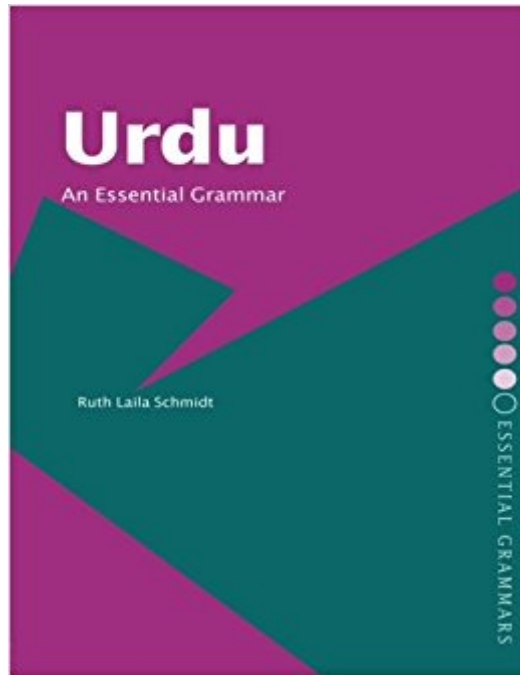




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Urdu: An Essential Grammar (Routledge Essential Grammars)



Synopsis

Urdu: An Essential Grammar is a reference guide to the most important aspects of the language as it is used by native speakers today. The complexities of Urdu are set out in short, readable sections. Explanations contain minimal jargon and emphasis has been placed on the aspects of Urdu that pose a particular challenge for English-speaking students. Features include: * language examples throughout in both Urdu script and romanization * user-friendly layout * detailed contents list * comprehensive index. Urdu: An Essential Grammar presents a fresh and accessible description of the language and will prove invaluable to students at all levels.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ruth Laila Schmidt is a Lecturer in the Department of East European and Oriental Studies at the University of Oslo, Norway. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Mr. Poser's review missed the point of this book, I think. Having studied from Barker off and on over many years, I passed over Essential Urdu both at conferences and libraries until the other day when I checked it out just to.... check it out. I haven't been able to put it down; I even read it while I'm cooking. Despite the reviewer, Mr. Prendergast, who said the book was good for beginners, too, I believe it is my vague familiarity with Urdu which gives the book so much impact on my understanding of how the language works. IMHO, only a linguistically sophisticated person would

grasp the import of the fascinating structures found in everyday Urdu, let alone in the many borrowing from Arabic, Persian, Hindi, English, and so on. (One of my great frustrations is that when I trot out a new Urdu word for, say, school registration, my friends say, "Oh, we just say 'registration'"). To be fair to Mr. Poser's complaints, I do believe it is my wide if not deep readings in linguistics plus my study of Barker and others, including the Russian Klyuyev, that allow me to 'fill in' some of the gaps he cites. So, indeed, it may not be for beginners. But let me cite some elements of the book that I found so enlightening and helpful. The sections on particles and interjections, courtesy forms, time and dates, and causatives were particularly useful to me. Let me be clear here, I am comparing this book to all other such manuals; it could be that all in this series are as careful about covering as many aspects of speech as possible, but my experience of many years in using grammar manuals of many languages is that these elements are often skipped or slighted, or, at least, not presented in a compact way. And I think it is this latter point that is both a strength and a bit of a put-off in the book. The long pages of forms are not a way to learn those forms; they must be learned through use, not memorization. But as Prof. Schmidt lays the paradigms out, it does clarify them for the person who already has some of the forms internalized through use. So, for me, reading and annotating this book for my use has been a series of epiphanies. I especially liked the examples of how the play of transitive/intransitive and causative forms allows a range of expression typically represented in English by totally different words. In teaching Spanish, I found it important to explain how Spanish vocabulary, smaller in toto than that of English, supplements meaning through derivation. This section explains how causatives do that in Urdu (not to say Urdu's lexicon is small by any means!). I recall when an eminent scholar of Urdu was so kind as to e-mail me about my on-again, off-again study of the language and tell me that the language was pretty simple. When I responded that the morphology may be simple compared to Russian or Latin, but that Urdu more than compensates in the complexity of word-formation and syntax. You have only to read Prof. Schmidt's helpful gathering of ways to express obligation, probability, and so on, to realize that. The features Mr. Poser wants delved into more would be appropriate, IMHO, for one of Routledge's Comprehensive series, and that is a hint to Routledge.

I am an American born Pakistani who only began to learn Urdu late in life (age 18 or so). 10 years later, I am somewhat proficient in the language, but not fluent by any means. Through my years of speaking and book study, this book answers most of the many questions which I have had and which no one (not even my parents, who are native Urdu speakers and also speak English well) has been able to answer to my satisfaction. I felt like I had an epiphany each day that I read this. I highly

recommend this book for those attempting to learn the language on their own without formal classroom experience. One caveat, to which I allude in the title of my review, is that this book is not for beginners. I recommend a simpler book first which will familiarize you with the language. After that, this book provides excellent further study. It is the best resource I have found on the market.

The book is written in naskh, which is a minor inconvenience. Otherwise, the text is extremely helpful for the student learning Urdu.

the point size of printed letters are too small compared with the size of the book page for an old persons eyes to read it.

This book fills an important hole in the literature: a solid, up-to-date, in-print grammar of the Urdu language. I have used it to supplement my study of other Urdu texts. I have a few minor quibbles with the book: 1) The Urdu transcription system is not given explicitly. Reference is made to R. S. McGregor's Urdu Study Materials, an out-of-print book published in India. While it may be readily available in major centers of learning or through interlibrary loan, I think that reference to an out-of-print book for something as significant as the transcription system should be avoided. Perhaps in future editions the system should be included in the text. 2) Sections appear where reference is made to 'ko' marking objects and 'ko' marking subjects. I'm not sure that this is the best way to address the use of 'ko', since it is more a comment on peculiarities of English grammar than any feature of Urdu. In Russian there are similar impersonal structures that use dative objects for what we would consider subjects in the English translations. A simpler approach to the issue of 'ko' might be to say that it marks dative objects, which may, however, be translated into English by words having different grammatical roles in the corresponding English sentence. Incidentally, I also have the "Teach Yourself Urdu" book and have found it of value, though not for its grammatical descriptions, which don't seem to me to be a distinguishing strength. I have collected the Urdu texts of the dialogues into a notebook that I find useful for rapid reading practice.

It's a grammar book, so it can't be all fun (but really, after "Eats, Shoots and Leaves" can this be an excuse anymore?). Good reference book when things don't make sense, but not a good way to learn Urdu. The fonts get strange in the Kindle version, so get it in hard copy instead.

Excellent grammar book to have in one's reference collection.

This book is much too difficult for a beginner with no knowledge of pronunciation or knowledge of the sound of the language. NOT A BEGINNER'S BOOK!

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