



# HAZĀRA IV. HAZĀRAGI DIALECT

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(1) Hazārāgi (native *azoragi/azaragi*), the language of the Hazāra living in Central Afghanistan between Kabul and Herat in the province called Hazārajāt and in northeast Persia in the areas of Mašhad and Qučān (s. *Bābor-nāma*, tr. Beveridge, p. 207; *QJ* 4, 1339/1960, pp. 201-15, s.v. Hazārajāt; *Edāra-ye markazi-e eḩšā'iya*, III, pp. 1563-96, s.v. *Bamyān*; *TAVO*, s.v. *Hazārajāt*). This district is to be distinguished from that of *Hazāra* in West Pakistan (see Bazmee Ansari, in *EI2* III, pp. 335-36).

The term *hazāra*, derived from Persian *hazār* (thousand) translates the Mongolian term *ming* (thousand), alluding to a military unit of the Mongol armies. Originally a term used by outsiders, it was later adopted as the self-designation of the Hazāra tribes. Their way of life is fairly well known although the list of their clans and other data vary from one author to another, therefore to be consulted with caution (e.g., Elphinstone, pp. 478-87; Perrin, pp. 397-99; Malleson, p. 44; Bellew, pp. 34-48; Krause, pp. 129-31; Schurmann, passim; Watkins, pp. 10-18, 181; Klimburg, pp. 129-36, etc.; Gregorian, pp. 33-35 and passim; Kakar, p. 160; Kraus, 1972, pp. 190-91 and passim; Stewart, passim; Blanc, pp. 98-110; Dupree, in *EIr.* I/5, pp. 497-98). The most recent and



comprehensive discussions of the Hazāra can be found in Poladi and Mousavi.

The number of *hazārāgi* speakers is approximately 1.8 million. The Afghan *hazārāgi* varieties of Persian (see *EIr.* I/5, p. 510) comprise the speeches of Kāhmard, Bāmiān, Bēsud, Nāwor, the west of Ġazni, Jāgori, Māle-stān, Orūzgān, Gizāw, Dāy-Kondi, Panjāw, Yakāwlang, Šārestān, Laʿl-o-Sarjangal. These are essentially very close to modern *tājiki* (cf. Rastorgueva), or rather of modern *dari* Persian, or even *kāboli* Persian (Farhadi), but their typology still has to be fully defined. The differences are minor, but are nevertheless significant. On the whole, the main distinctive features are dental retroflexes, and the Turco-Mongolian lexical component (about 10 percent; cf. Weiers, pp. 11-24).

There may have been a Turco-Mongol population (Weiers) in the area, perhaps including Buddhists (Bāmiān), prior to the Mongol invasion. The conversion to speaking Persian by the Hazāra appears to have occurred toward the end of the 18th century (Dulling), with the exception of Mongolian speakers of the Herat region. For the following discussion, see V. A. Efimov (1965, 1997), who describes the Yakawlang-variety.

*Phonology.* As a group of eastern Persian varieties, Hazāra retains the voiced fricative  $\gamma$  and the bilabial articulation of  $w$ ; has borrowed the (rare) retroflexes  $\check{t}$   $\check{d}$ , e.g., *buṭ* “boot” (< Eng. loan words) vs. *but* “idol” (Pers. *bot*); *ḡal* “group”; and rarely articulates  $h$ .

**Table 1.** Consonants of Hazārāgi.

Diphthongs are *ay*, *aw*, and *ēw* (< *-ab/-āb/-ūw*). The vocalic system is typically eastern Persian characterized by the loss of length distinction, the retention of the mid vowels, and the rounding of  $\bar{a} > \check{a}/o$ , alternating with its merger with  $a$ , or  $\hat{u}$  (< *-ān*):

**Table 2.** Evolution of the Hazārāgi vowel system.

Stress is dynamic and similar to that in *dari* (Afghan) Persian (see Farhadi, 1975, pp. 64-67) and *tājiki* (Rastorgueva, pp. 9-10) Persian, and not variable (as suggested by Dulling, p. 37). It generally falls on the last syllable of a nominal form, including derivative suffixes and a number of morphological markers. Typical is the insertion of epenthetic vowels in consonant clusters, e.g., *pašm* > *póšum* “wool,” and final devoicing, e.g., *kūt* “self, own.”



The grammatical structure of *hazāragi* (see Efimov, 1965, pp. 22-83; idem, 1997; Dulling, pp. 29-41) is practically identical with that of Dari or even *kāboli* Persian (Farhadi, 1955; idem, 1975).

*Nominal morphology:* The most productive derivative marker is *-i*; the plural markers are *-o* (< *-hā*), e.g., *kitob-o* “books,” and animate *-û* (< *-ān*), e.g., *biror-û* “brothers.” The emphatic vocative marker is *û* and *-o*; the indefinite marker is *-i*, and the specific object marker is *-(r)a*. The personal pronouns are: 1st sing. *ma*, 2nd sing. *tu*; 1st plur. *mû*, 2nd plur. *šimû*; 3rd sing. *i* “this,” *u* “that,” 3rd plur. *yo*, *wo* (< *i-hā*, *u-hā*); personal suffixes are: 1st sing. *-um*, 2nd sing. *-it*, 1st plur. *-mû*, 2nd plur. *-tû*, and both 3rd sing. and 3rd plur. *-iš/(i)ši*, with the notable loss of number distinction. The comparative marker is *-tar*, e.g., *kalû* “big,” *az u (kada) kalû-tar* “bigger than that one.” Dependent adjectives and nouns follow the head noun and are connected by *-i*, e.g., *kitob-i momut* “the book of Maḥmud”; topicalized possessors precede the head noun marked by the resumptive personal suffix, e.g., *Zulmay ayê-ši*, lit. “Zulmay her mother.” Prepositions include, in addition to the standard Persian ones, *kun(i)* “with, by means of,” *da* “in” (< *dar*); the latter often replaces *ba* “to” in dative function; loaned postpositions include comitative *-qati* “together with” and (*az*) *-worî* “like.” Interrogatives typically function also as indefinites, e.g., *kudam* “which, someone.”

*Particles, conjunctions, modals, and adverbials.* These include *atê/arê* “yes”; *ammo*, *liken*, *wali* “but”; *balki* “however”; *šayti* “perhaps”; *bayti* “it is necessary”; *i(n)ji* “here,” *ûnji* “there”; *oli* “now,” *wukt-a* “then.” These are also marked by distinctive initial stress.

*Verb morphology.* The imperfective marker is *mi-* (assimilated variants *m-*, *mu-*, *m-*, *mê-*), e.g., *mi-zan-um* “I hit, I am hitting”; the subjunctive and imperative marker is *bi-* (with similar assimilation); the negation is *na-*, e.g., *na-mi-zad-um* “I was not hitting.” These usually attract stress.

The personal endings are: 1st sing. *-um*, 2nd sing. *-i*; 1st plur. *-i(m)*, 2nd plur. *-i(t/n)*; 3rd sing. and plur. *-a*, with loss of number distinction in the third person, similar to the personal suffix, and with incipient merger of the 1st singular and plural endings. The tense, mood, and aspect system is typically quite different from western Persian. The basic tense system is threefold: present-future, past, and remote (pluperfect). New modal paradigms developed in addition to the subjunctives: (1) The non-seen/mirative that originates in the resultative-stative perfect (e.g., *zad-ēm* < *zada am*), which has



largely lost its non-modal use; (2) the potential, or assumptive, which is marked by the invariant *ƙot* (< *ƙāh-ad* “it is wanted, intended”) combined with the indicate and subjunctive forms. Moreover, all past and remote forms have developed imperfective forms marked by *mi-*. There are doubts about several of the less commonly found, or recorded, forms, in particular those with *ƙot* (e.g., Dulling, pp. 35-36). However, the systematic arrangement of all forms according to their morphological, as well as semantic, function, shows that those forms fit well within the overall pattern. The system may tentatively be shown as follows (as suggested by Windfuhr; all forms are 1st sing), leaving out complex compound forms such as *zada ƙot mu-buda baš-um* as shown in Table 3.

In the assumptive, the distinction appears to be not between present versus past, but indefinite versus definite. Also, similar to all Persian varieties, the imperfective forms in *mi-* and past perfect forms, such as *mi-zad-um*, *zadabud-um*, are used in unreal conditional clauses and wishes, e.g., *kaški zimi qulba kadagi mu-but* “If the field would only be/have been plowed!” Modal verbs, such as *tan-* “can,” are constructed with the perfect participle, e.g., *ma bū-r-um*, *da čaman rasid-a ƙot tanist-um* “I shall go, and may be able to get to Čaman.”

Participial nominalization are typical, both with the perfect participle, e.g., *kad-a* “(having) done” and with the derived participle with passive meaning, *kad-ag-i* “having been done,” e.g., *zimin-i qulba kada-ya* “The field is ploughed,” *zamin-i qulba (na-)šuda-ra mi-ngar-um* “I am looking at a plowed/unploughed field,” *imrūz [u ƙondagi] tikror mu-kun-a* “Today he repeats (reading) what he had read.” The gerundive, e.g., *kad-an-i* “to be done,” is likewise productive, e.g., *yak čiz, ki uftadani baš-a, ma u-ra qad-dist-ku girift-um, tulğa kad-um* “One object, that was about to fall, I grabbed, and held it.” The clitic *-ku/-ku* topicalizes parts of speech, *-di* the predicate; e.g., *i-yši raft, ma-ku da ƙona mand-um* “He himself left; I, though, I stayed.”

*Lexicon.* As indicated, the most striking feature of this dialect is its lexicon that includes many notable items of uncertain origin. G. K. Dulling (pp. 14) considers “the present dialect to consist of three strata: (1) pre-Mongol Persian, with its own substratum; (2) the Mongolian language; and (3) modern *tājiki*, which preserves in it elements of (1) and (2).” He is probably right when he asserts (p. 12) that: “Although these dialects are essentially forms of modern Tajik [more properly modern Dari; C.M.K.], they are nevertheless lexically distinctive enough to merit their local special name of ‘Hazārāgi’” (discussion



on pp. 47-99). Examples of the vocabulary are: Turkic *ata* “father,” *kaṭa* “big, large,” *qara* “black”; Mongolian: *bêri* “bride,” *alaḡa* “palm (of hand),” *qulaḡay* “thief” (Efimov, 1965, pp. 22-23)

Text sample from the beginning of a song; text and transcription follow Askar Mousavi (p. 86):

*doš raft-um pal-iši sob na-bud, nim šew bud.*

*yak maḡ-ak istad-um, u mah-qačar-ak dar ḡew bud.*

*nagah bedar šod-ak pir ḡosur madar au.*

“Last night I went to her side, it was not morning then, but the middle of the night./I took a little kiss, and the moon-browed one was asleep./Suddenly awoke her old mother-in-law.”

See also [AFGHANISTAN iv](#) and [v](#).

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