

Chapter 20

Iranian languages

Dénes Gazsi

Iranian languages, spoken from Turkey to Chinese Turkestan, have been in language contact with Arabic since pre-Islamic times. Arabic as a source language has provided phonological and morphological elements, as well as a plethora of lexical items, to numerous Iranian languages under recipient-language agentivity. New Persian, the most significant member of this group, has been a prominent recipient of Arabic language elements. This study provides an overview of the historical development of this contact, before analyzing Arabic elements in New Persian and other New Iranian languages. It also discusses how Arabic has influenced Modern Persian dialects, and how Persian vernaculars in the Persian Gulf region of Iran have incorporated Arabic lexemes from Gulf Arabic dialects.

1 Current state and historical development

1.1 Iranian languages

Iranian languages, along with Indo-Aryan and Nuristani languages, constitute the group of Indo-Iranian languages, which is a sizeable branch of the Indo-European language family. The term “Iranian language” has historically been applied to any language that descended from a proto-Iranian parent language spoken in Asia in the late third to early second millennium BCE (Skjærvø 2012).

Iranian languages are known from three chronological stages: Old, Middle, and New Iranian. Persian is the only language attested in all three historical stages. New Persian, originally spoken in Fārs province, descended from Middle Persian, the language of the Sasanian Empire (third–seventh centuries CE), which is the progeny of Old Persian, the language of the Achaemenid Empire (sixth–fourth centuries BCE). New Persian is divided into Early Classical (ninth–twelfth centuries CE), Classical (thirteenth–nineteenth centuries) and Modern Persian (from the nineteenth century onward), the latter considered to be based on the dialect of Tehran (Jeremiás 2004: 427).



Today, Iranian languages are spoken from the Caucasus, Turkey, and Iraq in the west to Pakistan and Chinese Turkestan in the east, as well as in a large diaspora in Europe and the Americas. New Iranian languages are divided into two main groups: Western and Eastern Iranian languages. The focus of this study is New Persian, the most significant member among Iranian languages, but a brief overview of Arabic influence on other New Iranian languages will also be provided. Below is a list of the most important members and their geographical distribution (Schmitt 1989: 246).

1.1.1 Western Iranian languages

1.1.1.1 Southwestern group

Persian (*Fārsī*) (spoken throughout Iran and adjacent areas), Tajik (the variety of New Persian in Central Asia), Darī Persian (Afghanistan), Kumzārī (Musandam Peninsula). Persian dialects in this group include Dizfūli (Khuzestan province), Lurī (ethnic group along the Zagros mountain range), Baḥtiārī (nomadic tribe in the Zagros mountains), Fārs dialects (Fārs province), Lāristānī dialects (Lāristān region of Fārs province), Bandarī (dialects spoken around Bandar ʿAbbās in the Persian Gulf region, to which Finī also belongs).

1.1.1.2 Northwestern group

Kurdish, Zazaki (in eastern Turkey), Gurānī (in eastern Iraq and western Iran), Balūčī (Balochi, spoken chiefly in Iranian and Pakistani Baluchistan, and parts of Oman). Non-literary languages and dialects: Tātī, Tālišī and Gilakī (on the shores of the Caspian Sea), Central dialects (spoken in a vast area between Hamadān, Kāšān and Iṣfahān), Kirmānī (south of the Dašt-i Kawīr).

1.1.2 Eastern Iranian languages

1.1.2.1 Southeastern group

Pashto (Afghanistan, Pakistan, eastern border region of Iran), Pamir languages (Pamir Mountains along the Pānj River).

1.1.2.2 Northeastern group

Yaḡnōbi (Zarafšān region of Tajikistan), Ossetic (central Caucasus).

1.2 Historical development of Arabic–Persian language contact

Language contact between Arabic and Persian has been a reciprocal process for the past 1500 years. During the pre-Islamic and early Islamic era (sixth–seventh centuries CE), Middle Persian, being embedded in the well-established and sophisticated Iranian culture, provided many loanwords to pre-Classical and Classical Arabic (Gazsi 2011: 1015; see also van Putten, this volume) under RL (recipient-language) agentivity (Van Coetsem 1988; 2000). With the collapse of the Sasanian Empire and expansion of Islam and the Arabic language over vast territories outside Arabia, Classical Arabic began to exercise an unprecedented impact on the emerging New Persian language. Arabic never took root in the everyday communication of the ethnically Persian population, although it gained some dominance as a written vehicle in the administrative, theological, literary and scientific domains in the eastern periphery of the Abbasid Caliphate. Instead, spoken Middle Persian (*Darī*) flourished as a vernacular language. In the middle of the ninth century CE, it was in this part of Iran, specifically in Fārs province, that *Darī* emerged in a new form as it repositioned itself in the culture and literature of the local populace. This new literary language, the revitalization of the Persian linguistic heritage, would be called New Persian. Since its earliest phase, New Persian has borrowed a staggering number of loanwords. Initially, these loanwords were borrowed from various northwestern and eastern Iranian languages, such as Parthian and Sogdian. Despite this relatively large group of loans, the most versatile lenders were the Arabs. Whereas in the pre-Islamic era Arabic had almost exclusively taken lexical items from Middle Persian (in the fields of religion, botany, science and bureaucracy among others), New Persian also incorporated Arabic morphosyntactic elements.

The first Arabic loanwords began to permeate New Persian in the ninth–tenth centuries CE (20–30%). This process was not even diminished by the Iranian *šūfīyya* movement, the major output of which was all conducted in Arabic. In subsequent centuries, Persian continued to absorb an ever-expanding set of Arabic lexemes. By the turn of the twelfth century, the proportion of Arabic loans increased to approximately 50%. The majority of Arabic loans had already been integrated into New Persian by that time and have shown a remarkable steadiness until recently.

After the fall of Baghdad in 1258 CE, Arabic lost its foothold in the eastern provinces of the Caliphate, thereby drawing the final boundary between the use of Arabic and Persian (Danner 2011). The Mongol Ilkhānids, who as non-Muslims were not dependent on Arabic, introduced Persian as the language of education and administration in Iran and Anatolia. Despite the significant de-

struction the Mongols caused to northern Iran during their conquest, this period (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries CE) is considered to be the zenith of Persian literature. This is also the epoch when literary Persian is, in an excessive way, inundated with Arabic language elements. This phenomenon is easily detectable in the works of one of the most significant personalities in Classical Persian literature, and a pre-eminent poet of thirteenth-century Persia, Saʿdī of Shiraz. Following the norms of Persian prose writing and poetry of his time, Saʿdī flooded his writings with a bewildering array of Arabic language elements. To illustrate this, here is a typical sentence from Saʿdī's *Gulistān* 'Rose Garden' (completed in 1258 CE), where words of Arabic origin are highlighted in boldface (Yūsifi 2004: 77).

- (1) اگر رای عزیز فلان ، أحسن الله خلاصه ، به جانب ما التفات کند در رعایت خاطرش هرچه تمامتر سعی کرده شود واعیان این مملکت به دیدار او مفتقرند و جواب این حروف را منتظر *agar rāy-i ʔazīz-i fulān, aḥsana allāhu ḥalāṣahu, ba ġānib-i mā iltifāt kunad dar riʔāyat-i ḥāṭiraš har či tamāmtar saʔī karda šawad wa aʔyān-i īn mamlakat ba dīdār-i ū muṣtaqirand wa ġawāb-i īn ḥurūf rā muntaẓir.*

'If the precious mind of that person, may God make the end of his affairs prosperous, were to look in our direction, the utmost efforts would be made to please him, because the nobles of this realm would consider it an honor to see him, and are waiting for a reply to this letter.'¹

It is easy to ascertain that, apart from verbs and adverbs, almost every lexical item in the sentence is of Arabic origin. But writers of this era, such as Saʿdī, not only inundated their works with Arabic elements, but even used Arabic morphology and semantics freely by coining new and innovative meanings, e.g. *ṣaʔqa* 'lightning' < MSA/MSP *ṣāʔiqā* or *baṭṭāl* 'liar' < MSA/MSP 'inactive, unemployed person',² < MSA *mubṭil* 'liar'. The Persian and Arabic language use of Saʿdī and other literary figures in the Classical Persian period came closest to what Lucas (2015) calls convergence under the language dominance principle. As reflected in the purely Arabic and Arabic-infused Persian segments of his oeuvre, Saʿdī was equally dominant in both Classical Arabic and Classical Persian along with the dialect of Shiraz.

¹Persian transcription in this chapter follows the Arabic phonological conventions to avoid using two disparate systems.

²In this chapter, references are made to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Modern Standard Persian (MSP) as a comparison to dialectal forms in both languages. This seemed more straightforward as it is not always feasible to determine at what point in time a lexeme was borrowed from Arabic into Persian.

Modern Persian is still deeply rooted in Arabic. Arabic loanwords constitute more than 50% of its vocabulary, but in elevated styles (religious, scientific, literary) Arabic loans may exceed 80% (Jeremiás 2011). Although the proportion of these loanwords fluctuates according to age, genre, social context or idiolect, any style in Modern Persian deprived of Arabic influence is almost impossible. An endeavor similar to Atatürk's to purge Turkish of foreign language elements would be unrealistic in Modern Persian, even with recurring efforts by linguistic purists and the Academy of Persian Language and Literature (*Farhangistān-i zabān wa adab-i fārsī*).³ It is noteworthy that when the need arose for new terminology to describe fledgling political concepts in Iran, for instance during the Constitutional Revolution in the early twentieth century, as Elwell-Sutton (2011) phrased it, "politicians and journalists instinctively turned to Arabic rather than Persian". Frequently, however, these "Arabic" words were new coinages in the recipient language, e.g. *mašrūta* 'constitution', *mawqifiyyat* 'situation, position'. After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, another wave of Arabic lexemes related to the new religious governing system surfaced, e.g. *mustazʿifīn* 'the needy, the enfeebled' (< MSA *mustaḍʿafūna/mustaḍʿafīna*).

Primary and secondary schools in contemporary Arabic-speaking countries do not offer language education in Persian. In Iran, compulsory Classical Arabic instruction is part of the curriculum. However, the language is taught for religious purposes only, with no intention to utilize MSA as a means of acquiring communication skills.

2 Contact languages

This section briefly describes the linguistic impact of Standard Arabic on several New Iranian languages. A more detailed analysis of contact-induced language change in New Persian will follow in §3.

2.1 Arabic influence on New Iranian languages

2.1.1 Tajik (*Tōǧīkī*)

Tajik, written in a modified Cyrillic script, is the variety of New Persian spoken throughout Central Asia, most notably in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and northern Afghanistan. Similarly to all varieties of Persian, Arabic borrowings constitute the earliest layer of foreign vocabulary in Tajik (Perry 2009). This lex-

³An example of their activity is the publication (by Rāzī 2004) of a dictionary that lists "pure" Persian words.

icon was transferred under RL agentivity. Although Arabic lexical items have a firm hold in Tajik, their pattern of distribution differs from that of New Persian. For instance, Tajik uses *pēš* ‘before’ and *pas* ‘after’ rather than MSA/MSP *qabl* and *baʿd*, but *ōid ba-/ōid-i* (< MSA *ʔāʔid* ‘returning’) ‘concerning, relating to’ in lieu of MSP *rāǧiʔ ba-* (< MSA *rāǧiʔ* ‘recurring’). Also, *madaniyyat* ‘civilization’ (< MSA *madaniyya* ‘civilization’; cf. MSA/MSP *tamaddun* ‘civilization’), *hōzir* ‘now’ (< MSA *hādir* ‘present; ready’, MSP *hāzir* ‘present’), *ittifōq* ‘(labor) union’ (< MSA *ittifāq* ‘agreement; contract’; cf. MSP *ittiḥād* ‘[labor] union’).

Arabic plural forms, both sound feminine plural and broken plural, were lexicalized with collective or singular meanings: *hašarōt* ‘insect’, with regular plural ending *hašarōthō* ‘insects’ (< MSA/MSP *hašarāt* ‘insects’), *talaba* ‘student’, pl. *talabagōn* (< MSA/MSP *ṭalaba* ‘students’), *šarōit* ‘condition, stipulation’ (< MSA/MSP *šarāʔiṭ* ‘conditions’).

2.1.2 Kurdish

A characteristic feature of Kurdish, the change of postvocalic /m/ > /v/ or /w/, also occurs frequently in words of Arabic origin: *silāv* ‘greeting’ (< MSA/MSP *salām*; Paul 2008).

2.1.3 Gurānī

The phonological system of Gurānī dialects is similar to Kurdish in the occurrence of Arabic pharyngeal and emphatic sounds /ʕ/, /ħ/, /ʕ/ (MacKenzie 2012).

2.1.4 Ossetic

Ossetic has incorporated terms related to Islam from Arabic and Persian through neighboring Caucasian languages (Thordarson 2009).

2.2 Arabic-speaking communities in Iran

Arabic-speaking communities are known to be present within the boundaries of the Islamic Republic of Iran, but their exact number is not readily discernible from official statistics. It is estimated that 3% of Iran’s 80 million citizens are Arabs, which would put the Arab population at approximately 2.5 million. The majority of Arabs live in the western parts of Khuzestan province (see Leitner, this volume), but also along Iran’s Persian Gulf coast and parts of Khorasan in eastern Iran (Oberling 2011). Already during the Sasanian era, several Arab tribes, including the Bakr ibn Wāʔil and Banū Tamīm, settled in the area stretching from

the Šaṭṭ al-ʿArab to the Zagros Mountains (Daniel 2011). At the end of the sixteenth century, the Banū Kaʿb, originating from present-day Kuwait, settled in Khuzestan. During subsequent centuries, more Arab tribes moved from southern Iraq to the province. As a result, Khuzestan, which until 1925 was called ʿArabistān, became extensively Arabized. Members of these Arab tribes live on either side of the Iran–Iraq border. In the same way as Iraqi Arabic vernaculars, Khuzestan Arabic has been influenced by Persian. However, Khuzestan Arabic can most easily be distinguished from Iraqi dialects by its wide-ranging transfer of Persian lexemes (Ingham 1997: 25; see also Leitner, this volume).

Arab presence has a well-documented history on the Iranian coastline of the Persian Gulf, in what now constitutes Būšīhr and Hurmuzgān provinces. According to travelogues from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries CE, as well as British archival materials dating back to the British Residency of the Persian Gulf, Arab tribes inhabited most fishing and pearling villages, as well as islands and coastal towns with strategic importance (e.g. Bandar ʿAbbās). The most significant tribes in this area were, and in some cases still are, the Qawāsīm, Marāzīq, Āl Ḥaram, Āl ʿAlī, Āl Naṣūr, Banī Tamīm, Banī Ḥammād, Banī Bišr, among others. In contrast to most Persians and Khuzestani Arabs who are primarily Shiite, these tribes are Sunni Muslims. A widespread exonym to designate Arabs on the Iranian coast, but shunned by the local population, is *hōla* (variously referred to as *hula*, *huwala* or *hawala*). Local tribes prefer the endonym ‘Arabs of the Coast’ (*ʿArab as-sāḥil*) (Gazsi 2017: 110).

Most Khuzestani and Iranian Persian Gulf Arabs are bilingual, speaking Arabic as their mother tongue and Persian as a second language. Although Khuzestan and the two Persian Gulf provinces are geographically part of Iran, linguistically their Arab populations form a continuum with the southern Mesopotamian Muslim *gilit* dialects, and the dialects of the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, respectively. In the spoken and written code, ‘Arabs of the Coast’ often engage in tetra-glossic switching between MSA, Gulf Arabic (GA), MSP, Colloquial Persian and one of its local dialects such as Bandarī. In their speech, Persian phonological and lexical elements are borrowed into GA under RL agentivity.

3 Contact-induced changes in New Persian and modern Persian dialects

Language contact between Arabic and New Persian is most evidently detectable in the New Persian lexicon, and to a lesser extent in phonology and morphosyntax. This section summarizes the characteristics of this contact. In addition to

standard New Persian, and its contemporary variant MSP, Arabic has also influenced modern Persian dialects. This influence is slightly different, and in several ways more far-reaching, particularly in the realm of phonology and lexicon.

Persian dialects developed separately from and parallel to Classical Persian and MSP. Modern Persian dialects retain several Early Classical and Classical Persian phonological and morphosyntactic features that are not present in MSP. Additionally, they were in direct contact with the Arabic language through Arab tribes that settled across Persia immediately after the Islamic conquest or in later centuries. Although most Arab tribes have long been integrated into the Persian-speaking population, the Arabic language in the areas currently dominated by ethnic Arabs is still in contact with the surrounding Persian dialects. Unlike Arabic influence on the standard version of New Persian, Arabic influence on modern Persian dialects is an understudied field that does not allow for providing an exhaustive list of contact-induced changes at this point. Instead, below is a preliminary description of salient examples of how Arabic phonological and lexical elements were transferred to New Persian, both its standard and dialectal variations.

3.1 Phonology

3.1.1 New Persian

The initial step in the adoption of Arabic lexemes was the adoption of the Arabic script. New Persian began to use a modified Arabic script in the ninth century CE; it has 32 letters, 28 acquired from Arabic and 4 new letters added to represent Persian phonemes (/p/, /č/, /ž/, /g/). Arabic /θ/ and /s/ collapse to Persian /s/, Arabic /ð/, /d/, /ḏ/ collapse to Persian /z/, and Arabic /t/ becomes Persian /t/. The phonemic inventory of Early Classical Persian was augmented with the glottal stop, which originated in the two separate Arabic phonemes /ʔ/ and /ʕ/.

3.1.2 Modern Persian dialects

This section highlights phonological features of modern Persian dialects that were the result of contact-induced language change under RL agentivity, either with Arabic or with Classical Persian, and subsequently MSP.

3.1.2.1 Adoption of Arabic pharyngeal sounds

The two Arabic pharyngeal sounds undergo phonological integration in New Persian: the voiceless pharyngeal fricative /ħ/ is pronounced as a voiceless glottal fricative /h/, and the voiced pharyngeal fricative /ʕ/ as a glottal stop /ʔ/. The

dialects of Dizfūl and Šūštar have acquired pharyngeal sounds directly from Arabic, which occur in Arabic loanwords: *šaḡīb* ‘strange’, *baʿd* ‘after’ (MacKinnon 2015). The dialect of Jarkūya shares this feature: *ḥasūd* ‘jealous’, *ḡimʕa* ‘Friday’ (Borjjan 2008).

The dialect of Kulāb in Tajikistan also borrows Arabic pharyngeal sounds in words of Arabic origin: *ʕaib* ‘flaw’, *daʕvō* ‘claim’, *miʕalim* ‘teacher’, *ḥikimat* ‘wisdom’, *sōḥib* ‘owner’. Arabic pharyngeal sounds also occur in a few Persian/Tajiki words (*ʕasp* ‘horse’, *ḥamsōya* ‘neighbor’). Interestingly, the pharyngealized form for ‘horse’ occurs far and wide within the Iranian linguistic domain, as *ʕasb* in the Lurī dialect of Šūštar, in Ḥānsāri and Caucasian Tāti. In the Arab Gulf states, the *ʕAḡam*, ethnic Persians holding Kuwaiti, Emirati and other Gulf citizenship, pronounce Arabic loanwords in their Persian speech with pharyngeal sounds.

3.1.2.2 Dropping of Arabic pharyngeal sounds

In several modern Persian dialects, the voiceless pharyngeal fricative /ħ/ is absent. The preceding vowel is lengthened or the subsequent vowel disappears too, e.g. *mūtāḡ* ‘in need, destitute’ < MSA/MSP *muḥtāḡ* (Īzadpanāh 2001: 190), *šārā* ‘desert’ < MSA/MSP *šaḥrā* (Sarlak 2002: 15), *šāb* ‘owner’ < MSA/MSP *šāḥib* (Šarrāfi 1996: 135), *mulāza* ‘consideration, observation’ < MSP *mulāḥiza*, cf. MSA *mulāḥaḏa* (Šarrāfi 1996: 188), *šul* ‘peace’ < MSA/MSP *šulḥ* (Stilo 2012), *ēsās* ‘feeling’ < MSA/MSP *iḥsās* (Salāmī 2004: 160–161). In Kirmān, the sound change /uħ/ > /ā/ is attested, e.g. *fāš* ‘insult’ < MSA/MSP *fuhš* (Borjjan 2017).

The voiced pharyngeal fricative /ʕ/, pronounced as a glottal stop in MSP, can also be dropped. This may result in vowel lengthening: *māṭal* ‘idle’ < MSA/MSP *muʕaṭṭal* (Šarrāfi 1996: 184), *māmila* ‘transaction’ < NewP *muʕāmila*, cf. MSA *muʕāmala* (Šarrāfi 1996: 184; Sarlak 2002: 15), *rubbi sāt* ‘quarter hour’ < MSP *rubʕ sāʕat*, cf. MSA *rubʕ sāʕa* (Šarrāfi 1996: 108), *mānī* ‘meaning’ < MSP *maʕnī*, cf. MSA *maʕnā* (Sarlak 2002: 15), *mōḡiza* ‘miracle’ < MSA/MSP *muʕḡiza* (Īzadpanāh 2001: 190), *tāḡub* ~ *tāḡuv* ‘surprise, wonder’ < MSA/MSP *taʕaḡḡub* (Salāmī 2004: 162–163), *rāyat* ‘regard’ < MSP *riʕāyat*, cf. MSA *riʕāya* (Šarrāfi 1996: 107).

3.1.2.3 Dropping of the Arabic voiceless glottal fricative /h/

The voiceless glottal fricative disappears in closed syllables in many Persian dialects, resulting in occasional vowel lengthening: *tārat* ‘cleanliness’ < MSP *ṭahārat*, cf. MSA *ṭahāra* (Sarlak 2002: 76), *nāal* ‘impolite’ < MSP *nāahl* (Īzadpanāh 2001: 192).

3.1.2.4 Miscellaneous sound changes

A range of additional consonant developments and shifts can be attested in Persian dialects. Some of these developments include:

/ʕ/ > /ħ/:

In Lurī and the dialect of Jarkūya, a shift occurs from the voiced to the voiceless pharyngeal: *ħilāğ* ‘cure’ < MSA/MSP *ʕilāğ* (Īzadpanāh 2001: 207), *taħna* ‘sarcasm’ < MSA/MSP *taʕna* (Borjān 2008).

/ħ/ > /ʔ/ occurring with occasional metathesis:

taʔr ‘plan’ < MSA/MSP *tarħ* (Şarrāfi 1996: 137), *maʔla* ‘city quarter’ < MSA/MSP *maħalla* (Şarrāfi 1996: 188), *maʔala* ‘city quarter’ (Nağībī Finī 2002: 133).

/h/ > /ʔ/:

muʔlat ‘deadline, respite’ < MSP *muhlat*, cf. MSA *muhla* (Şarrāfi 1996: 190).

/θ/ > /t/:

This shift is also common in several Arabic dialects, e.g. in Egypt and Morocco: *mīrāt* ‘heritage’ < MSP *mīrās*, cf. MSA *mīrāθ* (Īzadpanāh 2001: 190).

Word-final /b/ and /f/ > /m/:

nağīm ‘noble’ < MSA/MSP *nağīb* (Īzadpanāh 2001: 193), *nişm* ‘half’ < MSA/MSP *nişf* (Īzadpanāh 2001: 195).

/r/ > /l/:

in Kirmān, *zilar* ~ *zilal* ‘damage, loss’ < MSP *zarar*, cf. MSA *darar* (Şarrāfi 1996: 136; Dānişgar 1995: 163), *haşil* ‘straw mat’ < MSA/MSP *haşir* (Şarrāfi 1996: 85), *qulfa* ‘small room for summer resting’ < MSA *γurfa* ‘room’ (Fāzilī 2004: 151).

Arabic voiceless dental emphatic /t̤/ > /d/:

mudbaħ ~ *madbaħ* ‘kitchen’ < MSA *maṭbaħ* (Şarrāfi 1996: 186; not attested in MSP), *mudbaq* in Baħtiārī (Sarлак 2002: 251).

/b/ > /f/:

muftilā ‘afflicted’ < MSP *mubtilā*, cf. MSA *mubtalā* (Borjān 2017).

Medial and word-final /b/ > /v/:

in Baħtiārī, *ādāv* ‘customs’ < MSA/MSP *ādāb* (Sarлак 2002: 15), *ʕajīv*

‘strange’ < MSA/MSP *ʕajīb* (Sarlak 2002: 25), *qavīla* ‘tribe’ < MSA/MSP *qabīla* (Sarlak 2002: 199).

Word-initial /ħ/ > /h/:

in northern Lurī and Baḥtiārī, *hāla* ‘aunt’ < MSA/MSP *ḥāla* (Īzadpanāh 2001: 204).

/q/ > /k/:

kabīla ‘tribe’ < MSA/MSP *qabīla* (Naḡībī Finī 2002: 21).

/ʕ/ > /q/:

šūql ‘occupation’ < MSP/MSA *šūyl* (Stilo 2012).

/ğ/ > /y/:

direct borrowing from Khuzestan Arabic dialects, *mailis* ‘council’ < MSA/MSP *mağlis* (Sarlak 2002: 260; Fāzili 2004: 165).

Metathesis:

qulf ‘lock’ < MSA/MSP *qufl* (Salāmī 2004: 84–85; Imām Ahwāzī 2000: 146), *šuhb* ‘morning’ < MSA/MSP *šubḥ* (Dānišgar 1995: 161; Naḡībī Finī 2002: 23).

The full /t/ of the *tāʔ marbūʔa* appears on words where it is absent in MSP: *ḥalmat* ‘attack’ < MSA/MSP *ḥamla* (Īzadpanāh 2001: 207), *ḥaḡāmat* ‘cupping’ < MSA/MSP *ḥaḡāma* (Salāmī 2004: 92–93). This was a typical feature of Classical Persian literature.

3.2 Morphosyntax

Several Arabic morphosyntactic features were transferred to New Persian in the realm of nominal morphology under RL agentivity. These features encompass sound and broken plural forms (*musāfirīn* ‘passengers’, *tabliyāt* ‘propaganda’, *dihāt* ‘villages’, *ḥuqūq* ‘rights’), possessive constructions (*fāriy ut-taḡṣīl* ‘graduate’, *wāḡib ul-iḡrā* ‘peremptory’) and occasional gender agreement in lexicalized expressions (*quwwa-yi darrāka* ‘perceptive power’). Word formation has been an active method of transferring Arabic lexical elements into New Persian from early on, either by way of derivation (*dihālat* ‘interference’ < MSA *mudāḥala*, *awlā-tar* ‘superior’ < MSA *awlā*, *raqsīdan* ‘to dance’ < MSA *raqs*, *akṣaran* ‘most, generally’ < MSA *akṯar* ‘more, most’) or compounding. Compounding is a highly developed process of enlarging the New Persian vocabulary. It is manifest in lexical compounds (*tayzia-šinās* ‘nutritionist’, *ḥiānat-kārāna* ‘perfidiously’) and phrasal compounds (*iṯāṣat kardan* ‘to obey’, *ṣadam-i wuḡūd* ‘non-existence’, *ṣala l-ḥuṣūṣ* ‘particularly’).

3.3 Lexicon

3.3.1 Arabic lexicon in New Persian

Contact-induced language change manifests itself most strikingly in the lexicon transferred from Arabic to New Persian under RL agentivity. The earliest loanwords entered New Persian during the ninth–tenth centuries. This process occurred smoothly, as the phonological inventory of Early Classical Persian was likely close to that of Middle Persian and also close to that of Classical Arabic.⁴ The influx of Arabic loanwords has unabatedly continued over the centuries until now. To showcase a recent example of Arabic vocabulary in Modern Persian, below are titles of articles from *Hamšahrī* ‘Fellow Citizen’, a major Iranian national newspaper, taken from its 29th January 2018 edition. Arabic words are highlighted in boldface:

- (2) a. **kulliyāt-i** **lāyiḥa-yi** **būdḡa-yi** **sāl-i** **97-i** **kull-i**
 total.PL-GEN bill-GEN budget-GEN year-GEN 97-GEN whole-GEN
kišwar **radd** **šud**
 country reject be.PST.3SG
 ‘The total budget bill of the year 2018 for the whole country was rejected.’
- b. **dašwat** **az** **tihrānīhā** **barā-yi** **iḥdā-yi** **ḥūn** **asāmī-yi**
 call from Tehrani.PL for-GEN donation-GEN blood name.PL-GEN
marākiz-i **faššāl**
 center.PL-GEN active
 ‘Calling the residents of Tehran to donate blood. Names of active centers.’
- c. **iḥrāz-i** **huwīyyat** **dar** **mušāmilāt-i** **milki**
 authentication-GEN identity in transaction.PL-GEN proprietary
bā **kārt-i** **hūšmand-i** **millī** **aṅḡām** **mī-šaw-ad**
 with card-GEN smart-GEN national complete PRS-be-3SG
 ‘Personal authentication in real estate transactions is done with the national smart card.’

In the Arabic lexicon of New Persian, further characteristics can be observed, such as phonetic changes (NewP *maʔnī* ‘meaning’ < MSA *maʔnā*, NewP *madrīsa* ‘school’ < MSA *madrāsa*, NewP *šīkl* ‘shape, form’ < SA *šakl*), where in some cases

⁴In Early Classical Persian, short vowels were likely pronounced as /u/ and /i/, and the *alif* as /ā/. In MSP, the pronunciation is /o/, /e/ and /v/.

the Persian pronunciation may follow Arabic dialectal forms, semantic changes (NewP *kitābat* ‘writing’ and *kitāba* ‘inscription’ < MSA *kitāba* ‘writing’, NewP *ṣuḥbat* ‘speech’ < MSA *ṣuḥba* ‘companionship’), and occasional *imāla* in elevated or poetic style (NewP *ḥiḡīz* < MSA *ḥiḡāz*).

3.3.2 Arabic lexicon in Persian dialects

Arabic loanwords affect Persian dialects in two ways that differ from MSP: i) semantic changes, where Arabic lexemes assume new meanings unattested in both MSA and MSP: in Kirmān *ḡāt* ‘age’ (Şarrāfi 1996: 106) < MSA/MSP ‘self, soul, essence, nature’, *ḡātī* ‘old’ < MSA/MSP ‘own, personal’; ii) lexemes and expressions directly borrowed from Arabic, and not attested in MSP: in Šūstar, *ḥaya* ‘snake’ < MSA *ḥayya*, MSP *mār* (Fāzili 2004: 140), *ṭayyāra* ‘airplane’ < Arabic dialects *ṭayyāra*, MSA *ṭāʔira*, MSP *hawāpaimā* (Fāzili 2004: 150), *ṣaḥn* ‘bowl, dish’ < MSA *ṣaḥn*, MSP *buṣqāb* (Fāzili 2004: 150), *ṭabaq* ‘plate, tray’ < MSA *ṭabaq*, MSP *sīnī* (Fāzili 2004: 150), in Fīn, *mismāl* ‘nail’ < MSA *mismār*, MSP *mīḥ* ‘nail’ (Naḡībī Fīnī 2002: 133), in Kirmān, *aḡad un-nās* ‘nobody, somebody’ < MSA *aḡad un-nās*, MSP *hīčkas* ‘nobody’, *kasī* ‘somebody’ (Şarrāfi 1996: 33).

On the Persian Gulf coast of Iran, due to linguistic, economic and commercial connections with the Arabian Peninsula, Persian dialects have incorporated from Gulf Arabic a number of Arabic technical terms relating to pearling, fishing and traditional shipbuilding: *muḥār* ‘shellfish, oysters’ (cf. MSA *maḥār*), *giyās* ‘measure, gauge’ (< GA *giyās*, cf. MSA *qiyās*), *mīdāf* ‘helm (boat)’ (< GA *mīdāf*, cf. MSA *miḡdāf*), *māčila* ‘meal (on a boat)’ (< GA *māčila*, cf. MSA *maʔkūl*). Two neighborhoods in the town of Bandar Līnga (opposite Dubai, 180 km west of Bandar ʔAbbās) are called *Maḥalla-yi Bahrainī* ‘Bahraini Quarter’ and *Maḥalla-yi Sammāčī* ‘Fishers’ Quarter’ (< GA *sammāč*, cf. MSA *sammāk*) (Baḥtiyārī 1990: 137–138).

4 Conclusion

Although Arabic–Persian language contact has been a well-known phenomenon for centuries, academic research dedicated to this topic is far from abundant. Throughout the centuries, Persian writers and poets used Arabic lexical elements in new meanings or coined non-standard Perso-Arabic lexemes based on Arabic derivational patterns. Idiosyncratic features of individual Persian writers should be examined separately before compiling a comprehensive review of this contact-induced language change. Substantial fieldwork needs to be conducted to describe the bilingualism of ethnic Arab communities of Iran and ethnic Persians

in Arabic-speaking countries. Additionally, it is essential for linguists to look into Arabic influence on Modern Persian dialects and Iranian languages other than New Persian. This will help scholars understand the scale and depth of how Arabic has shaped Iranian languages for the past thousand years.

Contact-induced language change in New Iranian languages primarily transpired under RL agentivity. It should be noted, however, that medieval Persian literati were so well-versed in Arabic due to its prestige and dominance, that their bilingualism may have enabled convergence in Arabic–Persian language contact.

Further reading

- Asbaghi (1987) gathers eight hundred Persian words of Arabic origin in twenty-three groups and analyzes the semantic changes they underwent when transferred from Arabic to New Persian.
- Gazsi (2011) gives an overview of Arabic–Persian language contact from pre-Islamic times up to the modern era, also touching on Arabic dialects in Iran. A brief analysis of Arabic morphosyntactic features in New Persian is also provided.
- Šādeqī (2011) discusses a range of Arabic phonological, grammatical and semantic elements in New Persian.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Éva Jeremiás, Prof. Werner Arnold and Prof. Ali Ashraf Sadeqi for their support while I was working on Arabic–Persian language contact. I am thankful to members of the ‘Arabs of the Coast’ in the UAE, especially Sheikh Ibrahim, Sheikh Abdulrahman, Dr. Abdullah, Walid, Ahmed, and many others for providing language data in Gulf Arabic.

Abbreviations

BCE	before Common Era	NewP	New Persian
CE	Common Era	PL	plural
GA	Gulf Arabic	PRS	present
GEN	genitive	PST	past
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic	RL	recipient language
MSP	Modern Standard Persian		

References

- Asbaghi, Asya. 1987. *Die semantische Entwicklung arabischer Wörter im Persischen*. Stuttgart: Steiner.
- Baḥtiyārī, Mağīd. 1990. *Ustān-i hurmuzgān (rāhnamā-yi mufaṣṣal-i Īrān)*. Tehran: Gitāšināsī.
- Borjjan, Habib. 2008. Jarquya ii: The dialect. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Borjjan, Habib. 2017. Kerman xvi: Languages. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Daniel, Elton L. 2011. ‘Arab iii: Arab settlements in Iran. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Dānišgar, Aḥmad. 1995. *Farhang-i wāzahā-i rāyiğ-i turbat-i ḥaidarīya*. Mašhad: Āstān-i Quds-i Rażawī.
- Danner, Victor. 2011. Arabic language iv: Arabic literature in Iran. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Elwell-Sutton, L. P. 2011. Arabic language iii: Arabic influences in Persian literature. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Fāzilī, Muḥammad Taqī. 2004. *Farhang-i gūyiš-i šūštari*. Tehran: Pāzīnah.
- Gazsi, Dénes. 2011. Arabic–Persian language contact. In Stefan Weninger, Geoffrey Khan, Michael P. Streck & Janet C. E. Watson (eds.), *The Semitic languages: An international handbook*, 1015–1021. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Gazsi, Dénes. 2017. Language and identity among the ‘Arabs of the coast’ in Iran and the Arab Gulf states: Social media and beyond. *RiCognizioni* 7. 105–129.
- Imām Ahwāzī, Sayyid Muḥammad ʿAlī. 2000. *Čistānnāma-yi dizfūlī*. Tehran: Daftar-i Pažūhišhā-yi Farhangī.
- Ingham, Bruce. 1997. *Arabian diversions: Studies on the dialects of Arabia*. Reading: Ithaca Press.
- Īzadpanāh, Ḥamid. 2001. *Farhang-i lurī*. Tehran: Intišārāt-i Asāṭīr.
- Jeremiás, Éva M. 2004. New Persian. In Peri Bearman, Thierry Bianquis, C. Edmund Bosworth, Emeri Johannes van Donzel & Wolfhart P. Heinrichs (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn., vol. 12: *Supplement*, 426–448. Leiden: Brill.

- Jeremiás, Éva M. 2011. Iran. In Lutz Edzard & Rudolf de Jong (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and linguistics*, online edn. Leiden: Brill.
- Lucas, Christopher. 2015. Contact-induced language change. In Claire Bowerman & Bethwyn Evans (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of historical linguistics*, 519–536. London: Routledge.
- MacKenzie, David N. 2012. Gurāni. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- MacKinnon, Colin. 2015. Dezfūli and Šūštārī dialects. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Naǧībī Finī, Bihǧat. 2002. *Barrasī-yi gūyīš-i finī*. Tehran: Našr-i Āšār-i Farhangistān-i Zabān wa Adab-i Fārsī.
- Oberling, Pierre. 2011. ‘Arab iv: Arab tribes of Iran. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Paul, Ludwig. 2008. Kurdish language i: History of the Kurdish language. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Perry, John R. 2009. Tajik ii: Tajik Persian. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Rāzī, Farīda. 2004. *Farhang-i wāzahā-yi fārsī-yi sara barā-yi wāzahā-yi šarabī dar fārsī-yi mušāfir*. Tehran: Našr-i Markaz.
- Salāmī, ʿAbdulnabī. 2004. *Ganǧīna-yi gūyīššināsī-yi fārs*. Tehran: Našr-i Āšār-i Farhangistān-i zabān wa adab-i Fārsī.
- Sarлак, Rizā. 2002. *Wāžanāma-yi gūyīš-i baḥtiārī-yi čahārlang*. Tehran: Āšār.
- Schmitt, Rüdiger. 1989. *Compendium linguarum iranicum*. Wiesbaden: Reichert.
- Skjærvø, Prods Oktor. 2012. Iran vi: Iranian languages and scripts. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Stilo, Donald. 2012. Gīlān x: Languages. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Šadeqī, ʿAlī Ašraf. 2011. Arabic language i: Arabic elements in Persian. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Šarrāfī, Maḥmūd. 1996. *Farhang-i gūyīš-i kirmānī*. Tehran: Surūš.

- Thordarson, Fridrik. 2009. Ossetic language i: History and description. In Ehsan Yarshater, Mohsen Ashtiany & Mahnaz Moazami (eds.), *Encyclopædia iranica*, online edn. New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation.
- Van Coetsem, Frans. 1988. *Loan phonology and the two transfer types in language contact*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Van Coetsem, Frans. 2000. *A general and unified theory of the transmission process in language contact*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Yūsifī, Yūlāmḥusain. 2004. *Gulistān-i Saʿdī*. Tehran: Širkat-i Sahāmī-yi Intiṣārāt-i Ḥārazmī.

