ki chakki mein Pisnay walay Aik Tabkay Ki Daroon-en Khana Dilchasp Kahani. Jang: Sunday Magazine Press.
- Zimman, Lal. 2008. Contesting gender, (re)constructing sex: Semantic variation in transgender communities. Paper presented at Lavender Languages and Linguistics XV, Washington, DC.