



The title of this module is misleading and inadequate, but it is also the best I can come up with. The following modules talk about the ways in which Urdu builds vocabulary from verbs and using suffixes that have come into Urdu through Prakrit. What should this register of Urdu be called? It certainly is not Arabic or Persian. Many of the words in this register come from Prakrit and are thus Indic and related to Sanskrit, but it would be misleading to label them as *tatsama*, since they are not, in fact, Sanskrit in a changed form, nor, in most cases, are they *desī* words not related to Sanskrit. We can't call them "Indic vernacular," because that casts too broad a net. These are word forms in many cases specific to Urdu (though many have parallels in other vernacular Indian languages). A very good solution would be simply to call the section "Urdu Word Building." But this also presents a problem, since it implies that the patterns of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit-Prakrit word building surveyed elsewhere are somehow different from Urdu word building. That would be incorrect, since we are using the word "Urdu" to describe the whole of the language, just as we subsume French, German, and Latin words building under the umbrella category "English" when talking about English vocabulary, and we might turn to Latin terms like "Anglican" to describe those elements that distinguish vernacular English word building patterns from its Germanic and Latinate cousins.

For these reasons, I have called this section "Hindi Word Building in Urdu." The word "Hindi" is not used here in the narrow sense of Urdu's sister language written in the Devanagari script, but in its older and broader sense of "Indic language" and one of the classical names of Urdu. A second reason to use this name is that these forms are all shared with, and identical in, Modern Standard Hindi. The title is thus intended to demonstrate the close relationship between, and indistinguishability of, these two languages.

Verbal Noun Patterns

Urdu derives a great deal of its vocabulary from verbs. This section covers two forms that readers are likely to encounter in everyday contexts.

When speaking of verbal nouns, it is helpful to think of them in terms of infinitive forms like پہنچنا [pahunchnā] (to reach, arrive) or چلنا [chalnā] (to move, go, walk). More specifically, most verbal nouns can be related in one way or another to the root of the verb, which is the infinitive minus نا [nā]. In fact, the verb stem of the verb پہنچنا [pahunchnā] (to reach, arrive), پہنچ [pahunch] is itself a verbal noun meaning "access." It is one of a large number of Urdu verb stems that are also verbal nouns in Urdu.



The Suffix ن [an]

One of the most common ways to derive a verbal noun in Urdu is by suffixing ن [an] to the verb stem. This suffix is typically used with verbs whose stem consists of a single syllable—for example چلنا [chalnā] (to move, to walk, to go), رہنا [rehnā] (to live, remain), ملنا [milnā] (to meet). Often, the nouns that result refer to the action of the verb or an abstract quality associated with it.

(conduct; custom) [chalan] چلن ← (to move, walk, go) [chalnā] چلنا

In some cases, the resulting noun is only used in idiomatic phrases.

[sehnā] (to endure) سہنا (to live, remain) [rehnā] رہنا
(lifestyle) [reheh sehn] رہن سہن ←

The Verbal Suffix اوٹ [āvāt]

This suffix is likewise suffix to verbal stems. In general, the resulting word is an abstract noun that refers to the quality or action of the verb.

(writing) [likhāvāt] لکھاوٹ ← (to write) [likhnā] لکھنا

If a verb stem ends in ا [ā], the suffix is shortened to وٹ [vāt].

(attachment) [lagāvāt] لگاوٹ ← (to attach) [lagānā] لگانا

Common Noun Suffixes

This section reviews two suffixes commonly used to form either nouns from adjectives or abstract nouns from concrete nouns.

The suffix پن [pan]

This suffix is applied to adjectives to form nouns to concrete nouns to form abstract nouns.

(loneliness) [akelāpan] اکیلا پن ← (alone) [akelā] اکیلا

(state of bankruptcy, insolvency) [dīvālāpan] دیوالہ پن ← (bankruptcy) [dīvālā] دیوالہ

When used in a postpositional phrase, any marked element in this construction will be put into the oblique.

(in simplicity) [sīdhepan meñ] سیدھے پن کا ← (simplicity) [sīdhāpan] سیدھاپن

The Suffix ہٹ [haṭ]

This suffix is most often used to form nouns from adjectives. Most nouns formed with this suffix are feminine.

(softness; overripeness) [pilpilāhaṭ] پیلپلاہٹ ← (softened; overripe) [pilpilā] پیلپلا

(bitterness) [karvāhaṭ] کڑواہٹ ← (bitter) [karvā] کڑوا

This suffix is also used to form verbs from verb stems, particularly from those that involve repetition, echoing, or onomatopoeia.

(hesitation, wavering) [hichkichāhaṭ] ہچکچاہٹ ← (to hesitate, waver) [hichkichānā] ہچکچانا