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**ARABIC DIALECTS OF CENTRAL ASIA:  
INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT TENDENCIES OF ARABIC  
LANGUAGE MATERIAL**

**Preface.** The Central Asian Arabic dialects – Bukhara (BAD) and Qashqadarya (QAD) belong to the eastern group of Arabic dialects. They are spoken in the territory of modern Uzbekistan. BAD is spoken by the population of the qishlaqs: Jōgarí, Chaghdarĕ, Shohan-beg, Ghijduvan area, Bukhara region, as well as the qishlaq Arab Khāna, Wobkend region, whereas QAD is spoken in the qishlaqs Jeinau and Qamashi, Beshkend region, North – West of Qarshi. According to our onsite observation, BAD is spoken by approximately 3000 people in the given qishlaqs at present, whereas up to 1500 people know the QAD. At the same time, the Arab population in residential areas greatly exceeds the number of native speakers.

Important studies were devoted to Central Asian Arabic dialects by G. Tsereteli (1941, 1956), I. Vinnikov (1962, 1963), V. Akhvlediani (1985), O. Jastrow (2005) and others.

The works by these scholars are largely devoted to the study of the Central Asian Bukhara dialect. This, in the present writer's view, is due to the existence of rich dialectological material reflective of Bukhara Arabic in scholarly use, the credit for which goes to Acad. G. Tsereteli and Prof. I. Vinnikov.

The present work aims at filling this gap. Dialectological material was obtained during our scholarly missions in Central Asia in the qishlaqs Jeinau and Qamashi, the city of Qarshi, Qashqadarya region, in 1980, 1986 and 2000. Working with informants, the present writer tried to record the speech of people of different age and sex, with a good command of Arabic. The people with poor knowledge of the Arabic language were also recorded, whose speech was considerably interspersed with Uzbek and Tajik idioms.

Centuries-old isolation from the Arabic world is an important peculiarity of Central Asian Arabic dialects. QAD and BAD developed independently of the

Arabic world, torn from their native linguistic environment, over a long period of time. A significant linguistic picture has resulted from the development of Arabic dialects in the non-identical linguistic environment, when they co-existed, being in linguistic contact with the Indo-European (Tajik, Dari) and Turkic (Uzbek, Turkmen) languages over centuries. This favored the development of triglossia in Central Asia – nowadays the majority of the population of Bukhara and Qashqadarya regions speaks and makes wide use of the Tajik and Uzbek languages, along with their native Arabic. It should also be noted that of the non-native languages, Bukhara Arabs speak Tajik more fluently, whereas Qashqadarya Arabs use Uzbek with more fluency. Historical, geographic, social and other extra linguistic factors played an important role in the development of Central Asian Arabic dialects and they are taken into account in the program of research into these dialects.

The complex study of the Central Asian Arabic dialects takes the following directions:

I. The oldest phonological, grammatical and lexical features of Arabic language, preserved in the dialects, - important from the prospect of the history of Arabic and, in general, Semitic languages.

II. Internal development tendencies of Arabic language material isolated from the Arab World Arabic Dialects.

III. Development of linguistic peculiarities as a result of contacts with non-kindred Indo-European and Turkic languages.

IV. The role of extra linguistic factors in the development of Central Asian Arabic Dialects.

Central Asian Arabic dialects contain extremely wealthy materials for the study of the tendencies of the development of Semitic languages. Below are given some linguistic peculiarities of QAD and BAD important from the point of view of the historical morphology of Arabic language and internal development tendencies of Arabic linguistic material.

**The Root.** It is typical for the root structure of nouns and verbs to have a tendency to restore three consonants: *kē avbar* < *ke ‘abar* - “*he lived*”, *rowd* < *rōd* < *’arḍ* – “*ground*”:

*kāin ma kāin fi qaḍīmi waxt esqe zamōn fad bōy ke avbar.*

*“Once upon a time there lived one Bey in old times”.*

*hat pōšō ki-sōr, i ḥād abū rowden pošoya insōir i-hankit ḡe’ōniya misōr.*

*“When he became a Pasha, in his father’s country was famine”.*

**Indicative Pronoun.** The following indicative pronouns in BAD: *had*, *hadi*, *hat*, *hālān* may have Syrian origins. The adequate form of *hālān* (< Syr. *hālēn*) in Literary Arabic is *ha’ulā’i*. Rarely we find beside *hal* the form *han*. We find the existence of *hal* as a demonstrative pronoun in Central Asian Arabic very important in Arabic, generally from the viewpoint of establishing the definite article genesis.

The old Syrian or Jacobite (West Syrian) forms are: hāna, hāde, hālēn, hānūn (comp. Arab. hāda, hāḏihi, ha'ulā'i, ḏālika). In Bukhara Dialect we have haw (comp. ḏālika) and hānēn (comp. tilka). The demonstrative pronouns had, hadī, hat, hal/han represent changed forms of the adequate Syrian pronouns.

We can suppose that the existence of original Syrian forms in Bukhara dialect, as well as in other Arabic dialects (for example in Syrian Arab dialects), is a result of language interactions in the early period of development of Arabic dialects, when Arabic language integrated with local languages and created Arabic dialects. Therefore such dialects represent the speech of non-Arabs. Many people accepted and made it their own Arabic, but also maintained forms from their pre-existent native language.

Arab Dialects were born and were developing in two directions. If Bedouin speech of the Arabian Desert and neighboring lands represents the next step of language development for the pre-Islamic population, then the dialects of Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, as well as of other places of Eastern Arab population, represent a result of mix of old Arabic dialects with local languages due to Arab conquests.

Consequently, it is possible, that the Arabs who settled in Central Asia brought forms of demonstrative pronouns typical of Syrian (Aramaic), which was functional in their dialects.

**Personal Pronouns.** The following are the independent personal pronouns in QAD:

*Singular:* 3 m. haw/zōk, 3 f. hay/zīka; 2 m. inta, 2 f. inti; 1 anā.

*Plural:* 3 m. ziklōn/ziklonāt/zōkāt, 3 f. ziklānna; 2 m. intū/intuwāt, 2 f. intīnna; 1 naḥna/naḥnāt.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> person sing. and pl., also in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> persons pl. there are the following parallel forms: haw/zōk sing. m. hay/zīka sing. f., ziklōn/ziklonāt/zōkāt pl. m., intū/intuwāt pl. m., naḥna/naḥnāt pl.

The functional frequency of haw/hay (sing. 3<sup>rd</sup> person) is very low. These forms appear in the dialect mostly with the negative particle mā: ma-haw, ma-hay. Usually in the dialect we have zōk/zīka in sing. 3<sup>rd</sup> person. As for plural, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, we have three forms: ziklōn, ziklonāt, zōkāt. ziklonāt is formed by means of the double plural (ziklōn + āt). As for zōkāt, it is formed by adding the plural marker āt to the singular form of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person zōk.

In the first person we have the alternation of naḥna with naḥnāt, where naḥnāt is a double form of plural. In QAD, functional frequency of this form is very high.

**Formation of Plural.** The plural in the QAD is formed mainly with the suffix - āt. This rule applies both to fem. and masc. nouns. Rarely, to build plurals, masc. nouns take the suffix -in, and fem. nouns - the suffix yām or ām: hamrayām - "gold coins" (Chikovani 2006-2007: 32). Broken plural forms: imṭār - "rains"

are also preserved in the dialect. The double plural is characteristic too: farasīnāt - “horses”, imṭārāt - “rains”.

In many cases the forms of broken plurals have the meaning of singulars: ṣuhūr - “sons-in-law”. A number of broken plural forms in the Classical Arabic are used in singular as well. Among them are fu‘ūl/fu‘ul and fi‘āl constructions, which are present in Central Asian as well. The abovementioned examples from Central Asian Arabic clearly show that in literary Arabic the forms of broken plural with plural connotation, such ‘iyāl - “sons”, qubūr - “graves” and ṣuhūr - “sons-in-law” carry singular meanings in dialect. We can suppose that Central Asian Arabic reflects the old case with regards to development of the language. According to the presenting material we can assume that forms C<sub>1</sub>uC<sub>2</sub>ūC<sub>3</sub>/C<sub>1</sub>uC<sub>2</sub>uC<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>1</sub>iC<sub>2</sub>aC<sub>3</sub> initially express the singular form and gained the Plural meaning in the following stage of the language development process.

Forms with the endings - in/īn are widespread in BAD, they are found between the modifier and the modified, constituting a certain linking element. For instance: kalbīn kbīr - “big dog”, such nunation is typical of the Qashqadarya dialect as well: ḥoiṭīn ḡdīd - “new house”.

**Reflexive Pronoun.** The word rūh - “soul” is used as a reflexive pronoun with the particle əb/ib < bi: əbrūhi/ibrūhi - “he/himself”, əbrūhna/ibrūhna - “we/ourselves”. In QAD between the particle bi (b) and rūh (rāḥa) appears d: budrāḥa - “he himself”:

i\_ḡeināu šaybōni ademiāt kisīr hast, budrāḥa ‘arab.

“There are a lot of Shayban people in Jeinau. They are themselves [himself] Arabs”.

naḥnāt ib-rūhna ‘amal hamikiya insu. “We are doing the work like this”.

**Derivative Forms.** There are all derivative forms from the second to the tenth, with the exception of the ninth. Activity, intensity, direction, conative, causative and the meaning of the passive voice are conveyed by the means of the derivative forms. At the same time the derivative forms are not formed from any verb. The forms attested in BAD and QAD do reflect the linguistic potential of word building rather than of form building. A similar tendency is characteristic of other Arabic dialects as well.

The fourth form in Central Asian Arabic, which is rarely encountered in Arabic dialects, appears in the shape of anṭa < a’ṭa (comp. Syriac anṭa, Iraqi anṭa: boy binta ma nṭa - “The Bey did not give his daughter”, tōgīr i\_zōka māl kisīr anṭa - “The merchant gave him a lot of money (merchandise)”.

The tendency towards the disappearance of the distinction between long and short vowels is noticeable in QAD. This brings about the overlapping of the second and third forms on the one hand and of the fifth and sixth forms on the other. There are also cases of conveying by one verbal form the lexical meanings of the paired forms. The number of such cases in the dialect is gradually increasing, e. g.: ‘ayyan - I; “established”; 2. “looked at (smb., smth.)”, takatteb - I. “to align in columns

(oneself-with)”, comp. amīr timūr ‘ašer fadhat alf ‘askar takatteb – “*Timur Lenk aligned eleven thousand warriors (in columns)*”; 2. “*Kept correspondence with*”. Nevertheless the second and third forms and the fifth and sixth forms are attested in the QAD. As the analysis clarifies, in such cases mostly such forms occur for which in the literary Arabic language it is impossible to find phonetically close morphological formations, e.g.: ‘azzal (II) - “*separated fighting persons*”, fāxer (III) - “*was proud*”, tafattam (V) - “*learnt smth.*”; ta‘ārak (VI) - “*quarreled*”, “*fought*”. As already noted, the enumerated verbs in the literary Arabic language are not represented respectively in the third, second, sixth and fifth forms. It should be noted here that the presence of long vowels in verbal forms and also in other Arabic words in QAD is probably due to various factors. The most important among them, in the author’s view, is the accent. The tendency towards preserving the traditional pronunciation of Arabic words, which unconsciously is conveyed through generations, is also to be taken into account.

At the same time “the Iranian and Turkic influence have enriched the language quite considerably and lifted it far above the ordinary Arabic dialect type”... (Jastrow 2005: 137).

**The Verbal Particle m/mi in BAD.** The formation of the imperfect verbs in BAD differs from QAD by using the verbal particle m/mi. We have similar particles b, m in Egyptian, Palestinian and Syrian dialects. The etymology of this particle maybe related with Arabic particle bi. In Bukhara dialect the presence of article mi in imperfective forms may be related with the influence of Persian mi as well. But it seems doubtful that such grammatical borrowing has taken place as the result of linguistic contacts between Tajik and Arabic dialect. In Persian this mi particle is used with the verb forms not only in present, but also in past (Tsereteli 1941: 141). As for BAD, the mentioned particle is used in the forms of imperfect and it is more acceptable to be explained on the basis of the internal development of Arabic dialect. It may be supposed that the particle m/mi was in use by the Arabs of Bukhara region when they came to Central Asia. Examples:

- fad waxt misōr, dük ‘iyāl gidāmu milimihun – muqūl: - anā qarībiya men dunia ma‘ber.

“*The time has passed [and] he is calling his kids saying to them: “I will pass away from this world soon”.*

- anā ileykum fat nağzia masu himil mañtikum.

“*I’ll give you enough [of good quality] food (load)”.*

**Transition of Verb kāna into Suffix.** In the speech of Bukhara and Qashqadarya Arabs the verb kāna – “*to be*” has evolved into the suffix k. In such cases, the verbs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, m. g., sing. are equipped with suffix k: ġadak – “*he was going (moving)*”. E. g.:

pošo salās iūm i\_darb ġadak.

“*Pasha was going for three days*”.

xilāf bōy i\_bēt rūhu ġāk.

“*Then the Bey came back himself to (his) house*”.

For the formation of *Plusquamperfect* to the verb ḡā'a, the active participle of the verb kāna – kēyyin/koin is added. So we have in QAD ḡā' kēyyin – “obviously he came” (Tsereteli 1941: 143). In the speech of Jogari I have recorded ḡakkīn (< ḡā'a kā'in) and ḡadakin/ḡadakkīn (< ḡadā kā'in).

As a result of the loss of final n and afterward long ī in BAD we have ḡak and ḡaddák. These forms are absent in QAD, but the presence of kēyyin in ḡā' kēyyin in the aforementioned dialect helps us to explain the phenomena of ḡak and ḡaddák in Bukhara Arabic. As a result we see that ḡā'a and ḡadā are equipped in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, m. g., sing. with the suffix k, which in many cases residue of active participle of kāna.

The shortening of the verbs kāna and ḡadā and their transferring into verbal suffix is the result of internal development of verbal structure in Central Asian Arabic dialects.

**The Transitive Verb's Objective Structure.** The transitive verbs in BAD are always equipped with pronominal affixes which express the objectives. Usually the objectives are presented in the sentence, but even if they are absent, in any case the verb is always equipped with pronominal affix:

harōmi i\_bēt daxal, xēṭ xazah.

“The vagabond entered the house [and] took the string (took it)”.

bōy i\_hal ademi rossa gassah. ugūb zōka illay xallāsni.

“The Bey cut off the head of a man [his head], then he saved me”.

It is obvious that pronominal suffixes of the verb are expressing objectives by transforming into objective suffixes. Such objective structure we have in some languages unrelated to Semitic languages, like Caucasian languages (Tsereteli 1941: 143). The expression of verb valency by means of the marking of the objectives is one of the interesting peculiarities of verb formation of Central Asian Arabic dialects. In many cases in the recorded material we see that the verbs are marked by objective suffixes which are, in origin, pronominal affixes. So, transitive verbs in our dialects express two persons: subject and object. This linguistic phenomenon may be explained as the tendency of internal development of verb structure in Central Asian Arabic.

**The Tense: “Present Indefinite”.** The formation of the “Present Indefinite” is a result of the internal development of Central Arabic linguistic material (Chikovani 2002: 114). In QAD the “Present Indefinite” is formed by adding to the masdar of the first form the auxiliary verb sawa - “to do smth.” in imperfect and corresponding person, e.g.: ‘ammalān isi - “he works (usually)”, rakabān asi - “I break in horses (on the whole (usually))”:

ana i\_b\_rūhi ademiyāt ‘ammalān asi afarmid.

“[My work is] to give [and] to register the job for the people”.

zoka i\_buxoro hast, rakabān isi.

“He is in Bukhara busy with breaking of the horses”.

**“Past Indefinite”.** “Past Indefinite” is formed by means of the active participle and pronominal suffixes: šāribni – “I drank”, mā sāmi‘ni – “I heard”. This tense has developed in Central Asian Arabic under the influence of Turkish language (Tsereteli 1941: 142):

muya pošō inti šarabti? – anā mā šāribni.

*“Have you drunk the Pasha’s water? – [No], I did not drink”.*

i\_gappāt pošō anā mā sāmi‘ni. *“I didn’t hear the Pasha’s words”.*

**“Complex (Immediate) Future”.** “Complex (Immediate) Future” is formed by the adding of the prefix tā to the verb in imperfective: tā-noğdi – “let’s go now”, tā-noxuz – “let’s take [it]”. The particle tā is originated from Arabic ḥattā:

way šahriyya hama walad ikōkōyāta igūl: - tā-noğdi il-bozor.

*“In the morning the boy says to his brothers: “Let’s go to the bazaar”.*

boy binta ihama walad xuttoṛin sawa, - tā-nokul al-palaw zika ihama itgūl.

*“The Bey’s daughter invited the boy saying [to him]: “Let’s eat the pilaf”.*

**“The Present Definite”.** The present definite conveys a continuous, prolonged action. To a certain extent it resembles the English “Present Continuous”. The indicated tense is formed in the QAD by adding active participle forms of the verb nām to a form of the imperfect (Tsereteli 1941: 142), e.g.: iṭbuḥ nāyim - “(smb.) is now baking (smth.)”, nōkul nāyiminni – “we’re now eating”. It should be noted here that the participle of the auxiliary verb nām is frequently supplied with a pronominal suffix:

akramkul wēnū? – ha, iğī nāim.

*“Where is Akramkul? – [Here is] he, coming”.*

ieš saweytum? – nokul nāiminni. *What are you doing? –*

*We are eating now”.*

**Conclusion.** The objectives of the above study outline characteristics of Central Asian Arabic important to the research history of Arabic language and its development. Internal development of Arabic linguistic material shows grammatical formation on the different level of the language. There is the tendency of word-formation as well. The specifics of Central Asian Arabic dialects are mainly caused by the absence of the influence of Classical Arabic and its dialects. The linguistic contacts are visible on the different levels of the linguistic structure of the mentioned dialects.

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