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**RESEARCH PAPER**

# Role of Strictly Semantic Properties in Assigning Gender to English Loanwords in the Khattak Dialect of the Pashto Language

### [1]Neelma Riaz* and [2]Sarwet Rasul

1. PhD Scholar, Department of English, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8713-2178
2. Professor, Department of English, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan

| *Corresponding Author | neelmariaz@hotmail.com |

**ABSTRACT**

This study focuses on exploring the strictly semantic properties involved in the assignment of grammatical gender to English loanwords in the Khattak dialect of Pashto. The study aims to investigate how strictly semantic criteria influence the gender allocation process in loanword integration, contributing to a deeper understanding of language contact phenomena in the Pakistani context. Using Corbett's (1991) model of gender assignment as a framework model, a perceptive and innovative research design that best suited the current and continuing research in the Pakistani setting was created. The nature of the current study is qualitative and descriptive. The issues of gender assignment, borrowing, code mixing, and gender marking in the Pakistani context gain prominence in this study. With relation to the interaction of English and Pashto, the researcher believes that this research will not only aid in understanding the nature of these processes in Pakistan but will also raise awareness of the need for more research in the area.

## Introduction

The Khattak dialect of Pashto, like many languages influenced by English loanwords, presents an intriguing case for examining gender assignment. This proposal seeks to delve into the semantic aspects of gender assignment, exploring how meaning plays a role in determining the grammatical gender of borrowed English terms within the Pashto linguistic framework. The integration of English loanwords into Pashto has impacted the grammatical structure and gender assignment patterns in the Khattak dialect. Understanding the semantic dimensions of this phenomenon is crucial for unraveling the complexities of language contact and adaptation. It employs Corbett's (1991) model of gender assignment within the Pakistani context, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Hence, a model of the method or way in which a particular gender is assigned to a certain noun is known as a gender assignment system (Corbett, 2005).

## Grammatical Gender

Gender assignment in language, a multifaceted concept, varies across disciplines and cultures. In linguistics, it refers to the classification of nouns into grammatical categories, while in biology, it denotes biological sex. The concept of gender in language refers to the classification of nouns as feminine, masculine, or neuter.

Grammatical gender is distinct from natural or biological gender, as it is a grammatical category independent of the biological sex of the referent. While natural gender is based on biology, grammatical gender is a matter of grammar and agreement within the language. There are languages where gender is based on biological sex, while others have gender systems that are not tied to sex at all. Grammatical gender, a system within languages, involves agreement with other linguistic elements like adjectives and verbs. Corbett (1991) defines gender as classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words, emphasizing its role in agreement and nominal categorization. Gender assignment methods vary, with some languages relying on formal qualities or semantics. Contemporary linguistic research debates whether gender assignment follows strict rules or is arbitrary. Hence, Grammatical gender plays a crucial role in noun classification and agreement within sentences, affecting the forms of associated words like adjectives, pronouns, and determiners.

Native speakers typically predict noun gender based on language-specific rules, facilitating language comprehension and word creation. Borrowed words may adopt the gender of similar native words or the suffix used as a gender marker. However, gender assignment can evolve over time, as evidenced by changes in loanwords' genders in languages like Russian.

## Literature Review

### Gender Values

The smallest possible number of gender values is two, and two-gender-systems are the universal reality (Corbett, 2013a). Though there are many languages consisting more than a dozen classes, for example, Arapesh, spoken in Papua New Guinea, has 13 genders (Aronoff, 1992,1994; Fortune, 1942), Ngan'gityemerri, a language spoken in Australia, has 15 genders (Reid, 1997), and Nigerian Fula has more than 20 genders depending on dialect and analysis (Arnott, 1970; Breedveld, 1995).

Gender establishment in a language is not always straightforward and simple process. Since the indicators for gender are agreeing words, any inconsistencies or mismatches within or among these words can complicate the analysis. For example, there are languages in which not all agreeing words mark the same array of genders.

### Gender Assignment in World Languages

The World Atlas of Language Structures provides insight into the prevalence and diversity of gender systems across languages, with approximately half of the world's languages having some form of grammatical gender. Some languages have extensive gender systems, while others lack gender entirely. The assignment of gender can vary based on linguistic features such as phonological markers, strictly semantic properties, or formal characteristics of nouns. Languages worldwide exhibit diverse methods of gender assignment, with most employing affixes to categorize nouns. Some languages, like English, lack grammatical gender systems, while others have straightforward masculine-feminine differentiations or complex systems with multiple genders, as seen in Russian. Gender assignment varies across languages, with some having extensive gender systems and others lacking gender altogether. Languages with gender often categorize nouns into two or three genders, while some, like those in the Nakh-Daghestanian language family, may have four or more. The assignment of gender can be based on semantic, formal, or phonological criteria, leading to diverse gender systems worldwide. Languages exhibit varying numbers of gender values, with two-gender systems being prevalent, but outliers

like Arapesh and Ngan'gityemerri showcasing 13 and 15 genders respectively, posing challenges in gender assignment.

Understanding gender assignment in languages like Pashto, which incorporates English loanwords, sheds light on the complex interplay between linguistic features and cultural influences. By exploring gender assignment across languages, researchers gain valuable insights into the structure and functioning of grammar systems worldwide.

Gender establishment relies on word agreement, where discrepancies in agreement patterns across languages, like in Dutch, contribute to ambiguity in determining the number of genders. Agreement, as defined by linguists like Hockett and Steele, plays a crucial role in gender assignment, with nouns serving as triggers and related words adapting their forms accordingly. As per Anderson (1992:103) agreement is 'a quite intuitive notion which is nonetheless surprisingly difficult to delimit with precision'. Examples from languages such as Spanish, Urdu, Russian, and Pashto demonstrate how agreement operates, with verbs, adjectives, and complementizers adapting to reflect the gender of the nouns they accompany. Nouns function not only as a means of classification but also as a basis for gender assignment through agreement systems. Contemporary linguistic literature emphasizes syntactic criteria over semantic ones in studying gender.

**Gender in English Language**

In many languages, gender is indicated through agreement with other words, but in English, it's primarily expressed through personal pronouns. Chichewa openly marks gender on nouns and agreement. Conversely, English has minimal gender expression, with only personal pronouns showing gender distinction. While Old English had a more robust gender system, Modern English relies more on natural gender and pronouns. English pronouns often reflect the addressee's gender, with the masculine used as default. Neuter gender is rare and mostly reserved for infants, while inanimate objects may be assigned feminine pronouns.

**Gender Assignment Systems**

There seems to be no practical criterion by which the gender of a noun in German, French or Latin could be determined. (Bloomfield 1933:280)

Corbett (1999) is in opposition of this notion and rather gives arguments against it. He claims that when the native speakers of any language speaks a certain language, they do not commit any sort of mistakes when it comes to gender assignment to different nouns. Secondly, he believes that there must be some sort of underlying mechanism or rules working behind the whole phenomena of gender assignment. People cannot rely entirely on their memory when it comes to gender assignment. Thirdly, he is of the view that the native speakers readily and with a high degree of consistency allot a gender to any sort of invented nouns.

After putting forth all these arguments, Corbett explains the phenomena of assigning gender to noun as follows:

Thus native speakers have the ability to 'work out' the gender of a noun; models of this ability are called 'assignment systems.'          (1999)

**Types of Assignment Rules**

Certain words changing or altering their forms in accordance with the grammatical gender of the nouns in a particular sentence, refers to as concord or agreement between them. This very phenomena of agreement carries great importance and emphasis in the category of grammatical gender. Since nouns carry an inherent gender, thus the "triggers" of this whole agreement process are the nouns, whereas the associated words such as, verbs, demonstratives, adjectives, numerals, definite and indefinite articles etc. can be referred to as the "target" of the changes taking place.(Franceschina 2005:72)

Gender assignment rules in languages can be categorized into three main types: morphological, phonological, and semantic. Semantic rules often rely on broad distinctions like animate versus inanimate or male versus female, while morphological rules focus on formal qualities such as suffixes or inflectional patterns. Phonological rules consider the sounds or endings of nouns. These rules vary in scope, from specific patterns like German's assignment of masculine gender to nouns referring to minerals, to broader patterns like the Qafar language's association of feminine gender with nouns ending in accented vowels. Overall, gender assignment reflects a complex interplay of semantic, morphological, and phonological factors in language.

**Assigning Gender to English Loanwords in Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language**

Persian and English both are gender neutral language but Urdu does possess gender. Hence, when words from Persian or English language are used in Urdu, a certain gender is assigned to them as per the rules and regulations of grammatical gender assignment in Urdu. Arabic language do possess grammatical gender like Urdu. It is interesting to note that words such as *kursi* 'chair' and *kitab* 'book' are assigned a masculine gender and *buhera(h)* 'sea, ocean' and *šəms* 'sun' are assigned a feminine gender in Arabic language. whereas *kursi* 'chair' and *kitab* 'book' are treated as feminine in Urdu language and *buhera(h)* 'sea, ocean' and *šəms* 'sun' as masculine. As per Schmitt (1999), Platts (2002) [1909]), Danish (1970), in Arabic loanwords, gender marking of three different types can be seen: *-at* and *a(h)* the feminine gender markers and *–in* the masculine gender marker. In case of Arabic language also, the masculine nouns are not marked usually, whereas the feminine nouns are usually marked by certain feminine suffixes such as, -ah/-at, -aa. Few instances of nouns ending in these suffixes are *sehr-aa* 'desert', *šəjər-ah* 'tree'. The –ah/-at suffix known as *taa marbuutah*, usually pronounced as –ah when comes in the pausal form, is the most commonly used feminine marker in Arabic language as compared to the less commonly used feminine marker that is –aa, referred to as *alif maqsuurah* or *alif mamduudah*.

In Pashto language, there are so many English nouns or loanwords which have made their way into the Pashto sentences. Since English is a gender neutral language, whereas Pashto does comprise a whole system of grammatical gender. Pashto language comprises of two genders i.e. masculine gender and a feminine gender. In Pashto language, all sorts of nouns, either animate, human or inanimate, non-human, are assigned a certain gender. Furthermore, no neuter gender exists in Pashto language unlike English language. So when English loanwords are incorporated in Pashto sentences then a certain gender is assigned to them. Now, the questions which arises are that how and which gender will be assigned to the English nouns and which rules will govern the gender assignment in case of English loanwords. Will these rules be similar to those followed by the Pashto nouns in case of gender assignment procedure or will they be different ones. In the last chapter the researcher has applied the different criterion or systems for gender assignment on Khattak dialect of Pashto language. Whereas in this very chapter, the researcher will apply those rules or systems on the English loanwords.

As per the typological survey regarding the gender assignment, it can be seen that the world's languages varies and differ in their criteria and systems of assigning gender to nouns. In certain languages such as Tamil language, only the semantic rules are sufficient in determining the gender of the noun. At times semantic criteria is not enough for assigning gender to nouns and is unable to cater to all the nouns. Hence, in case of such nouns, the formal rules or criterion is applicable mostly. The morphology and phonology of the nouns are involved in case of formal criterion. A few languages where the formal criterion is applicable are French, Russian and Qafer.

Since English is a gender neutral language, so when English loanwords are incorporated into the Pashto language then a certain gender is assigned to these loanwords. These borrowed words follow the morphology of the Pashto language and follow its pattern of gender assignment system.

**Material and Methods**

**Data Collection**

The researcher has collected and driven the bulk of her data from the Khattak dialect of Pashto language spoken in Karak district. The Khattak dialect of Pashto is slightly different from the standard Pashto. It is not in the written form whereas the standard Pashto does exist in the written form as well. Data is collected from various sources and different methods of data collection were used in order to ensure that the data is fairly representative.

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To create that fund I used several different sources of data given below.

1. Data is collected from different domains of life such as; naturally occurring data, recordings of real life conversations and discussions, recordings of conversations with shopkeepers, religious sermons.

2. News, Radio programs in Khattak dialect of Pashto language

3. Songs in Khattak dialect of Pashto language

4. Social media including Facebook and YouTube

5. Intuitive and personal knowledge of Pashto language

6. For English loanwords, the researcher has selected secondary English textbooks taught to 9th and 10th grade in KPK and marked all the nouns in it. Then the researcher has asked students from the same focused groups, as mentioned above, to use these words in sentences, in which gender is marked. Then the researcher has recorded these examples and verified them from a person who is an expert and well versed in Khattak dialect of Pashto language as well.

7.  Hence, the data is collected from all sorts of formal and informal settings and domains. The examples of nouns were collected from naturally occurring data, everyday language usage and Informal conversations and formal conversations. But I needed access to the data of nouns which are used in formal usage. For that reason I gathered a list of nouns from textbooks as well.

Depending on the type of study, information is not gathered from a single source. This investigation is detailed.

Corbett's (1991) typological categories for determining the gender of the nouns were applied in the current research. He asserts that for determining a noun's gender, both the meaning and the form are equally significant. In the system of grammatical gender assignment, both have different functions to play. Corbett (1991), divides these assignment systems or models into two major types which are also further sub-divided into several sub-categories.

1.  Semantic Assignment System

    a.  Strict Semantic Systems

        *   Rationality, Mythology, Sex, Size, Shape

    b.  Predominantly Semantic Systems

        *   Semantic residue, Concept association, Culture, Belief system, Politeness, Domesticity and concreteness

2.  Formal Assignment System

    a.  Phonological Systems

    b.  Morphological Systems

The current research makes use of the aforementioned framework. To fulfill the demands and requirements of the current research, the framework has been modified, and specific categories have been added or removed as necessary. A clear set of categories with additional division into sub-categories was developed after thorough consideration. Now other researchers in the field of grammatical gender assignment can utilize the current research paradigm as justification for their own future studies. The analysis of the data collected for the present research was done by categorizing the material under following headings.

Semantic Systems in Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and Assigning Gender to English Loanwords in Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language

1.  Strictly Semantic Systems in Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and Assigning Gender to English Loanwords in Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language

a.  Gender assignment to Khattak dialect of Pashto language and English loanwords based on sex

b.  Gender assignment to Khattak dialect of Pashto language and English loanwords based on religious beliefs

c.  Gender assignment to Khattak dialect of Pashto language and English loanwords based on size
d.  Gender assignment to Khattak dialect of Pashto language and English loanwords based on physical strength and qualities
e.  Gender assignment to Khattak dialect of Pashto language and English loanwords based on profession

**Results and Discussion**

**Semantic Systems in Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and Assigning Gender to English Loanwords in Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language**

Corbett lays great emphasis on the importance of semantic system in case of gender assignment and in fact this is the first type of gender assignment system that he has focused on. The semantic aspect is further divided into two different categories that is strict semantic system and predominantly semantic system. The researcher focuses on the strictly semantic system in detail   and tries to figure out to what extent the strictly semantic rules are responsible for assigning gender to Pashto nouns   and English loanwords in Khattak dialect of Pashto language.

**Strictly Semantic Systems in Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and Assigning Gender to English Loanwords in Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language**

According to Corbett (1991), in case of strict semantic gender assignment systems, a particular gender is allotted to the nominal entities based on their strictly semantic properties or literal meanings. Hence the only thing required in assigning a particular gender to a certain noun is only the noun's meaning irrespective of its form. According to Corbett (1991), the strict semantic system of assignment can rely on several other things, such as rationality, shape, size, qualities, color, profession etc.

The strictly semantic category is divided into following sub-categories:

a.  Gender assignment to Khattak dialect of Pashto language and English loanwords based on sex
b.  Gender assignment to Khattak dialect of Pashto language and English loanwords based on religious beliefs
c.  Gender assignment to Khattak dialect of Pashto language and English loanwords based on size
d.  Gender assignment to Khattak dialect of Pashto language and English loanwords based on physical strength and qualities
e.  Gender assignment to Khattak dialect of Pashto language and English loanwords based on profession

Within each subcategory, first it is applied on Khattak dialect of Pashto language, then it is applied on the English loanwords. Afterwards a comparison and conclusion is drawn at the end.

Other than the animate referents all the inanimate nouns are also assigned a certain gender which is known       as a grammatical gender. Grammatical gender can be either feminine or masculine. In case of English language instead of a grammatical gender for inanimate beings, there exists a neuter gender for them. So *it*       is used for denoting or referring to all the inanimate things.

In case of Pashto language there are several different semantic rules for assigning gender and not only the   biological sex alone is enough to allot a certain gender. Similarly, according to Trosterud (2001), the Norwegian language comprises of somewhat twenty eight different semantic rules of  gender  assignment. Hence  the  semantic assignment system of Pashto language can be based on several different things, such as size, shape, color, qualities, profession etc.

**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Sex**

Nesset, T. (2003) proposes a 'Core Semantic Override Principle', according to which the biological sex dominates all other rules of gender assignment, and serves as the semantic core of the grammatical gender.  There is much evidence in favor of this claim that this principle is also a part of the universal grammar.  Dahl (2000:101f.) also referred to sex as the 'major criterion' when it comes to assigning gender in different languages. This Core Semantic Override Principle is similar to the observations made by Corbett and Fraser:

'As is universally the case, the formal gender assignment rules […] are dominated by the semantic gender assignment rules.' (Corbett and Fraser 2000:321)

In Pashto language also the gender of the Pashto nouns is determined either by signification or by form. For instance, in Pashto language, all the proper nouns denoting females are assigned a feminine gender by signification. This includes all the proper female names. Pashto language comprises of two genders i.e. feminine and masculine. Neuter gender does not exist in Pashto language. In Khattak dialect of Pashto language, all common and proper nouns, used for females are feminine whereas those which are used for males are considered to be masculine. In Khattak dialect of Pashto language, there are different words for masculine and feminine animates.

In case of Khattak dialect of Pashto language all the animate beings or referents are classified or divided under biological or natural gender. In Khattak dialect of Pashto language, all female humans, animals and plants considered as feminine are assigned a feminine gender whereas, all the male humans, all male animals, and all the plants which are considered to be masculine are allotted a masculine gender. In case of inanimate things, and even the abstract nouns, a certain gender is assigned to them which is either feminine or masculine.

Similarly, in accordance to that, in English loanwords, sometimes the natural or biological gender of a noun expresses the gender. The researcher has devised the table given below in which only those animates are included which has got separate words used for the masculine and feminine entities. These words are first mentioned (self-designed)

**Table 1**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Sex**

|   | Khattak dialect of Pashto language | | English | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | **Masculine** | **Feminine** | **Masculine** | **Feminine** |
| 1. | Wrur | Xur | Brother | Sister |
| 2. | səṛa | Šəza | Husband | Wife |
| 3. | Plor | Mur | Father | Mother |
| 4. | Zwa | Lur | Son | Daughter |
| 5. | Bədša | Bədšozay | King | Queen |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | ælməsa | əlməsay | Grandson | Granddaughter |
| 7. | traṇ | Trur | Paternal uncle | Paternal aunt |

From the above given table, it can be seen that since there are separate words for the male and female animate beings. Hence, in these cases the biological gender is responsible for assigning a particular gender to the nouns. The words used for females are allotted a feminine gender whereas the words used for males are given a masculine gender. Therefore if these nominal entities are used as loanwords in Khattak dialect of Pashto language sentences, then the gender assignment will be based on their semantic basis that is their biological gender. Hence, similar to Khattak dialect of Pashto language nouns, some English loanwords are also used for males and females separately

There are certain animates in English language, for whom there are no separate words assigned for the male or female counterparts. In those cases the same word can either be used for masculine and feminine. Their grammatical gender is guessed by the agreement of different parts of speech present in the Khattak dialect of Pashto language sentences, with the English loanwords. Words such as monkey, donkey, cat, wolf, eagle, and crow are a few such examples. Consider the table given below.

**Table 2**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Sex**

| | Khattak dialect of Pashto language | | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Masculine** | **Feminine** | **Masculine/Feminine** |
| 1. | Xar | Xra | Donkey |
| 2. | Bizoga | Bizogay | Monkey |
| 3. | Bəlika | Bəlikay | Cat |

In the above examples, it can be seen that in case of English language, there exists no separate words for the masculine and feminine counterparts whereas in case of Pashto language, there are separate words used for masculine and feminine figures. Consider the examples given below.

**Table 3**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Sex**

| Khattak dialect of Pashto | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Da | yu | ğwəṭ | bəlika da. | |
| PN | Det | Adj | MN | HelpV |
| This | one | fat | cat | is |

This is a fat cat.

| With English Loanwords | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Da | yu | ğwəṭ | cat | da. |
| This | one | fat | cat | is |
| PN | Det | Adj | M.N | HelpV |

This is a fat cat.

In case of Khattak dialect of Pashto example, the word *bəlika* shows that it is a masculine cat. Similarly, the helping verb da also agrees with the masculine gender of the noun. In case of feminine cat, the helping verb do would be used. In case the English loanword cat is used in Khattak dialect of Pashto language sentence, then the grammatical gender is assessed by the agreement of the different parts of speech involved in the sentence. The helping verb da shoes that it is a male cat. In case of a female cat, the helping verb do would be used. Similarly, the article *yu* also agrees with the masculine gender of

the cat. In case of feminine cat, the article *eva* would be used. Similarly, the adjective *ǧwət* also shows that it is a male being because for a female the adjective *ǧwəta* is used.

It can be concluded from the above examples that in case of separate words designated for masculine and feminine entities, the gender is revealed through the nouns used for feminine and masculine animate beings. The nouns referring to females are referred to as feminine nouns whereas the nouns referring to males are known as masculine nouns. In case there is a single noun referring to both the masculine and feminine nouns then in that case, the adjacent parts of speech shows agreement with the gender of the noun. Hence, they inflict in accordance with the gender of the noun.

**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Religious Beliefs**

There are certain nouns in Khattak dialect of Pashto language which are assigned a masculine gender and are used as masculine always. For instance, words such as *Xodaye* 'God', *Qoran Məjid* 'Quran', *jənat* 'Paradise', *dozax* 'Hell', kəyəmat 'doomsday', *jəmat* 'mosque', *əlmunz* 'prayer', etc.

**Table 4**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Religious Beliefs**

| Khattak dialect of Pashto | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dozax | bo | der | garam | wi. |
| Hell | will | very | hot | be |
| M.N | V | | Adj | HelpV |
| Hell will be very hot. | | | | |
| **With English Loanwords** | | | | |
| Hell | bo | der | garəm | wi. |
| Hell | will | very | hot | be |
| M.N | V | | Adj | HelpV |
| Hell will be very hot | | | | |

The noun *dozax* is treated as a masculine entity in Khattak dialect of Pashto language. When the English loanword hell is incorporated in the Khattak dialect of Pashto sentence, then the same gender is assigned to the loanword that is the masculine gender. This can be seen in the sentence given in the table given above. The adjective *garəm* agrees and inflects with the masculine gender of the noun *dozax* and loanword hell. In case of feminine gender the word *garma* will be used. Now consider the example of Urdu language.

Furthermore the words which have religious connotations such as *əlmunz* 'prayer', *jəmat* 'mosque' are also treated as masculine entities in Khattak dialect of Pashto language. Its semantic equivalent in English, when inserted in Khattak dialect of Pashto sentence, is also treated as a masculine figure.

In order to assign a certain gender to certain nouns, the religion or religious beliefs can also play a crucial part. Quran is the noble and holy book of Muslims. It contains the message and sermons of Allah. It is originally written in Arabic language. In Arabic language also, all the holy figures and nouns having religious connotations are treated as masculine entities. Similarly if we utter the same words in Khattak dialect of Pashto, then also they are assigned a masculine gender and treated as such. Words pertaining to religious beliefs are also assigned a masculine gender in Khattak dialect of Pashto language.

Therefore when English nouns, which have a religious connotation to them such as mosque, prayer, hell, paradise etc are incorporated as loanwords in Khattak dialect of Pashto sentences then they are always assigned a masculine gender. Hence these English loanwords are considered as masculine similar to their Pashto counterparts.

**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Size**

In case of Khattak dialect of Pashto language size also matters when it comes to gender assignment to inanimate objects. Those objects which are larger, greater or bigger in size are treated as masculine entities. Similarly, those objects which are smaller in size as compared to their bigger counterparts are assigned a feminine gender. Again this may connote to the Pakistani patriarchal setup in the context that women are considered to be weak, fragile, and smaller in social stature as compared to the big, macho patriarchal man. Hence all the things which are small, minute, are associated with the feminine gender, whereas the big and huge things are allotted the masculine gender. Few examples from Khattak dialect of Pashto language are given below.

**Table 5**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Nouns according to their Size**

| Nouns with big size | Nouns with small size |
|---|---|
| Masculine | Feminine |
| Maaṭ 'Big pitcher' | Maṭay 'Small Pitcher' |
| Tol    'Big plate' | Talay  'Small plate' |
| škur    'Big plate' | škəray 'Small plate' |
| ṭupak  'rifle' | Təmuča          'pistol' |

**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Physical Strength and Qualities**

There are many nouns in Khattak dialect of Pashto and Urdu language which are always assigned a masculine gender. For instance, *tupan* 'storm' is a strong wind hence it is assigned a masculine gender whereas *həwa* 'wind' is not as strong as a storm therefore it takes feminine agreement markers. For instance,

**Table 6**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Size**

| Khattak dialect of Pashto | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Da  ṭupak  der    gron          da. | | | |
| This  rifle  very  expensive        is | | | |
| PN  M.N      Adj          HelpV | | | |
| This rifle is very expensive. | | | |
| **With English Loanwords** | | | |
| Da   rifəl    der    gron          da. | | | |
| This  rifle  very   expensive       is | | | |
| PN  M.N          Adj          HelpV | | | |
| This rifle is very expensive. | | | |

In the example given above, from Khattak dialect of Pashto language, it can be seen that the noun *ṭupak* 'rifle' is assigned a masculine gender. The adjective *der gron* 'very expensive' is used and helping verb *da* 'is' is used. In case of a feminine noun, the adjective *dera grona do* will be used. When the English loanword rifle is inserted in Khattak dialect of Pashto sentence, then also the masculine gender is retained.

**Table 7**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Size**

| Khattak dialect of Pashto | | |
|---|---|---|
| Aği | təmuča oxwəstəla | |
| He | pistol | bought |
| PN | F.N | V |
| He bought a pistol. | | |
| **With English Loanwords** | | |
| Aği | pistəl | oxwəstəla |
| He | pistol | bought |
| PN | F.NV | |
| He bought a pistol. | | |

In Khattak dialect of Pashto language, the word *təmuča* 'pistol' is granted a feminine gender. The verb agrees with the gender of the noun and inflicts accordingly. In case of a masculine noun it would be *oxwəstal*. When the English loanword for pistol is incorporated in Khattak dialect of Pashto sentence then also it is given a feminine gender.

It can be concluded that in case of Khattak dialect of Pashto language, size also plays an important role at times, when it comes to grammatical gender assignment. Again there may be the patriarchal mentality or setup behind this rule. Since in our patriarchal society men are considered to be macho and bigger as compared to small and petite feminine figures. In case of borrowing English loanwords, no such rule or criteria has been seen or noticed where the size of the loanwords plays a role in grammatical gender assignment.

**Table 8**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Physical Strength and Qualities**

| Khattak dialect of Pashto | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bar | teza | Həwa | čəliži. |
| Outside | fast | Wind | Blowing |
| Adv | Adj | F. N | V |
| Wind is blowing fast outside. | | | |
| **With English Loanwords** | | | |
| Bar | teza | wind | čəliži. |
| Outside | fast | wind | blowing |
| Adv | Adj | F.N | V |
| Wind is blowing fast outside. | | | |

In the given examples, it can be seen that the adjective *teza* 'fast' is used for the noun həwa 'wind'. This is a feminine gender agreement marker. This shows that the noun *həwa* 'wind' is feminine in nature. In case it was masculine noun then the adjective *tez* 'fast' would be used. In case their semantic equivalents in English language are used as loanwords in Khattak dialect of Pashto language sentences then they are also assigned the same genders. Hence, in the example given above, the English counterpart for the Pashto word *həwa* 'wind' is also assigned a feminine gender.

Being in a patriarchal society and setup, it is a matter of the fact that physical traits pertaining to toughness, roughness, strength and durability are associated with the masculine gender. Although it may sound clichéd in this present era, where social issues such as feminism and equality of rights is on its peak but still such mentality exists in our society. Masculinity is assumed to have physical strength and power over the weak and feeble femininity. Due to this very mindset, in Pashto and Urdu language both, the things

which are strong, sturdy and powerful are mostly given a masculine gender whereas those which are less in power or meek and feeble are addressed as feminine entities. For instance in Khattak dialect of Pashto language the noun *həwa* 'wind' is not as strong and fast as compared to *tupan* 'storm'. Hence *həwa* 'wind' is given a feminine gender whereas *tupan* 'storm' is treated as a masculine entity.

Similarly, there are certain English loanwords, which when incorporated into Khattak dialect of Pashto language sentences, are used as feminine nouns, due to their qualities such as, beauty, delicacy, fragility, meekness etc. For instance, few such examples are doll, fish, nurse, cat, wind, and fairy. For instance,

**Table 9**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Physical Strength and Qualities**

| Khattak dialect of Pashto | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mota | da | ḍoll | ša lagi. |
| I | this | doll | like |
| PN | PN | F.N | Adj |
| I like this doll. | | | |

In this example taken from Khattak dialect of Pashto language, the adjective *ša lagi* 'like', reveals the feminine gender of the noun doll. In case of masculine noun the adjective *šṇ lagi* 'like' would be used.

Whereas English words such as wrestler, giant, storm, bodybuilder etc are assigned a masculine gender based on the traits and qualities. Since physical strength and toughness are the qualities which are mostly associated with the males, hence these words are also considered as masculine in nature. Masculine gender agreement markers are utilized for them, which reveals their gender.

**Profession**

There are a few professions, which are only adopted by the males mostly in Pakistani society. So, the nouns referring to such professions are mostly used as masculine in Khattak dialect of Pashto language. For instance, *zərgar* 'jeweller', *məzdur* 'laborer', *mistri* 'mechanic', plumbər 'plumber', *moči* 'cobbler'.

**Table 10**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Profession**

| Khattak dialect of Pashto | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Da | muža | məzdur | da. |
| This | Our | labourer | is |
| PN | PN | M.N | HelpV |
| This is our labourer. | | | |
| **With English Loanwords** | | | |
| Da | muža | məzdur | da. |
| This | Our | labourer | is |
| PN | PN | M.N | HelpV |
| This is our labourer. | | | |

The helping verb da shows that the noun *məzdur* 'labourer' is a male. Otherwise the helping verb do would be used. Now if the English loan word for the same word is incorporated in Pashto sentence, then also it is assigned the same masculine gender.

Now let us take the example of a few professions in English language. In English language we can see that gender demarcation can be seen in separate words for males and females, in certain professions. Hence, a similar profession has reserved different names for feminine and masculine counterparts. So in this case the separate names or nominal referents used for both the genders serving in a same profession, makes their grammatical genders evident. Few such instances are given below where gender is determined based on their biological gender.

**Table 11**
**Masculine/Feminine in Professions Names, English Language**

| Masculine | Feminine |
| --- | --- |
| Actor | Actress |
| Waiter | Waitress |
| Steward | Stewardess |
| Salesman | Saleswoman |
| Governor | Governoress |

Similar to the English language, in Khattak dialect of Pashto language also there are certain professions where different names are reserved for masculine and feminine figures. When English loanwords related to the professions are incorporated into the Khattak dialect of Pashto language sentences, then the same English loanwords, with slight phonemic alterations, are used for the males and female entities. In case of the examples given below, with addition of a vowel /a/ the noun is changed from masculine to feminine.

**Table 12**
**Masculine/Feminine in Professions Names, Pashto Language**

| Masculine | | Feminine |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Inspecṭər | (Inspector ) | Inspecṭəra |
| Profesər | (Professor) | Profesəra |
| Insṭrəkṭər | (Instructor) | Insṭrəkṭəra |
| Manejər | (Manager) | Manejəra |
| Dəctar (Doctor) | | Dəctəra |
| Lidər (Leader) | | Lidəra |

Few sentences where the English loanwords used for professions, are incorporated in Khattak dialect of Pashto sentences are given below.

**Table 13**
**Gender Assignment to Khattak Dialect of Pashto Language and English Loanwords based on Profession**

| Khattak dialect of Pashto | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Da | muža | gəvərnər | da. |
| This | our | governor | is |
| PN | PN | M.N | HelpV |
| This is our governor. | | | |
| Da | muža | gəvərnəra | do. |
| This | our | governoress | is |
| PN | PN | F.N | HelpV |
| This is our governoress. | | | |

From the above examples, it can be seen that if we incorporate these nouns in Khattak dialect of Pashto sentences, then the helping verbs show agreement with the gender of the nouns used in the sentences above. Helping verb *da* 'is' is used for *gəvərnər* 'governor' (M.N) whereas helping verb *do* 'is' is used for the feminine noun *gəvərnəra* 'governor' (F.N).

When it is compared with English language, it can be seen that when words related to these professions are    incorporated as loanwords in Khattak dialect of Pashto language then they are assigned a masculine gender due to the very reason that these professions are reserved for men only in our society. Such professions are laborer, plumber, hawker, loader, mechanic, cobbler etc. These professions are not adopted by the females in our Pakistani society. Despite the fact that in this present era, women are no less than men in anything and can conquer any field but still there are certain limitations for women in our society.

In case of Khattak dialect of Pashto language, there are certain nouns known as 'common gender' nouns, which can be utilized for both the sexes that is masculine and feminine genders both. Nouns for instance, *libğhoṛa* 'player' and *milma* 'guest' are few such examples. Such nouns can be used to denote or refer to people from masculine and feminine both sexes. When they refer to females, then they takes feminine agreement whereas in case of males these nouns combine with the masculine agreement targets. Similarly, there are certain English nouns or loanwords which can be utilized for males and females both. For instance, patient, student, member, client, artist, singer, anchor, writer, tourist, teacher, scholar etc. such nouns are known as 'common gender' nouns.

Hence, it can be concluded that in Pakistani society, there are a few professions that are almost exclusively practiced by men. Therefore, in the Khattak dialect of Pashto and English language as well, the nouns pertaining to these vocations are typically employed as masculine nouns.

**Conclusion**

A few goals and several research questions were established at the outset of the study. The researcher has made an effort to not only accomplish all of her goals but also to provide answers to the questions posed at the outset of the study. Following is the summarized version of the findings of the research work. All animate entities or referents are categorized or split according to their biological or natural gender in the Khattak dialect of Pashto. All female humans, animals, and plants that are deemed to be feminine in the Khattak dialect of Pashto are given the gender "female," while all male humans, all male animals, and all plants that are thought to be masculine are given the gender "masculine." Inanimate objects, including abstract nouns, have a gender that is either feminine or masculine given to it. Similar to that, there are several animates that have separate words used for the masculine and feminine entities in English loanwords, and occasionally the natural or biological gender of a noun communicates the gender. Because the terms for male and female animate beings are distinct. Therefore, in these situations, the biological gender is in charge of giving the nouns a specific gender. Furthermore, In the English language, there are several animates for which there are no specific words designated for their male or female counterparts. In such circumstances, the same word can be used for both genders. The agreement of various parts of speech in Khattak dialect of Pashto phrases containing English loanwords, such as cat, donkey, etc., can be used to infer the grammatical gender of a speaker.

In the Khattak dialect of Pashto, some Pashto nouns having religious connotations are always assigned a masculine gender. Similarly English loanwords having religious connotations, such as mosque, prayer, hell, and paradise, are invariably given a masculine gender.

A significant finding was that while determining the gender of inanimate objects in the Khattak dialect of Pashto, size also counts. Larger, grander, or bigger objects are assigned a masculine gender. In a similar way, objects that are smaller than their larger counterparts are given a feminine gender. Once more, this may allude to the patriarchal system in Pakistan where women are viewed as being weak, fragile, and having a lower social status than the large, macho patriarchal man. There is no precedent for the magnitude of the loanwords to affect the grammatical gender assignment in the case of borrowing English loanwords.

Numerous words in the Khattak dialect of Pashto and Urdu are consistently given a masculine gender. In contrast to *həwa*, which is assigned feminine agreement markers because it is not as forceful as a storm, *tupan*, which means "storm," is a strong wind. Similar to this, several English loanwords are employed as feminine nouns in sentences in the Khattak dialect of Pashto because of attributes like beauty, delicacy, fragility, meekness, for instance words such as doll, fish, nurse, cat, wind, and fairy.

In Pakistani society, there are a few vocations that are almost exclusively practiced by men. Therefore, in the Khattak dialect of Pashto, the nouns pertaining to these professions are typically employed as masculine nouns. When compared to the English language, it is clear that loanwords pertaining to these professions are also given a masculine gender since, in our society, men are the only ones who are allowed to work in these fields.

An interesting aspect of the findings is that there are some nouns in the Khattak dialect of Pashto known as "common gender" nouns that can be used to refer to both the masculine and feminine genders. Examples of such nouns include *libğoṛa*, which means 'player' and *milma*, which means 'guest'. Similar to this, there are some English nouns or loanwords that can be used for both genders. For instance, 'common gender' nouns' include terms like patient, student, member, client, artist etc.

This study has shown that the majority of the Pashto language rules for gender assignment were expanded to include English nouns that were borrowed into Khattak dialect of Pashto language, demonstrating that gender assignment is a phenomenon that is governed   by rules. To assign gender to English borrowed words, all three systems i.e. semantic, phonological, and morphological are applied. However semantic and phonological systems are the ones which are more frequently employed than morphological systems.

**Recommendations**

The investigation of the phenomena of strictly semantic grammatical gender assignment rules to English loanwords in the Khattak dialect of Pashto has been the main focus of this project. One can also investigate the various other rules taking part in gender assignment process as well. It would be most logical to use a big corpus of data with an even greater sample of English nouns to expand on this study.

Here are a few more contributions to the growing body of knowledge regarding grammatical gender assignment. In languages with various gender systems, one can

investigate how grammatical gender assignment varies. How nouns or loanwords from other languages are given grammatical gender in various languages. Additionally, many facets of the grammatical gender system in Pashto dialects can be investigated using data from dialect change, attrition, and acquisition.

Examine the impact of grammatical gender on thought. Examine whether specific types of cognitive processes or situations have an impact on grammatical gender effects. We can learn more about grammatical gender assignment and how it affects language and cognition thanks to their efforts. To learn what the practical applications of grammatical gender study are in areas like education or language learning.

It is important to look at gender assignment to loanwords, as emphasized by Corbett (1991), Thornton (2009), and Audring (2016), among others. It is possible to analyze the existence of dominance links between several formal and semantic gender assignment criteria and Pashto data, whether the formal and semantic gender assignment rules follow a hierarchy of dominance.

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