

AN OLD PHONOLOGICAL STUDY OF NEW PERSIAN AND BALOCHI

Language & Literature

Hamid Ali Baloch*
Dr. Abdul Saboor Baloch†
Dr. Bilal Ahmed‡

ABSTRACT

The Balochi language is one of the ancient languages, which belongs to the Iranian branch of Indo-European family. This language has a very deep-rooted history and similarities with the Sanskrit, Avesta, Old Persian and Pahlavi (which are now considered as dead languages). These languages flourished side by side for thousands of years and the concerned language did not let itself dead because of its enrichment and nomadic environment. Balochi is currently spoken in Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, India, the Arab Gulf States, Turkmenistan, east Africa and some Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Norway. The aim of this paper is to show the differences between the new Persian and the Balochi languages and to clear the misunderstandings of those writers who have considered the Balochi language as a contemporary of the new Persian. In this paper phonetics and the phonological basis of the Balochi language will be discussed to prove that the Balochi language has a long history of approximately 5000-6000 years. As far as, the Persian language concerns, the evolutionary changes and the changes of phonetics, the phonetically variations will be mentioned that which language (Persian or Balochi) is most affected. References from different sources will be given to eliminate the misunderstandings of those so-called linguists who not lingual

* Lecturer, Department of Balochi, University of Balochistan, Quetta.

† Assistant Professor and Chairperson, Department of Balochi, University of Balochistan, Quetta.

‡ Chairperson Department of Persian University of Balochistan, Quetta

approach to the Persian and the Balochi languages. Different epoch will be mentioned to prove the internal changes of both languages.

INTRODUCTION

The origin of the Balochi language was an enigma* for the linguists before one and a half century and the Balochi language has been considered as a dialect of the Persian language. These concepts took place when the British Imperialists captured the Baloch land for the political and financial interests. A.W. Hughes was the first man among the British colonial Generals who directly raised hands towards the Balochi language without a lingual approach of both Persian and the Balochi languages, considered the Balochi as a dialect of the New Persian.

This is also a prevailing concept in Persia and majority of the Persian net sites are in the view that Balochi has not its own existence and history, except a dialect of the Persian.

But the development and analyses of the modern linguistics and lingual researches showed that these ideas were fake, counterfeit and unacceptable. Approximately, all linguists are agreeing on the point that the Balochi language belongs to the Iranian Branch of Indo- European family, which has a very long and deep-rooted history.

Joseph Elfenbein inscribes that the Balochi language belongs to the eastern group of the Iranian languages like Parthian and Arsacid Pahlavi. Ancestor of the Balochi language was neither Parthian nor Middle Persian (Sasanid Pahlavi), but a lost language which thus while sharing a number of characteristic features with either, some with both, had a pronounced individuality of his own. This language may have been a variety of Median speech since the Kurdish dialects, which have a noteworthy affinity with Balochi are to be traced, in Minorasky's opinion, to the ancient Median (**Josef. Ency: Vol-1: 1960**).

Another European linguist T.A Mayer who has a wide grip over the Iranian languages had been confirmed this statement before Josef Elfenbein that the Balochi to be the remnants of the Medians or the ancient west Iranians,

*The writers who worked on the Balochi language during the British era in the Indian subcontinent could not differentiate the Balochi language to the Persian language, because most of them were not linguists.

whose language bears signs of affinity to the language of the Medes (**Mengal: 1988:8**)

The later scholars and linguists approved it. In 1925, Robert Gilbertson found certain affinities between Kurdish and Balochi but Tedesco carried a vast research on the Iranian dialects in 1921. He places Balochi in the center of western Iran or Zagros range, but Longworth Dames refers to the abode of it to be around the Caspian coasts (Cosa-bir, a Baloch tribe). Tedesco, however, puts pre-Balochi among the North Western dialects of Iran, including the present Caspian dialects. Mackenzie in 1961 also places the Balochi in Central West Iran (**Windfuhr: Isogloses:458**).

Dr. G.L Windfuher writes, sketch of Persia and Parthians; Kurds and Medes and adds Kurdish shares a number of features with the Median band of dialects. However, it also exhibits a cluster of innovations and lexical items which it shares with a dialect group now adjacent to Kurdish, namely, Persian and Baloch (Windfuhr: Isogloses. P. 458). K. Mason writes that Balochi is another Aryan language of akin to the Old Persian, Old Arian, Achaemanid and Median (**Masson: 1945: 325**).

No doubt, Balochi stands closer to the Achaemanid, the court language of the Achaemanid King who spoke Persian at home and also shared features with the Avesta dialect of Median language, the one in the Gathaas or Hymns of secret Knowledge, called "Gat" in Balochi (Mengal: 1988:11). None of the above-mentioned linguists declared Balochi as a dialect, even the contemporary of the Persian language, but akin of the Old languages such as Old Persian, Avesta and Sanskrit. The supposed linguists differentiated the Balochi language with New Persian by studying the phonetics, semantics, etymology and grammar. Balochi has a lot of phonetic differences, which even not match with the new Persian, but a great similarity with Old Persian, because it flourished at the same time, in the same region. Being the Akins of each other, it is a real fact that there will be a little bit lexical influences or similarities in the concerned languages.

Phonological Changes:

The linguists have deeply studied the phonological differences between the new Persian and the Balochi language, and proved that both languages have a lot of Phonetic variations. In this context, Professor Khalil Saddiqui mentions that Balochi language has a Phonetical similarity with the Sanskrit. It has also maintained it's Avestan and Pahlavi Phonemes and the phonemes have been themselves in the New Persian. He further adds, that phonetically the Balochi

language, somehow near similarity with the Avestan and on the other hand, it also relates a little bit with Pahlavi. The palatal voices in the Balochi and Pahlavi languages are same and still maintained their positions, but these phones and phonemes have been changed in the New Persian.

For example, the words, *Rōč* and *Rōčan* are still in its concerned form in the Balochi but changed its shape into *Rōz* and *Rōzan* in the New Persian. Balochi has not even been changed the unvoiced phonemes, but in the new Persian the case is different, it has changed the unvoiced phones into the voiced form. The word *Zāt*, *Kurt* have been converted into *zād* and *Kard*; *āp*, *šap*, and *dāt* converted into *āb*, *šap* and *dād* in the new Persian, but the Balochi did not break up its kinship with the Pahlavi and Avesta but phonetically made its relationships strong with the said languages.

He further adds that Balochi might be older than newer and may be the contemporary of the Pahlavi language (**Siddiqi: 2001 :202-203**).

Agnes Korn adds a new point about the classical approach of the Balochi language among the other Iranian languages, she mentions that “Balochi is of particular importance for the study of the history of the Iranian languages since (in contrast to all other modern Iranian languages) it directly reflects the old Iranian consonants in all position of the word. Although the remarkable archaicity noted by Geiger might be the result of somewhat more complex processes than hitherto assumed, Balochi is a key witness for the reconstruction of earlier stages of the Iranian languages for which the evidence often scares or difficult to interpret. Among the contemporary Iranian languages, Balochi occupies an important place, as the area where it is spoken is comparatively large and the number of its speakers comparatively high. A further interesting point is that the Balochi lexicon as well as its historical phonology reflects with a variety of neighboring languages. (**Korn: 2005:7**)

It's clear to note that the Persian language has changed its phonological, morphological and even the lexical structures since centuries ago. Thousands of years before the Persian language was known as the *Pārsī ay bāstān* (Old Persian), the language of Cyrus the Great.*

At that time, the Persian was in its purified form, but when the time passed simultaneously and the rulers came one after another to occupy the seats of the Kingdom, the process overthrew a major effect on the Persian language. The Old Persian appeared in the shape of Pahlavi after five centuries to the

* Cyrus the Great is known as Kōryūš e Azam in the Persian history. He defeated the Medes king and maintained the Old Persian language as the official language of his court. He was the first king or ruler who expanded the boundaries of his kingdom from Persia to the Greece.

Iranian subjects, and it was adopted as the court or official language of the Iranian Kings.

The catastrophic change in the Pahlavi* language takes place, when the Caliph Umar manages an expedition to Iran by his commander Abu Musa Ash'ari†. When Iran is conquered in the era of the caliph Umar, the Arabic language became the official language of the Iranian masses and it engulfed the Persian language in all aspects. It's interesting to note that the major phonological change occurs at the said time. Even the proverbs, idioms and structure of sentences have been changed.‡

In the early years of the twentieth century the passions of patriotism and love to the Persian language stimulated a prejudice against the Arabic language and once again a movement of purification was started by some Iranian linguists. *Pur Daud* was one of the key figures among them, who led the movement in the name of "*Pārsī ay bāstān*" with his nearest companions. The aims and objectives of this movement were to eliminate the Arabic words, purify the language in its old form such as the Old Persian. But his language purification movement became unsuccessful because of his extreme linguistic views. He was condemned by the other Iranian linguists throughout Iran. On the one hand Mirza Muhammad Khan gave him the title

* Pahlavi is basically called the Middle Persian and most of the Persian intellectuals are in views that language of *Šāhnāmeḥ Firdōsī* is Pahlavi but there are some confusion concerning to the Pahlavi word. some say that the word "Pahlavi" was the name of a city in Iran which meant "Cantonment or Army". In this regard the great poet Firdōsī mentions in his book:

Za pahlav barūn raft Kaūs Šāh

Za harsū hamē gašt gard e sipāh

Firdōsī further mentions that this was the language of Pahlavans (inherited singers), who used to sing different songs in the courts of kings.

Agar pahlavani nadānī zubā

Bitāzī tū arwandrā Dajlw xwā

Nizami conveyers a different message about the name Pahlavi and says that Pahlavi is the name of a musical mode.

Bahar ē ganjiš ču pidaram kard

Ba pahlav zubāniš harē nām kard

For further details see (Muhammad Hussain Azad. 1988:143-147).

† Abu Mūsa Aš'arī was one of the key commanders of the muslim army in the battle of Qadissiyya. He was sent to the Baloch Sardar and commander Siyahsawar (known as Al-Dissawar in the Arabian History), to reconcile upon some strategic issues against the Persian army. Aš'arī along with the Baloch army assaulted the Persian throne and occupied the Iranian region. This was a good omen for the Arabs and Islam and this was the time when the Arabic language started penetrating in the core of Persian language and engulfed it.

‡ For further details see the poetry of Sheikh Sadi and Hafiz and the contemporary Persian poets and prose-writers.

of “extremist” and on the other hand, the words of French, German and English languages were Persianized simultaneously. So, this movement took his last breath and could not succeed it from the influence of other languages till now, and this process led the Persian language to another way e.g. This changed its structure (**Siddiqi: 2001:202-203**)

Beside, the Balochi language has not lost its original form and after thousands of years, it has fully maintained its old linguistic structure, but somehow, because of mass migration through different communities the Balochi language has adopted a little bit sounds i.g. *ʈ*, *ɽ* and *ɖ*,* which are basically the Indian sounds.

A comparative of sketch of the Old Iranian sounds:

It is interesting to note that Balochi is the only language in the Iranian region, which has preserved its old Iranian sounds, but the other languages like Kurdi, Persian, Pashtu Luri and Saghdi have lost the sounds of their parent languages. A small comparative sketch of the Old Iranian sound is given here to specify that how Balochi has been preserved its old sounds.

The sound of OIr. *č* (**Korn:2005:84**)

- ◆ Bal. *čar* (*r*) “turn/move” (AV. *čara-* “move”- Parth. *Čar* “graze”[†])
- ◆ Bal. *gičīn*[‡] “select” (AV. *Vī-činao-*) NP- *guzīn/ guzīd*, Parth. *wižīn-/ wižīd*[§], Balo. *Rōč* “day” (AV. *rōčah*) and the NP. *Rōz*.

Here we see that how the new Persian its original sound. The sound of Old Persian “č” is being converted into “z” but the Balochi has sustained it till today. *Ĵ* (Korn: 2005: 86)

Some examples of the Balochi and OIr sound *č* “*چ*” are as follows which have changed themselves into *z* “*ز*”.

* Most of the linguists favor this idea that all the Iranian languages have not the sound of *ʈ*, *ɽ* and *ɖ*, basically these sounds are found in indo-Aryan (Sanskrit) and new indo- Aryan languages, such as Punjabi, Sindhi, Lehinda , Marhathi and others etc. such sounds are also found in the Pushto language but actually Pashto has also taken these sounds from Indian languages by mass migration through the indo- subcontinent.

[†] Basically *čarr* and *čar* both words are found in the Balochi language in the whole dialects. The meaning of *čar* is same as in the Parthian.

[‡] Korn has taken reference of this word from Mocker. The real pronunciation of this word is *gičēn* which means “select or purify”.

[§] The Parthian sound *ž* is also found in the eastern hill dialect of the Balochi language (see details in the book of Josef “Balochi language, a dialectology with texts). The word “*gōžd-meat*” specifies the Parthian sound. Balochi thus corresponds to the Early Parthian stage with regard to word- internal *č* (Korn:2005: 86)

Sūcin(سوچن), ey rōč(اے روچ), dōč(دوچ), pač(پچ), pačag(پچگ), tāč(تاچ) and rōčag(روچگ) have been changed phonetically as sōzan(سوزن), imrōz(امروز), dōz(دوز), paz(پز), paza(پزه), tāz(تاز) and rōza(روزه) in persian.

The sound of Old Iranian J̄ is converted in z in the new Persian. According to Grunburg the age of J̄ is * older than the sound of z.

♦ jan-† / jat “strike” (Av. Jan-, Np zan-/ zad, Parth žan-/ žad), jan “woman, wife”(Av. Jinni-, NP- zan

♦ bōj- “open” (buj, MP boz-/ bōxt, Parth.bōž‡-/ bōxt “save”), raj- “colour”(NP raz-/ rašt) drāj and in NP dirāz.

The OIr Z(Korn:2005:88)

♦ Zān- “know”(Av. Zanā-, NP dān-/dānist, Parth. Zān/ zānād), zāmāt “son-in-law”(Av. Zāmātār-, NP dāmād);mazan “big”(Av. Maz-, MPM mazan “monster”, OInd. Mahant-),mēz “urinate”(Av. maēza§-, NP mēz/ mēzīd.

OIr. I (Korn: 2005:141)

♦ išt “brick” (Av. Ištiia-, NP xišt

♦ pit”father” (Av. Pitar-, NP pidar, Prth.pid (ar) Sans.pita

Olr. T”ت” changes itself in d”د” in the new persian(Moosa Mahmoodzahi 1370H:33)

♦ āzāt “free, liberated” (Av. Āzāta- NP āzād)

♦ māt “mother”(Av.mātar-, OP mātar, Sans. Māta **, NP mādar).

♦ zūt “speed, haste”(Av. Zūt-Pah. Zūt, NP- zūd

♦ palīt “impure, comtaminated ” Pah,OP- palīt, Pah- palīt, Av. Palīt, NP- palīd

The new Persian has lost the old Avestan and Old Persian clusters which are the signs of the oldness of the Iranian languages. Whether Sanskrit is considered to be the langue of Indo-Aryan language and it has very near kinship to the Old Persian Avestan and the Balochi languages. The cluster

* For details see monthly gwānk (Baloch: 2009:Balōčī o Fārsī e rājdaptarī arzišt)

† Jan is used for both noun and verb. In the eastern dialect of the Balochi language jan means “to strike” but in the western dialects of the Balochi language the verb form is “janag”. For example ā janagā int (he is striking) etc.

‡ The word bōž has the similar sound and meaning in the eastern dialect of the Balochi language and the Parthian language.

§ The Avestan word maēza is very near to the Balochi verb mēzag phonologically and morphologically.

** The Sanskrit sound of māta is very near and similar to the Balochi word māt morphologically and phonologically. The above-mentioned word pita of the Sanskrit is structurally same to the Balochi language.

sounds “*granč/ ošt**” of Sanskrit, Avesta and Balochi are mostly same. For instance, the clusters *bra-*, *tra-*, *sra-*, *gra-*, *kra-* and such like other clusters are the same morphologically and phonologically. These cluster sounds are found in the Vedas and in the Avestan sacred books[†]. The clustered words like, *brā-t*, *krā-m*, *dra-hmadān*, *gwam*, *gwaz[‡]* and thousand of other clustered words are found in the Balochi language which specifies the old sounds of the Iranian region.

CONCLUSION:

A thorough phonological study showed that the Balochi language still keeps a vast place in the Old Iranian languages. The Balochi language preserved its old sounds what its contemporary languages could carry it on. The languages like Medi, Old Persian, Parthian, Sanskrit and Avestan languages which were considered to be the language of religions and officials in the courts of kings in different eras of the history. Being in the strong safeguard and protection they cannot preserve themselves in the pages of history. By the passage of time when the kingdoms collapsed the said languages already started declining simultaneously. Regarding to the new Persian language it lost its old shape and as it has mentioned before that after conquering the Persian region the Arabic language laid a strong effect on the Persian language.

Balochi is the only language which has maintained its original form and the Old Iranian sounds. It has been said that it has lost a little bit sound and adopted some Indian sounds like Sindhi and Lehinda[§].

As it has been mentioned that the Balochi is the only survived language in the region and if someone wants to study the historical background of the Old Iranian languages he has to study the Balochi language^{**}.

Some writers in the British era misunderstood the Balochi language and interpreted as the dialect of the Persian language but the modern research and linguists concluded that the modern Persian is itself lost away its original phonological and morphological structures.

* The word *ošt* was used for cluster in the Balochi language by Sayad Zahoor Shah Hashmi and the word *granč* used by a small group of literary men in Turbat which not yet been accepted by the total literary men of the Balochi Literature.

† See further details (Baloch: monthly Gwānk Jan, Balōčī o Sanskrit e hamgōnagī).

‡ These sounds are only found in the Sanskrit, Avesta and the Balochi languages not any other new Iranian languages.

§ The Saraiki language which was firstly mentioned by William Jones in his book, the linguistic survey of India and after that the later writers adopted the same word for Saraiki.

** See Korn 2005 introduction of her PhD thesis

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Elfenbein, Josef: The Balochi Language: A Dialectology with Texts
2. Mengal, Mir Aqil Khan: 1990, A Persian-Pahlavi and Balochi Vocabulary, Vol. 1, Balochi Academy, Quetta.
3. Gilbertson, Gorge Waters English-Balochí colloquial dictionary: Ghāno Khān (Haddiānī.), Haddiānī Ghāno Khān - 1925 - Volume 2.
4. Korn, Agnes: 2005. Towards a Historical Grammar of the Balochi Grammar, A Phonology and Vocabulary,
5. Siddiqui, Khalil Ahmad. " Zubān kyā hae" Bacon Books, Gulgasht Multan 2nd Edition.
6. Windfuhr, Dr. G.L: 1975. "Isoglosses: A Sketch on Persians and Parthians, Kurds and Medes",.
7. Masson, Charles: 1844. Narrative Of Various Journeys In Balochistan Afghanistan The Panjab And Kalat Vol IV.