



Areal Features in the Languages of South Iran: Focus on Balochi and Baskhardi

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► To cite this version:

Agnes Korn. Areal Features in the Languages of South Iran: Focus on Balochi and Baskhardi. Iranian Languages and Linguistics Lecture Series, Erik Anonby; Arsalan Kahnemuyipour; Université de Toronto, Jan 2022, Toronto, Canada. halshs-03622909

HAL Id: halshs-03622909

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03622909>

Submitted on 26 May 2022

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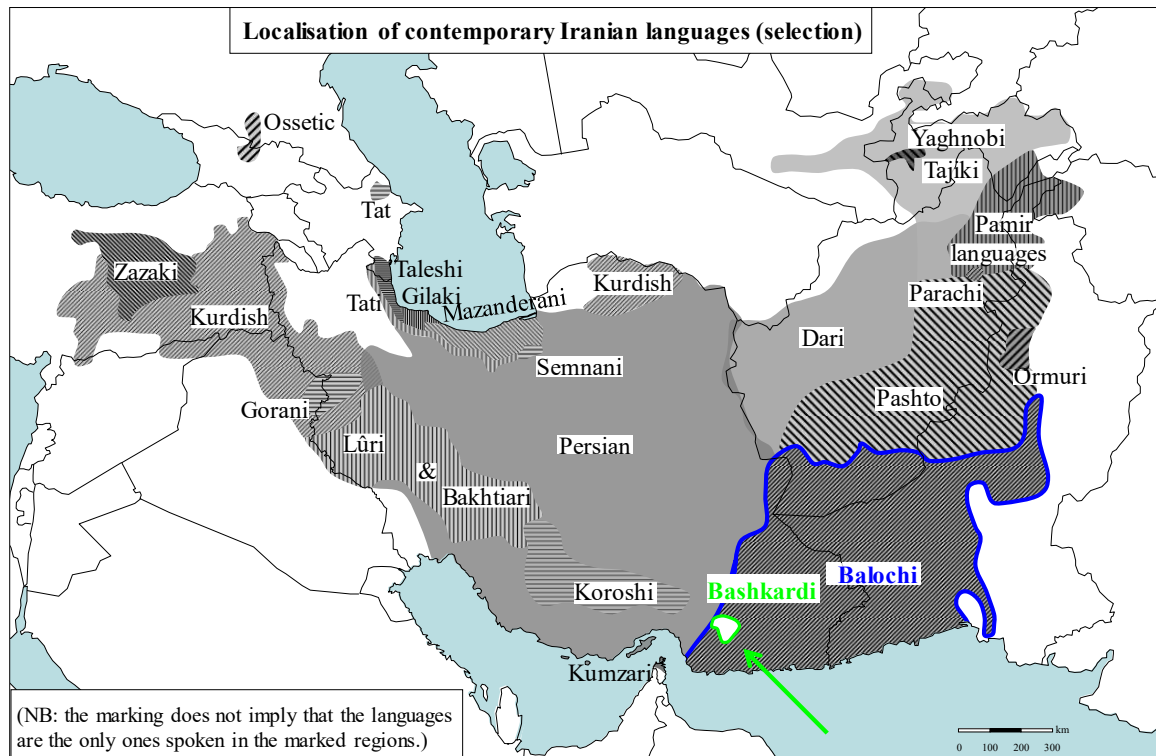
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AREAL FEATURES IN THE LANGUAGES OF SOUTH IRAN: FOCUS ON BALOCHI AND BASHKARDI

Agnes KORN



1. Background

- essentials of Balochi (Bal.) known since 19th c.: data collected e.g. by officers in British India (e.g. MOCKLER 1877), thus Balochi included in the handbook *Grundriß der iranischen Philologie* (grammatical sketch: GEIGER 1901a)
- “Very little of the morphology of Bashkardi is known.” (SKJÆRVØ 1989a: 848); published research on the dialect of Minab (BARBERA 2005 etc.); South Bashkardi dialect of Dahwast (MA thesis in Persian, SEDDIQI NEZHAD 2010)
- Data for this paper:¹ Bashkardi (Bsh.) recordings made in 1956 by Ilya Gershevitch² (NB: influence of Persian less strong than today)
Balochi: focus on Afro-Balochi of Iran³

Basic grammar of Bashkardi (cf. KORN 2017):

- nominal system: no case marking;
directive clitic =*â* (sporadic)
- verb system: PST / PRF domain: ergative alignment, but similar to Sorani Kurdish:
widespread (or generalised?) use of pronominal clitics for agent of transitive verbs

Bashkardi verb stems (example: ‘sit down’)			
	North Bashkardi	South Bashkardi	alignment
PRS	<i>nen-</i>		nominative/accusative
PST	<i>nešt</i>		(ex-)ergative
PRF	<i>nešt-eh</i>	<i>nešx</i>	

¹ The examples (referred to by numbers in **blue** in what follows) are in the appendix (pp. 8-9).

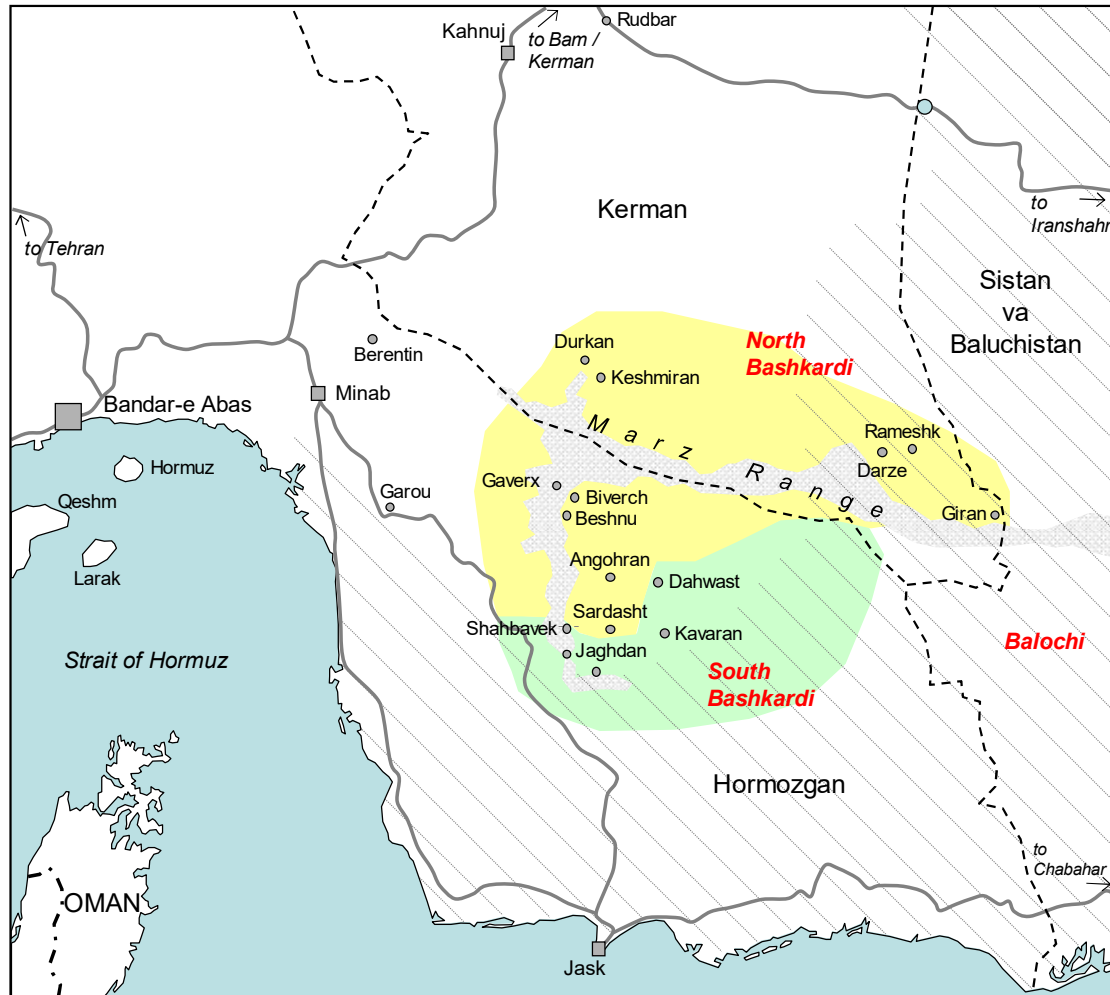
² Analysis of the Bashkardi texts by mine (with the help of Bakhtiar Seddiqi-Nezhad and Behrooz Barjasteh Delforooz). See KORN 2015 for a description of Gershevitch’s material and GERSHEVITCH 1959 for an account of his journey. One text each from Gershevitch’s recordings is published in KORN 2021; 2022.

³ The map only shows the main area where Balochi is spoken. – For a grammatical sketch of “Afro-Balochi”, see KORN & NOURZAEI 2019. The Balochi forms to follow are a selection of the available data and are somewhat standardised.

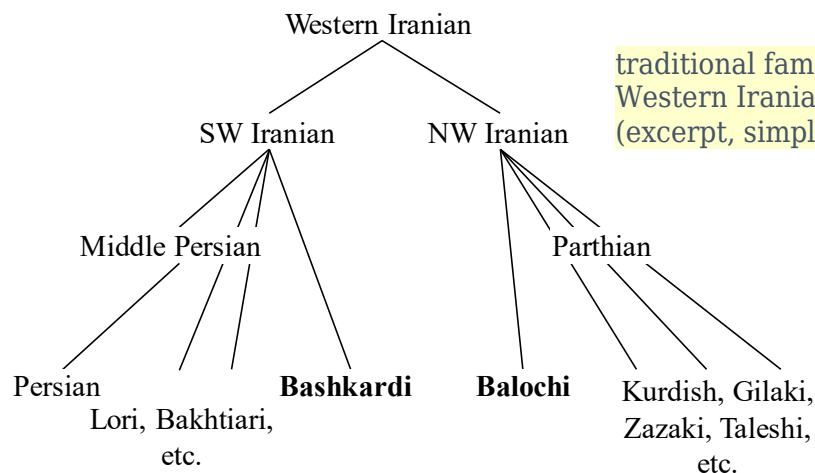
2. Dialects and isoglosses

2.1 State of the art

- two main dialect groups: Southern Bashkardi; North Bashkardi, with different identity (Molkigāl vs. Marzigāl, respectively)



- affiliation as per available literature: Bashkardi is South-West Iranian, i.e. Persian sub-branch of Western Iranian while Balochi is North-West-Iranian (Parthian sub-branch)⁴



⁴ As pointed out by KORN (2016, 2019) and others, this model is problematic for various reasons.

In what follows, a feature being shared by X and Y does not necessarily imply that X and Y are the only Iranian varieties that shows this feature.

2.2 Problem: dialectal divergences of North and South Baskhardi⁵

Historical phonology:

Development of postsonantal stops in Baskhardi, Persian and Balochi⁶

Middle Persian	North Bš	South Bš	Balochi	Proto-Iranian
<i>ābus</i>	<i>aves</i>	<i>yōpes</i>	<i>āpus</i>	* <i>āpuθra</i> - ‘pregnant’
<i>kird</i>	<i>kerd</i>	<i>kert</i>	<i>kurt</i>	* <i>kṛta</i> - ‘done’
<i>kadām</i> (Parth.)	<i>karōn</i>	<i>katam</i>	East Bal. <i>kut^hān</i>	* <i>katāma</i> - ‘which’
<i>spēd</i>	<i>espīr</i>	<i>espīt</i>	<i>spēt</i>	* <i>spaita</i> - ‘white’

- North Bsh. shows lenition of postsonantal stops similar to Middle Persian;
but postvocalic **t* > **d* (> **δ*?) > *r*
- South Bsh.: preservation of postsonantal voiceless stops otherwise typical for Balochi:
“Von allen Dialekten hebt sich das Balütschī durch grosse Ursprünglichkeit glänzend hervor. Es hat die alten Tenues in allen Stellungen (...) bewahrt” (GEIGER 1901: 417)
Both is systematic (i.e. not limited to isolated items that could be explained as loans).

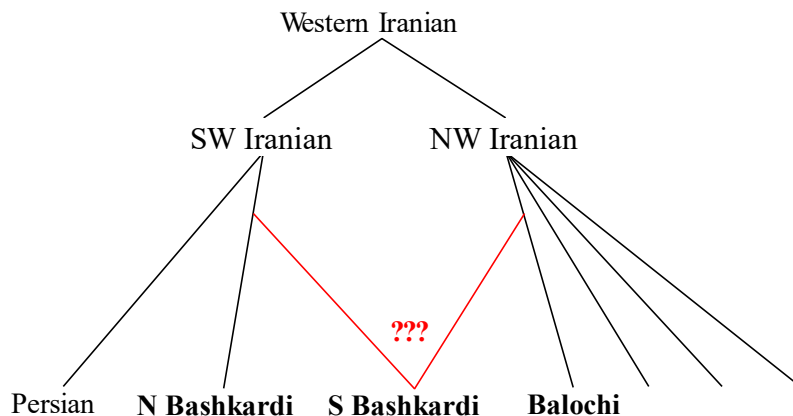
Morphology:

Pronominal clitics in Baskhardi, Middle Persian and Balochi⁷

	Middle Persian	North Baskhardi	South Baskhardi	Balochi	Old Iranian
SG 1	= <i>Vm</i>	=(<i>o/a</i>) <i>m</i> (3)	= <i>om</i>	= <i>un</i>	= <i>mai</i> , = <i>mā</i>
2	= <i>Vt</i> / = <i>Vd</i>	=(<i>e</i>) <i>t</i>	= <i>t</i>	= <i>it</i>	= <i>tai</i> , = <i>θwā</i>
3	= <i>Vš</i>	=(<i>e/a/i</i>) <i>h</i> , = <i>e</i> , (3) = <i>i</i> (3)	= <i>ī</i>	= <i>iš</i> , = <i>ē</i> , = <i>ī</i>	*= <i>šai</i> , = <i>hai</i> , = <i>īm</i> , etc.
PL 1	= <i>mān</i> , = <i>n</i>	= <i>mōn</i>	= <i>an</i> (7a, b, d)	= <i>in</i>	*= <i>nah</i>
2	= <i>tān</i> / = <i>dān</i>	= <i>tōn</i>	= <i>ox</i>	= <i>ū</i>	*= <i>wah</i>
3	= <i>šān</i> , = <i>š</i>	= <i>šān</i> , = <i>šōn</i> (1)	= <i>eš</i>	= <i>iš</i> , = <i>ēš</i>	*= <i>šām</i>

- North Bsh. shares the PL clitics in *-ān* (> *-ōn* / *-ūn*) derived from the SG as seen in Persian
- South Bsh. shows the preservation of the inherited PL clitics also found in Balochi:
“Most conservative is Balōči” (WINDFUHR 1989: 257 about the pronominal clitics, also mentioning Baskhardi)

⇒ Is South Baskhardi still “South-Western Iranian” or rather an offshoot of Balochi?



⇒ VOSKANIAN & BOYAJIAN (2007: 122): “Though the extant materials on these dialects are still limited, they do not seem to be dialect variations of the same language, but, rather, build two distinct language groups, unified — regardless their genetic characteristics — under one conventional name (Baškardī) merely on the basis of territorial coverage.”⁸

⁵ See also KORN (2021: 379) for a short list of differences between North and South Baskhardi.

⁶ Items from SKJÆRVØ 1989a, based on GERSHEVITCH’s data.

⁷ For 1PL =*n* and 3PL =*š* see JÜGEL (2015: 222, 225f.); for more details on the pronominal clitics and their development see KORN 2009. Old Iranian is cited in an underlying form, abstracting the specificities of Old Persian and Avestan.

⁸ GERSHEVITCH (1970: 163) defines North and South Baskhardi as “two distinct language groups”.

- Conversely, North and South Bashkardi do share non-trivial features.

2.3 Features of North and South Bashkardi shared with Balochi

Some verbal stems (selected forms)

	Middle Persian	North Bashkardi	South Bashkardi	Balochi	Parthian
COP.PST	(<i>būd</i>)	<i>ar</i> (2)	<i>at</i> (8)	<i>at</i>	(<i>būd</i>)
'sit down' PRS PST	<i>nišast</i> , <i>nišīn-</i>	<i>nešt</i> (4) <i>nen-</i>		<i>ništ</i> <i>nind-</i>	<i>nišast</i> <i>nišīδ-</i>
'do' PRS	<i>kun-</i>	<i>kan-</i> (3), (9)			<i>kar-</i>

- Non-trivial agreement of North and South Bsh. for some verbal stems with Balochi, against both Persian and Parthian
- COP.PST: origin unclear (thus the commonality is particularly interesting);
'sit down': PRS stem *nen-* probably < *nind-*, i.e. the form seen in Balochi;⁹
'do' PRS stem: traditionally held to be an important isogloss of SW Ir. (Old Persian *kunau-*) vs. NWIr. (Parthian, Zazaki /*kar-*/),¹⁰ but Bashkardi & Balochi differ from both

⇒ Is North Bashkardi still "South-West Iranian"
or do both South and North Bashkardi belong with Balochi?

2.4 Features of North and South Bashkardi not shared with Balochi

Structure of progressive constructions in Bashkardi, Balochi and Persian

North Bashkardi	<i>a-kerd-en=om</i> (4)	<i>a</i> -PST-INF=COP
South Bashkardi	<i>be-kert(-en)=īn</i> (10a, b)	<i>be</i> -PST(-INF)=COP
Balochi	<i>kanag-ā =un</i>	INF-OBL = COP
Persian	<i>dār-am mī-kon-am</i>	AUX-INFL ('have / hold') + PRS-INFL

- similar progressive in North and South Bashkardi (INF or PST with prefix);
Balochi (inflected infinitive) and Persian (auxiliary construction) pattern differently

South Bashkardi	<i>be-</i>	<i>kert(-en)</i>	<i>=īn</i>	'I am doing'
North Bashkardi	<i>a-</i>	<i>kerd-en</i>	<i>=om</i>	
Structure	<i>be/a-</i>	PST(-INF)	COP.1SG	

- same slots filled with different elements: cf. definition of linguistic area:
"one grammar with different lexicons" (KOPITAR 1829, quoted by FRIEDMAN 2000:2 for the classic case of the Balkan *Sprachbund*): convergence of languages of different origins that develop shared traits due to language contact
- contact-induced progressive in the NWIran / Caucasus area: Iranian and Aramaic varieties showing a locative-type progressive 'be in the state of X-ing'¹¹
- entirely parallel to Bashkardi: progressive (generalised as present tense) in Caucasian Tat (an Iranian language spoken in Azerbaijan):¹²

IPFV system of Caucasian Tat

	Jewish Tat	Muslim Tat
"eventual"	<i>mə</i> -PRS-INFL	
subjunctive	(<i>bi-</i>)PRS-INFL	(<i>bi-</i>)PRS-INFL
present tense	PST-INF=COP	<i>bā-/mī</i> -PST-INF=COP

⇒ Is Bashkardi a mini-Sprachbund (linguistic area), i.e. convergence of Iranian varieties of different origins?
This could accommodate both differences and shared traits of North and South Bashkardi.

⁹ TEDESCO (1921:223f., 247, 254), PAUL (2003: 63-67).

¹⁰ See KORN (2005: 96, 127) for suggestions on the derivation of these stems.

¹¹ Cf. VAFAEIAN (2018: 170-174), see also Section 3.2 below.

¹² Cf. KORN & SULEYMANOV 2017, SULEYMANOV (2019: 200f.).

3. A case study of convergence: The imperfective domain

3.1 The Baskhardi formations used in the IPFV domain

i.e. present tense, progressive, subjunctive, etc. (non-past domain)

The imperfective domain according to the published literature (schematic)¹³

	North Baskhardi	South Baskhardi	cf. Persian
present/future	<i>a</i> -PRS-INFL		<i>mī</i> -PRS-INFL
subjunctive	<i>be</i> -PRS-INFL	<i>be</i> -/ <i>e</i> -PRS-INFL	<i>be</i> -PRS-INFL
progressive	<i>a</i> -PST-INF=COP	<i>be</i> -PST(-INF)=COP	AUX-INFL + PRS-INFL

Distribution of verbal prefixes as seen in the data

	<i>a</i> -		<i>bé/e</i> -		Ø-	
	North Bš	South Bš	North Bš	South Bš	North Bš	South Bš
present habitual / iterative	<i>a</i> - (7b), (9)				Ø-	Ø- (7a)
future	<i>a</i> - (3), (7d)		<i>bé</i> -		Ø-	
conditional	<i>a</i> -		<i>bé</i> - (3)		Ø-	
subjunctive	<i>a</i> - (5)		<i>bé</i> -	<i>e</i> -	Ø- (6f), (7a)	
imperative			<i>bé</i> - (5), (6a, c)	<i>e</i> -	Ø- (6b, e)	
progressive	<i>a</i> - (4)			<i>be</i> - (10)		

- North Bsh. *a*- not only for present, habitual, iterative, future, but also in contexts where from a Persian perspective one would expect a SBJV (including conditional sentences)
- North Bsh. *be*- not only for SBJV and IMP, but also for future
- zero-prefixed PRS (not mentioned in the literature!) in all functions

- ▶ apparently same prefixes used for different functions?
- ▶ apparently same functions expressed by all possible means?

3.2 The progressive again

- Comparison with Tat suggests that *be*- in “subjunctive” and progressive are different elements (cf. KORN & SULEYMANOV 2017):

	SBJV	PROG	prep. ‘to’:
South Baskhardi:	<i>bé</i> -/ <i>bó</i> -	vs. <i>be</i> - (unstressed, no assimilation)	<i>ba</i>
Upper Širvan Tat:	<i>bí</i> -/ <i>bú</i> -	PRS <i>bä</i> - (unstressed, no assimilation)	<i>bä</i>

⇒ South Baskhardi progressive is a locative pattern as is the present tense of Tat

VAFAEIAN (2018: 14): “Typical grammaticalization path of progressives:
LOCATIVE → PROGRESSIVE → IMPERFECTIVE”

⇒ North Baskhardi progressive copied from Southern Baskhardi, or is the PRS/FUT prefix generalised to to another imperfective category?

North Baskhardi: PRS/FUT *a*- vs. PROG *a*- prep. ‘to’: *a*

3.3 The Baskhardi subjunctive

- modal functions also found with prefix *a*- (5)
- *be*- SBJV vs. unprefixed forms: apparently same functions as present/future and subjunctive; variation in (6) suggests that unprefixed form is the older one

⇒ prefix *be*- borrowed from Persian (as seems likely for Balochi)?

¹³ SKJÆRVØ (1989a:848f.; 1989b:367), who calls the progressive “continuous present tense”.

3.4 A scenario for the development of the imperfective categories in contact

Stage 1: Ø-PRS

unmarked PRS1 (PRS/FUT) unspecified for mood (6b, f), (7a)

- ▶ attested in Middle Iranian (which also preserves a SBJV that can also be used for FUT); various particles “in the air” for emphasising aspectual or modal nuances

Stage 2: *a*₁-PRS

*a*₁:- aspectual (imperfective) prefix of unclear origin (3), (7b, d), (9)

- ▶ innovation in South & North Bashkardi + Balochi, possibly areal phenomenon

Stage 3: *be*₁-INF/PST

*be*₁: preposition *be* ‘to’, forms PROG (locative pattern) (10)

- ▶ innovation in South Bashkardi, where the PROG is common and also occurs negated

Stage 4: *a*₂-INF

*a*₂:- PROG in North Bashkardi, where it is rare and does not seem to occur negated (cf. Persian *dāštan* pattern, which is normally not negated¹⁴)

- ▶ innovation in North Bashkardi, *a*₂- = preposition *a* ‘to’ (then a calque of the South Bsh. patter) or a generalisation of IPFV *a*₁- (then a partial calque)? (4)

Stage 5: *a*/*e*₃-PRS

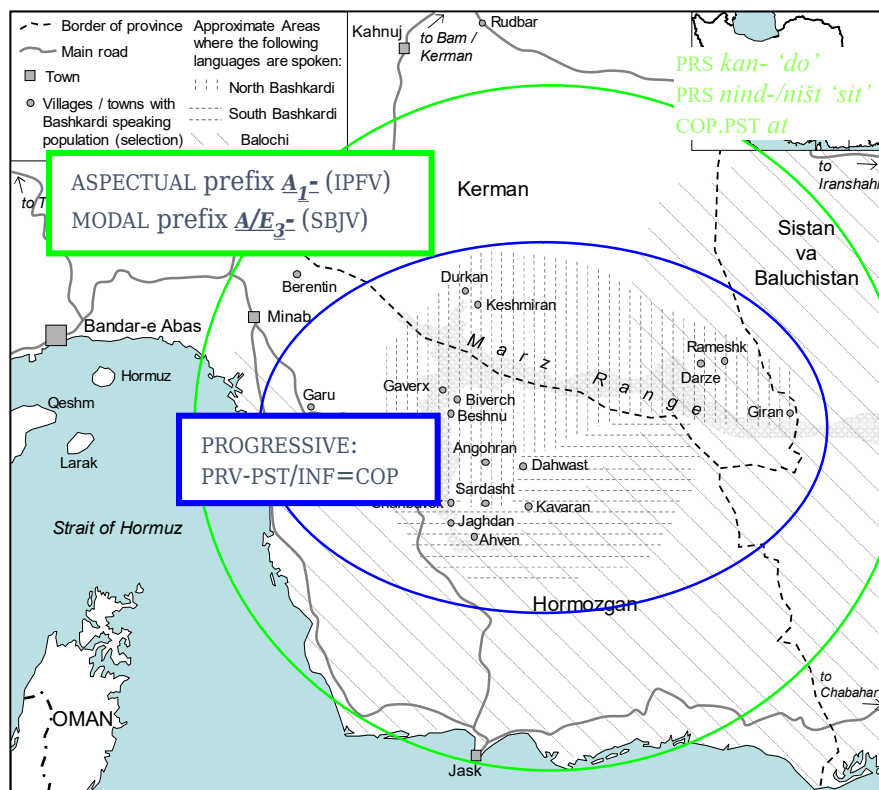
a/*e*₃:- modal prefix (5)

- ▶ innovation in South & North Bashkardi + Balochi, possibly areal phenomenon

Stage 6: *bé*₂-PRS

*bé*₂:- modal prefix (3), (5), (6a, c), (10)

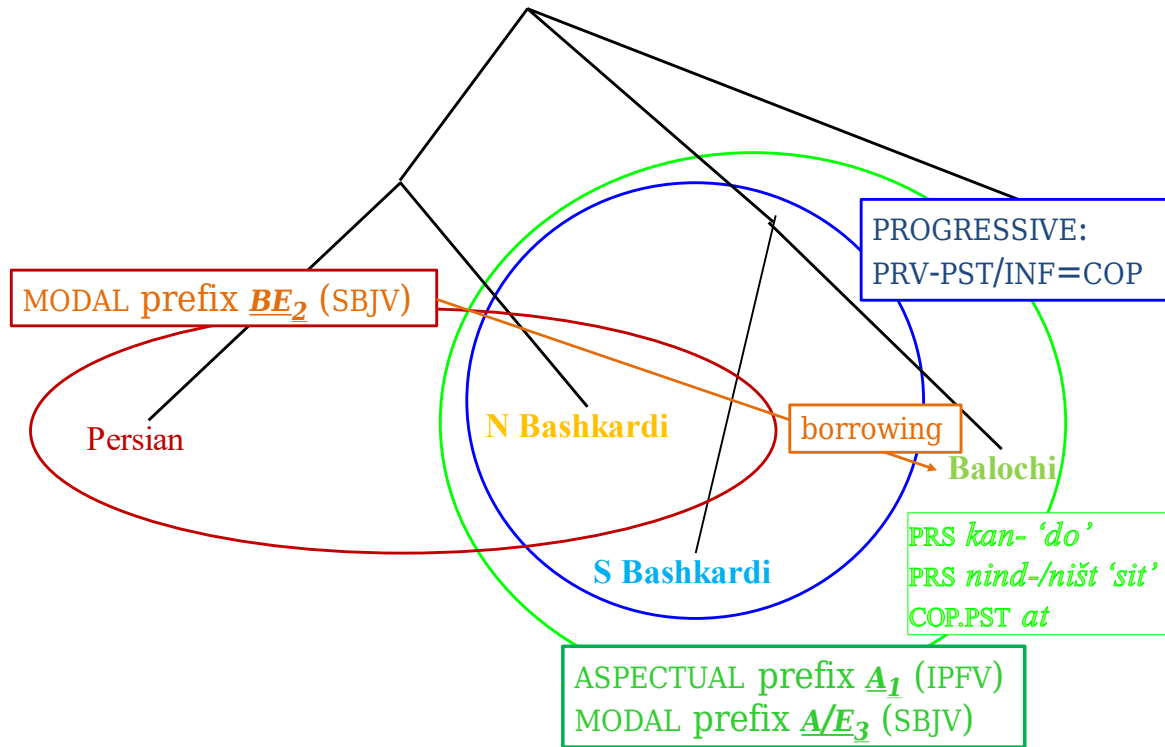
- ▶ Balochi: borrowed from Persian (limited use in Eastern Balochi dialects)
- ▶ North Bashkardi: inherited or borrowed from Persian?



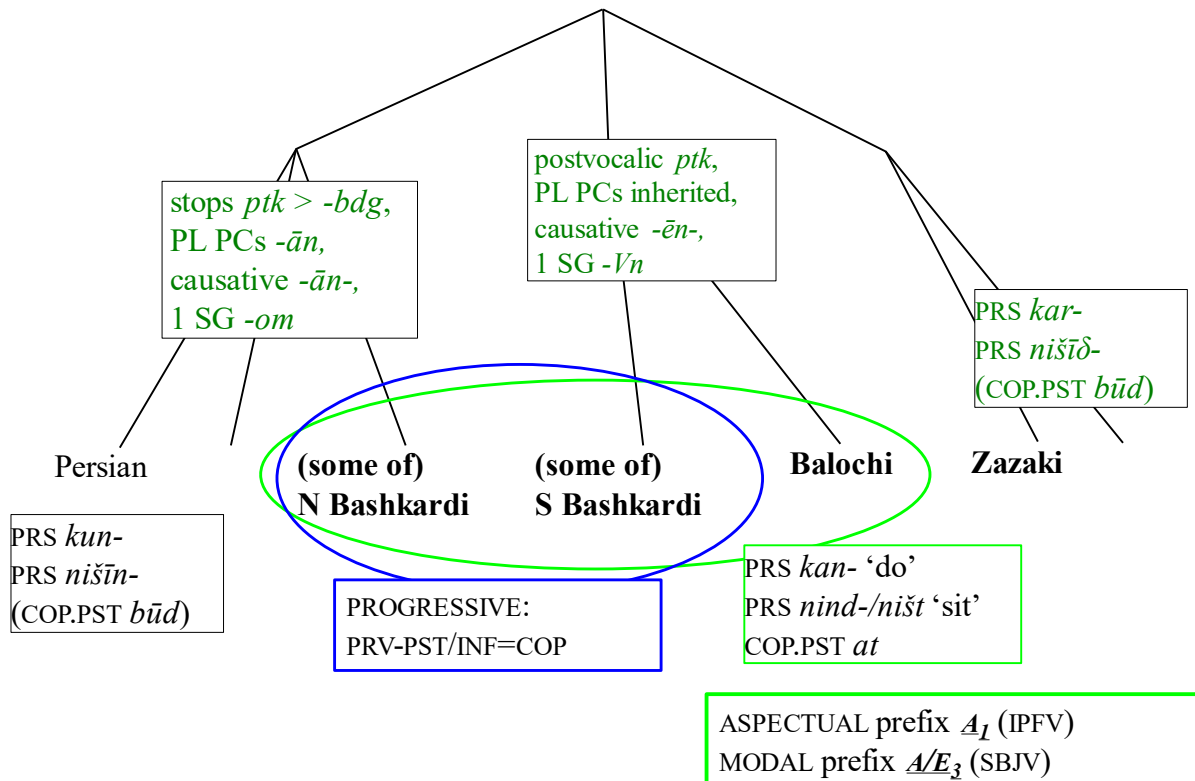
¹⁴ Cf. VAFAEIAN (2018: 79, 90), who has found isolated NEG examples, though (ibid. 102, 136-138).

4. Conclusion

- shared features of Bashkardi and Baloch mapped onto a (partial) tree:



- very preliminary suggestion of a model accounting for the data discussed in this paper (partial tree, highly simplified):
interplay of material inherited in each of the sub-branches under study with areal influences showing a convergence of North and South Bashkardi, and of both and Balochi



Appendix: ExamplesNorth Bashkardi:

- 1** *bü=šōn* *do dāna boz*
 become.PST=PC3PL two piece goat
 'They had two goats (lit. to them were to piece [of] goat).'

- NB: Expression of 'have' by 'to me is X' (no verb 'to have' in Bashkardi or Balochi);
- counting word *dāna* also for animals.

- 2** *go to hamā darbīš ī*
 say.PST you.SG DEM2 dervish COP2SG
ke šōu lahar mon ar-ī
 SUB night hut I COP.PST-2SG
 '[The shepherd] said: "You are that dervish who [one] night was in my hut."'

- NB: *ar-* shows the typically North Bsh. change of Old Ir. postvocalic *t* to *r*;
- Ezafe often not present when possessor = pronoun (KORN 2017: 88).

- 3** *go hālā aga mō jost... jōn=ī be-kan-om=e*
 say.PST now if I (false start) healthy=PC3SG SBJV-do.PRS-1SG=PC3SG
č=om a-dah-an
 what=PC1SG IPFV-give.PRS-3PL
 '[The shepherd] said: "Now if I... cure her, what would / will they give me?"'

- NB: Pronominal clitics (=ī, =e, =om) in object function in the PRS domain.

- 4** *dega hamā morg nešt=e sar gandom, gandom a-xwar(d)-én=ī*
 again DEM2 bird sit.PST=COP3SG on wheat wheat IPFV-eat.PST-INF=COP3SG
 '[The boy sees:] Again that bird sits on the wheat, it is eating the wheat.'

- NB: Focal progressive: Look, that bird is eating the wheat right now.

- 5** *be-yār-ie ke gwar=e hamie kabāb-ōn a-xwar-om*
 IMP-bring.PRS-2PL SUB side=EZ DEM1 meat-PL IPFV-eat.PRS-1SG
 'Bring [the bread] so that I might eat it with the meat!'

- NB: *gwar* 'side' = Balochi (Persian *bar*); used in a way parallel to Persian *pahlū*-ye 'id.'

- 6a** *go: konār to ya moč=ī tāg be-da*
 say.PST (tree) you.SG one handful=IND leaf SBJV-give.PRS
 'He (the jackal) said: "Konar-tree, give me a handful of leaves."

- 6b** *(aga na xo a-g-en konār konār tāg da?*
 if not well IPFV-say.PRS-3PL (tree) (tree) leaf give.PRS
 If not, well, they say [in fact]: "Konar, Konar, give [me] leaves!"' ...
 [discussion in the background]

- 6c** *be hamā-tau bo-go*
 to that-way IMP-say.PRS
 [Someone else:] 'Say it that way.'

- 6d** *hamā-tau bo-g-om?*
 that-way SBJV-say.PRS-1SG
 'Should I say it in that way?'
 [confirmation from the others present]

- 6e** *xob. gu: konār konār tāg da*
 well say.PST (tree) (tree) leaf give.PRS
 'OK. He said: "Konar-tree, give [me] leaves,

- 6f** *tāg barr-om boz-ā, boz ger-om šīr-ā,*
 leaf carry.PRS-1SG goat-DIR goat seize.PRS-1SG milk-DIR
 [so that] I take the leaves to the goat, take milk [from] the goat, ..."

South Baskhardi:

7a yâ moraxxas=**an** kî
 or permitted_to_leave=**PC1PL** do.PRS.3SG
 ke ra-m ba xârêja
 SUB go.PRS-1PL to abroad

‘... or he sets us free so that we (can) go abroad.’

7b kasxodâ=i dūdâ=**n** a-m-vâ,
 headman=EZ PN=**PC1PL** IPFV-NEG-want.PRS.3SG
 We do not want the headman Duda.¹⁵

7c bîzâr om, bîzâr om,
 desperate COP.1PL desperate COP.1PL
 We are desperate; we are desperate;

7d a-yôz-et=**an** salâh=**ah** e
 IPFV-kill-PRS.3SG=**PC1PL** power=**PC3SG** COP.3SG
 he will kill us; that’s his capacity.’

- NB (b): Expression of ‘want’ with a non-canonical subject (‘to us is (not) desirable’); interesting position of negation (after prefix)

8 balôčkâra-n ham ord at-en yok balôčkâra=e yok naxîb
 freeman-PL also there COP.PST-3PL one freeman=IND one servant
 ‘The freemen were there, one freeman and one servant.’¹⁶

9 az ordû jêin a-kan-în a-ra-în ahven
 from PN place IPFV-do.PRS-1SG IPFV-go.PRS-1SG PN
 ‘From Ordu,¹⁷ I set out [and] go to Ahven.’

10a [Kadxodâ:] to çe be-kert=o
 you.SG what IPFV-do.PST=COP2SG
 Kadkhoda: ‘What are you doing?’

10b men samât be-čint=în
 I dung IPFV-collect.PST=COP1SG
 ‘I am collecting dung.’



¹⁵ Duda is a Balochi name from the epic tradition; maybe the Kadkhoda was a Baloch.

¹⁶ The *balôčkâra* were a high-rank social group while the *naxîb* were servants to the upper classes (Gerardo Barbera, p.c.).

¹⁷ In this context, Ordu is more likely to be a place name than mean ‘camp’.

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