

Theoretical Perspectives on the Genesis of the Dari Language

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Keywords: Dari Language, Persian Language, Pahlavi Language, Tokharian Language, Sogdian Language, Pashto Language, Afghanistan, Khurasan, Mashriq.

Abstract: The Dari language is one of Afghanistan's official languages. Numerous studies have investigated the lexicon and grammar of the Dari language. However, scarce scientific literature exists concerning the etymology of the term "Dari." This article focuses on this subject and analyses diverse notions about the term "Dari."

1 INTRODUCTION

The Dari language, which belongs to the Iranian language group, boasts a history of nearly 2000 years. Sources have recorded information about this language since the 10th century. Various terms have been used to refer to this language for many years (in scientific literature, terms like Farsi, Farsi-ye Kabuli, and Kābulī Persian are found). However, it was officially renamed as the Dari language in the Constitution of Afghanistan in 1964 and granted official status. The legal protection granted to Dari as an independent language has bolstered its position, elevating the status of state language policy. Furthermore, this reform has ushered in a new era of Dari linguistics.

It is widely recognized that the modern Persian, Dari, and Tajik languages, which succeeded the classical Dari language between the 10th and 15th centuries, belong to the Iranian languages within the southwestern group of the Indo-European language family. The key stages in the origin and historical development of these languages overlap and share common written sources.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed analysis, synthesis, and diachronic historical-comparative methods.

3 RESULTS

The Dari language dates back almost 2,000 years, with sources from the 10th century providing information about it. The earliest known inscriptions in Dari are stone monuments discovered in the Sorkh Kotal area of the Baghlan Valley. These monuments were a significant turning point in the history of the Dari language, as they proved that it was an independent language separate from Pahlavi and Persian.

4 DISCUSSIONS

Before the Islamic conquest, Afghanistan was home to multiple languages, including Dari, Tokharian, Sogdian, Greek, Pashto, and Pahlavi, which was the official language of Parthia. Pahlavi took its name from the place formerly known as Pahlā, later renamed Khorezm. Parthia claimed territory in Isfahan, Ray, Hamadan, and some portions of Azerbaijan. These regions are reinforced by Abdullah ibn Muqaffa's claims. This information has come down to us through Muhammad Ishaq ibn Ya'qub Nadim's "الفهرست" Al-fehrest ("Catalogue") (987). It states:

دری زبان شهر نشینان بود و درباریان با آن سخن میگفتند و منسوب به دربار پادشاهی است و از میان زبان های اهل خراسان و مشرق، زبان مردم بلخ در آن بیشتر بود. اما پارسی، زبان مؤیدان (روحانیون زردشتی) (گزیده بود که در پارس مردم به آن دین معتقد بودند و امثال آنان بود و مردم فارس به آن سخن میگفتند

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[...Dari served as the tongue in the Madoyin cities, being spoken by those inhabiting the palace, whilst also being exclusive to the king's court. When comparing the dialects of the people living in Khurasan and Mashriq, the dialect originating from Balkh surpasses all. However, the language spoken by the mubad, ulama, and Zoroastrian priests, as well as the general populace of Persia, is Persian.] (Hakikiy A. 1372.)

There were two variations of the Pahlavi language: northern (شمالی پهلوی pahlawi-ye šemâli) and southern (جنوبی پهلوی pahlawi-ye janubi). It is also referred to as "پارتی" pârî or "اشکانی" aškâni in the northern dialect, which was later adapted to the Persian language. The southern variant, on the other hand, is known as "پهلوی ساسانی" pahlawi-ye sâsâni (Moin M. 1343). According to scholars, the Dari language is believed to have derived from the northern dialect (Yamin M. 1393). It is challenging to concur with the claim as some evidence suggests the use of the Dari language during the Pahlavi period.

An inscription discovered in the Sorkh Kotal area of Baghlan Valley serves as a credible source that distinguishes the Dari language from Pahlavi. This inscription was based on Tokharian and Greek calligraphy, establishing Dari as an autonomous language that existed for nearly two millennia. About this A. Habibi in the book "بعد از اسلام تاریخ افغانستان" Târix-e Afgânestân ba'd az eslâm ("Afghanistan's Post-Islamic History") noted:

این نظر جدید علمی که زبان دری افغانستان از زبان پهلوی نژادیده، اکنون یک سند قوی و واضحی را پیدا کرده، که آن عبارت از کشف سنگ نباشته در تخارستانی در سرخ کوتل بغلان است اکنون که سنگ نبشته مکتوبه بغلان را بزبان دری تخاری و رسم الخط یونانی می بینیم اعتراض می کنیم، که زبان دری کنونی از پهلوی منشعب نشده، بلکه در مدت یک هزار و هشت صد سال تا دو هزار سال پیش ازین در تخارستان تاریخی زبان تکلم و تحریر و ادب و دربار بوده، که اینک ۲۵ سطر نوشته آنرا در حدود ۱۶۰ لفظ بهمان شکل قدیم و عناصر کهن تاریخی در دست داریم، و بنابراین کشف این سنگ نبشته گرانبها تحولی را در عالم زبان شناسی و تاریخ ادبیات افغانستان بوجود می آورد، و عقاید کهنه را متزلزل میگرداند.

[The latest scientific theory that suggests Dari, the language spoken in Afghanistan, is not a sub-branch of Pahlavi has been convincingly proven by a recently discovered stone inscription in Baghlan Sorkh Kotal (pass), located in Takharistan. Based on the evidence presented by the Baghlan find, specifically the inscription stone written in the Takhari Dari language and Greek calligraphy style, it can be concluded that the present Dari language did not originate from the Pahlavi language. Instead, it is evident that 1800-2000 years ago in ancient Takharistan, this language was used for speech, writing, and literature, and even as the court language. Now in existence is a 25-line

inscription comprising approximately 160 words. This inscription bears the same old form and ancient historical elements, consequently making this petroglyph invaluable. It significantly contributes to the field of linguistics and Afghan literature's history, and challenges prior beliefs.] (1345)

Scientists have recorded the existence of the Dari language prior to the ascension of the Sassanid dynasty. Notably, Afghan orientalist M.H. Yamin provides insight into this matter:

زبان دری قبل از برقراری ساسانیان در نواحی باختر (باکتریا) رو به هستی می گذارد؛ چنانکه در اواخر ساسانی و آغاز دوره اسلامی نمونه های از آن در کتب تاریخی و جغرافیه نویسان عرب دیده می شود.

[...The Dari language existed in the region of Bactria before the Sassanid dynasty. For instance, its usage can be witnessed in the writings of Arab historians and geographers who lived during the concluding days of Sassanid reign and the early Islamic era...] (1393.)

P.M. Haidarjubal also confirms the above points: زبان دری ...تاریخ چیز کم دو هزار سال [دارد]، در دوره های قبل از اسلام وجود داشته و در افغانستان [خراسان کهن] وجود آمده نخست زبان مردم خراسان بوده و بعداً انتشار آن به غرب [ایران ...] امروز [صورت گرفته

[The Dari language..., with a history of almost two thousand years, dates to pre-Islamic times and emerged in Afghanistan (ancient Khorasan)... Originally the language of the people of Khurasan, it later spread to the west (now Iran)....] (1379.)

It is evident that "فرهنگ جهانگیری" Farhang-e Jahângiri (Dictionary of Jahangir) by Husayn Inju distinguishes between Dari and Pahlavi (Persian) languages as separate entities:

پارسی زبانی را گویند که در بلاد پارس که دارالملک آن استخر است مردمان بدان سخن کند، و استخر اول شهر است که کیومرث بنا کرده و عهد پیشدادیان بغایت آبادانی رسیده و در تفسیر دلیلی مسطور است .. دوم دری است، گروهی دری را به فصیح تعبیر نموده اند، و نیز گفته اند که هر لغتی که در آن نقصانی نبود دری باشد، ... و بعضی گفته اند که دری لغتی باشد که سکن چند شهر بدان تنطق نمایند، و آن شهرها بلخ بامی و مرو شهبان و بخارا بود، و در کتابی دیده ام که دری لغت مردم بدخشانست و فرقه آورده اند که زبانی را که مردمان درگاه کیان بان متکلم میشده اند دری نامند ... سوم پهلوی بود، پهلوی نام پدر پارس است که این لغت از زبان او مستقیم گشته، و فرقه به بیان آورده اند که پهلوی منسوب " به پهل باشد، و پهل ری و اسپهان و دینور است

[Persian is the language spoken by the inhabitants of the land of Pors, with its capital in Istakhr. Istakhr was constructed by Kiyumars and was the first city in the region to prosper during the Pishdadi dynasty. However, it was destroyed during the Daylami dynasty. The second language is Dari. Some describe it as a beautiful language and believe that any word spoken with precision is considered Darician. It is spoken by people residing in the cities of Balkh, Merv and Bukhara. According to a book I read, Dari is also

spoken by the people of Badakhshan and was once a language of the Kiyani state. The third item concerns the Pahlavi language, which was named after the father of Pahlaw Pors. The term "Pahlaw" is believed to have originated from the name Pahlā, which encompassed the cities of Ray, Isfahan, and Dinur.] (1351).

Muhammad Husain Tabrizi also expresses a similar opinion in the dictionary "برهان قاطع" Borhân-e qâte ("Strict Evidences"):

دری آنست که در آن نقصانی نبود همچو: ابریشم و اسپید و اشکم و اشتر و برو و بدو و بگو و بشنو و امثال آنها. پس بریشم و سپید و شکم و شتر و رو و دو و گو و شنو دری نباشد و چند دیگر در گفتار نهم در بیان دال و رای بی نقطه مذکور است. و پهلوی منسوب است به "پهله" که پدر پارس و پسر سام بن نوح باشد و این لغت از زبان او مستقیض گشته. بعضی گویند که منسوب است به "پهله" که آن ولایت ری و اسفهان و دینور باشد، یعنی زبان مردم آن ولایت است و جمعی بر آنند که پهلوی زبان شهری است، چه "پهله" بمعنی شهر نیز آمده است. و پارسی زبانی را گویند که در ولایت پارس - که دارالملک استخر است - مردمان بدان سخن کنند و بعد از عربی زبانی بهتر از پارسی نیست.

[The Dari language boasts a range of words that are free from defects; for instance, abrišom, aspid, eškam, oštor, beraw, bedaw, begu, bešenaw, and more. Conversely, words like barišom, sapid, šekam, šotor, raw, daw, gu, and šenaw are not Dari, and this was conveyed in the ninth conversation, which covered the sounds of dol and dotless ro. The term Pahlavi (language) alludes to Pahlā, father of Pors and son of Sam ibn Nuh, and the word has roots in his language. Some suggest that the term Pahlavi originates from the Pahlā region, which unites the areas of Rai, Isfahan, and Dinur. It is considered the language of the people from this region. Alternatively, some say that Pahlavi refers to the language spoken in cities and that "Pahlā" is also occasionally used to refer to a city. Persian is spoken by the inhabitants of the Pors region, with Istakhr as its capital, and many consider it to be the second-best language after Arabic.] (1343)

Thus, it is confirmed in the dictionaries that the Persian language stemmed from Pahlavi and the Dari language is independent. The definitions in the dictionaries are alike, and the authors combined the three languages described above into the term 'Common Persian Language', encompassing Iranian languages, with grammatical notes interpreted as Persian language rules.

M. Muin asserts that the "Borhân-e Qâte" dictionary ("Confirm Evidence"), was compiled in the Dari language. Moreover, he cites that this dictionary recorded Dari as an independent language prior to Pahlavi (1343).

While Dari and Pahlavi share some similarities, their origins are distinct. However, H. Yamin

disagrees with the aforementioned viewpoints and contends that the Pahlavi language had its roots in the name of the Pors region, not in the name of Pahlā:

کلمه پارثوی نیز که از ریشه پارتیه و پارتیه مشتق شده است " شکل نسبتی آن پارثوی بود که بعداً پهلوی گردیده است؛ زیرا در زبانهای ایرانی تبدیل /ر/ به /ل/ و ابدال /س/، /ث/ به /ه/ یک حادثه عادی بوده است؛ بنابراین پارثوی تبدیل به پهلوی گردیده بعد آبا تقدیم و تاخیز حرو □ /ل/ و /ه/ شکل پهلوی را به خود گرفته است؛ بدین گونه پارثوی ها (پارتها) پهلوی ها گفته شده و زبان پارثوی زبان "پهلوی نامیده شده است".

The word Porsavi is derived from the root morphemes Portia and Porsia, with its relative form being porsavi. Later on, porsavi evolved into Pahlavi due to the common Iranian practice of changing the sound of 're' to 'lom' and the sound of 'sin' to 'ho-yi havvaz'. As a result, the word Parsavi was transformed into Pahlavi, and later, the sounds 'lom' and 'ho-yi havvaz' were assimilated. Consequently, the Parsavis (also known as Portians) were subsequently referred to as Pahlavis, and the language they spoke was known as the Pahlavi language.

According to M.H. Yamin's analysis, the Pahlavi language originated from the Parsavi language, which is an ancient form of Persian. During the period of Middle Persian, it was known as Pahlavi and later referred to as Persian or Farsi during the period of New Persian. The study of the Persian language in Iranian studies typically involves division into Old, Middle, and New Persian languages. The Pahlavi language is equivalent to the Middle Persian language.

Western scholars, including Abdullah ibn Muqaffa, P.N. Khanlari, Z. Safo, G. Lazard, and U. Bimen, have proposed that the term "dari" is derived from the Persian word for palace, "درگاه" dargâh. Specifically, P.N. Khanlari believes this to be the case:

مقدسی در ذکر زبان مردم بخارا می نویسد زبانشان دری ... است و هر چه از آن گونه باشد دری خوانده می شود، زیرا که آن زبانی است که به آن نامه های شاه را می نویسند و با آن عریضه به شاه می فرستند، و اشتقاق آن از در است که باب (درگاه) باشد یعنی "آن زبانی است که در درگاه (شاه) به آن گفتگو می کنند

[Muqaddasi noted that the people of Bukhara speak Dari and that this language is used for all official correspondence, including letters and petitions addressed to the king. The term "Dari" is derived from "dar", meaning palace, as it was spoken in the royal court.]

Some scholars suggest that the word "dari" originated from "دره" dara. This concept was originally introduced in the explanation of the term Dari found in Allahdad Fayzi ibn Asadululamo Alisher al-Sarhindi's "مدار الافاضل" Madâr-ul-afâzel ("Circle of Scholars") dictionary. Additionally, it can

also be observed in the introduction of R. Rahin's book "سرگذشت زبان فارسی دری" Sargozašt-e zabân-e fârsi-ye dari ("History of Farsi-ye Dari Language"):

فارسی دری منسوب به دره کوه را نیز گویند، همچون کبک
دری: محمد پادشاه شاذ در کتاب خود به نام قاموس آنندراج گویند
دری زبانی است از هفت زبان فارسی که به دره کوه منسوب است
"چه در زبان سابق در دره های کوه ها، روستاییان بدان ناطق بودند

[It is suggested that the name "Dari" originates from the term Farsi-ye Dari, meaning mountain gorge, such as the Dara kaklig. According to Shahz's King Muhammad in his book "Anandroj Dictionary," the Dari language belongs to the valley situated at the base of the mountains, and it is one of the seven languages of Persian. The inhabitants of the mountainous foothills and villages spoke this language.] (Rahin R. 1388)

There is an alternative view that suggests the term "Dari" actually originates from the Tahari language, as demonstrated by the sound change of خ x in the word "تخاری" taxâri, which was altered to ها h and subsequently lost the ا alef to become Tahri. The ت t sound then changed to د d, resulting in the evolution from "تهری" to "دهری" and finally to "دری" dari (Rahin R. 1388).

We believe that the notion that Dari is only referred to as such due to its association with the court is incorrect. Due to the aforementioned facts, the Dari language was spoken by the inhabitants of the Ancient Khurasan, Mashriq, and Balkh regions before it was adopted as the court language. The language grew in prominence during the reign of the Sasanian dynasty (3-6th centuries) and became the official language of the court.

Scholars commonly cite the use of Dari and Persian names by poets as evidence that Dari is a dialect of Persian. For example, the translation of "تفسیر طبری" Tafsir-e Tabari (961 (962) - 975 (976)) in Persian is initiated as below:

و این کتاب تفسیر بزرگ است از روایت محمد بن جریر
"طبری... ترجمه کرده به زبان پارسی و دری راه راست

[and this book is a great commentary on the narration of Muhammad ibn Jarir At-Tabari... translated literally into Persian and Dari.]

Balaamy writes in the Arabic preface to "تاریخ" Târix-e Tabari ("The History of Tabari"):

"فَقَدْ تَرَجَمْتُهُ بِلُغَةِ الْفَارَسِيَّةِ الدَّرِيَّةِ"

[I translated this book into Persian.] (Tabari N. 1339.)

It should be said here that P.N. Khanlari From Firdavsi:

بفرمود تا پارسی و دری نبشتند و خوتاه شد داوری

[Writing in Persian and Dari was ordered and the debate was short]

Quoting a sentence from the source, the author expressed their assumption that the "w" and connective were added by the scribe when combining Persian and Dari. Additionally, they mentioned the potential to interpret Farsi as a colloquial language and Dari as an indication of the specific Persian dialect. According to O. Ismailov, it was believed by Firdavsi that Persian was the colloquial language and Dari was the official state language on this continent. The decree was issued by the ruler in both the official language of the palace and the everyday vernacular. As the poet stated, "Conflicts and quarrels have ended".

Since the 10th century, the use of Dari, Persian, and Pahlavi languages in prose and poetry samples has led to numerous complications. For instance, Firdavsi employed Dari, Persian (Persian), Pahlavi, and Middle Persian names in "Shahnama".

J. Humayi explains that the use of Dari and Persian languages simultaneously in poetry is a common practice. It is important to note that the poet uses the language for specific purposes with intention and care. The poet does not let one language dominate the other; instead, they balance the two languages to create a unique and harmonious blend. Additionally, the use of Dari and Persian gives the poet access to a wider range of vocabulary, allowing for more expressive and precise language. Thus, this linguistic practice is a testament to the richness of the Persian literary tradition.

چنان که میدانیم نویسنده گان و شعرای قدیم ایران شعر و نثر
خود را دری می نامیدند و این زبان را به علتی زبان فارسی هم
"میگویند و از فارسی در اینجا مراد ایرانیست

[It is known that ancient Iranian writers and poets referred to their poetry and prose as Dari, which is also known as Persian.]

Persian is derived from the name of the country, Iran. Thus, when poets referred to the Persian language, they were referring to the language of the Pors region.

Sources note that during the initial centuries of the Islamic era, the Dari colloquial language lacked unification and consisted of numerous local forms (Lazard G. 2014). Eventually, these variations merged into two primary dialects, namely: 1) northeastern, covering Khurasan, Mowarounnahr, and the northern region of present-day Afghanistan; 2) southern, consisting of the area ranging from Khuzestan to Seistan (Lazard G. 2014).

Ancient texts, written in the Arabic script, were based on the northeastern dialect. Dari literature blossomed during the Samanid reign in Movarounnahr and Khorasan regions for the first time. Poets and writers from other parts of Iran drew

inspiration from their Eastern counterparts in the 10th and 11th centuries. J. Lazard noted that they purged the language of certain regional aspects. This action was taken since the poetry of the Samanid epoch in Movarounnahr used many local words; Asadi Tusi's book "لغت فرس" *Loğat-e Furs* ("Persian Dictionary") records this phenomenon. The *Loğat-e Furs* was created specifically for readers in western Iran who are unfamiliar with certain words. However, the language used by the writers in their work was based on the Northeastern dialect, which resulted in the development of the classical Dari language. Afghan scientist M.H. Tanvir said that the Dari language is not a dialect, but an independent language in his article. The etymology of the Dari language is very well explained in this article. According to the scientist, those who still call the Dari language "Persian" stole the ideas of Iranian scientists. They damaged the prestige of the Dari language without learning it themselves. He points out that the language policy carried out in Iran had a direct impact on Afghanistan, which was reflected in the studies of scientists who consider the Dari language to be a dialect (https://www.heratonline.com/farhang/tarikh_zaban_dari.html).

The influence of the Dari language on the Pahlavi language is acknowledged historically. However, Iranian scholars' perception of the Dari language as a dialect and efforts to expand the Persian language's sphere of influence can be seen as language policy imposition. A review of existing research on Dari and Persian linguistics reveals that most researchers have relied on the works of Iranian scholars.

After the Samanid dynasty ascended to power in the 9th century, both Dari and Arabic languages gained greater influence, which accelerated the impact on the Persian language. Consequently, Dari has become a language acclaimed for not merely palace discourse, but also scientific and poetic discourse. Many works have been translated into Dari. The Dari language's status as a Persian dialect despite being the language used by scientists and poets in court is puzzling.

One explanation for this is the increasing influence of Persian during the Safavid dynasty (1502-1736). Ismail Safavi I, the dynasty's founder, came from the Azaris of the Pors region, and the territories he conquered didn't include the Balkh region. Therefore, he designated Persian as the language of the court. Subsequently, he elevated the status of Turkish to that of the state's official language, garnering adulation from Azerbaijanis. Additionally, it must be remembered that the term 'Persian' in the phrase 'Dari language belonging to the

Persian languages' in the aforementioned works and explanatory dictionaries refers to Iranian languages.

According to G. Lazard, the term "Farsi-ye Dari" referred to the new Persian language, which was popular until the 11th century. The poets who wrote in New Persian found it more convenient to write in the Dari language with Arabic script, which they called "Farsi-ye Dari" (10th to 11th centuries - X.U.). Lazard argues that the term "Farsi-ye Dari" originated during the Sassanid period. Later, as the Middle Persian language began to fade, the suffix "Farsi-ye Dari" no longer required the inclusion of the word Dari. Consequently, it was removed from the term, ultimately leading to the creation of the term "Farsi language".

By the mid-18th century, the Baburi dynasty (Mongols - L.N. Kiseleva) in the east and the Safavid kingdom in the west had joined the Afghan territories to form an independent state called Afghanistan (the Durrani kingdom was established in 1747 - X.U.). The state declared "Indian Persian" or "Afghan Persian" as the official language of the region, which is today known as "Dari". As per

L.N. Kiseleva's account, this amalgamation was carried out objectively and cohesively without any subjective evaluations. This language, spoken in Iran, differs from the standard literary language. Its peculiarities are not only in its lexicon but also in its many Hindi acquisitions, phonological, and morphological systems. The archaic elements of the phonemes ô and ê and the forms of the verb system were preserved during the historical period.

Scholars have given this language various names, including Farsi-ye Kabuli (Dorofeeva L.N. 1960.) and Kābulī Persian (Bogdanov L. 1930.). The frequent references to the Dari language in various works and its presence in poetic samples demonstrate its dominant position in the past. Thus, designating the Dari language as Farsi-ye Dari or Farsi-ye Kabuli is unnecessary.

U.A. Rubinchik (1960) has noted that the modern Persian and Tajik languages have changed the further development of the Dari language, concluding that they are two branches of the same language. In conclusion, these two sources present different perspectives on the relationship between these languages/dialects. Meanwhile, M.N. Saidi (1392) considers Dari, Persian, and Tajik to be three geographical dialects of the Persian language, with Persian being the original language with various dialects in different regions.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In 1964, the official status of Dari and its designation as a distinct language in Article 3 of the Afghan Constitution provide evidence of its restored authority. It is incorrect to conflate Dari and Persian or classify Dari as a dialect.

Dari can be traced back almost 2,000 years, with sources mentioning it dating as far back as the 10th century. The earliest relics composed in the Dari tongue are stone carvings discovered in the region of Sorkh Kotal within the Baghlan Valley. These inscriptions signified a significant shift in the evolution of Dari as a language, evidencing its autonomy from Pahlavi and Persian tongues.

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