Teaching of Urdu in France: Issues and Challenges

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Urdu – Brief description on origin and current status

- Language begins around 11th century, influenced by many languages (Schimmel 1975)
- Before 18th century several names of Urdu language: Musulmani Bhasha
- Vehicular language of India in the 19th century
- After the partition of India & Pakistan in 1947
  - Urdu – national language of Pakistan
  - Co-official language status in 5 states of India and official language of the Constitution
  - Around 20 Academies of Urdu in India
  - 230 millions speakers worldwide (Ethnologue 2018)
Some different names of Urdu

Hindvi (13th-19th century)

Hindi (13th-19th century)

Musulmani zubaan (13th – 15th century)

Dehlavi (13th-14th century)

Rekhtah (13th-19th century)

Gujri (15th century)

Dakhini (15th-18th century)

Indostan (17th century)

Hindustani (18th-20th century)
Urdu teaching History in the Indian sub-continent – A brief summary
Teaching of Urdu in France

- Started in the year 1828
- Garcin de Tassy was the first chair of Hindustani in France (1828-1878)
- Hindustani – Devanagari & Perso-Arabic script
- 1962 – Chair of Urdu in Inalco
Current Urdu program B.A.

- Three-year Bachelors program in language and civilisation studies (10 hours of language + 6 to 12 hours of specialisation in other disciplines)
- Master and PhD program
- One year Diploma program
Profile of students enrolled to learn Urdu

- Most of the students are of Pakistani origin
- Bilingual in Urdu
- Punjabi Parents / Punjabi cultural baggage
- Difficulties and Advantages or *Issues and Challenges* with Bilingual Urdu students

- Few students are non-Urdu non South Asian background – *Issues & Challenges*
  - Army personnels
  - Researchers
  - Embassy personnels
Some Urdu textbooks

- Huge lack of proper textbooks in French for Urdu
- Many textbooks in French are full of errors
- Urdu textbooks are old fashioned and out of touch with radical thinking (Rahman 2010).

Spoken Urdu - Assimil

Teach Yourself Urdu - Matthews & Dalvi

Books on instruction to teach Urdu to Non-Native Speakers
Challenges for script learning

- Urdu written in Urdu script
- Persian script
- Arabic script
- Sanscrit phonemes
- Written from right to left

Hard to learn with rules of associated letters and numbers of diacritic signs

Table 2: Urdu vowel list with IPA and CISAMPA symbols

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<th>Sr. #</th>
<th>Urdu Letter</th>
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Diacritics of Urdu
Teaching & Learning Exchange Program

- Student immersion program in India or Pakistan
- MoUs with some universities in South Asia
- Recruitment of Native Urdu speakers
Conclusion …

- Interest in Urdu declining among the young generation in India and Pakistan
- Dominance of English. Career-oriented languages. Impact on Urdu language learning in abroad
- Lack of textbook in French for Urdu
- Lack of discipline to teach Urdu as a Foreign Language or as a Second Language
- More technological support needed
Bibliography

- Ethnologue. [Urdu | Ethnologue]