

## Linguistic Innovations and Language Change: A Case Study of Dialects of Kashmiri

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### Abstract

In urban dialectology, the correlation between the linguistic variability and the social variables is very important. Social class, age, sex have proven to be most likely independent variables to correlate with linguistic innovations. This paper discusses the process of ongoing linguistic change which is the outcome of social differentiation. Following the need for field investigations of linguistic innovations for the mechanism of change, the linguistic variable investigated in the present study of Kashmiri dialects is (r) involved in an ongoing linguistic change.

**Key Words:** Dialectal Variation, Linguistic Variable, Age, Sex, Education, Linguistic Innovations, Stylistic Variation, Marker, Overt Stigmatization, Relic Features.

### Introduction

The relationships between Language with geography and the spatial differentiations of language were the main research inquiries of Traditional Dialectology. However, the trend changed with the emergence of Urban Dialectology. In this field, dialectologist not only established that how language varies at regional level but also how it varies at individual level. It is enunciated by the fact that for modern dialectologists, linguistic variation is not primary. The thing, which is important, is correlation between language and the social factor that are more closely related with linguistic variation.

### Linguistic Variation and Linguistic Innovations

Linguistic variability is the linguistic outcome of social/geographical differentiation and whenever there is a class or regional (Rural/Urban) differentiation, the variant that is used by high or Urban class is ascribed more prestige than the other. In such a context, where the emphasis is directed towards speech, speakers of all classes show tendency to increase their use of the higher status variant which directly results into stylistic variation. Such a type of

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variation was either treated as free variation or dialect variation. However, on the advent of urban dialectology, this type of variation is not now treated as free variation or mixture of two linguistic codes but is constrained by social and/or linguistic factors. This insight was attained as a result of the development of the notion of the LINGUISTIC VARIABLE, a linguistic unit with two or more realizations in covariation. "Linguistic variables ... regarded as socially different but linguistically equivalent ways of doing or saying the same thing, and occur at all levels of linguistic analysis" (Chambers & Trudgill 1998:50). In the process of any kind of linguistic change, it is inevitable that some changes take precedence over the other. And it is possible to find out the some elements in the society tend to change their accent, making it possible to ascertain the social groups that plays the role of catalyst for a particular innovation with which linguistic variation have been found to correlate.

### **Previous Work**

A review of the literature related with the survey of Kashmiri dialect showed that the study was confined with spatial distribution and classification of the dialects of Kashmiri. The authors were engaged in describing linguistic features of these varieties. Traditionally Kashmir valley has been classified into three regional zones corresponding to specific varieties of Kashmiri, as shown under:

1. The northern and north-western regions of Kashmir valley correspond to Kamraaz dialect of Kashmiri language.
2. The southern and the south-western regions of Kashmir valley correspond to Maraaz dialect of Kashmiri language.
3. The Central regions of Kashmir valley correspond to Standard dialect of Kashmiri, this variety is used in written form.

Grierson's (1919) account of Kashmiri dialect is the first pioneering attempt. According to him, Kashmiri spoken in the valley has more or less a unified and homogenous speech patterns whereas geographical distribution has least control over the linguistic diversity. Kashmiri has only one true dialect- Kastiwari spoken in the valley of Kasktiwar. Poguli, Siraji and Rambani are the other dialects which are of mixed types about which nothing certain is known. Zainagiri (1969) in "kəʃlri zaba:ni manz alakiwa:di phe:r", in which he has given number of lexical variation on the basis of regional dialects. Correspondingly, Koul and Schmidt (1984) have reported that Kashmiri outside the valley of Kashmir has two main regional dialects as Poguli (in the pogul and Paristan valley) and Kashtiwari in the valley of Kashtiwari. Apart from these, two more religious dialects of Kashmiri i.e., Hindu Kashmiri and Muslim Kashmiri have been reported by Grierson (1919). Kachru (1969) classified these as Sanskritized Kashmiri and Persianized Kashmiri. Dhar (2001) and Sachedeva, Dhar and Koul (2010 & 2013) have revisited the linguistic variation of the dialects of Kashmiri, based on spatial distribution in detail, by applying the modern trends in Structural Dialectology.

However, in the recent year, there is no serious fieldwork for research on the issues relates with dialect contact. The study of dialects of Kashmiri in terms of

linguistic variability and ascertaining the linguistic innovation for the process of linguistic changes in progress, will prove one of the most pioneering and fascinating field of research.

### Present Work and Analysis

Following the need for field investigations of linguistic innovations for the mechanism of change, the linguistic variable investigated in the present study of Kashmiri dialects is (r) involved in an ongoing linguistic change. In most of the varieties of Kashmiri, Kashmiri trill (r) and the tap (ɽ) at word final position (which are allophones of the trill phoneme) such as *ku:r* is a variable alternating between allophones as trill /ku:r/ or tap /ku:ɽ/. Below mentioned example from the dialect of Kashmiri will illustrate the linguistic variability:

Srinagar	Anantnag	Pulwama	Baramullah	Gloss
dor	do ɽ	do ɽ	dor	'hard'
gur	gu ɽ	gu ɽ	gur	'horse'
gər	gə ɽ	gə ɽ	gər	'wrist watch'
nər	nə ɽ	nə ɽ	nər	'arm'
šur	šu ɽ	šu ɽ	šur	'child'

As clear from the example of dialects of Kashmiri, the variable (r) has two variants:

(r)-1= /r/

(r)-2= /ɽ/

Thus the forms with (r)-2= /ɽ/ must be derived from the form (r)-1= /r/ by the rule:

$r \longrightarrow \text{ɽ} / \_\_\_ \#$

This variable (r) is a marker which is subjected to stylistic variation. This is due to the reason that it is subjected to unfavorable comment in the community. The variant (r)-1= /r/ is considered as more prestigious form as is spoken by the speakers of standard dialect in Srinagar or Urban areas, while as, (r)-2= /ɽ/ is subject to overt criticism of being a known linguistic feature of persons who belong to rural areas.

### Speaker

In the present study, the 40 informants were selected from many districts with in the valley like Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam and some far flung areas of District Budgam (like, Reyar, Gogjipatar, Wartredh). In these areas (r)-2 is very common.

### Sample

These informants were divided into three age groups, young, middle and old. 35 words with final (r) and were repeated for number of instance for RPS and WLS.

### Recordings

The recording was made in a sound-proof room using a "Linear PCM digital sound recorder" at 48kHz sampling rate with 16bit depth. The recordings were

analyzed using the WaveSurfer and Speech Analyzer software. The postulation has been tested by means of field work methods conducted on the basis of list of lexical items with (r) from Kashmiri at final position. This list comprises of 23 word. The thrust of the questionnaire has been to address the style shift of Linguistic variable (r) within the valley like Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam and some far flung areas of District Budgam. In the back drop of the scope of the present survey, the dialect of Kashmiri with Linguistic variable (r) have been focused while framing the questionnaire to illicit data accordingly.

Taking in to account, Education, Age and Sex, as a significant social factors for the survey, the breakup of informants with number to administer the recording is given below in table 1.1. Informants with educational background have been classified into four groups.

Group	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Group A (8 <sup>th</sup> 9 <sup>th</sup> & 10 <sup>th</sup> students)	5	5	10
Group B (11 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup> class student)	5	5	10
Group C (Undergraduate students)	5	5	10
Group D (Post graduate students)	5	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>

**Table 1.1. Respondents' Distribution on Sex and Educational Qualification.**

Applying the Urban Dialect Methodology (Labov 1966, Milroy 1987, Trudgill 1974, Chambers and Trudgill 1998) for quantitative analysis of the occurrence or the percentage of (r)-1 in the speech of standard dialect of Kashmiri will produce score of 0 and the occurrence of (r)-2 in the speech of rural dialects will produce score of 100. Indices for such variables have been computed in a number of following ways:

Speaker A from Standard dialect  
Srinagar

Instances of (r)-1  
 $20 * (r)-1 = 23$   
 $0 * (r)-2 = 0$   
 $23 = 23$   
 Score =  $23/23 = 1$

Speaker B from mara:z dialect  
Anantnag

Instances of (r)-1  
 $1 * (r)-1 = 1$   
 $22 * (r)-2 = 44$   
 $23 = 45$   
 score =  $45/23 = 1.95$

Index = (Result - 1)\*100, Applying the formulae, we get

*Index of Speaker A* =  $1-1*100=0$   
 $1=0.95*100=95>100$

*Index of speaker B* =  $1.95-1=0.95*100=95>100$

For group score and indices, we first calculate the index of individual and then find average of them.

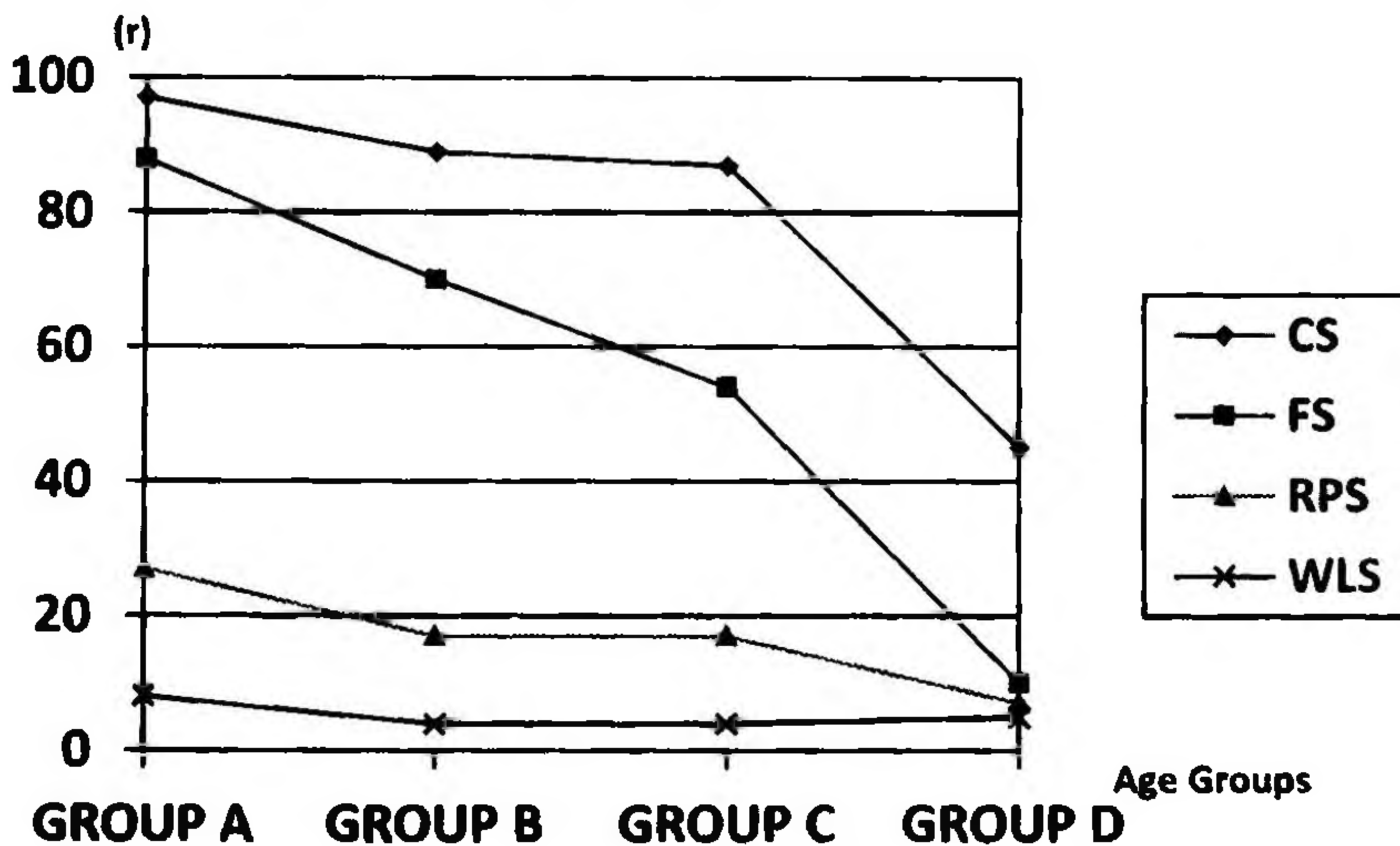
The score can also be counted by simply count the numbers of (r)1 as opposed to (r)2 and find out the percentage score.

The stylistic changes were analyzed statistically by comparing informants response in four style as: casual style (CS), formal style (FS), Read Passage Style (RPS) and Word-list style (WLS). (Perter and Trudgil, 1998)

**Age-Based Linguistic Innovations**

Style differentiation can be indicative of a linguistic change which is in progress. The following figures of the percentage of use of the variable (r) among informants of rural dialect marked by replacement of tap / ɾ / with trill / r /, show drastic shifts in style from CS to WLS.

	CS	FS	RPS	WLS
GROUP A	97	89	87	45
GROUP B	89	70	54	10
GROUP C	87	54	17	3
GROUP D	45	17	10	4



Informants with higher qualification and have been in social networks of people who are the speakers of standard dialect, tend to be those groups whose speech diverges most markedly from the norms of the speech of speakers who are not in frequent social interaction with speakers of standard dialect. Hence, the graphic representation shows a familiar pattern of stylistic shift from more formal (word-list style and Read-Passage style) to less formal (casual speech) style. The informants show tendencies towards in (r)-1=0 in more formal style. Variable (r)

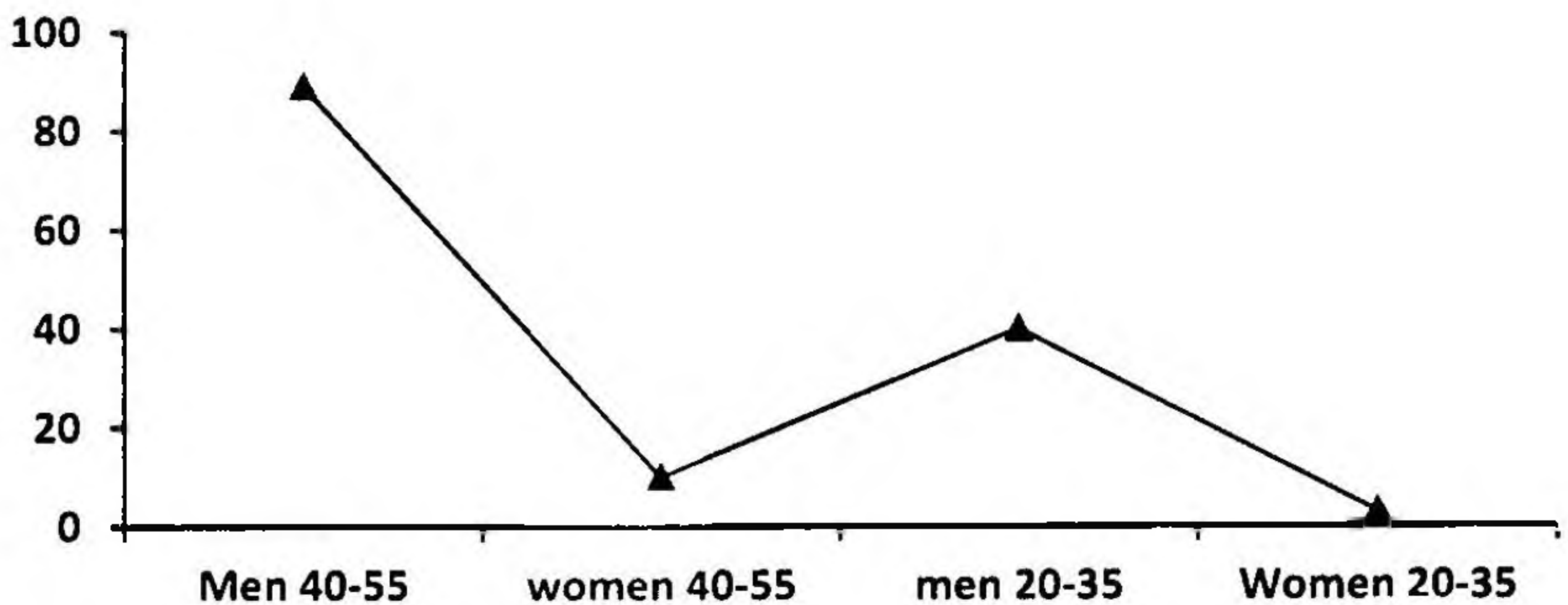
measure the percentage of replacing /ɾ/ by /r/ finally in words mentioned in appendix. As shown in the graph (1), group A and group B score significantly higher than group C and D. Graph (1) suggests that the respondents from group C & D from rural dialect remain entrenched with the people from standard dialect, thus making the linguistic innovations in the direction of standard speech. Their regular contact and social circumstances reinforces this interpretation.

### Sex-Based Linguistic Innovations

Generally the informants, who are in social networks of the speakers of standard dialect, tend to diverge their speech most markedly from the norms of the speech of speakers who are not in frequent social interaction with speakers of standard dialect.

However, the following figures of the linguistic variable (r) reveals paradoxical result with respect to the behaviour males and females.

Group	Score
Men 40-55	89
Women 40-55	10
Men 20-35	40
Women 20-35	3



The graphic representation shows a familiar pattern of decrease in use of (r)-2 from more formal (word-list style and Read-Passage style) to less formal (casual speech) style. This variable is a well-known marker and is openly stigmatized. In Graph (2), in case of men informants from rural dialect, we can see the decline in score. But in women of both the age groups, this decline in score is more in comparison to men. The informants show tendencies towards in (r)-1=0 in more formal style. Thus, women are making linguistic innovations in the direction of standard speech.

## Conclusion

This correlation shows that there is a very clear relationship between the usage of the variable (r)-2 and the ongoing linguistic change. It is a kind of relic feature, "... a linguistic feature of dialect which is receding from general use in the community and thus occur only in isolated places".( Chambers and Trudgill 1998). This is due to the fact that unfavourable comments are associated with it and thus plays the role of marker for this ongoing linguistic change. Consequently, the young age-group of higher education and women play the role of innovators of the linguistic change in the rural areas.

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**Appendix A**  
**Kashmiri Word-list**

<b>Kashmiri</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
dor	'hard'
gur	'horse'
gər	'wrist watch'
nər	'arm'
šur	'child'
tsər	sparrow
tsə:r	select
tì:r	cold
tə:r	delay
tse:r	late
tsir	clap
tshir	basket
phur <sup>ˈ</sup>	turn
khər	foot
khor	bald
bar	door
ma:r	beat
ša:r	verse
par	read
tar	cross
sar	think
šar	wish
khar	ass

