

An explanatory note about this draft document, from C. M. Naim:

It was perhaps in 1967 that I was asked by Prof. George Hart, Univ. of Wisconsin, and the Univ. of Wisconsin Press to write a report on Prof. Gopi Chand Narang's reader. The following detailed report was sent with an enclosing letter recommending its publication. By sheer coincidence, when the book came out a couple of years later, it was sent to me for review by the Journal of Asian Studies. My review can be read in the JAS, 28:4 (August 1969), p. 887.

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C. M. Naim

G. C. Narang: Readings in Literary Urdu Prose

A mere glance at this book will suffice to indicate that a great deal of effort has gone into its preparation. Containing 18 Units of good Urdu prose -- each with its own introduction, serial glossary, and notes -- it is a handsome book with its lovely nasta'liq calligraphy and will no doubt also prove quite useful in classrooms. But is it altogether what its editor had set out to achieve? In my opinion, only partly. To a significant part, it is something else. Basically it has been marred by what I can only call an ambiguity of motives on the part of its editor. He began with certain specific -- and modest -- goals in mind but soon, it appears, got distracted by other motives, which were irrelevant to and often conflicting with the earlier stated goals.

"The primary purpose of this reader," the editor says in his preface, "is to supply an intermediate teaching aid to students who wish to increase their vocabulary and reading proficiency beyond the elementary stage. Its secondary purpose is to integrate with the ~~language~~ language instruction an appreciation of those features of Indian and Pakistani culture and literary tradition which are most pertinent to the Urdu language." These are modest and meaningful goals. One needs only select prose pieces of just more than elementary difficulty and of decent literary and cultural contents. They should be arranged in order of increasing lexical and grammatical difficulty and the result would be a good second year reader. Note, a good second year reader, not an intermediate text. Certainly not if one also tried to incorporate all the existing prose styles in the language. It then becomes a reader of literary Urdu prose or a cross-section of ~~modern~~ Urdu prose literature, which in itself is a useful thing. But then, any attempt to tamper with the language of the selections will only mar its identity as a genuine cross-section and will not necessarily make it easier reading to qualify as an intermediate text. Style is not the "meaning" but an inseparable fusion of the meaning and the word, if not the word itself. Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare are after all Lamb's, not Shakespeare's. More about it later. Let us return to the stated primary purpose of providing an "intermediate teaching aid."

Something which is intermediate has to come between ~~an~~ something elementary and something advanced, and this context must be stated very explicitly. The reader must be told in clear terms just what precedes the intermediate text and what follows it. After all an intermediate text is a bridge between two specific points, two specific texts.

In the present case, the editor does not tell us anything of the kind. Only vague ~~xxxx~~ remarks are made about "elementary materials now in use in the United States;" while nothing is said about the other end of the bridge. If it is really supposed to be an intermediate text, then we ought to be told specifically ~~xxxx~~ which of the existing elementary texts it follows and which of the advanced texts it precedes. Let us make a survey of our own. This book was prepared during 1965 and 1966. By that time the following elementary text-books were being used in the United States and were available either in published form or in mimeographed drafts.

1. Conversational Hindi-Urdu, vols. I and II, by John Gumperz and others. c.a. 1962
2. Urdu Reader by John Gumperz and C. M. Naim. c.a. 1960
3. Spoken Hindustani by Henry Hoenigswald. c.a. 1942
4. Introductory Urdu Course by Ernest Bender. c.a. ?

The Gumperz and Naim's book was the only one to have lessons on Urdu orthography as well as short lessons written in Urdu script. It was intended to be used in accompaniment with either Conversational Hindi-Urdu or Spoken Hindustani. Either combination was intended to cover one academic year. In the second year various mimeographed things were used, according to the whim ~~and~~ of the teacher and the needs of the students. Benders's course was a little more self-sufficient while being a little more restricted in scope too. Anyway, considering the fact that only the first two Berkeley books were ~~not~~ being used at the University of Wisconsin, one can conclude that when Mr. Narang refers to elementary materials now in use he means only those two books. He should have explicitly stated that. Further, and more importantly, he should have considered their contents and structure more thoroughly in order to establish correctly the starting point of his intermediate text. (I am taking for granted that Mr. Narang did not intend to include ~~my~~ into consideration my two volume Introductory Urdu which came out near the end of 1965. That, in fact, this intermediate reader is intended to come after the Berkeley books.)

The Berkeley Urdu Reader (UR) was ~~xxxx~~ prepared before the Conversational Hindi-Urdu (CHU) was even started, and as such has very little ~~xxxxxxx~~ vocabulary ~~with~~ common with it. UR contains no grammatical explanations and in lexical difficulty remains inherently different from even the second volume of CHU. Thus, if the two books are to be used together, one has to give all the vocabulary of CHU in Urdu script in order to supplement what is given in UR. On the other hand one has to give all the grammar of CHU to make the texts in UR comprehensible. A messy job, which can be taken care of, once and for all, by producing an Urdu script version of CHU, similar to the one done in Hindi.

Even if ~~the~~ only the two parts of the first volume of CHU are put into Urdu script, they with UR will form together a decent ~~in~~ elementary course, which can justifiably be followed by the present intermediate reader. ~~So far as~~ ~~xxxxx~~ as an intermediate reader, it will have to include a great deal of new material in the form of exercises of many kinds, to repeat and enforce lexical items and grammatical features. Just a text and glossary will not do. Further, it will have to follow the orthographical and structural rules set down in the preceding material. As it is, Mr. Narang's reader contains no exercises of any kind, ~~xxxxx~~ employs orthographical props which were discarded in the UR -- an improvement in one sense, but an irrelevant innovation in another -- and uses a new system of transcription. ~~xxxxx~~ As for the choice of lexical items for inclusion into the glossaries, it has been done in a purely impressionistic manner. One gets the impression that this book is 'bucking' to be considered ~~as~~ as an independent creation. This suspicion is confirmed if one looks at the "other end of the bridge."

What were the advanced text-books available at the time this book was started? Only the following two.

1. A Second Year Urdu Reader (SYUR) by Masud Husain Khan and Abdul Azim, Berkeley, 1962.
2. Readings in Urdu Prose and Poetry (RUPP) by C. M. Naim. c.a. 1965.

~~Syn~~ SYUR contains only short stories, each with a separate non-serial glossary but with many exercises of various types. ~~xxxxx~~. The transcription used in it is similar to the one used in UR ~~xxxx~~ but with some significant modifications. No grammatical information is provided, not even in the notes. The grammar is considered to have been covered by the CHU or other elementary material. The stories are by three ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ modern writers and the texts have not been changed in any way.

~~Rupp~~

RUPP was not prepared with any specific elementary material in mind, at least none that existed at the time of its preparation. It was not intended to be used as a second yr. book ~~xxxx~~ after the first year ~~Berkeley~~ material and always required some special intermediate material. It aimed, essentially, to present a cross-section of Urdu literary prose of the modern times, 1930 and after. As such, it has stories, editorials, essays, ~~xxxxxx~~ and humour for its contents and, though ~~no~~ serial glossaries are not given, it has a fairly comprehensive glossary at the end. It also has detailed cultural and grammatical notes. Its glossary contains certain new features which aim to provide not just the meaning of a word but also its grammar in a very explicit manner that has not been employed in any other Urdu text-book.

For example, most of the Urdu verbs cannot properly be used unless one knows the particular postposition or ~~preposition~~ preposition that goes with it in given context. Such information and its like has been provided in RUPP by means of special symbols. After the completion of my Introductory Urdu in 1965, RUPP stands in logical sequence after it, requiring no intermediate material to maintain the continuity. Mr. Narang's book is a cross-section just as RUPP is a cross-section of modern Urdu prose; the former differs only in including some of the earlier writers. ~~It is a cross-section of modern Urdu prose; the former differs only in including some of the earlier writers.~~ Inherently it remains a cross-section. It also uses a transcription system different from the one used in RUPP and in no way attempts to follow the principles ~~used in the glossary of RUPP.~~ On the other hand, it is just like RUPP in not having any exercises or drills accompanying its ~~selections.~~ Though it is also an improvement on RUPP in having a serial glossary facing each page of the text and containing good, detailed notes on the authors and the selections. In any case, it is neither intended to precede RUPP nor can be considered to do so in all seriousness in view of the above mentioned facts and also in view of the fact that my Introductory Urdu ~~has now been available for some time.~~

On the other hand, it will make a useful ~~supplement~~ supplement to the material published from Berkeley, the CHU, UR, and SYUR, discussed earlier. And it would help to make a more explicit identification with them. Toward that end some modifications may be necessary, especially in the following areas.

1. Transcription of Urdu words.
2. Grammatical notes.
3. Drills and exercises on grammatical and lexical features.

Now that we have concluded that in its present form this book is neither a continuation of a specific text-book nor does it lead to some specific advanced book, that in short it has its own independent existence -- which is not a fault in itself -- let us consider its achieved form independent of the purported aims of the editor.

It is an anthology of short excerpts and full pieces from the writings of various Urdu writers, though it also has some pieces which were written with the specific pedagogic needs of this book and cannot be considered to represent any particular style of Urdu prose. Other selections have also been tampered with, and the ~~changes~~ changes have not been clearly indicated in the texts.

I could compare only one selection (Unit III) with its original, and I found that the changes were not so numerous and could have been easily handled by additional notes in the glossary. As long as no attempt was being made to ensure repetition of vocabulary and no drills were being provided to emphasize particular grammatical and lexical features, it did not matter if a dozen more lexical items and a few more idiomatic constructions had also been retained along with the rest. At least, that way, the integrity of the author's style would not have been damaged.

No anthology is without its faults of ~~omissions~~ omissions and inclusions, and one should not have any quarrel on that account with this anthology as long as it is clearly understood that it is not one specific kind of anthology. It has selections from earlier authors as well as from the contemporaries, all of which have been edited for pedagogical purposes. It also has specially prepared pedagogical texts, which can hardly be called specimens of current prose styles. They are lessons in a text-book. Professor Ehtisham Husain's piece on Sir Saiyad Ahmad Khan is informative about the life of Saiyad Ahmad; it does not tell how Prof. Ehtisham Husain writes his literary criticism. And if the idea was to inform the students about those "features of Indian and Pakistani culture and literary tradition which are "most pertinent to the Urdu language," why include Zakir Husain's adaptation for children of a Yiddish play and Abid Husain's translation of that section of Gandhiji's life which deals with his sexual problems? This criticism is not to say that the selections are intrinsically useless. Of course, not. On the contrary, they will make enjoyable reading in the classroom. Let us, however, recognize the fact that together they make only a random, personal selection.

It was an excellent idea to provide a serial glossary facing each page of the text. But the most basic principle in of a serial glossary is to provide only that meaning of word which is most pertinent in the particular context. It does not help a student to give him all the various --even conflicting -- meanings of a word at one time. That kind of thing is done in a dictionary or a terminal glossary. Further, a terminal glossary is a necessity in any case. There is only one decent Urdu-English dictionary, that of Platt's, but it is often useless for the purpose of studying contemporary prose. As far as Urdu is concerned, a comprehensive terminal glossary is most emphatically not a "poor substitute for a dictionary."

Introductory notes are on the whole very informative and shall be of much help to the students. I would, however, like to bring to the editor's attention certain specific items (comments, facts) which perhaps can be modified.

1. The new translation of Godan has been done by Gordon Roadarmel and S. H. Vatsyayan, "Agyeya."

2. There was hardly any influence of Sir Saiyad on Muhammad Husain Asad. (p. 169).

3. I doubt if Professor Suroor knows when his translation of Ghalib is going to be published, if it is going to be published at all.

4. Hali deserves a longer note, ~~xxxx~~

5. A little objectivity and restraint would greatly improve the analytical aspects of the notes. Remarks such as the following do not add much to a reader's knowledge, or at least to his appreciation of the text. (Italics added)

"His paper is a critical supporter of the Congress policies." p. 367.

"His ghazal are unique, etc.....for their impregnated language." p. 306.

"Syed Abid Husain stammers in speech." p. 252.

"Krishan Chander is one of the most singular authors of Urdu." p. 227.

"More often than not he is overtly palpable." "He has produced about seventy volumes of fiction, which include more than twenty collections of short stories and a dozen novels." p. 227

"He made use of English loans rather freely and spoke such chaste, etc.....Urdu that all could follow him." p. 201

"Umrao Jan Ada has intense stimulation." p. 138. It also has realistic detail on p. 138 and superfluous descriptions on p. 139.

What follows next is a page-by-page critique of the first 75 pages of the book as well as of another 15 pages chosen at random.

Preface

1. What does the following mean? "The student is advised not to use the glossary where he is not supposed to (it may be covered by a piece of paper)."

2. What are "close-listed" words?

Contents

1. It is not clear whether the table indicates the chronological order of the authors' birthdays or the publication dates of the selections, or both.

Conventions (Glossary)

1. Instead of giving the serial numbers of words as they occur in the text it might be more helpful to give in the first column the serial number of the line in which those words occur.
2. If the transcription is broad phonemic then why are both v and w being used? As a matter of fact, v is not included in the list given in note 1.0. but ~~xxxx~~ is later added, unexplained, in note 1.5. A close scrutiny of the words transcribed with either v or w failed to disclose any rhyme or reason behind this confusion.
3. The language of note 1.2. is most confusing. /h/ is being used not only with all stops except /g/w but also with affricates, /c, j/, nasals, /m, n/, and a lateral and a retroflex, ~~xxxxxx~~ /r, l/. It is also being used in the only compound symbol being used in this book, /sh/. If c can be used for the voiceless affricate, why not use ~~xxx~~ ~~z~~ or ~~z~~ or some other single symbol for the alveolar fricative?
*
4. The letter ~~z~~, voiced alveolar fricative occurs only in some not so common Persian loans. ~~xx~~ These loan words are used only by those people who are fairly well educated and who do make an effort to pronounce them correctly. In modern literary prose, this letter is often used in transliterating words borrowed from ~~xxxx~~ French and European proper names. It is already being used in most Urdu materials now being used in this country, both at the elementary level and the advanced.
5. Note 1.66, is meaningless. What is the difference between the "common Orientalist transcription" and a "phonemic notation" if not that the first does use separate symbols for homophonous letters. What one finds ~~xxxx~~ is that certain words are written out in their common English form, while some are considered ~~xxx~~ rarer and are given a little more exotic effect: the same letter ~~z~~ is written as x in the word Nasx and as Kh in the Khān. And so forth. On the other hand, the explanatory notes seem on the whole to have been written no different from the words in the glossary and ~~xxxx~~ should not have been included in this note.
6. If the use of a hyphen in the words mentioned in note 2 is not a ~~symbolic~~ special symbolic device, what is it? And if it was considered necessary to use this symbol -- it was unavoidable -- then why the flim-flam. ~~xxxxxx~~ And again we are not sure whether the ditor aims to use a phonemic transcription or a transliteration. Same confusion occurs in note 2.1.

Further, the following verbs should have been included in the glossary as verbs and provided with the necessary information about their postpositions, etc., instead of putting in the glossary only their first member. Cf. note 12. Some of them are quite different from what a speaker of English might expect.

Page 6, Orthography

1. One ought to be told just what innovations are being made, which of the notes refer to traditional practices and which ~~xxx~~ to the innovations suggested by Maulāī ~~abdulhaq~~ and Mr. Narang. Also, just how wide spread is their use in actual Urdu publications? If these are radical departures, is an intermediate reader ~~xxxxxx~~ a suitable place to introduce them? The students have already learnt to do without them and need not expect to find much of them again in the advanced readings. And if diacritics are going to be used, better proofreading would be necessary. On page 13 itself there are four new words which are written without necessary diacritics. ~~A~~ In any case, the transcription on the ~~A~~ facing page should be enough for the student to learn the correct pronunciation.
2. A note on tashdīd should be added to cover not only the geminate consonant clusters but also the non-aspirate plus homorganic aspirate type.
3. The note ~~xxxx~~ on wāo mādūla is a mere innovation and serves no purpose. The wāo in , and is not silent, at least not in the Urdu pronunciations /xwāhish, xwāb/, or does Mr. Narang want these words to be pronounced according to Persian rules as /xāhish/ and /xāb/? As far as the other two words, and , are concerned, they are not any different -- as far as Urdu is concerned -- ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ from the words and discussed in note 1.2.
4. It is simply incorrect to say that nūn Gunna is not possible in the Nasx.
5. Note no. 6 is only confusing. It is enough to say that that particular he indicates aspirated consonants. What is not mentioned is the fact that sometimes these same words with mh, nh, and lh are written with another variety of he.

In any case, there is no need to write all these notes when these matters have apparently been covered in whatever elementary book this intermediate reader follows. Only the innovations should have been indicated. For example, notes 4, 8, 9, 10, and 11 are useful and the ~~xxxx~~ orthographical practices they refer to are commendable.

page 12

1. cunāice does not mean "so that."

page 14

1. ikatṭhaa is occurring in the text as an adverb and not as an adjective.
2. murdaa is occurring in the text as an adjective and as a noun.
3. Why give maraa huaa in the glossary rather than the verb itself?
4. "soul" is quite different from "life" and only the latter is the correct meaning of the word jaan.

page 16

1. S.n. 5 is better translated: Forget it.
2. S.n. 18. bath
3. S.n. 21. a feminine and diminutive

page 18

1. S.n. 2. Only adverb.
2. S.n. 5. Is it just a stylistic variant?
3. S.n. 12. The text has /bārah sāl ki/.
4. S.n. 13. The use of /ko/ is not obligatory.

page 20

1. S.n. 8. should be treated as a grammatical note and not just a gloss.

page 26

1. S.n.1. Requires the postposition /-se/.
2. S.n. 9. The gloss "to obseeve" is wrong.
3. S.n. 13. The lit. meaning is the only correct meaning.
4. S.n. 15. The meaning in the context is "to start wrestling or fighting with X (-se)."
5. S.n. 22. All the various meanings require different postpositions and these should be made clear.
6. The construction /ki kahī/ in the third line of the text needs a note or gloss.

I think this should be enough to indicate the nature of my remarks on the remaining pages.

page 92

1. S.n. 1. landlord, lit. "land-holder". "farmer" is incorrect.
2. S. n. 6. Pp. -se should be indicated.
3. S.n. 19. Ppn. -mē should be indicated.
4. S.n. 20. The grammar of the verb should be clearly indicated. The "real" subject is always followed by -ko.

page 108

1. The title should be transcribed with a diphthong in the first syllable, as it is in the Urdu orthography.
2. S.n. 10. The gloss "soil" is incorrect.
3. S. n. 11. The gloss "hedge, fence, border" is incorrect. The word needs to be explained in more exact terms.
4. S. n. 14. "A garment of wool" ??
5. S. n. 21. Only the verb bahlānā should have been put in the glossary to match with the context. The verb dil bahlānā requires either X-kā or apnā, either understood or overtly, which in either case should be indicated in the glossary.
6. S. n. 26. /Z KI tarah/. Why Z instead of X and Y as in some earlier glosses?

page 120

1. S. n. 3. k us ke sāth cal-paṛī : set off with ~~he~~ him. The intensive verb adds to the meaning as much here as ~~w~~ elsewhere.
2. S. n. 7. The idiom refers to the phenomenon of dew. Fig. refers to a late hour of night, but before midnight.
3. S. n. 15. The second, figurative meaning is unnecessary.
4. S. n. 17. The explanation is misleading.
5. S. n. 18. "tongues will start wagging; an uproar will begin."

page 128

- S. n. 29. It should be v.t.

page 154

1. S. n. 9. The word agl has already occurred many times. Actually the phrase in which it occurs should be given a note.

2. S. n. 10. With the obligatory ppn. -se, jalnē is a separate verb. ~~Exx~~

~~Ex~~

PAGE 163

No remarks.

page 185

1. The phrase "unhī jaisī zubaan" needs a note.

page 188

1. S. n. 1. /turkistān/ is not Turkey but Central Asia.
2. S. n. 8. Add "scarves".
3. S. n. 23. The obligatory ppn. -ko should be indicated.

page 220

1. S. n. 7. The gloss "gift" is wrong.
2. S. n. 12. lit. "scores".
3. The following should be added to the glossary: bāḡ lagānā; Tokiyo; tehrān. Also a note on "yahī rang thā."

page 234.

1. S. n. 2. The obligatory ppn. -ko should be indicated.
2. S. n. 9. The verb sastānā as it occurs in the text is not intransitive, but transitive.
3. S. n. 3. The gloss "weak" is incorrect.
4. Add a note on "hajūr kā bacā".

page 260

No remarks.

page 272

1. S. n. 7. Needs a note and not just a gloss.
2. S. n. 10. If the verb should be given as it has been then the obligatory ppn. -ke should also be indicated.
- 3.

page 292

1. S. n. 10. "Ideal" ??
2. S. n. 16. The gloss does not convey the sense of the construction at all.
3. S. n. 23. "an open area" ??

page 324

1. S. n. 5xhm. The interpretation is not justifiable.
2. S. n. 5. Add v.i.
3. S. n. 6. The obligatory ppn. -se should be indicated.
4. S. n. 9. It should be "poetry ; poem".
5. The phrase /āp hī kahā/ in line 7 needs a note.

page 356

1. Perhaps it would be better to give /ta-āwun karnā/ as a verb, as it occurs as such in the text, and also

It would be clear from the above that a revision of the glossary and notes -- with the aim of bringing into it consistency, grammatical clarification, and American idiom -- would be useful.