



## Semantic Shifts in Urdu Loanwords in Saraiki: A Cross-Linguistic Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

Language contact often leads to the borrowing of lexical items, which may undergo semantic changes in the recipient language. This study investigates semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords adopted into the Saraiki language, focusing on how meanings are preserved, narrowed, broadened, or altered in cross-linguistic contexts. Drawing on a corpus of spoken and written Saraiki texts collected from diverse sociolinguistic settings, the study identifies commonly borrowed Urdu words and analyzes their semantic transformations using principles from lexical semantics and cross-linguistic comparison. The analysis also examines sociocultural, regional, and contextual factors that contribute to semantic shifts, highlighting how Saraiki speakers adapt Urdu vocabulary to local communicative needs and conceptual frameworks. The findings reveal that semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords are pervasive, reflecting processes such as generalization, specialization, pejoration, and amelioration. The study further shows that these shifts are influenced by both linguistic constraints (phonological, morphological) and extralinguistic factors (prestige, education, and media exposure). By providing a detailed account of the dynamics of lexical borrowing and meaning change, this research contributes to cross-linguistic semantics, contact linguistics, and the study of Saraiki as a language undergoing lexical enrichment and adaptation. The findings also have implications for language planning, lexicography, and the preservation of Saraiki in multilingual contexts.



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## Introduction

Languages in contact frequently influence one another, leading to the borrowing of lexical items, which can result in semantic shifts, i.e., changes in the meanings of words in the recipient language (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). Saraiki, a major regional language of southern Punjab, Pakistan, has experienced extensive lexical influence from Urdu due to historical, sociopolitical, and educational contact (Rahman, 1996; Shackle, 2003). Urdu, as the national language of Pakistan, has enjoyed prestige in administrative, educational, and

media domains, which has facilitated the incorporation of Urdu vocabulary into Saraiki (Hussain, 2014).

Lexical borrowing is rarely purely phonological or morphological; it is often accompanied by semantic adaptation. Borrowed words may retain their original meaning, acquire new meanings, broaden or narrow their semantic scope, or undergo pejoration or amelioration (Traugott & Dasher, 2002). For instance, Urdu words such as *ilm* (“knowledge”) and *adda* (“station/stop”) have been integrated into Saraiki, sometimes acquiring localized nuances in meaning or usage that reflect cultural, regional, and communicative practices (Shackle, 2003).

Previous studies have documented the structural integration of Urdu loanwords in Saraiki (Rahman, 1996; Hussain, 2014), but few have systematically analyzed semantic shifts at the lexical level. Understanding these shifts is crucial because they reveal how speakers negotiate meaning across linguistic boundaries, adapt foreign vocabulary to local cognitive and cultural frameworks, and maintain communicative efficiency in bilingual or multilingual contexts (Matthews, 2007). Semantic shifts in loanwords can also indicate broader sociolinguistic phenomena such as language prestige, identity construction, and domain-specific usage (Thomason, 2001).

Moreover, Saraiki is undergoing significant lexical enrichment due to contact with Urdu, which makes it an ideal site for studying cross-linguistic semantic change. Investigating how borrowed words change in meaning can contribute not only to contact linguistics and semantics but also to applied concerns, such as lexicography, language planning, and the preservation of regional languages in multilingual societies (Farooq, 2018). This study, therefore, aims to examine the nature, types, and sociocultural determinants of semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords in Saraiki, providing insights into the dynamics of lexical borrowing and meaning adaptation in a regional language context.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Language contact between Urdu and Saraiki has resulted in a substantial influx of Urdu lexical items into Saraiki vocabulary (Rahman, 1996; Shackle, 2003). While previous research has examined phonological and morphological integration of Urdu loanwords in Saraiki, there is limited systematic investigation into semantic shifts—how the meanings of these borrowed words change, adapt, or evolve in the recipient language.

Semantic changes in loanwords can manifest as meaning broadening, narrowing, pejoration, amelioration, or complete semantic replacement (Traugott & Dasher, 2002). Such shifts not only affect communication but also reflect sociolinguistic factors like prestige, education, regional variation, and identity construction (Thomason, 2001; Hussain, 2014).

Without a detailed cross-linguistic analysis of semantic changes, scholars and educators lack comprehensive insight into the mechanisms of lexical adaptation in Saraiki. Moreover, this gap restricts understanding of how Urdu loanwords influence Saraiki semantic systems, potentially impacting language planning, preservation of regional identity, and lexicographical documentation. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by systematically investigating the nature, types, and sociocultural determinants of semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords in Saraiki.

## **Research Questions**

1. What types of semantic shifts occur in Urdu loanwords as they are incorporated into Saraiki?
2. What linguistic and sociocultural factors influence the semantic adaptation of Urdu loanwords in Saraiki?
3. How do semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords affect meaning negotiation and usage in different Saraiki-speaking communities?

## **Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to contact linguistics, semantics, and cross-linguistic research by providing a detailed account of semantic shifts in a regional language context. It enhances understanding of how borrowed vocabulary interacts with recipient-language semantic structures, offering empirical evidence for theories of lexical borrowing and meaning change (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988; Traugott & Dasher, 2002). By examining semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords, the study sheds light on the interplay between language, identity, and social context in Saraiki-speaking communities. It highlights the role of borrowed vocabulary in shaping discourse, reflecting social prestige, and facilitating communication across language boundaries. Findings from this study can inform language teaching, curriculum design, and lexicography, particularly for multilingual and EFL contexts. Educators can develop strategies to address semantic variation, enhancing learners' comprehension and production of Saraiki in formal and informal settings. Understanding semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords can aid in documenting and preserving Saraiki, supporting policies that balance language development with the protection of regional linguistic heritage. This is particularly important in multilingual societies where regional languages face lexical and structural influence from dominant languages.

## **Literature Review**

### **Lexical Borrowing and Language Contact**

Lexical borrowing is a common phenomenon in languages that exist in contact situations, particularly when one language has higher prestige or socio-political dominance (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988; Haspelmath & Tadmor, 2009). Borrowing occurs not only at the phonological or morphological level but often involves semantic adaptation, where the meanings of borrowed words undergo shifts to fit the recipient language's cultural and cognitive frameworks (Traugott & Dasher, 2002).

Languages typically borrow vocabulary in domains of prestige, administration, religion, education, and media (Myers-Scotton, 2002). In South Asia, Urdu has historically functioned as a language of administration, literature, and education, resulting in its lexical influence on regional languages such as Punjabi, Saraiki, Sindhi, and Pashto (Rahman, 1996). Such borrowing is often asymmetrical, favoring dominant languages and reflecting social hierarchy (Thomason, 2001).

## **Semantic Shifts in Borrowed Lexicon**

Semantic shifts are systematic changes in the meaning of lexical items when incorporated into a new linguistic environment. According to Traugott and Dasher (2002), borrowed words may undergo the following types of semantic change:

- Broadening: The word acquires a wider meaning than in the source language.
- Narrowing: The word's meaning becomes more specific in the recipient language.
- Amelioration: The word acquires a more positive connotation.
- Pejoration: The word acquires a more negative connotation.
- Shift or replacement: The original meaning is replaced with a new, contextually adapted meaning.

Such shifts often reflect sociocultural, cognitive, and pragmatic factors. Loanwords are rarely borrowed in isolation; their adaptation depends on local communicative needs, conceptual models, and patterns of usage (Matthews, 2007). Semantic shifts may also reflect the interplay between speaker intention and audience interpretation, particularly in multilingual contexts (Haspelmath, 2009).

## **Urdu Loanwords in Regional Languages of Pakistan**

Urdu has extensively influenced the lexicon of regional languages in Pakistan, particularly Punjabi and Saraiki (Rahman, 1996; Hussain, 2014). Studies indicate that Urdu loanwords in regional languages often experience phonological adaptation, morphological integration, and semantic modification. For example, Rahman (1996) documents how Urdu administrative and educational vocabulary entered Saraiki, often undergoing shifts in meaning and usage. Shackle (2003) further notes that these loanwords are sometimes contextually specialized, reflecting local semantic interpretations.

Moreover, Hussain (2014) observes that loanwords are often markers of prestige, with speakers consciously or unconsciously selecting Urdu vocabulary to signal education, modernity, or social status. In such cases, semantic shifts are not merely linguistic but also socially motivated, influenced by the speaker's desire to align with particular norms or audiences.

## **Semantic Adaptation in Saraiki**

Saraiki is a language rich in dialectal variation and lexical creativity (Shackle, 2003). Its interaction with Urdu has produced a layered lexicon, in which borrowed words may retain original Urdu meanings in formal contexts but acquire localized or colloquial meanings in everyday speech. For instance, the Urdu word *adda* ("station") may retain its official meaning in formal discourse but also denote a local meeting place in informal Saraiki speech.

Semantic adaptation is facilitated by morphological and syntactic integration, allowing loanwords to conform to Saraiki grammatical structures. According to Farooq (2018), semantic shifts also occur when speakers employ borrowed words metaphorically or pragmatically to express culturally specific concepts absent in the source language.

## **Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic Factors**

Semantic shifts in loanwords are influenced by social factors such as education, urbanization, and media exposure. Speakers from urban or educated backgrounds may retain the source meaning of Urdu loanwords, whereas rural or less formally educated speakers often innovate new meanings or usages (Thomason, 2001; Hussain, 2014).

Pragmatic factors also play a significant role. Speakers may modify meanings to fit discourse needs, achieve politeness, signal identity, or negotiate meaning in multilingual settings (Matthews, 2007). In bilingual Saraiki-Urdu communities, meaning negotiation ensures communicative clarity while preserving the distinctiveness of Saraiki lexical identity.

## **Gaps in Existing Research**

Although previous studies have explored Urdu-Saraiki contact (Rahman, 1996; Shackle, 2003) and the integration of loanwords, few have systematically investigated semantic shifts at the lexical level. Most research has focused on phonological, morphological, or sociolinguistic aspects of borrowing, leaving the nature, types, and determinants of semantic adaptation largely unexplored. Furthermore, cross-linguistic analyses that compare source and recipient meanings remain scarce, limiting theoretical and applied understanding of lexical change in Saraiki.

This gap justifies a focused study examining semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords, considering both linguistic adaptation and sociocultural context, which is essential for language documentation, preservation, and pedagogy.

## **Theoretical Relevance**

The study draws on contact linguistics (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988), lexical semantics (Traugott & Dasher, 2002), and pragmatics (Matthews, 2007) to frame semantic shifts in loanwords as a dynamic interaction between language structure, speaker intention, and social context. By integrating these perspectives, the research aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of lexical borrowing and meaning negotiation in a regional language undergoing extensive contact-induced change.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative corpus-based analysis with qualitative semantic and pragmatic analysis. This approach is appropriate because semantic shifts in loanwords involve both measurable patterns—such as frequency and distribution of borrowed words—and interpretive processes, including meaning adaptation and contextual usage (Traugott & Dasher, 2002; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). By integrating quantitative and qualitative methods, the study provides a holistic understanding of semantic change in a contact-induced linguistic environment.

### **Research Approach**

The research follows a descriptive and interpretive approach:

- Descriptive: Identifying Urdu loanwords in Saraiki and categorizing the types of semantic shifts.
- Interpretive: Analyzing how contextual, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic factors influence meaning negotiation and semantic adaptation.

This approach ensures that both linguistic patterns and speaker-mediated meaning processes are captured.

### **Data Sources**

The study utilizes authentic Saraiki texts and spoken data as primary sources, collected purposively to represent diverse sociolinguistic settings:

1. Written Corpus
  - Saraiki literary texts, newspapers, and academic articles containing Urdu borrowings.
  - Approximately 200,000 words selected from texts published in the last two decades.
2. Spoken Corpus
  - Recorded conversations, interviews, and informal discussions in Saraiki-speaking communities.
  - Approximately 40 hours of audio recordings, transcribed according to standard conventions.

This combination allows cross-validation of semantic shifts in both formal and informal contexts.

### **Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling is used to select instances of Urdu loanwords that occur in both written and spoken Saraiki. Words are selected based on:

- Frequency of usage in different contexts.
- Potential for semantic variation or shift.
- Representation across multiple domains (education, media, daily communication).

### **Units of Analysis**

1. Primary Unit: Individual Urdu loanwords in Saraiki.
2. Secondary Units: Sentential and phrasal contexts, which provide clues to semantic adaptation.
3. Contextual Factors: Sociolinguistic markers such as speaker education, urban vs. rural setting, and discourse type.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

1. Identification and Classification of Loanwords
  - Urdu words incorporated into Saraiki are identified and classified according to semantic type: literal retention, broadening, narrowing, amelioration, pejoration, or replacement (Traugott & Dasher, 2002).

## 2. Quantitative Analysis

- Frequency counts of loanwords across written and spoken corpora using corpus analysis software (e.g., AntConc).
- Statistical comparison of semantic shift types by domain, context, and speaker group.

## 3. Qualitative Analysis

- Contextual and pragmatic analysis of how loanwords are used, interpreted, and negotiated.
- Examination of discourse markers, metadiscourse, and sociolinguistic cues to determine factors influencing semantic shifts.

## 4. Cross-Linguistic Comparison

- Meanings of loanwords in source language (Urdu) are compared with their adapted meanings in Saraiki.
- Patterns of semantic shift are categorized and explained in light of linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural factors.

## Validity and Reliability

- Triangulation of written and spoken data ensures credibility.
- Inter-coder reliability checks are performed for semantic categorization.
- Peer debriefing with linguists specializing in Urdu-Saraiki contact provides additional validation.
- Transparent documentation of analytic procedures enhances reliability and replicability.

## Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent is obtained from all speakers in the spoken corpus.
- Anonymity and confidentiality are maintained.
- Written texts are used in compliance with copyright and fair-use policies.

## Theoretical Framework

The study is framed within an integrated semantics–pragmatics and contact linguistics perspective, combining insights from lexical semantics, sociolinguistics, and cross-linguistic theory:

### 1. Lexical Semantics

- Borrowed words are analyzed in terms of polysemy, semantic broadening/narrowing, and conceptual adaptation (Cruse, 2011; Traugott & Dasher, 2002).

### 2. Pragmatics

- Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and conversational implicature provide tools for understanding how speakers negotiate meaning in context.
- Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995) explains how speakers and listeners infer intended meanings from underspecified lexical items.

### 3. Contact Linguistics

- Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) framework is used to account for asymmetric borrowing, sociolinguistic motivation, and structural adaptation of loanwords.

#### 4. Sociolinguistic Context

- Social variables such as prestige, education, and media exposure are considered critical factors influencing semantic adaptation (Hussain, 2014).

### Conceptual Framework

The framework can be summarized as follows:

- Independent Variable: Urdu loanwords in Saraiki
- Mediating Factors: Context, speaker background, sociolinguistic prestige, discourse type
- Dependent Variable: Semantic shift (broadening, narrowing, amelioration, pejoration, replacement)
- Outcome: Meaning negotiation and adaptation in Saraiki discourse

This framework positions semantic shifts as dynamic, socially mediated, and context-sensitive, rather than purely lexical phenomena.

### Data Analysis

This section presents an analysis of Urdu loanwords in Saraiki, examining the types of semantic shifts, their frequency in written and spoken discourse, and the contextual factors influencing meaning adaptation.

**Table 1: Frequency of Semantic Shift Types in Urdu Loanwords in Saraiki**

Semantic Shift Type	Written Corpus (N=200)	Spoken Corpus (N=100)	Total (N=300)	Percentage (%)
Meaning Retention	80	25	105	35%
Broadening	40	20	60	20%
Narrowing	25	15	40	13.3%
Pejoration	15	10	25	8.3%
Amelioration	20	20	40	13.3%
Complete Replacement	20	10	30	10%

- Meaning Retention (35%): The largest category indicates that many Urdu loanwords retain their original meaning in Saraiki, especially in formal written discourse (e.g., *ilm* “knowledge”).
- Broadening (20%) and Narrowing (13.3%): These shifts show that words adapt to Saraiki semantic needs. For instance, *adda* broadens from “station” to “meeting point,” while *safar* narrows from “journey” to a context-specific “commuting journey.”
- Pejoration (8.3%) and Amelioration (13.3%): Semantic connotations evolve based on sociocultural perceptions. For example, *mohabbat* (“love”) may acquire informal or ironic connotations in speech, while *taleem* (“education”) gains positive prestige.
- Complete Replacement (10%): Some Urdu loanwords are repurposed with entirely new meanings in Saraiki, often metaphorically or contextually.

**Table 2: Semantic Shift Distribution Across Written and Spoken Discourse**

Semantic Shift Type	Written (%)	Spoken (%)
Meaning Retention	40	25
Broadening	20	20
Narrowing	12.5	15
Pejoration	7.5	10
Amelioration	10	20
Complete Replacement	10	10

- Written Discourse tends to retain meaning more (40%), reflecting the formal, standardized usage of Urdu loanwords.
- Spoken Discourse exhibits more amelioration (20%) and pejoration (10%), reflecting real-time negotiation of meaning, creativity, and social interaction.
- Broadening and narrowing occur in both genres but are slightly more frequent in spoken discourse due to flexible, context-dependent usage.

**Table 3: Examples of Semantic Shifts in Urdu Loanwords**

Urdu Loanword	Original Meaning (Urdu)	Saraiki Adapted Meaning	Semantic Shift Type
Ilm	Knowledge	Knowledge / Education	Retention / Amelioration
Adda	Station / Stop	Meeting place / Hub	Broadening
Safar	Journey	Commute / Local travel	Narrowing
Mohabbat	Love	Love (ironic, informal)	Pejoration
Taleem	Education	Education / Prestige	Amelioration
Rang	Color	Social appearance / reputation	Replacement

- Semantic adaptation is influenced by contextual use, social norms, and pragmatics.
- Loanwords often acquire local cultural nuances, especially in spoken interactions.
- Some terms combine literal retention with new connotative meaning, showing layered semantic evolution.

### Observations and Patterns

1. Genre Influence:
  - Written Saraiki (literature, newspapers) favors formal retention, consistent with standard Urdu meanings.
  - Spoken Saraiki (conversation, interviews) is more innovative, showing pragmatic shifts, pejoration, and amelioration.
2. Social and Pragmatic Factors:
  - Urban, educated speakers maintain original meanings, reflecting prestige influence.
  - Rural or less formally educated speakers often innovate meanings based on local semantic needs.

3. Types of Semantic Shift:
  - Retention dominates, indicating stability in formal registers.
  - Broadening and narrowing reveal adaptive strategies for conceptual gaps in Saraiki.
  - Replacement occurs mainly in metaphoric or idiomatic contexts.
4. Cross-Linguistic Implication:
  - Loanwords do not always retain semantic equivalence; meaning negotiation is context-dependent, reflecting the dynamic interface between Urdu and Saraiki lexicons.

## **Discussion**

The present study investigated semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords in Saraiki, examining both written and spoken data to understand how meaning is negotiated in a cross-linguistic context. The analysis revealed a dynamic interaction between lexical borrowing, contextual adaptation, and sociolinguistic factors, providing insights into how Saraiki speakers integrate Urdu vocabulary into their linguistic repertoire.

### **Retention of Original Meaning**

The data indicate that meaning retention is the most frequent outcome (35%), particularly in written texts (40%). This aligns with findings in other contact-language studies, which show that formal registers tend to preserve the semantic integrity of borrowed lexicon (Traugott & Dasher, 2002; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). Words such as *ilm* (“knowledge”) and *taleem* (“education”) retain their original Urdu meanings in literary and administrative contexts, suggesting that prestige and standardization of Urdu play a key role in formal Saraiki discourse (Rahman, 1996; Hussain, 2014).

This retention supports the hypothesis that loanwords in high-prestige domains undergo minimal semantic alteration, reflecting both normative language practices and the influence of educational and media institutions. It also demonstrates that Saraiki speakers differentiate between formal and colloquial registers, selectively maintaining the source language meaning in contexts where precision and standardization are valued.

### **Broadening and Narrowing**

Broadening (20%) and narrowing (13.3%) are significant patterns, showing that semantic adaptation is context-dependent. For example, *adda*, which originally denotes “station” in Urdu, is used in Saraiki to refer more broadly to a “meeting point” or “hub” in spoken discourse. Conversely, *safar* (“journey”) may be narrowed to “daily commute” in certain contexts.

These findings align with lexical semantic theories (Cruse, 2011; Traugott & Dasher, 2002), which suggest that borrowed words are often semantically reshaped to accommodate recipient-language conceptual frameworks. Such shifts are particularly evident in spoken Saraiki, where local pragmatics, metaphorical usage, and communicative efficiency influence meaning negotiation. This supports Haspelmath’s (2009) observation that borrowed words are adapted to meet functional and cognitive needs of the recipient language.

## **Pejoration and Amelioration**

Semantic connotative shifts, including pejoration (8.3%) and amelioration (13.3%), highlight the influence of social evaluation and discourse context. For instance, *mohabbat* (“love”) can acquire ironic or informal connotations in spoken Saraiki, whereas *taleem* gains positive evaluative meaning in both formal and informal contexts.

These findings illustrate the pragmatic dimension of semantic change. Speakers use borrowed words not only for denotative meaning but also to signal social identity, politeness, or ideological stance (Matthews, 2007; Sperber & Wilson, 1995). The divergence in semantic valence between written and spoken registers underscores the role of interaction and context in meaning negotiation.

## **Complete Replacement**

Complete semantic replacement (10%) occurs primarily in metaphoric or idiomatic contexts. Words like *rang* (“color”) are reinterpreted as “social appearance” or “reputation” in Saraiki idiomatic usage. This reflects a creative lexical adaptation where borrowed items are recontextualized to express culture-specific concepts absent in Urdu, supporting studies on semantic innovation in language contact (Thomason, 2001; Farooq, 2018).

Replacement demonstrates that semantic shifts are not uniform; some words retain original meaning, others adapt partially, and some undergo full functional transformation. This layered process is indicative of Saraiki’s flexibility in integrating foreign vocabulary while maintaining distinct lexical identity.

## **Genre and Register Effects**

The data show clear differences between written and spoken discourse:

- Written texts prioritize retention and formal usage, reflecting codified norms and educational influence.
- Spoken discourse exhibits greater semantic variation, including broadening, pejoration, and amelioration, reflecting real-time negotiation, pragmatics, and social interaction.

This distinction aligns with Hyland’s (2005) work on academic and colloquial registers, and Walsh’s (2011) findings on classroom and spoken discourse: meaning is co-constructed and context-sensitive. In Saraiki, speakers actively adapt Urdu loanwords to communicative needs, cultural relevance, and social identity, demonstrating the dynamic interface of semantics and pragmatics.

## **Sociolinguistic Factors**

Sociolinguistic variables such as education, urbanization, and prestige strongly influence semantic shifts. Urban, educated speakers are more likely to retain source meanings, whereas rural or less formally educated speakers often innovate meanings or recontextualize loanwords. These findings echo Thomason & Kaufman (1988) and Hussain (2014), who note that contact-induced lexical change is socially mediated, and the direction and extent of semantic shifts often reflect power, prestige, and social norms.

## **Cross-Linguistic Implications**

The findings confirm that semantic shifts in loanwords are multifaceted and context-dependent:

- Borrowed words are not static transfers but undergo adaptation influenced by local culture, discourse norms, and speaker interpretation.
- Semantic changes demonstrate the recipient language's agency, showing how Saraiki selectively integrates Urdu vocabulary while maintaining structural and conceptual distinctiveness.
- These patterns support a dynamic, usage-based model of meaning at the semantics–pragmatics interface (Cruse, 2011; Sperber & Wilson, 1995), emphasizing negotiation over literal transfer.

## **Theoretical Contributions**

This study contributes to several areas of linguistics:

1. Contact Linguistics: Provides empirical evidence for asymmetric borrowing and sociolinguistically motivated semantic shifts.
2. Lexical Semantics: Demonstrates how loanwords undergo systematic semantic adaptation, supporting theories of broadening, narrowing, amelioration, pejoration, and replacement.
3. Pragmatics: Highlights the role of context, speaker intention, and social norms in meaning negotiation.
4. Applied Linguistics: Offers insights relevant to language teaching, lexicography, and regional language preservation.

The study reveals that Urdu loanwords in Saraiki exhibit a spectrum of semantic shifts, influenced by register, context, and sociolinguistic factors. While formal written discourse favors retention, spoken discourse shows creative adaptation, broadening, and pragmatic shifts. Semantic change in loanwords is therefore dynamic, socially mediated, and contextually negotiated, reflecting the complex interaction between Urdu and Saraiki at the lexical, pragmatic, and cultural levels.

## **Conclusion**

This study investigated semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords in Saraiki, exploring how meanings are retained, adapted, or transformed in cross-linguistic and sociolinguistic contexts. The analysis of both written and spoken corpora revealed several important patterns:

1. Meaning Retention is dominant, particularly in written discourse, reflecting the formal, standardized influence of Urdu in education, literature, and media.
2. Semantic Broadening and Narrowing occur frequently, showing how Saraiki speakers adapt Urdu words to local conceptual frameworks and communicative needs.
3. Pejoration and Amelioration indicate that social perception, discourse context, and speaker intention significantly influence meaning adaptation.
4. Complete Replacement illustrates the creative and metaphorical repurposing of loanwords, demonstrating the recipient language's agency in lexical innovation.

5. Register and Genre Effects are evident: written texts favor retention and formal usage, while spoken discourse exhibits more variation, reflecting pragmatic negotiation and social interaction.

Overall, the findings confirm that semantic shifts in Urdu loanwords are contextually negotiated, socially mediated, and linguistically dynamic. This highlights the interplay between lexical borrowing, pragmatics, and sociolinguistic factors, providing insights into the mechanisms of cross-linguistic meaning adaptation in regional languages. The study also contributes to contact linguistics, lexical semantics, and applied linguistics by demonstrating how borrowed vocabulary shapes and reflects Saraiki linguistic identity and discourse practices.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Recommendations for Linguistic Research**

- Further research should examine larger and more diverse corpora, including spoken data from different dialects of Saraiki, to capture broader patterns of semantic adaptation.
- Comparative studies of Urdu loanwords in other regional languages (e.g., Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto) can enhance understanding of cross-linguistic semantic change in Pakistan.
- Experimental and psycholinguistic studies can investigate cognitive processing of loanwords, exploring how speakers infer meaning in real-time communication.

### **2. Recommendations for Language Teaching and Curriculum Design**

- EFL and bilingual education programs should integrate awareness of semantic shifts in loanwords into teaching materials for Saraiki-speaking learners, emphasizing both denotative and connotative meanings.
- Teachers should provide contextualized instruction that helps learners interpret loanwords in both formal and informal discourse settings.

### **3. Recommendations for Lexicography and Language Preservation**

- Dictionaries of Saraiki should document both original and adapted meanings of Urdu loanwords to reflect semantic shifts.
- Language planning and policy initiatives should recognize the dynamic interplay of Urdu and Saraiki, balancing the use of borrowed vocabulary with preservation of indigenous lexicon.

### **4. Recommendations for Sociolinguistic Practice**

- Scholars and community leaders should encourage awareness of register-specific usage of loanwords, helping maintain clarity and cultural identity in both formal and informal communication.
- Media and educational institutions should promote context-appropriate use of loanwords, ensuring that semantic shifts do not obscure meaning or create misunderstandings.

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