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978-0-521-51931-1 - Speaking Like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan

Alyssa Ayres

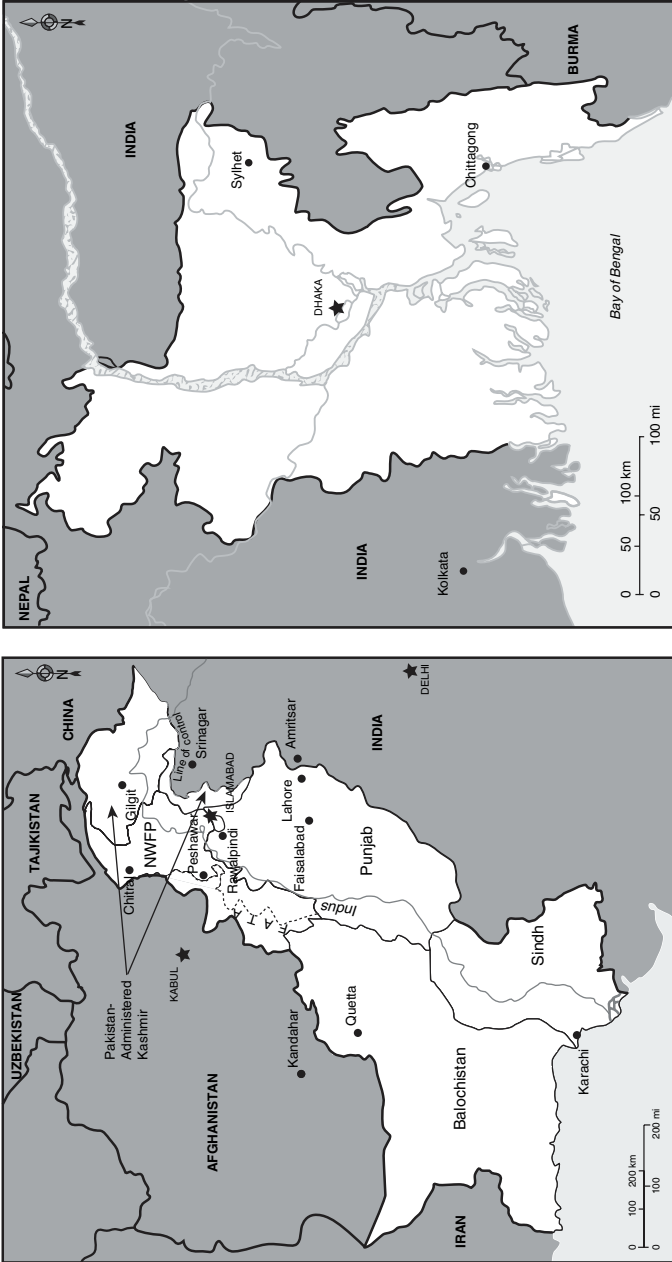
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Speaking Like a State

Founded in 1947 as a homeland for South Asia's Muslims, Pakistan has been beset by conflict throughout its existence. Alyssa Ayres' fascinating study examines Pakistan's troubled history by exploring the importance of culture to political legitimacy. As she explains, early leaders selected Urdu, the first language of a small percentage of Pakistanis, as the natural symbol of the nation's great cultural past. But due to its limited base, great efforts would be required to propagate Urdu and make it truly national. This paradox underscores the importance of cultural policies for national identity formation. In Pakistan's case, the process also fuelled resentments. By comparing Pakistan's experience with those of India and Indonesia, independent around the same time, the author analyzes how their national language policies led to very different outcomes. The lessons of these large multiethnic states offer insights for the understanding of culture, identity, and nationalism throughout the world. The book is aimed at scholars in the fields of history, political theory, and South Asian studies, as well as those interested in the history of culture and nationalism in one of the world's most complex, and challenging, countries.

Alyssa Ayres is Director for India and South Asia at McLarty Associates, Washington, DC. A cultural historian of modern South Asia, she has carried out research in India, Pakistan, and Indonesia. She has co-edited three books, including one forthcoming on power realignments between China, India, and the United States, as well as two volumes in Asia Society's *India Briefing* series. She received an AB *magna cum laude* from Harvard, and an MA and PhD from the University of Chicago.



Map 1 (a) Basic map of Pakistan (b) Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan/East Bengal province of Pakistan. Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative.

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No work is ever the product of a single individual, and I owe great debts to a very long list of people. This book's path was influenced by scholarly curiosities inflected by a desire for life outside the cloistered ivory tower. In the mid 1990s I interrupted my doctoral studies to serve first with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and then with the Asia Society in New York. That nagging sense of unfinished work led me to resume my academic program, which included a dissertation that grew into this book. Mentors from my time at the Asia Society encouraged me to make the leap, and I am deeply grateful to Nicholas Platt, Marshall M. Bouton, Robert W. Radtke, Vishakha N. Desai and Frank G. Wisner of the extended Society family for steering me in the right direction.

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Note on transliteration

Urdu poses a number of transliteration problems. It contains sounds particular to Indic languages, such as a series of retroflex consonants and a differentiation between aspirated and unaspirated consonants. A font with diacritics used for Indic languages might be a good base. However, Urdu is written in a modified Arabic script, which introduces many additional distinct characters into the orthography. Many of these letters are not pronounced with any degree of distinction; the Urdu *zal*, *ze*, *zwad*, and *zoi* all sound the same, though to an Arabic speaker the four letters are very much distinct.

No font easily allows the transliteration of all the distinct Indic sounds as well as Perso-Arabic letters. In Pakistan, new experiments with romanization of Urdu are far less precise than the Library of Congress and Annual of Urdu Studies systems. So, for ease of reading, this book utilizes a hybrid scheme based on pronunciation, somewhere in between that of the Library of Congress romanization and the romanized Urdu variations in widespread use on the Internet. Words that appear more commonly in English, such as *ulema*, are not marked.

Vowels a ā ī ī u ū e ai o au

Consonants

<i>be</i>	b	<i>dāl</i>	d	<i>swād</i>	s	<i>gāf</i>	g
<i>pe</i>	p	<i>ḍāl</i>	ḍ	<i>zwād</i>	z	<i>lām</i>	l
<i>te</i>	t	<i>zāl</i>	z	<i>toi</i>	t	<i>mīm</i>	m
<i>ṭe</i>	ṭ	<i>re</i>	r	<i>zoi</i>	z	<i>nūn</i>	n / ṅ
<i>ṣe</i>	s	<i>ṛe</i>	ṛ	<i>ʿain</i>	ʿ	<i>vao</i>	v / w
<i>jīm</i>	j	<i>ze</i>	z	<i>ghain</i>	<u>gh</u>	<i>he</i>	h
<i>ce</i>	c	<i>zhe</i>	zh	<i>fe</i>	f	<i>docashmī-he</i>	h
<i>he</i>	h	<i>sīn</i>	s	<i>qāf</i>	q	<i>ye</i>	y
<i>khe</i>	<u>kh</u>	<i>shīn</i>	sh	<i>kāf</i>	k	<i>hamza</i>	ʾ

Notes:

1 Aspirated consonants are indicated with an “h.” Thus *ghar* = house, *acchā* = good.

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- 2 Retroflex sounds, as depicted above, are differentiated by a dot below the letter.
- 3 The velar fricatives from Arabic (ghain and khe) are indicated with a subscript line.
- 4 Izāfat is indicated with -e-. Thus *jang-e-āzādī* and *tahrīk-e-pākistān*.
- 5 The v/w of conjunction is written *o*.
- 6 Doubled letters are written twice. Thus *qisse*.