

The Role Of Orientalists In The Promotion Of Urdu Language

Muhammad Tahir Bostan Khan¹, Saba Ali², Maqsood Ahmad³

¹Department of Urdu, Cadet College, Swat.

²Department of Urdu, University of science and technology Bannu.

³Department of Urdu, University of Buner.

Abstract

Regardless of official motives, some such British officials and Orientalists appear who did the first but basic work in Urdu linguistics, grammar and lexicography. Although they had their own interest in learning Urdu, they did whatever they could with regard to the Urdu language, References to which are still given today. This fact cannot be denied. The language was ours but the initial work of grammar and vocabulary was done by the English. These Orientalists were not only English but also included French, German and other Europeans. What we could not do with the roots of our language was given by the Orientalists. This article briefly reviews the services of some important Orientalists regarding Urdu language.

Keywords: obstacle, languages, Orientalists, romance, negotiations, Seminary, campaigner

Introduction

The British came to India for trade but due to their cunning, incompetence of local rulers and treachery of their own, the East India Company took control of the country. When Lord Wellesley became Governor-General in 1898, language became a major obstacle in the company's administration. So he writes higher ups.

During this time, the British had difficulty in communicating with the locals. These included difficulties in dealing with traders and understanding the day-to-day problems of the locals. He thought it was important to learn the language for good governance. So to learn the local languages they plan for an institution. In which Fort William College was established in 10 July 1800.⁽¹⁾

John Joshua Cutler was the first European who published the first book of Urdu Grammar in Latin in 1743.⁽²⁾

But the first institution, the Oriental Seminary, was established in January 1799 under the patronage of Dr. Gilchrist. In which Persian and Urdu (Hindustani) language were taught. The company paid special allowances to its employees for learning Persian and other languages. For this purpose, the same style of "Halle Berry College" was introduced in England in 1805. This college was considered as a training institute for the officers coming to India.

The services rendered by Fort William College for Urdu prose cannot be underestimated in any way. Although the British had their own intentions and goals in its establishment but the promotion of Urdu language and especially Urdu prose did not come from any other institution. Prior to this, most of the attention in Urdu was on poetry and prose was scarce.

The college had an excellent system of oriental languages and especially Urdu. There were regular departments of Urdu, Hindi, Arabic, Persian and Bengali headed by the English. These Heads were called professors, while the local teachers were called Scribes (Munshi) and pundits. There were many local teachers in the college who translated poetry into prose, translated from Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit into Urdu. The famous are; Meer Jafir, Sher Ali Afsos, Bahdar Ali Hussaini, Haider Bakhsh Haidri, Mazhar Ali Khan Wala, Tota Ram, Meer Aman, Kundan Lal, Lalo Lal kovi, Khalil Ali Khan, Meer Hassan, Kazam Ali Jawan, and Nehal Chand Lahori etc. Along with this list, foreign writers and poets also left a good literary collection in Urdu language and literature. People associated with Fort William College include Gilchrist, Thomas Roebuck, William Hunter, William Taylor, Gladden, William Price, W.Tees. Others include George Abraham Grierson, GS Ranking, Ferguson, Alves Springer, John Shakespeare, George

Hadley, SW Fallon, Graham Bailey, and Garson Datasi. Their services for Urdu language and literature are discussed one by one.

John Gilchrist: (19 Jun 1759 -9 Jan 1841)³:

John Gilchrist came to India as a medical doctor but his name will always be remembered for his services Urdu language and literature. His main projects or publications for Urdu language are:⁴ “A Dictionry of english and Hindoostanee (1786), “A Grammar of the Hindoostanee Language (1796), “The Appendix (1798), “The Oriental Linguist (1798), “The Anti Jargonist (1800), “A New theory and Prospects of Persian Verbs (1801), “Hindi Exercises for the first and Second Examination in Hindustanee”, “At the College of Fort Villiam(1801), “The Stranger’s East India Guide to the Hindoostanee or Grand Popular Language of India (1802), “The Hndee Maunal or Casket of India” (1802), “Practical Outlines or a Sketch of Hindoostanee Orthoapy in the Roman Charachtes” (1802), “ The Hindee roman Orthhoe Pical Ultmatum” (1804), “The Hindee Moral Preceptor and Persian Scholars’s Shortest Road to the Hindustanee Language or Vice Versa” (1821), “Hindi Arabie Mirror” (1804), “Dailoge English and Hndee”, “The Oriental Fabulist”, “The Hindee Story Teller” (1802) and “The General East India Guide and Vademecum” (1825)

Gilchrist not only came to India and became interested in literature, but before that he also wrote poems in English. The influence of Wordsworth and Cates' romance is evident in his poems. These poems show that he was a campaigner and a seeker of new lands and it was this passion that brought him to India. It has been a priority for English writers in Urdu grammar and vocabulary that they first worked on grammar and vocabulary.

William Taylor: (7 Nov. 1765 – 5 Mar 1836)

William Taylor was a notable scholar, polyglot and literary person. In respect of Urdu Language he wrote “Hindoostanee Dictionary” (1808 in Roman and Urdu), “Gramer ke Sawalat” (1808 roman and Urdu, it was especially for college course.

Thomas Roebuck: (1781–1819):

Thomas Rubik came to India as an army officer but is still remembered today as an Orientalist. He did important work in terms of lexicography. His most important work is;⁵ “The Indian Maritime and Medical Dictionary” (1802), “The English and Hindoostanee Dictionary with Grammar Prefixed” (1810), “English and Hindoostanee Naval Dictionary of Technical Words and Phrases” (1811), “Collection of Oriental Proverbs” (1816), “Annals of Fort William College” (1819), “Persian and Urdu functions” (1824), “A Persian Dictionary” and “A complete Hindoostanee and English Dictionary”

Garsan Datasi: (20 Jan 1794- 2 Sep 1878)⁶

Garsan Datasi was not an Englishman but a Frenchman. He was a true lover of Urdu who sat in Paris and rendered valuable services in the field of Urdu literature and poetry. He was not only fluent in Urdu but also fluent in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. He loved Urdu with the very much, his personal library had many books of Urdu prose and poetry. Although he did not come to India, he continued to correspond with many Indian writers, publishers, and newspaper and magazine editors. It is a miracle of his knowledge that even today our historians and researchers benefit from his writings. His book "Tareekh Adabiyat e Urdu" is a famous work; it is the imperative substantiation of 18th and 19th century Urdu literature. This history gave not only the preamble and bit of writings but also provide the comprehensive preface of publications. Linguistic and scriptural negotiations, appearance of journalism history, Hindustani culture with intention point of view. He used to speak in respect of Urdu language in his addresses. Tareekh Adabiyat e Urdu is a book in the style of ancient narrations. In which Urdu (Hindi) writers and poets have been written in alphabetical order.

Alvas Springer: (3 Sep 1812-12 Dec 1893)⁷

Alvas Springer rendered invaluable service to Urdu language and literature. He was from Germany but was fluent in several languages including Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Urdu and 22 other languages. Springer was a doctor by profession but first became an assistant resident in Lucknow and then principal of Muhammadan

College in Hugely. After 1848, he continued to work as a Persian translator and also became the secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Springer's books include "English Indian Grammar" and "History of Mahmud Ghaznavi" as well as "The Biography Hazrat Muhammad" and "Geography of Ancient Arabia". Although all of his writings are important, there is still a "Awadh Catalog" of living works. In which a detailed list of the libraries of Shahan-e-Awadh has been edited.

William Hunter: (15 July 1840 – 6 Feb 1900)⁸

His full name is William Wilson Hunter and he came in India as a Magistrate and collector. His stay in sub continent his works for Urdu and compile the books; "Hindustani kahwatain" (Indian proverbs 1802), "Hindusani main mustaamal Arbi w Farsi Alfaz ka intkhab" (Selection of Arabic and Persian words used in Hindustani) and "Hindoostanee English Dictionary". William hunter wrote these books in Urdu and last one in Roman manuscript.

George Abraham Grierson (7 Jan 1851 – 9 Mar 1941):

Grierson basically worked in the Indian Civil Service but his curiosity in philology and linguistics led him to chase studies in the languages as well as folklore. He spent his days in Bengal and Bihar. Grierson's valuable work on linguistics is still alive today. His book Linguistic Survey of India consists of nine volumes. It studies and analyzes the linguistics of 179 languages and 544 dialects. His other books include; "Seven Gammars of the Dialects and Sub Dialects of the Behari Language" (1883-87), "Bihar Peasant Life" (1885), "The Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustani" (1889), "A Dictionary of Kashmir Language" (1916-32), and "The Pisaca Language of North-Western India" (1906).

Apart from lexicography and grammar, the Orientalist also showed special interest in Urdu poetry. Although this poetry did not reach a high place, but part of history is strong. And it is a reflection of their love for Urdu. An attempt has been made to use the poetic mood of Lucknow in poetry. According to Maulvi Abdul Haq, at least one hundred Europeans or Englishmen wrote Urdu poetry.

Conclusion

The work done by Fort William College and other Orientalists for Urdu cannot be underestimated. It is also a fact that the British did not intend to promote Urdu literature. For them, the college was a language school. Their goal is that when they come to India, they know the local language in order to interact and work with the local population. Even today, the work done by the Orientalists regarding the Urdu language is made the main source.

References:

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