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# The Balochi Language of Turkmenistan

*A corpus-based grammatical description*



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**Abstract**

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This dissertation is a synchronic description of the Balochi language as spoken in Turkmenistan. The dissertation consists of three main parts: sound structure, word and phrase level morphosyntax and clause structure. The purpose of the present study is to describe the basic phonological, morphological and syntactic structure of the Balochi dialect of Turkmenistan in accordance with the principles of descriptive linguistics. This method has been chosen in order to present synchronic data on various language levels and to lay the basis for further studies of this variety of the Balochi language, as well as for comparative studies in Iranian linguistics. The language data are presented in the book in such a way as to make it accessible also to non-specialists in Iranian languages.

The oral texts used as language data have been written down or recorded during seven trips to Turkmenistan in the period between 1989 and 2000. The main part of the material consists of folktales, recordings of common speech and ethnographic texts. Folktales written down in the Latin and Cyrillic scripts by the Baloch themselves have also been used as linguistic data for the dissertation.

During the last twenty years the Baloch have started to leave their national settlements and actively migrate within the territory of Turkmenistan because of lack of water and the soil salination. In the future this migration is likely to bring about diverging Balochi dialects in the territory of Turkmenistan. The majority of migrants from the Baloch settlements, however, seem to switch from Balochi to Turkmen in all linguistic domains, including the home.

In this context the recording of speech samples of the Balochi language in Turkmenistan and linguistic descriptions of the language seem to be of special importance.

*Keywords:* Balochi, dialectology, phonology, morphology, syntax, descriptive linguistics, sociolinguistics, unwritten languages, fieldwork, Iranian languages

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*To the memory of my father, Victor Axenov...*

pullukkē pkanīn-ī. 22. lōrikānī um mān ..., lōrikānā um bra byār ki mān bdaīn-ī. 23. rangtēn dasag, ɣulpinēn, gwanakkētēn dṡarag byār pa-mman ki man amāi pullukkānā pkanīn, ša watī gujīṡā prēnīn. tā kadēn ēr int ā rangā? 24. pullukk ki kurtun, annūn amā šēpgwāp ant, ē šēpgwāpānī um pkanīn. 25. šēpgwāpānī um pkanīn, alās pkanīn-ī. 26. yakk wārēgī alās pkanīn u ša mnī gujīṡā pkapīt. ē tā kadēn ēr int ē rangā?

27. alās büt. lōrikānī mān bdaīn u ā kučkānā am mān bdaīn u āwānā um bdōčīn tā waxtēn ki alās bayant. 28. annūn ša mnī gujīṡā kaptant, alās büt.

### Carpet weaving

1. Bring wool, dear Zalekha, let us weave. I will set up (on the loom) a carpet.  
 2. Bring the comb for me, for me to comb them, to make them black, to make them pale-blue, to make them violet, to make them dark-blue for a while. 3. Let me prepare them in order to install a loom, help me a little. 4. Go and bring the sticks, Zalekha, for me to do what ... for me to nail up its pegs. 5. Bring also the axe for me to nail up the pegs. Bring also the loom base, dear Zalekha. 6. [Also the warp stick?]

7. When we have set up the loom, then let us arrange the warp stick. Go and bring me the warp, Zalekha. I have to make the warp stick, the warp and the loom. 8. [What are you setting up? 9. I am setting up the carpet. How many metres do I have to set, Zalekha? If I set three metres, it will be enough. More is not needed, those three metres are enough. 10. I have made it black, made it dark-blue, made it pale-blue, I have prepared it. 11. Let me weave in a little bit of the white (color), let me prepare it for the carpet for a while.

12. Now that we have set it up, the one thing we have remaining is for me to put it down with the warp stick. 13. Bring the warp threads, let me put it down with the warp stick, because a the time has passed by and until when will it (the loom) be set up here? 14. Bring also the weft with you for me to weave the black (color) into it and to weft it. 15. Bring also a knife. Bring also the scissors, dear Zalekha, for me to prepare it and to finish it in order to get rid of it (lit. that it would fall from my throat). How long will it be set up here for me?

16. Now I have got ready the border of the carpet, Zalekha. Now I will maybe add (lit. throw) a flower pattern. 17. This curly pattern I will add beside it from this side of it, and from that side of it I will add the flower pattern. 18. I will also add the curved pattern beside it. Here it is, bring a little stitch hook for me because I don't have a stitch hook. 19. I will also add the left-sided pattern for it. There are two that, what, tiny pearly patterns, I will add them also to it. 20. There won't be a thing, only that flower pattern, it is enough, after all.

21. Now, Zalekha, bring threads for me to make that little flower patterns of it too, because (threads) it has run out and I got rid of it. Go and bring these threads for me to prepare it. I will add a little flower pattern to it. 22. The pendants too ... go and bring the pendants for me to put them through it. 23. Bring coloured threads again, dark-blue, pale-blue (threads) for me make these little flower patterns and get rid of it. Until when will it be set up like that? 24. When I did the little flower patterns, now there are those whips, let me make these whips also. 25. Let me also make the whips for it and finish it. 26. Let me finish it all and let me get rid of it. How long will it be set up like that?

27. It is finished. Let me put through the pendants and these shells and let me sew them so it would be finished. 28. Now I got rid of it, it is finished.

### A.1.5 zāgīriay yāt

1. mnī zāgīrī gō mnī piss-u-mās u brās-u-gwārān bi ammay ulūpaay tā gwast. 2. mnī ošā int ki mnī piss gwanakkīā mnā bāz dōst dāst, pačē ki man āi gwanḡēn lāpōdōkēn zāg atun.

3. man waxtē čār-panč sālag atun, ā pa-mman har rāzay asmānakk u kōnagēn, ɣadīmīēn šayr-a gušt. 4. ša hamā šayrān bāzē ta angatā mnī ošā ant. masalan, "tawrū-tawrū", "šer abdullājān", "kargōšk-i patangōš". 5. man kammē ki iṡ bütun, šašš-apt sālag, mnī piss pamman sindbadī naklā kurt.

6. gwanakkīā man watī jīnday gīsay mālānā-a čārētun. ammā nazzik-i sad pas dāštan. 7. man u mnī brās usmān u sapor wārī pa bēri mālānā-a čārētun. 8. ammā pa watī mālān yakk-yakkī nām ištatan, āwānā bāz dōst dāštan u zabr drust-a kurtan. gīsay dapā bāy u pālēz ham kīštan. 9. man dawāzda sālagīā gō arā alap-a kāwurtun. hamā waxtā yakk spētēn arē dāštan, nāmī ḡabbū at.

10. mnī piss mnā ša panč - šašš sālagīā qurānay wāntinā ēl dāt. man gāwaxt-a na-wāntun, ša āi dēmā-a jīstun. 11. mnī piss mnā ar čōn dōst dāštēn, ham pa wāntinay xātīrā mnā-a gīpt u jat. man zār-a bütun, tā čunt rōč gō ičkass gīsay tā abar-a na-dātun. 12. nūn, waxtē ki iṡ bütun, sarpad-a baim ki mnī piss zabr kurta ki mnā jata. agar ma-jatēn, man-a na-wāntun.

13. ammay nazzikēn hamsāig yakkē turkmanē at, yakkē pārštē at. man ša zāgīrīā gō āwānī zāgān gwāzī-a kurtun u āwānī zubānā karā-karā yel kurtun. ammā yakkē āḡgaray gīsa-a šutan u kātan. 14. man-a dīstun ki mučč millatt am gō mašmayā yakk rāzay mardum ant, mašmā bāid brās bayan.

15. man šašš sālag atun. yakk rōčē mnī piss gō arā alap āwurt. mnī piss alapānā ki ša arā yēr kurt, zūtē gīsay tā šut u āp zurt u wārt. 16. ša basē ki ā bāz žand būtat u tunnaḡ at, aray bastinā am beōš kurtat. ar watī āwurtagēn

alapānā wat-a wārt u xumār at. 17. mni dil yagwā ōmān kurt ki arā swār bañ. šutun u yakk taštērā pādāy čērā ištun u arā swār būtun. 18. man ki swār būtun, ar alapay wārtinā išt u ša kūčāay tā kašš kurt. 19. man arči awš-awš kurtun ki āyrā sātīn, ā na-ōšīāt u šūt. man pikr kurtun ki ē bārēn gujā-a rawt?

20. alkay mānjīnā yakk čāē at ki mučč mardum ša hamōdā āp-a kāwurtant. mni ar rāstām bi hamā čāay sarā šūt. 21. ā čāay ēšk-u-āškā rētagēn kōlāpānā wārt-i. 22. man idā sarpad būtun ki ē har ša mni pišā am tunnagtir būta. ā zabr watrā sērāp kurt u āškūtirā šūt. 23. ša čāā yakk tukkurē dūrtira urinjāay dīgārē at. mni ar šūt bi-mā urinjāay tā u čaritinā laggit. 24. urinjāay wāund dīst ki ar āi urinjāanā-a wārt, čāršāxē zurt u āt. alaḏū kurt u arā gōn dāt u gō čāršāxā jat, ar jīst. 25. man grētun u guštun: tāti, tāti, mnā yēr bkan. ā jinēnzāg ičč parwā na-kurt ki aray sarā mardumē ast yā na. 26. ar alayirt kurt u jīst. man watrā sātitag na-kurtun, mnā jat bi dīgārā. man grētun u kaptun.

27. āwānī amsāig yakk mullāē at, ā mnā bāl āwurt u hāmōš kurt. arā gipt u mnā swār kurt u ammay gīsā āwurt. 28. mni čappēn dast ša say jāā pruštat.

29. ša mānjīnā sī sāl gwastat. ša rōčān yakk rōčē man watī dukkānay tā sawdā-a kanīn. 30. yakk pīrazālē grēt u watī nwāsagā baḡal kurta u rawt. man guštun ki: pačē-a grēway, tī nwāsagā čē būta? 31. ā gušt: ēšā ar jata, dast-i prōšta, āyrā tabībayā burtun. ēšī dast čōt mant, rāst kurtag-a na-bīt.

32. idā mni jān mōrinkčān kurt, ičč na-zāntun ki čōn watī čōtēn dastā sayl kurtun, watī dilā guštun: parāstū am dunyāay tā beīsābēn čīz na-int. 33. xudāy kiābānī tā nimistag būta ki: malāmatt ma-kanit ki malāmatt-a bait. 34. ē hamā jinēnzāg at ki gō čāršāxā mni arā jat.

### Childhood's recollections

1. My childhood passed with my parents and my brothers and sisters in our family. 2. I remember that my father loved me very much when I was a child, because I was his youngest and last son.

3. When I was four or five years old, he used to tell me various folk tales and old, ancient poems. 4. I still can remember a lot of those poems. For example, "Slinger-slinger", "Sher Abdullajan", "The lop-eared hare". 5. When I became a little older, six or seven years old, my father told me the story of Sinbad.

6. In childhood I grazed the sheep of our own house. We had about one hundred sheep. 7. I and my brothers Usman and Sapar used to graze the sheep by turns. 8. We had given names to everyone of our sheep, we loved them very much and recognized them with ease. We planted a garden and a melon-plantation in front of our house as well. 9. When I was ten or twelve

years old, I used to fetch grass with the donkey. At that time we had a white donkey, its name was Shorty.

10. My father taught me to read the Quran when I was five or six years old. Sometimes I did not study, I ran away from him. 11. However much my father loved me, he used to take me and beat me because I didn't study. I used to become angry and did not talk with anybody for several days. 12. Now, when I became an adult (lit. big), I understand that my father did a good thing when he beat me. If he had not beaten (me), I would not have studied.

13. Our near neighbours were a Turkmen and a Persian. Since childhood I played with their children and step by step learned their languages. We used to visit each other. 14. I saw that all the nations are similar to us, we have to be brothers.

15. I was six years old. Once my father brought grass with the donkey. When my father had put down the grass off the donkey, he quickly went to the house, took water and began to drink it. 16. Since he was so tired and thirsty, he even forgot to tie up the donkey. The donkey himself began to eat the grass he had brought and became excited. 17. I suddenly thought to myself to mount the donkey. I went and put a basin under my feet and mounted the donkey. 18. When I mounted (it), the donkey stopped eating the grass and rushed along the street. 19. However much I cried: "Whoa!" to stop it, it did not stop and went (on running). I wondered where it would go?

20. There was a well in the middle of the village that all people used to take water from. My donkey went straight to this well. 21. He began to drink (water from) puddles poured out around the well. 22. Here I understood that this donkey had been even more thirsty than my father. He drank until he became fully satisfied and went further to the other side. 23. A bit further away from the well there was a lucerne field. My donkey went to that lucerne and began to graze. 24. The field's owner saw that the donkey was eating her lucerne, took a pitchfork and came. She made a fuss and drove away the donkey and hit it with the pitchfork, the donkey ran. 25. I cried and said: "Aunt, aunt, get me down it". That woman did not worry about if there is someone on the donkey or not. 26. The donkey pranced and ran. I could not keep myself, (the donkey) threw me onto the ground. I cried and fell.

27. Their neighbour was a mullah, he lifted me up and calmed me. He caught the donkey, mounted me upon it and brought me to our house. 28. My left arm had been broken in three places.

29. Since then thirty years have passed. Once (lit. one day from days) I was selling (things) in my shop. 30. An old woman carries her grandson in her hands and goes crying. I said: "Why are you crying? What happened to your