



## Style Shift for Plosive Sounds among Faisalabadi Dialect of Punjabi

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### Abstract

*This paper addresses the factor that led to the style shift in the local social dialect in the Faisalabadi 'Dialect of Punjabi. This study explores shifting from plosive (Ph) to fricative (F) sounds. This shift correlates with variables like education and society. The stability towards the standard variable shows the linkage to high educational level and posh society. The study provides a clear articulation of the plosive sound 'ph' index is a class that is linked with highly educated society and inhabitants of the city, whereas the absence of 'Ph' and the presence of non-standard 'F', index class which is an uneducated and village dwellers. Quantitative research techniques have been employed to find the phonological and social differences. Correlations were sorted out by using the word list, interview questions, paragraph reading, and general conversation on SPSS software. A significant correlation between social structure and linguistic structure has been found.*

**Keywords:** Style shift, society, plosive sounds, fricative sounds.

### Introduction

This study focuses on the Majhi dialects of Punjabi. This dialect is spoken in many villages of Central Punjab, the selected village is Chhak 73 G.B. District Jaranwala of Faisalabad, Pakistan. The study examines whether the sociolinguistic or linguistic approaches are more appropriate in accounting for the phonological variation in focus. As we approach language study in its social context, language behaviour has small differences at every step. Small differences within a social dialectical system have been explained as structural, free, or social variations (Barbouchi, 2015). As the researcher moves from linguistic constant to social variable, he acquires a more realistic quantitative method of comparing systems and measuring the difference between systems (Rasinger (2013). A linguist's task is to measure such structures. The researcher hypothesized: "If people are categorised in the scale of social educational stratification, then they will be stratified in the same order by their different uses of ph."

This study included females and males ages from 18 to 70. Four tasks to judge style variation were designed for collecting data. These tasks were free conversation, informal interviews, passage reading, and word reading. The variations of the phonological environment of /ph/, which may lead to phonological variations, were included in the reading tasks. Follow-up interviews were conducted with informants to determine their awareness of and attitudes toward merging/ph-/with /f-/ in the Punjabi Majhi dialect. The linguistic variable of /f-/, in a few cases, is correlated with the sociolinguistic variables of educational level and locality, and it is closely associated with speech style to prove that systematic language variation exists in a speech community. The study aims to identify the relationship between social structure and language structure and whether language correlates with social structure.

### Preliminary investigation:

These include some interviews in public places, which allowed the researcher to find phonological variables. 'Ph', this variable appeared to be more sensitive to sociolinguistics measures in that particular society.

Based on variable ‘ph’, the researcher picked two notions:

1. The linguistic variable ‘ph’ is a social differentiator in all levels of speech in the village, town and city of Punjabi speakers.
2. Linguist structure may stratify social structure.

### **About Population**

The majority of people living in Faisalabad are Muslims who came from different districts in north-eastern Punjab, India, at the time of the separation of Indo-Pak and have been living here since 1947 (Khan, 2020). Due to interaction with the people already residing here, a slight shift in style has occurred. This shift in style is deeply concerned with education and locality.

### **Linguistic Variables**

Plosive (PH) and Fricative (F)

### **Approach to study**

The study settings are natural, and a quantitative approach has been applied.

### **Criteria for Assessment of Ongoing Changes:**

**a. Statistical:** What percentage of the population shows inclines towards standard and non-standard?

**b. Structural:** Does the change fit into the system of a language?

### **Literature Review**

Most speakers adjust their speech according to the perceived formality or informality of the conversation, a phenomenon known as style-shifting (Swann & Sinka, 2020). The interlocutor and the subject of the conversation can influence it a lot. That is delivering a written speech in front of a large group of people is a much more formal speech context than a passionate conversation about personal problems with a close friend, and a speaker will adjust their speech accordingly (Cao, Wisler, & Wang, 2022).

Linguistics is the study of language. Language manifests itself as a large number of natural languages, such as English, Chinese, etc (Chomsky, 1995). Many people speak natural language, and all of them are used with slight differences or style shifts. A homogeneous speech community is fiction; it does not exist (Romaine, 2000).

Stylistic variation is generally regarded as universal (Schilling-Estes, 2008). Labov (2008) labels those speakers who never style shift, who do not make distinctions in their speech among particular linguistic registers, as “abnormal and defective” (158). Labov (1972) demonstrates an extreme example of style-shifting as it interacts with social class using post-vocalic /r/ in New York City. In casual speech, the upper-middle-class subjects had an appreciably higher index for using post-vocalic /r/. However, in the more self-conscious task of reading a word list, the lower middle-class subjects exceeded them by the same index value. With the /r/ variable serving as a prestige variant, the lower-middle-class subjects exhibited a pattern of hyper-correction. Comparing the interview style to the somewhat more formal reading style for /ow/-fronting in California English. Bissell (2019) finds a greater degree of fronting in the former. He concluded that these speakers don’t consider the expression of this particular variable appropriate in more formal situations. Similarly, when looking for innovative forms, Labov (2008) states that the “most advanced tokens appear in emphatically stressed words in personal narratives” (158).

In a conversational interview focused on relatively neutral topics, the fact that a person is being interviewed and tape-recorded is an alarming obstacle to obtaining ordinary, everyday speech, the kind of speech that is so central to most studies of dialect variation. This problem has become known in sociolinguistics as the observer's paradox (Milroy & Gordon, (2008).

Change presupposes a period of variation, although variation need not produce change. In some cases, language variation lingers for centuries without much change, while others move, quickly or slowly,

toward a definite resolution (Hinskens, Van Hout, & Wetzels, 1997). The multiple grammars model proposes that variation arises from the competition of distinct grammatical systems within an individual (Bates, & Macwhinney, 2014). This view has been defended by, e.g., Kiparsky (1993) for phonology and Kroch (2001) for morph syntax. People want to be considered as a part of a particular social group as opposed to other groups, and part of this identity is symbolized by talking like other members of the group (Wolfram 1991). Selective adoption process results in a dialect difference if the adopted form stabilizes as a characteristic of some social group of speakers. It allows researchers to measure variation at one point of time by examining synchronic language variation across a generational age range of speakers (Beaman, 2021). Labov (1981) Martha's Vineyard study and his subsequent research in New York City (1966, 1972) demonstrate the utility of the apparent time construct. It has since been a mainstay feature of his research and that of others who have followed this method. Bailey, Wikle, Tillery, and Sand, (1991) concludes that the apparent-time construct is "an unquestionably valid and useful analytical tool" (241-264).

Vowels are particularly revealing of dialect differences because they tend to function as rotating systems or subsystems of linked elements rather than isolated individual entities. The allophonic wandering of one vowel over time may cause it to creep into the phonetic space of another vowel eventually. At this point, the two vowel phonemes can merge as their phonetic realizations become the same, reducing the entire phonemic inventory in that dialect by one. In another view, vowels move harmoniously to preserve their ability to distinguish words, reflecting the functional economy of the vowel system (Martinet, 1994). In this manner, the movement of one vowel phoneme can initiate a movement in the neighboring vowel phoneme, with it, in turn, moving its phonetic realization. This pattern of phonetic rotation in vowels is known as chain shifting. A vowel that moves and leaves a space behind that attracts another vowel into that space initiates a "pull chain". A vowel that infringes on another vowel's phonetic space forces it to move. Labov (1994) claims that principle of the most obvious evidence of chain shifting in the English language is preserved in its rather conservative spelling system, which has managed to capture quite well the pronunciation of late Middle and early Modern English before it underwent a radical rotation of English long vowels within the Great Vowel Shift in the mid to late 16th century. Modern North American English has proven to be no less dynamic. It continues to show several chain-shifting patterns that differentiate its dialects. He provides extensive details of chain-shifting phenomena in English and other European and non-Indo-European languages, which suggests the universality of the phenomenon.

Punjabi is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. According to a rough estimate, it is spoken by more than 100 million people worldwide. It is called the language of Punjab- the land of five rivers- of northern India and Pakistan. Punjabi is the language of the majority of the population in Pakistan, yet it has no official status and is neither taught nor encouraged in Pakistani Punjab (Chohan, García, 2019). Majhi is the main Punjabi dialect (Hussain, 2020). Punjabi is one of the most affected languages; although 45% of people still speak it, it has no official status in the country. It is treated as the language of the ignorant by those who consider themselves educated or belong to the elite of the country (Haidar, Wali, Tahir, & Parveen, 2021). Bhatia, (2013) Punjabi is a unique language among its South Asian counterparts. According to him 'a unique feature of the language is that, along with Lahanda and western Pahari dialects, it is the only modern Indo-European language spoken in South Asia which is tonal in nature'. It has three tones, which could result from the contact situation between Chinese traders and speakers from northern parts of India during the first and second millennia.

The study of phonetics and phonology of Punjabi has attracted a lot of attention since it is discovered the Punjabi tonal system (Bala & Kaul, 2009). However, the most interesting thing about Punjabi is that no two scholars agree on the number of Punjabi phonemes. They claimed that "Punjabi has 35 consonants and 10 vowels" (p. 35). Gill and Gleason (1969) divides Punjabi vowels

into three short and seven long vowels, and her chart of consonants has 34 consonants. Bhatia (2103) lists 10 vowels and 32 consonants in Punjabi grammar. Punjabi is a Subject-Object-Verb language. Its word order is fairly fixed. Interrogative or other sentence types do not induce any word order changes. The verb generally agrees with the subject (Hanan, Ali, and Atta, 2021). Punjabi shows split ergativity (Butt, 2007). In transitive perfective sentences, where the subject is overtly or underlying marked with the new post position, the verb agrees with the direct object. The rule of thumb is that the verb never agrees with any constituent marked with a postposition (Bhatia, 2013). According to Butt (2007) verbs are the most complex word class in Punjabi. The verbs can be divided into three classes (i) substantive verbs, (ii) conjunct verbs (iii) compound verbs. He adds word formation in Punjabi is vocalic as well as consonantal morphophonemic adjustments are made; it primarily uses prefixes and suffixes to arrive at inflectional and derivational word classes. Nouns are generally inflected for number, gender and case.

### Research Methodology

This is a quantitative type of research and tool used for measurements is SPSS, nonrandom and convenient sampling method is used. The selected sample population is based on Punjabi speakers of Majhi dialects of Faisalabad district, they belong to, city village and town, respectively.

Table.1.

*Showing correlation between variables and linguistics items*

### Data Presentation and Interpretation

Correlations											
		age...	gender...	income...	locality...	education...	type of dialect...	word list...	paragraph...	interview...	General Questions.
age...	Pearson Correlation	1	-.097	.355	.093	-.291	°	.212	.321	.013	.245
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.684	.125	.698	.214	.	.370	.167	.955	.298
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
gender...	Pearson Correlation	-.097	1	-.183	.000	-.291	°	-.013	.058	.272	.360
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.684		.441	1.000	.213	.	.957	.809	.245	.119
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
income...	Pearson Correlation	.355	-.183	1	-.248	.076	°	.271	.394	.311	.315
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.125	.441		.291	.751	.	.248	.086	.181	.176
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
locality...	Pearson Correlation	.093	.000	-.248	1	.317	°	-.532'	-.254	-.496'	-.484'
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.698	1.000	.291		.174	.	.016	.280	.026	.031
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
education...	Pearson Correlation	-.291	-.291	.076	.317	1	°	-.664''	-.565''	-.633''	-.647''
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.214	.213	.751	.174		.	.001	.009	.003	.002
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
type of dialect...	Pearson Correlation	°	°	°	°	°	°	°	°	°	°
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
word list...	Pearson Correlation	.212	-.013	.271	-.532'	-.664''	°	1	.788''	.732''	.528'
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.370	.957	.248	.016	.001	.		.000	.000	.017
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
paragraph...	Pearson Correlation	.321	.058	.394	-.254	-.565''	°	.788''	1	.665''	.598''
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.167	.809	.086	.280	.009	.	.000		.001	.005
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
interview...	Pearson Correlation	.013	.272	.311	-.496'	-.633''	°	.732''	.665''	1	.544'
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.955	.245	.181	.026	.003	.	.000	.001		.013
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
General Questions.	Pearson Correlation	.245	.360	.315	-.484'	-.647''	°	.528'	.598''	.544'	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.298	.119	.176	.031	.002	.	.017	.005	.013	
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

general discussions, the significant difference is less, as they are asked questions orally and reading is not a concern, as in the case of reading, their conscience makes them able to change their style from non-standard F to standard Ph.

Table 2.

*Showing education-wise occurrences and percentage for plosive 'Ph' and Fricative 'F'*

**The occurrences of 'ph' and 'f' sound in Punjabi, Total =40**

number of people=20	uneducated/4		matriculation/4		intermediate/4		graduation/4		post-graduation/4	
	score was taken from the four activities.		score taken from the four activities		score is taken from the four activities		score is taken from the four activities		score taken from the four activities	
Education	ph	F	ph	f	Ph	f	ph	F	ph	F
	0	40	3	38	7	33	13	27	14	16
Percentage	%0	100%	10%	95%	17%	82%	33%	68%	35%	40%

Table.2.a.

Graphical description of plosive and fricative sounds with accord to education

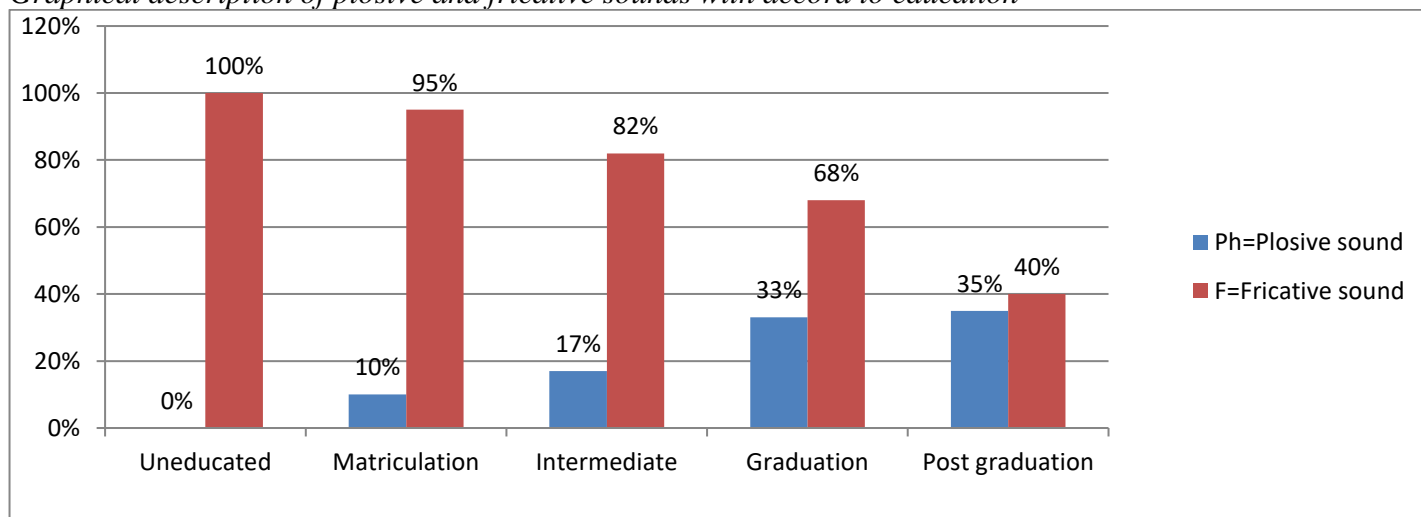
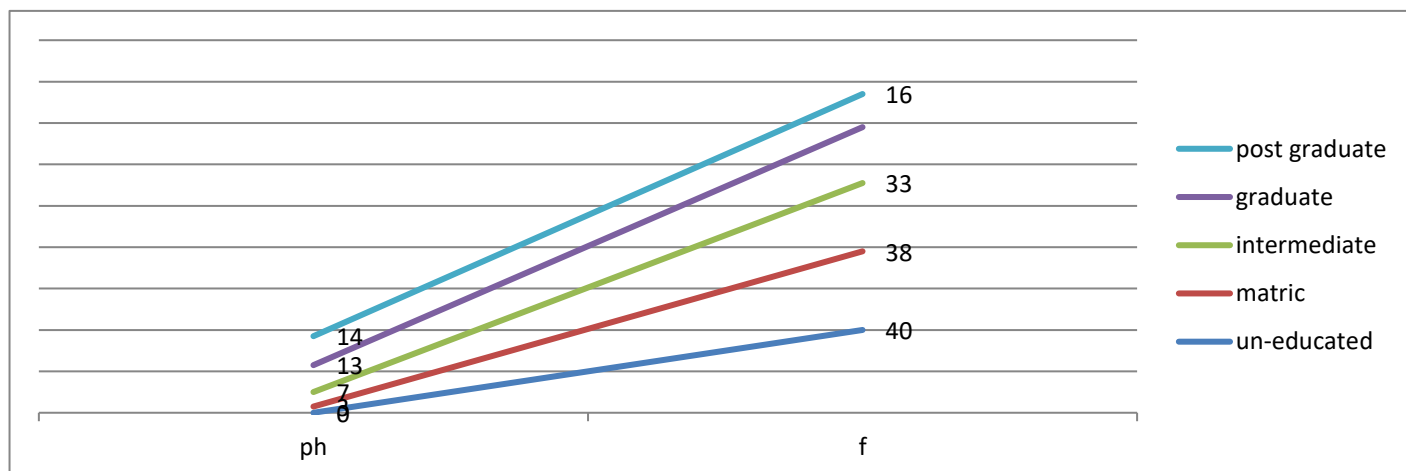


Table.2.b.

Graphical description of plosive and fricative sounds with accord to education.



The correlation status of education with plosive sound ph and fricative f shows a clear stratification. The people who are educated are more concerned with the standard dialect ph as compared to the uneducated. As the educational level decreases the use of standard dialect decreases and vice versa, as shown above in Table 2. a.b. In the conversation of uneducated people, the standard dialect is absent; one of the main factors behind this was the matter of prestige, uneducated people are not conscious of covert or overt prestige. On the contrary, educated people have an element of prestige and care about the standard dialect.

Table.3.

*Showing locality-wise occurrences and percentages for plosive PH and Fricative F  
The occurrences of 'Ph' and 'F' sound in Punjabi. Total =40*

Total number of people=20	City/7		Town/6		Village/7	
	The average score is taken from the four activities.		The average score taken from the four activities		The average score taken from the four activities	
Locality	ph	F	Ph	f	Ph	F
	13	27	9	31	2	38
Percentage	32 %	68%	22%	77%	5%	95%

Table 3. a.

*Graphical description of plosive and fricative sounds with accord to education*

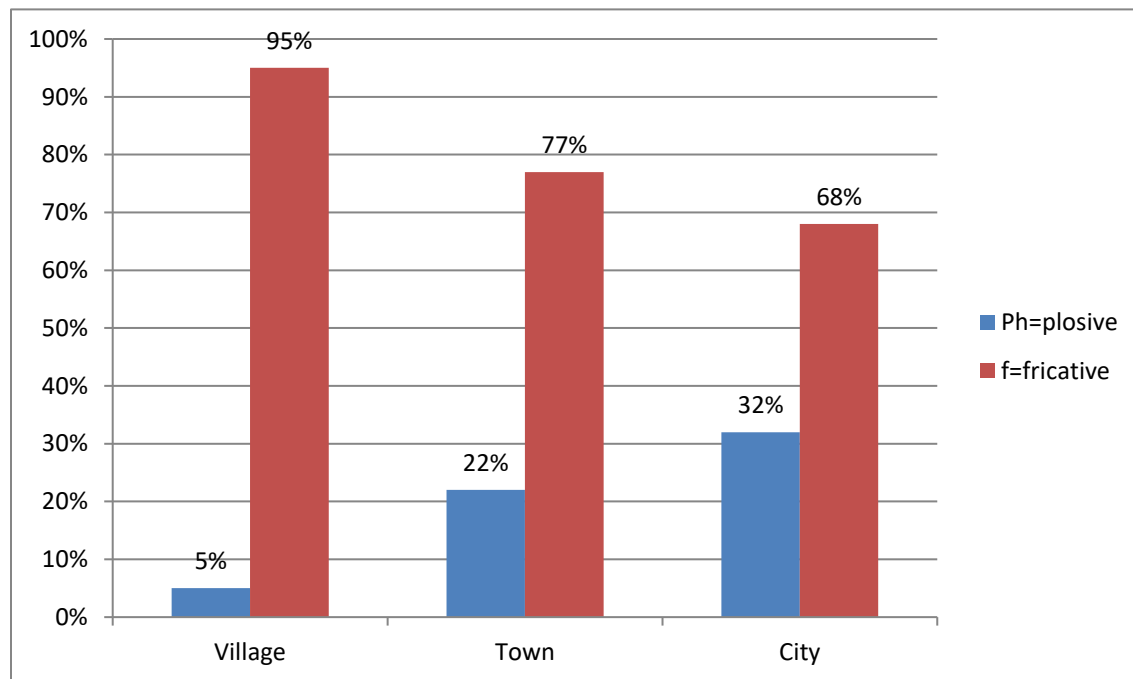
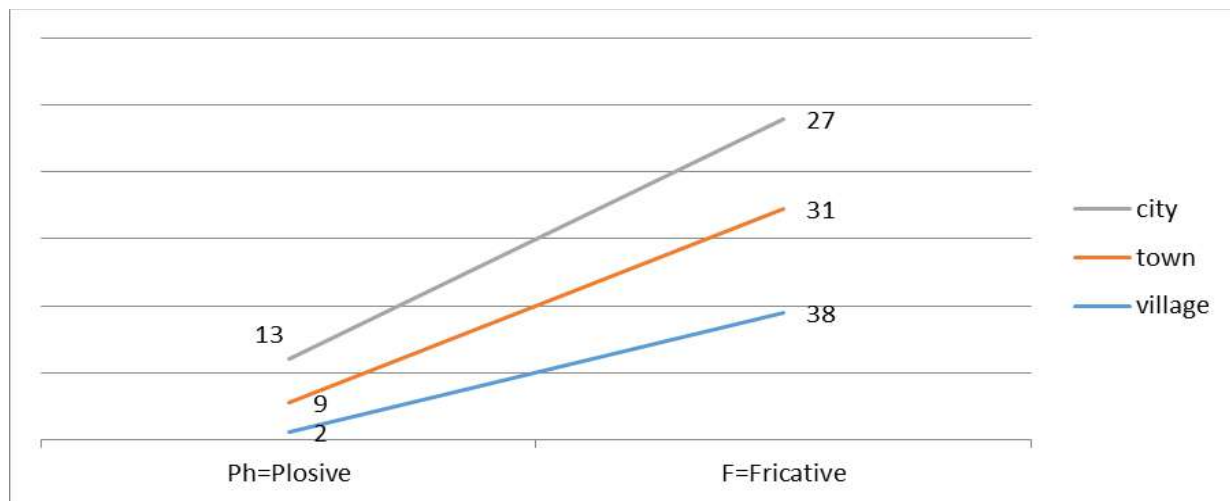


Table.3.b.

*Graphical description of plosive and fricative sounds with accord to education*



Correlation between locality and linguistic items also presents a clear social stratification; people who live in the city are educated as well, and the people with whom they have interaction belong to cultured areas and speak hypercorrect words, which is why they are more conscious about their style and style shifting is not too much. Still, the fricative element is present but less than village and town people. On the contrary, town dwellers' frequency of fricative f is more than town people but here again less than village settlers. The frequency for fricative f is highest in villagers' speech, and ph is almost the least quantity.

### **Discussion/results**

The individual language of each native speaker is called the idiolect. Similar idiolects constitute a dialect. Each language is a complex aggregate of regional, social, and professional dialects. A homogeneous speech community is a fiction; quite simply, it does not exist. Phonological Change is a part of every speaker's language, as finding a single speaker is impossible. These changes are the least frequent of them all, and, of course, even a tiny change affects thousands of words. Massive phonological changes usually involve whole natural classes. Thus, the small shift of a phoneme is largely responsible for the disastrous orthography of language. While the pronunciation changed, the spelling did not, and still, the pronunciation is accurately reflected. A linguistic variable is a set of dialectical variables with the same semantic and social meanings as in the case of the Faisalabad people's speech community. Fricative F is present in their speech instead of plosive ph, which is standard, but both pronunciations carry the same social and semantic meaning; shift occurs at the phonological level but not at the orthographical or lexical level. Educated people living in a city or village are inclined towards standardization, while uneducated people do not care more and are inclined towards nonstandard pronunciation. Differences in pronunciation index people as educational and locality-wise.

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