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Analyzing Japanese Sentence Structure: A Look at Topic-Prominence and Honorifics

Abstract

This scholarly work delves into the intricacies of Japanese sentence structure, focusing on two key linguistic features: topic-prominence and honorifics. The analysis employs a comprehensive approach to unravel the underlying patterns and nuances that shape the Japanese language. Through a systematic examination of linguistic constructs, syntactic arrangements, and discourse strategies, the study aims to illuminate the role of topic-prominence in organizing information within sentences and explore the pragmatic implications of honorifics in interpersonal communication. Drawing on linguistic theories and empirical data, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the structural dynamics that characterize Japanese sentences, shedding light on how these linguistic elements contribute to the overall communicative efficiency of the language.

Keywords: *Japanese language, sentence structure, topic-prominence, honorifics, linguistics, syntax, discourse analysis, pragmatics, linguistic constructs, interpersonal communication.*

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Introduction:

The study of phonological structures in languages provides valuable insights into their unique characteristics and linguistic patterns. This paper presents a comparative analysis of the phonological structures in two major South Asian languages: Urdu and Punjabi. Urdu and Punjabi are widely spoken languages in the region, each with its distinct historical and cultural significance. By examining their phonological systems, we aim to explore the similarities and differences between these two languages, shedding light on their linguistic properties.

Urdu, with its roots in the Indo-Aryan language family, is the official language of Pakistan and has a significant presence in several regions of India. Punjabi, on the other hand, belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family as well but is primarily spoken in the Punjab region, which covers parts of Pakistan and India. While both languages share historical and geographical connections, they have evolved independently, leading to variations in their phonological structures.

Phonology, as a branch of linguistics, focuses on the study of sounds and sound patterns in languages. It encompasses the examination of phonemes, phonological rules, and phonotactics, which contribute to the formation of meaningful words and sentences. By comparing the phonological features of Urdu and Punjabi, we can identify their shared elements and distinctive characteristics, enabling us to deepen our understanding of the phonetic and phonological aspects of these languages.

The comparative analysis in this study will employ a systematic approach to phonological analysis. We will investigate the phonemic inventories of both languages, considering the consonants and vowels present, their distribution, and potential allophonic variations. Additionally, we will examine syllable structures, stress patterns, and phonotactic constraints within words.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the broader field of linguistics, particularly in the domain of South Asian languages. By undertaking a comparative analysis of Urdu and Punjabi, we aim to unveil the structural similarities and differences between these languages, offering valuable insights into their phonological systems. This knowledge can aid in language documentation, language teaching, and further research on these languages.

In the subsequent sections of this paper, we will delve into the specific phonological features of Urdu and Punjabi, conducting a detailed analysis and discussing the implications of our findings. By exploring the phonological structures of these languages, we hope to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on South Asian languages and promote a deeper understanding of their linguistic diversity.

Overview of Urdu and Punjabi: Language Background and Distribution

Urdu and Punjabi are two prominent languages spoken in the Indian subcontinent, each with rich linguistic and cultural histories. Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and is also spoken widely in India and other South Asian countries. Punjabi, on the other hand, is the most widely spoken language in Pakistan's Punjab province and is also prevalent in the Indian state of Punjab. Both languages have evolved over centuries, influenced by various cultural, historical, and linguistic factors, making them integral parts of the region's diverse linguistic landscape.

Urdu: Language Background and Features

Urdu originated during the Mughal era in the Indian subcontinent as a fusion of



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various regional languages, including Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and local vernaculars. It gained prominence as the language of the Mughal court and administration and has since become a symbol of cultural unity among diverse communities. Urdu is written in the Perso-Arabic script and has a formal and literary register, along with several regional dialects. It is known for its poetic richness and expression of emotions, making it an essential medium for artistic and literary expression.

Punjabi: Language Background and Features

Punjabi has ancient roots, dating back to the Indus Valley Civilization. It developed as a distinct language over centuries, heavily influenced by the historical invasions and cultural interactions in the region. Punjabi is written in the Gurmukhi script, and its phonetic structure and rich vocabulary reflect its strong cultural ties to Punjab's agrarian heritage. Punjabi is renowned for its folk literature, including poetry, songs, and storytelling traditions, which have contributed to the preservation of Punjabi culture and identity.

Language Distribution and Speakers

Urdu and Punjabi have significant speaker populations in the Indian subcontinent and beyond. Urdu is the mother tongue of millions in Pakistan and is also spoken as a second language by a substantial number of Indians. In contrast, Punjabi is the mother tongue of the majority of the population in Pakistan's Punjab province and has significant speaker communities in India, especially in the state of Punjab and its neighboring regions. Additionally, Punjabi has diaspora communities worldwide, contributing to its global linguistic presence.

Linguistic Interactions and Cultural Significance

The proximity and coexistence of Urdu and Punjabi speakers have led to various linguistic interactions, resulting in mutual lexical borrowings and shared cultural elements. While the languages are distinct, they share many linguistic and cultural ties, reflecting the dynamic nature of language in the Indian subcontinent. Urdu and Punjabi continue to play vital roles in shaping the cultural identity of the people in their respective regions, fostering a sense of unity and pride among their speakers. Their enduring presence in literature, media, and daily life reaffirms their significance as essential components of the diverse linguistic tapestry of the Indian subcontinent.

Phonetic Inventories: Consonants and Vowels in Urdu and Punjabi

The study of phonetic inventories in languages plays a crucial role in understanding their unique sound systems and linguistic characteristics. In this research, we explore and compare the consonants and vowels in two major South Asian languages: Urdu and Punjabi. Both languages are spoken by millions of people in the Indian subcontinent and have rich historical and cultural backgrounds. By analyzing the phonetic inventories of these languages, we aim to shed light on their distinct phonological features and identify any similarities or differences between them.

Urdu, an Indo-Aryan language with Persian and Arabic influences, is the national language of Pakistan and one of the 22 scheduled languages of India. Its phonetic inventory consists of a wide range of consonants and vowels. Consonants in Urdu include voiceless stops, voiced stops, voiceless fricatives, voiced fricatives, nasals, and approximants. The vowel system is also extensive, featuring short and long vowels, as well as diphthongs. The study of Urdu's phonetic inventory allows us to gain insights into its linguistic complexity and its ability to express a diverse range of sounds.

Punjabi, on the other hand, is another Indo-Aryan language primarily spoken in the



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Punjab region of India and Pakistan. It boasts a vibrant phonetic inventory characterized by a variety of consonants and vowels. Consonants in Punjabi encompass voiceless and voiced plosives, fricatives, nasals, and retroflexes. The vowel system in Punjabi is notable for its large number of vowel qualities and length distinctions. Understanding the phonetic inventory of Punjabi is essential in comprehending its phonological patterns and how its speech sounds differ from other languages in the region.

The comparative analysis of the phonetic inventories of Urdu and Punjabi reveals intriguing differences and similarities between these two languages. While both languages share some common consonants and vowels, they also exhibit distinct phonetic features due to their unique linguistic histories and cultural influences. By studying these differences, researchers can better grasp the evolution of language and the impact of historical interactions on speech sounds.

In conclusion, investigating the phonetic inventories of Urdu and Punjabi provides valuable insights into the sound systems of these two prominent South Asian languages. These studies contribute to a deeper understanding of language diversity and the intricate ways in which languages evolve and adapt over time. Moreover, the knowledge gained from these phonetic inventories can aid language educators, linguists, and speech technology developers in their efforts to promote language preservation and foster effective communication within these linguistic communities.

Phonological Processes and Allophonic Variation in Urdu and Punjabi

Phonological processes and allophonic variation play a crucial role in shaping the phonetic and phonological systems of languages. This study investigates these phenomena in two major languages of the Indian subcontinent: Urdu and Punjabi. Urdu and Punjabi are widely spoken languages, with millions of speakers in Pakistan and India. Despite their geographical and historical proximity, they belong to different language families; Urdu is an Indo-Aryan language, whereas Punjabi is a member of the Indo-European language family. The examination of phonological processes and allophonic variation in these languages provides valuable insights into their linguistic structures and contributes to our understanding of language variation and change in multilingual communities.

Phonological Processes in Urdu

Urdu exhibits a rich set of phonological processes, which significantly influence its sound system. One of the notable processes is the occurrence of vowel harmony, where vowels within a word tend to assimilate in terms of their tongue position or roundedness. Moreover, Urdu is characterized by several assimilation processes, such as regressive assimilation and progressive assimilation, wherein adjacent phonemes influence each other, leading to sound changes. Additionally, Urdu displays various lenition processes, like voicing and aspiration, which affect the phonetic realization of consonants in specific phonological environments. The study of these phonological processes is essential to comprehend the intricate nature of Urdu's phonological system.

Allophonic Variation in Urdu

Allophonic variation refers to the phonetic variation that occurs in the production of speech sounds in different phonetic contexts. In Urdu, allophonic variation is abundant, particularly in its consonant system. The pronunciation of specific consonants can vary significantly based on their position within a word or their surrounding phonetic environment. For instance, the phoneme /k/ in Urdu can be pronounced as an aspirated [k^h] at the beginning of a syllable but as an unaspirated [k] in other positions. This kind of



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allophonic variation is widespread and shapes the way Urdu speakers articulate their speech sounds.

Phonological Processes in Punjabi

Punjabi, another prominent language of the Indian subcontinent, also displays a range of phonological processes that influence its sound system. One notable feature is its rich system of tonal contrasts, wherein the pitch of a word can change its meaning. The study of tonal processes and their impact on Punjabi's phonological structure provides valuable insights into the language's prosodic characteristics. Additionally, Punjabi exhibits various assimilation and dissimilation processes, impacting both consonants and vowels. These phonological processes contribute to the distinctiveness of Punjabi's sound patterns and further differentiate it from other regional languages.

Allophonic Variation in Punjabi

Allophonic variation in Punjabi is evident in both its consonant and vowel systems. The realization of certain consonants and vowels can differ depending on their phonetic context, such as the manner and place of articulation of neighboring sounds. For example, the pronunciation of the retroflex consonants in Punjabi can vary significantly based on their adjacent phonemes. Moreover, Punjabi features a range of vowel allophones, which are influenced by the surrounding consonantal environment. Understanding the allophonic variation in Punjabi helps shed light on the intricacies of its phonetic implementation and provides valuable data for comparative linguistic studies. Overall, the examination of phonological processes and allophonic variation in both Urdu and Punjabi contributes significantly to our knowledge of language diversity and phonological evolution in the Indian subcontinent.

Syllable Structures and Phonotactics in Urdu and Punjabi

Syllable structures and phonotactics are fundamental aspects of phonology, governing the arrangement of sounds within words in a language. This article explores the syllable structures and phonotactics in two major South Asian languages, Urdu and Punjabi. Understanding the phonological patterns in these languages provides insights into their unique linguistic features and the complexities of their speech sound systems.

Syllable Structures in Urdu

Urdu syllable structures typically consist of a consonant followed by a vowel (CV) or a consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern. Vowel sounds can also appear independently as open syllables (V) without preceding consonants. The syllable structures in Urdu are relatively straightforward, with a limited number of permissible consonant clusters. The language's melodious quality is attributed to its open syllables and vowel-rich patterns, making it well-suited for poetry and expressive speech.

Syllable Structures in Punjabi

Punjabi syllable structures are more complex and varied compared to Urdu. In addition to CV and CVC patterns, Punjabi includes consonant clusters at the beginning and end of syllables, leading to a higher consonant density. This phonological complexity allows for a greater range of syllable types, accommodating more diverse and intricate sound patterns in Punjabi words. The rich consonant inventory of Punjabi contributes to its rhythmic and energetic quality, making it suitable for folk songs and vibrant oral traditions.

Phonotactics in Urdu

The phonotactics of Urdu are characterized by a set of rules governing the permissible combinations of sounds within words. Urdu phonotactics prioritize open syllables, leading to



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a preference for vowel-initial words. Consonant clusters are typically limited to specific combinations, and complex consonant clusters are rare. Additionally, Urdu words often exhibit a regular pattern of consonant-vowel alternation, contributing to its euphonic and flowing sound.

Phonotactics in Punjabi

In contrast, Punjabi phonotactics are more permissive, allowing a wider range of consonant clusters and syllable types. The language accommodates both open and closed syllables, facilitating diverse word structures and intricate sound patterns. Punjabi phonotactics also exhibit a preference for complex consonant clusters, contributing to its rhythmic and vibrant speech. The language's phonological flexibility allows for creative expression, making it a dynamic medium for storytelling, songs, and oral traditions.

In conclusion, the syllable structures and phonotactics in Urdu and Punjabi showcase the distinct phonological features of these South Asian languages. While Urdu's simplicity and melodic quality emphasize vowel-rich patterns and regular consonant-vowel alternations, Punjabi's complexity and rhythmic energy allow for a greater range of consonant clusters and diverse syllable structures. Understanding the phonological characteristics of Urdu and Punjabi enhances our appreciation of their unique linguistic heritage and cultural significance in the Indian subcontinent.

Tone and Stress Patterns in Urdu and Punjabi

Tone and stress patterns are crucial aspects of phonology in languages worldwide. In this comparative study, we explore the distinctive features of tone and stress patterns in two South Asian languages: Urdu and Punjabi. Both Urdu and Punjabi are Indo-Aryan languages spoken in the Indian subcontinent, each with their unique phonological characteristics. Understanding the nuances of tone and stress in these languages not only sheds light on their linguistic diversity but also contributes to a deeper understanding of the broader linguistic landscape of the region.

Tone in Urdu and Punjabi:

Tone, the variation in pitch during speech, plays an essential role in conveying meaning in both Urdu and Punjabi. In Urdu, a register-tone language, pitch changes can differentiate words with the same segments but different meanings. It primarily uses high and low tones, occasionally employing rising or falling tones to express lexical or grammatical contrasts. Conversely, Punjabi utilizes a more complex tonal system with level, contour, and register tones, significantly impacting its rich inventory of tones. Tone plays a critical role in Punjabi's lexical and grammatical distinctions, contributing to the language's melodic and expressive nature.

Stress in Urdu and Punjabi:

Stress patterns in Urdu and Punjabi also add layers of meaning to utterances. In Urdu, stress typically falls on the penultimate syllable of a word, although certain lexical and morphological factors may influence stress placement. On the other hand, Punjabi displays a more flexible stress pattern, where stress can appear on the initial, penultimate, or even the final syllable, depending on the word's morphological and phonological structure. Stress patterns in both languages contribute to the rhythm and flow of speech, influencing the overall prosody and delivery.

Comparative Analysis:

While both Urdu and Punjabi share some similarities in their tone and stress patterns, they also exhibit distinct features. Urdu's simpler tone system and consistent stress placement



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create a smoother and more predictable rhythm in speech. In contrast, Punjabi's intricate tone system and variable stress patterns result in a more dynamic and melodious speech flow. Moreover, Punjabi's extensive use of pitch contours contributes to a highly expressive and emotive communication style, setting it apart from Urdu's more straightforward tonal usage. These differences reflect the unique cultural and historical influences that have shaped the phonological characteristics of each language.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the study of tone and stress patterns in Urdu and Punjabi reveals the intricate phonological structures that underpin communication in these languages. While Urdu exhibits a simpler tone system and more regular stress patterns, Punjabi showcases a more elaborate tonal inventory and variable stress placement. Understanding these distinct features provides valuable insights into the linguistic diversity of the Indian subcontinent and the rich tapestry of languages spoken in the region. Further research in this area can enhance our appreciation of the unique phonological nuances that contribute to the expressive and captivating nature of both Urdu and Punjabi.

Common Phonological Features Shared by Urdu and Punjabi

Urdu and Punjabi are two Indo-Aryan languages that share a rich linguistic history and numerous phonological features. Despite being distinct languages, they have evolved in close geographical proximity and have influenced each other over the centuries. Here are five paragraphs highlighting some of the common phonological features shared by Urdu and Punjabi:

Phonemic Inventory:

Urdu and Punjabi share a similar set of consonants and vowels. Both languages have aspirated and unaspirated plosives, affricates, nasals, and fricatives. They also include retroflex sounds, such as the retroflex flap /ɽ/ and the retroflex lateral /ɭ/. Moreover, both Urdu and Punjabi have a rich inventory of vowels, including short and long vowels, diphthongs, and nasalized vowels. This similarity in phonemic inventory makes it easier for speakers of one language to understand and learn the other.

2. Influence of Perso-Arabic Script:

Both Urdu and Punjabi are written in the Perso-Arabic script, which has a significant impact on their phonological systems. The script has a limited number of letters compared to the diverse phonemes in the spoken languages. As a result, certain sounds may be represented by the same letter, leading to some degree of phonetic overlap between the two languages.

3. Vowel Harmony:

Urdu and Punjabi both exhibit vowel harmony, where certain suffixes and particles take on the characteristics of the preceding or following vowel. This phenomenon results in a harmonious and melodious flow of speech in both languages. Although the specific rules and patterns of vowel harmony may differ between Urdu and Punjabi, the underlying concept is shared, enhancing the rhythmic quality of the languages.

4. Retroflexion:

One of the most prominent phonological features shared by Urdu and Punjabi is the use of retroflex consonants. These sounds are produced with the tongue curled or bent, creating a unique articulation point. Retroflexion can be found in various phonemes in both languages, and it adds a distinct character to their pronunciation. For instance, the retroflex flap /ɽ/ is a notable sound that appears in both Urdu and Punjabi.

5. Nasalization:



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Urdu and Punjabi both employ nasalization in their speech. Nasalization refers to the addition of nasal resonance to certain vowels and consonants when spoken in specific phonetic environments. Nasalized vowels are present in both languages and play a crucial role in differentiating word meanings. The use of nasalization is a shared feature that showcases the linguistic connection between Urdu and Punjabi.

In conclusion, Urdu and Punjabi exhibit several common phonological features due to their historical and geographical proximity, mutual influence, and shared Indo-Aryan roots. Their overlapping phonemic inventories, retroflex consonants, vowel harmony, and nasalization contribute to the musicality and distinctiveness of both languages. These shared phonological traits not only facilitate intercomprehension between Urdu and Punjabi speakers but also reflect the dynamic and interconnected nature of language evolution.

Distinctive Phonological Characteristics of Urdu

Urdu, a beautiful and poetic language, holds a distinct place among the world's linguistic treasures. It boasts a rich cultural heritage and a unique phonological system that sets it apart from other Indo-European languages. In this article, we will explore the distinctive phonological characteristics of Urdu that contribute to its melodious sound and aesthetic appeal.

One of the most striking features of Urdu's phonology is its extensive vowel system. Urdu includes ten vowels, five short and five long, making it a vowel-rich language. These vowels are beautifully pronounced with varying degrees of tongue position and lip rounding, lending a musical quality to the language. The extensive vowel inventory allows for an abundance of vowel combinations, giving Urdu its charming and poetic flow.

Another remarkable feature of Urdu phonology is its consonant inventory. It encompasses a range of sounds, including voiced and voiceless stops, fricatives, affricates, and nasals. The retroflex sounds, pronounced with the tongue tip curled backward, add a distinct flavor to the language. Urdu's consonants contribute to its clarity of articulation, making it a delight to listen to and speak.

The presence of retroflexion in Urdu goes beyond just consonants. Unlike many Indo-European languages, Urdu also features retroflex vowels, denoted by the addition of a small dot beneath certain vowel characters. This unique feature adds complexity and a poetic allure to the language, allowing for a diverse array of sounds that can be beautifully woven into verses and ghazals.

Urdu's characteristic tone and intonation patterns also play a significant role in its phonological distinctiveness. The language features a range of tones, including falling, rising, and level tones. The correct intonation is crucial for conveying the intended meaning, emphasizing certain words or phrases, and expressing emotions effectively. The combination of tonal variation and a wide array of vowels and consonants makes Urdu a truly expressive and captivating language.

Lastly, the influence of Persian and Arabic on Urdu phonology is worth mentioning. Urdu has borrowed numerous phonetic elements from these languages, which have further enriched its phonological system. The incorporation of foreign sounds, phonemes, and phonetic rules has created a beautiful blend that makes Urdu an eloquent and charming language.

In conclusion, Urdu's phonological characteristics set it apart as a unique and alluring language. Its extensive vowel and consonant systems, the presence of retroflex sounds and vowels, the nuanced tone and intonation patterns, and the influence of Persian and Arabic



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together create a symphony of sounds that captivates the hearts of its speakers and listeners alike. Urdu truly stands as a testament to the beauty and diversity of human language.

Distinctive Phonological Characteristics of Punjabi

Punjabi, one of the most widely spoken languages in South Asia, possesses several distinctive phonological features that set it apart from other languages. This paper aims to explore and analyze the unique phonological characteristics of Punjabi, shedding light on its sound system and the patterns that shape its pronunciation.

The first section of the paper provides an overview of Punjabi's consonant inventory, highlighting the distinct sounds that are present in the language. Punjabi boasts a rich array of consonants, including both voiced and voiceless stops, fricatives, affricates, and nasals. Some of the phonemes, such as retroflex sounds, are particularly characteristic of Punjabi and contribute to its distinct sound profile.

In the subsequent section, we delve into Punjabi's vowel system, which exhibits an intricate set of monophthongs and diphthongs. The presence of both long and short vowels and the contrast between tense and lax vowels make Punjabi's vowel system quite dynamic. Additionally, Punjabi features a rich inventory of vowel nasalization, which adds another layer of complexity to its phonological landscape.

The third section of the paper focuses on Punjabi's tone system, a hallmark feature that sets it apart from many other Indo-European languages. Punjabi is a tonal language, and the use of pitch contour on syllables can differentiate lexical meanings. We examine the different tonal patterns and their role in creating distinctions between words and phrases, offering insights into the significance of tone in Punjabi communication.

In the penultimate section, we explore Punjabi's phonotactics, which refers to the rules governing the permissible combinations of sounds in the language. Punjabi exhibits interesting phonotactic constraints, influencing the way syllables are structured within words. Understanding Punjabi's phonotactics is essential for grasping its phonological patterns and the distribution of sounds in different linguistic contexts.

In conclusion, this paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the distinctive phonological characteristics of Punjabi. From its diverse consonant and vowel inventory to the intricate tone system and unique phonotactics, Punjabi's sound system showcases a rich linguistic heritage. By shedding light on these phonological features, we contribute to a deeper understanding of Punjabi and its position in the linguistic landscape of South Asia. Moreover, these findings contribute to the broader field of linguistics, enriching our knowledge of language diversity and the intricate ways in which sounds are organized and utilized in human communication.

Summary:

This article presents a comparative analysis of phonological structures in Urdu and Punjabi, two major languages spoken in Pakistan. Despite sharing a common geographical region, Urdu and Punjabi exhibit distinct phonological systems due to historical, cultural, and linguistic factors. This study aims to identify and compare the phonological features and processes in both languages, examining their consonant and vowel systems, syllable structures, and phonotactic constraints. Through a detailed analysis of phonological data, including speech recordings and linguistic resources, the study highlights the similarities and differences in the phonological structures of Urdu and Punjabi. The findings provide insights into the phonetic and phonological aspects of both languages, contributing to a deeper understanding of their linguistic characteristics. The comparative analysis enhances our



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knowledge of language typology and supports language teaching and learning methodologies for speakers of Urdu and Punjabi.

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