



Linguistic Contact and Tracing Persian Construction onto Khuzestani Arabic Structures

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Abstract: Unlike other dialects of Arabic, Khuzestani vernacular Arabic seems to have attracted little attention within the linguistic community. In this vein, the present study aims to present some evidence to show that matter replication of Persian material is mostly found in Khuzestani vernacular Arabic and thus linguistic contact and grammatical borrowing is most often mapped from Persian onto Khuzestani Arabic. Replication of Persian material primarily occurs in the domain of lexical vocabulary, and partly in grammatical vocabulary. Also, pattern replication is notable in the emerging change of constraints on word order, the favoring of analytic constructions and emergence of a new analytic past tense, and the reduction of overt marking of definiteness. In addition, the most remarkable contact-induced change in the dialect is the identification of Khuzestani Arabic grammatical morphemes in attributive constructions – the Construct State marker and the definite article that appears between head and attribute – with the Persian attributive particle, and the consequent merger of two historically distinct attributive constructions – adjectival and nominal – into a single type, which replicates the state of affairs in Persian.

Keywords: Attributive constructions, Contact-induced change, Grammatical borrowing, Khuzestani vernacular Arabic, Linguistic contact.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The study of the status of local and regional variations of one language has always been an important part of sociolinguistics that has attracted a lot of attention at different levels (Shana, Zentz & Dion, 2012; Shin, 2016; Jennifer & Durham, 2019). Siemund (2009) argues that vernacular data are a valuable testing ground for established theories of language and an indispensable corrective for our assumptions about universal properties of languages. The study of vernaculars could profit from this enterprise by gaining access to new methodologies, hypotheses, motivations, and explanations. Butler (1988), on the other hand, believes that “the study of local and regional variations in linguistic phenomena has most commonly focused on manifest expression at the level of the word, or at the very most, at the level of the sentential utterance” (p.11). Moreover, he maintains that the main concern of such studies has been such features as pronunciation, the choice of lexical items and variation in the meaning of similar items, and the

syntactic constructions characterizing different regional, social, and ethnic varieties of a language (ibid.).

Trudgil (2009) claims that different degrees of simplification have occurred in different Arabic varieties to the extent that adult language learning and dialect contact have occurred. In the light of Kusters (2003) and McWhorter (2007), however, the fact that contact has been responsible for some of the simplifications which Arabic has undergone would seem to be incontrovertibly established. To them, the contact is of the kind ensued from the expansion of Arabic out of the Arabian peninsula and the language shift to Arabic from North African and Middle Eastern languages which followed later.

In the present study, it was attempted to investigate what specifications are there to make Khuzestani Arabic different from other versions of Arabic. The main incentive for the present study came from the unexpectedly astonishing observation of a large

number of schoolgoers in Ahvaz who as Khouzistani Persian-speaking pupils, were fairly proficient in Khuzestani vernacular Arabic, yet showed outstanding problems learning Modern Standard Arabic course while studying at junior high school. Still, in the prospective years, they frequently demonstrated little aptitude in leaning Arabic course, not being much capable of learning the course easily at high school and higher educational institutions. In this vein, in this study, it was endeavored to scrutinize what specifications are there to make Khuzestani Arabic different from other versions of Arabic. In other words, what linguistic and/or grammatical characteristics are mapped onto Khuzestani Arabic which make it different from Arabic, spoken in, say, countries like Iraq, Kuwait, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, what effects, if any, might replication of Persian, as the primary language of everyday communication in the province, have on Khuzestani vernacular Arabic, primarily in the domain of lexical and grammatical vocabulary.

2. Background

The Khuzestani local dialect of Arabic is spoken natively by a noticeable number of people in the southern part of the province of Khuzestan in south-western Iran. According to Ingham (1982), the local dialect of Arabic spoken in Khuzestan is considered a representative of the continuum of Mesopotamian dialects of Arabic, which cover the river lands of southern Iraq in the west. It is also reported that in the centuries following the advent of Islam, the Arabic language enjoyed the status of the literary language of religion, scholarship, and administration, as well as being the primary language of everyday communication in the province. This condition changed with the introduction of an intensive movement favoring Persian as the only official state language in 1926. The policy included the settlement of a Persian-speaking population in the province, so that Persian is now the only language of education, local media and newspapers, administration, and most urban commerce in the province of Khuzestan.

2.1. The Current Situation of the Dialect

Unlike other dialects of Arabic, Khuzestani Arabic seems to have not attracted much attention within the linguistic community. Ingham (1997) pays to the dialect, focusing, however, on an introductory discussion of phonology and vocabulary only; and Shabibi (2004) provides an overview of the structures of the dialect along with an analysis of contact-induced developments in morphosyntax.

At present, Persian is the only language of education, local media and newspapers, administration, and most urban business in the province of Khuzestan. Arabic, on the other hand, is most often the language of the family and Arabic-speaking neighborhoods, though even as an informal language it is now in decline, and Persian is the preferred language of the younger generation born since the 1970s. Nowadays, almost all

educated adult speakers of Arabic in Khuzestan are bilingual, and Arabic monolingualism is limited to the uneducated older generation, and to the older generation in rural communities.

Arabic literacy is, on the other hand, limited by and large to reading the Quran, and to a very basic level of instruction in Modern Standard Arabic, and even most educated Arabs might not have an active command of Modern Standard Arabic. In some cases, Khuzestani Arabic speakers are able to read modern Arabic by drawing on their exposure to media, combined with their basic familiarity with the Arabic script and with Classical Arabic (e.g., Quran).

2.2. Khuzestani Arabic and Linguistic Change

The historical interaction of Persian and Khuzestani Arabic has increasingly brought about remarkable linguistic changes in this indigenous dialect. A postulation about linguistic change in Khuzestani vernacular Arabic could be that the relatively rapid acquisition by large numbers of adults of Arabic in contact situations, followed in subsequent generations by the loss of the indigenous languages as well as total shift to the newly and somewhat simplified imposing language, were the main mechanisms involved. Thus, the contact of Khuzestani Arabic and Persian has progressively brought about a series of linguistic changes in this dialect wherein the main areas that have been influenced are:

1. Noun-noun and noun-adjective attribution constructions
2. Definiteness marking
3. Complement clauses
4. Discourse markers and connectors
5. Word order

A noteworthy point is, however, that it is not the case that contact has necessarily led only to simplification in the history of Arabic. As it would lead us to expect, in different types of sociolinguistic situation complexification may have also occurred which will be discussed later in this study.

3. Areas of Linguistic Change in Khuzestani Arabic Dialect

3.1. Phonology and Sound Segments

In Khuzestani Arabic, phonemes and sound segments that are otherwise absent from the standard Arabic system, most notably /p/, /č/, and /g/, are retained in Persian loanwords, e.g., *panjara* 'window', and *pič guštī* 'screwdriver'. Another noticeable phonological contact phenomenon in Khuzestani Arabic is the interchange of /ɣ/ and /q/, in words such as /ɣarīb/, qarīb/ 'close' (cf. Modern Standard Arabic /qarīb/ 'close', /ɣarīb/ 'strange'). This could go with the realization in Persian of etymological /q/ as /ɣ/.

3.2. Morphological Typology

A major change under Persian influence is the leveling of the status of attributes. In Standard Arabic (and other dialects), adjectival attributes follow the head noun, and agree with the head noun in gender, number, as well as in definiteness:

(1) Standard Arabic (and other dialects)

a. *walad kabīr*

boy big.m

‘a big boy’

b. *al-walad al-kabīr*

def-boy def-big.m

‘the big boy’

Nominal attributes, by contrast, are conjoined by means of the attributive *Iḍāfa*-construction, whereby only the dependent (genitive) noun is overtly marked for definiteness:

(2) Standard Arabic (and other dialects)

walad al-mudīr

boy def-director

‘the director’s son’

In Persian, on the other hand, both types of attributes are treated in the same way: The attribute (whether adjectival or nominal) follows the head, and an attributive particle (the *Ezāfe* marker) mediates between the two:

(3) Persian

a. *pesar-e bozorg*

boy-ez big

‘the big boy’

b. *pesar-e modīr*

boy-ez director

‘the director’s son’

c. *xūne-ye sefid*

house-ez white

‘the white house’

d. *moʔallem-e madrese*

teacher-ez school

‘the school teacher’

The pattern in Khuzestani Arabic matches the Persian arrangement. Likewise, as in other dialects of Arabic, the definite article *al-* assimilates to dental consonants, resulting in gemination of that consonant):

(4) Khuzestani Arabic

a. *walad č-čibīr*

boy def-big.m

‘the big boy’

b. *walad al-modīr*

boy def-director

‘the director’s son’

c. *beīt al-abyaz*

house def-white

‘the white house’

d. *mo-alləm-at al-madrāsa*

teacher-f.cons def-school

‘the school teacher’

A point to notice is that in the adjectival attributive construction in (4a and 4c) overt definiteness agreement between noun and adjective is lacking, just like in the genitive attribute construction in (4b and 4d). Based on the Persian model, Khuzestani Arabic has reanalyzed the definite article in such constructions as a marker of attribution, which matches the Persian (definite) *Ezāfe* marker *-(y)e*. Its distribution now resembles that of the Persian *Ezāfe* attributive marker: It appears, like Persian *-(y)e*, between the two constituents of the attribution, and it is used to link both adjectival, and nominal attributes.

Further evidence that the functions of the Persian construction are mapped onto Arabic structures is provided by the position of the feminine Construct State or *Izāfa*-marker *-at*, seen in (4d) in a position that is not untypical of Arabic as a whole. In Arabic, the Construct State marker (still recognizable in the vernaculars only in the feminine singular) is reserved for nominal attribution, as in (4d). But in Khuzestani Arabic we find it in adjectival attributive constructions as well, as in (5a–b); it even attaches directly to adjectives, as in *_aly-at* ‘high.f’ in (5b):

(5) Khuzestani Arabic

a. *jazīr-at al-xazra*

island-f.cons def-green

‘the green island’

b. *īḥ-at _aly-at al-beīt*

wall-f.cons high-f.cons def-house

‘the high wall of the house’

This matches the distribution of the Persian *Ezāfe* marker *-(y)e* (6):

(6) Persian

a. *jazīre-ye sabz*

island-ez green

‘the green island’

b. *dīvār-e boland-e xūne*

wall-ez tall-ez house

‘the high wall of the house’

It is important to note that in the ‘mixed’ type, as in (5b), involving both an adjectival-attribute (‘high wall’) and a genitive attribute (‘wall of the house’), the first (adjectival) attribution relies exclusively on the Construct State marker, while the second (nominal) relies on the combination of the Construct State marker with the following definite article. In fact, Khuzestani Arabic allows for variation in such cases, and the Construct State marker may be accompanied by a definite article in both positions.

Consider example (7), where the nouns are masculine, and there is no option of using an overt Construct State marker:

(7) a. Khuzestani Arabic

walad č-čibīr al-modīr

boy def-big def-director

‘the director’s big/eldest son’

b. Standard Arabic (and other dialects)

walad al-mudīr al-kabīr

boy def-director def-big

‘the director’s big/eldest son’

c. Persian

pesar-e bozorg-e modīr

boy-ez big-ez director

‘the director’s big/eldest son’

The crucial aspect of the Khuzestani Arabic construction is (1) to have a marker of attribution mediating between the head and its attribute, (2) to place the attribute in a position immediately following its head, and (3) to avoid any overt marking of definiteness in the adjectival attribution. In all this, Khuzestani Arabic copies precisely the Persian attributive construction. Contrasting with Persian, it retains a distinct marking of attribution with feminine singulars, but allows this marking to assimilate into the generic function of the attributive marker. The outcome of the process is (1) the loss of the distinction between nominal and adjectival attribution, (2) the loss of overt marking of definiteness in attributive constructions, (3) a change in the word order in complex (‘mixed’) attributive constructions (as in 5b and 7a), and, finally, (4) gender variation in the marking of the attributive construction, with optional use of the definite article to accompany the Construct State in feminine singulars in complex attributions.

3.3. Nominal Structures

The most notable contact-induced change in Khuzestani Arabic nominal structures is the status of the *Izāfa*-construction alluded to above. The replication of a construction type that is similar to the Persian *Ezāfe* leads, as discussed above, to the abandonment of definiteness agreement. The decline of overt definiteness marking can also be observed in other constructions in the language, notably in the absence of a definite article with definite head nouns of relative clauses. This too follows a Persian model (where definiteness generally remains unmarked):

(8) Khuzestani Arabic

mara lli šift-ū-ha xābar-at.

woman rel saw-2pl.m-3sg.f called-3sg.f

‘The woman that you saw called.’

3.4. Verbal Structures

In the derivation of verbs, the tendency to paraphrase inchoative and causative verbs drawing on an analytic construction rather than on derivational morphology, although found in other dialects of Arabic, appears to be reinforced by Persian. Thus we find:

(9) Khuzestani Arabic

aš-šijra z-zūīr-a šwayye šwayy tšīr čibīr-a.

def-tree def-small-f little little become.3sg.f big-f

‘The small tree gradually grows.’

Loan-verbs appear to be limited to the replication of Persian compound verbs consisting of a nominal stem (*masdar*) and a verbalizing element or

‘light verb’ (Persian *kardan* ‘to do’ or *šodan* ‘to become’). The nominal stem, often itself an Arabic loan into Persian, is replicated directly in Khuzestani Arabic, while as corresponding native light verb *šaww-* ‘to do’ is employed for Persian *kardan*, and *šār-* ‘to become’ for Persian *šodan*, thus: Persian *taayībeš kard* ‘he followed him’ (follow-3sg did.3sg) is rendered *šawwā-h ta_yīb* (did.3sg-3sg follow).

An additional change to the verb system, brought about through Persian influence, concerns the tense system. Persian has both a simple past tense, which is expressed by the person-inflected past stem of the verb, and a composite past tense, which consists of a past participle and an auxiliary. The auxiliary, based on the existential verb, may inflect for person as well as tense; the present-tense auxiliary is used to form the perfect, the past-tense auxiliary forms the pluperfect. Arabic, by contrast, has only one, simple past tense, though combinations of the past-tense existential verb with the lexical verb (usually in the imperfect or present-future) are also possible, usually expressing habitual aspect of conditional mood. Khuzestani Arabic copies the Persian composite past tense, drawing on inherited resources. The only available participle form in Arabic is the present participle, which inflects for gender and number (but not for person), and it is this form that serves as the basis for composite past tense in Khuzestani Arabic. Since the Arabic existential verb does not have a present-tense form, the only available auxiliary is a past-tense auxiliary; the construction thus matches the Persian pluperfect:

(10) a. Khuzestani Arabic

mān rāh-at. lā-l-beīt, huwwa mā-rāyāh čān

when went-1sg to-def-home he neg-going.sg.m was.3sg.m

‘When I went home he had not gone away.’

b. Persian

vayti raft-am xūne, ūn na-rafte būd.

when went-1sg home he neg-gone was.3sg.m

‘When I went home he had not gone away.’

(11) a. Khuzestani Arabic

mān gabul šāyfat-ha čānət.

from past seeing.sg.f-3sg.f was.1sg

‘I had seen her before.’

b. Persian

az yabl ūn-o dāde būd-am.

from past 3sg-acc seen was-1sg

‘I had seen her before.’

3.5. Other Parts of Speech

A series of Persian discourse markers, fillers, tags, and focus particles are used in Khuzestani Arabic. Most of these elements are well integrated into Khuzestani Arabic and are not perceived by speakers as foreign. The category that is most obviously influenced by Persian is that of discourse markers with a primarily interaction-qualifying rather than syntactic-semantic function: *xō/xōb/xōš* ‘well’, *xōlāse* ‘in sum’, *albate* ‘of course’, *hič* ‘at all, altogether’, *ham* ‘indeed, well’:

(12) *xōb w-hāy sabab ham al-ladi gabal cān ...*
dm and-this reason dm rel once was
'Well, and the reason that **indeed** once existed for this ...'

(13) *xolāse hīc mā-rāh-na madrasa.*

dm dm neg-went-1pl school

'After all, we didn't go to school **at all**.'

(14) *albate cān-an ham b-dīc z-zamān banāt c-cān-an yarh-an.*

dm were-3pl.f dm in-that def-time girls rel-were-3pl.f go-3pl.f

'Of course there were **indeed** girls at the time who used to go [to school].'

These are accompanied by Persian-derived focus particles: *ham* 'too' and *ham... ham* 'both ... and'.

(15) *dīc and-ha θnīan frūx ana ham and-ī θnīan.*

that.f poss-f two children I too poss-2sg two

'She has two children, and I have two children, **too**.'

(16) *ham ana w ham alī rāh-na l-əl-pārk.*

both I and also Ali went-1pl to-def-park

'Both Ali and I went to the park.'

(17) *umm-ī ham yaṣl-at lə-mmā in ham nazzaf-at l-beīt.*

mother-1sg both washed-3sg.f def-dishes and cleaned-3sg.f def-house

'My mother [**both**] washed the dishes **and** cleaned the house.'

Optional, occurring in variation alongside various Arabic-derived counterparts such as *hatta* 'even' or *lākin* 'but', is the contrastive correlative *balke* 'but [... also]':

(18) *huwwa mū bass bāhūš balke šujjā ham.*

he neg only clever but brave too

'He is not only clever **but also** brave.'

Further Persian borrowings that are generalized in Khuzestani Arabic are the concessive subordinating conjunctions *agarče* and *bā inke*, both 'although/ even though', and the factual complementizer *ke* 'that':

(19) *huwwa rāh lwaḥda l-əl-pārk agarče umm-a*
he went.3sg.m alone to-def-park although mother-3sg.m
gall-at l-a lā-yrih.

said-3sg.f to-3sg.m neg-go.3sg.m

'He went to the park alone, even though his mother told him not to go.'

(20) *rayyāl-na bə-l-yōm xətab, bā inke θaləθta š sana*
man-1pl in-def-day proposed.3sg.m although thirteen
year

umr-ī sawwūm rāhnamāi ubū-y qəbal b-ī

age-1sg third secondary school, father-1sg accepted for-3sg.m

'When my husband proposed, **although** I was [just] thirteen years old, **third year of secondary school**, my father agreed.'

(21) *tadr-īn ke rayl-ač ala kəl-šī caddab.*

know-2sg.f comp husband-2sg.f on everything lied.3sg.m

'You know **that** your husband lied about everything.'

The latter, the Persian complementizer and relativizer *ke*, does not appear in non-factual (subjunctive) complements, where instead we find the

Arabic (historical) relativizer *l-ladi* or *illi*, which also continues to cover the function of a relativizer. Nonetheless, occasionally Persian *ke* is also found in the position of the relativizer:

(22) *əbən uxū yāzī ke huwwa w mart-a hnā ...*

son brother Ghazi rel he and wife-3sg.m here

'Ghazi's nephew, who is here with his wife ...'

From this we might assume a gradual process of convergence in steps, as follows: in stage 1, the Persian model of having an identical marker for complement clauses and relative clauses (*ke*) is copied into Khuzestani Arabic, with the effect of generalizing the relativizer *l-ladi/illi* (at the expense of the historical Arabic complementizer *'inn-*) to cover the function of complementizer. The result is a convergence of patterns among the two languages. In stage 2, the actual Persian marker *ke* is adopted into Khuzestani Arabic in factual complement clauses, as seen in (21). The result is a split within Khuzestani Arabic between factual and non-factual complements, whereas the same marker is used in both languages to introduce factual complements. Finally, in stage 3, the beginnings of which are attested in the contemporary language, Persian *ke* infiltrates Khuzestani Arabic relative clauses as well, as seen in (22).

3.6. Constituent Order

One change in constituent order has already been mentioned above, in Section 2: it concerns the shift in 'complex' attributive constructions, away from the Arabic norm, which allows an adjectival modifier to be separated from its head (by a nominal modifier of the complex noun phrase), toward the Persian-type constituent order, whereby each attribute must immediately follow its head. We repeat example (7) here:

(7) a. Khuzestani Arabic
walad c-čibīr al-modīr
boy def-big def-director
'the director's big/eldest son.'

b. Standard Arabic (and other dialects)

walad al-mudīr al-kabīr

boy def-director def-big

'the director's big/eldest son' (also: 'the big director's son')

c. Persian:

pesar-e bozorg-e modīr

boy-ez big-ez director

'the director's big/eldest son'

A further issue related to the order of constituents in Khuzestani Arabic concerns the position of the copula-auxiliary */cān/*, which, in the composite past tense (pluperfect), follows the lexical verb: *mā-rāyāh cān* 'he had not gone away' (Persian: *na-rafte būd*) (see examples 10 and 11).

Noteworthy is also the flexible position of the causal conjunction *čīe* 'because'.

Like its Persian counterpart *čon*, it can also occupy the final position in the adverbial clause expressing cause:

(23) a. Khuzestani Arabic

lieš mā-reh-tī l-əl-madrasa?

why neg-went-2sg.f to-def-school

čān _edd-ī xuttār čē.

was.3sg with-1sg guests because

‘Why didn’t you go to school?’

‘Because I had guests.’

b. Persian

čērā be madrese na-raft-ī?

why to school neg-went-2sg

mehmūn dāšt-am čon.

guest had-1sg because

‘Why didn’t you go to school?’

‘Because I had guests.’

Finally, we must consider what appears to be the beginning of a shift in word order, extending the contexts in which Object–Verb order is favored to comply more frequently with the Persian type. Object–Verb order in Arabic is generally highly marked and is employed as a means to topicalize the direct object. Khuzestani Arabic makes use of such strategies, which include – unlike Persian, where OV prevails – the pronominal resumption of the object in a position following the lexical verb. Nevertheless, such constructions in Khuzestani Arabic do not necessarily express the topicalization of the object:

(24) *lə-bnayya d-dār nazzaf-at-ha.*

def-little.girl def-room cleaned-3sg.f-3sg.f

‘The little girl cleaned [it] the room.’

(25) *hadan xālāt-ī līsāns-hən kazz-ann-a.*

these aunts-1sg degree-3pl.f gained-3pl.f-3sg.m

‘My aunts received [it] their degree.’

3.7. Lexical Borrowings

The presence of numerous Persian lexical borrowings is a distinguishing feature of Khuzestani Arabic, setting it apart from other neighboring dialects of Arabic. Nevertheless, there is considerable sociolinguistic stratification in the use of Persian vocabulary among different groups of speakers (cf. Shabibi 2004). As the principal language of the public sphere, Persian supplies numerous lexical items in the domains of trade, institutions, tools, and other aspects of public and technical life (e.g. *xarīd-o-furūš* ‘trade’, *pīč guštī* ‘screwdriver’, *lebās šū ī* ‘washing machine’, etc.). In everyday vocabulary, Persian idioms are commonly calqued in Khuzestani Arabic, facilitated by the fact that those idioms themselves are often based on Arabic loan vocabulary in Persian, and so even more easily replicable in Khuzestani Arabic: Consider Khuzestani Arabic *wāyəd mamnūn*, lit. ‘very grateful’, in the sense of ‘thank you very much’, based on Persian *xeyli mamnūn*, or Khuzestani Arabic *yarreti zaḥma*, lit. ‘you have taken trouble [on my behalf]’, also an expression of gratitude, from Persian *zahmat kešīdī*. Here, the fact that the languages already share a large part of their vocabulary (as a result of earlier, historical influence of Arabic on

Persian), makes replication of lexical Matter redundant, and promotes in turn replication of idiomatic Patterns surrounding a pivotal word in the idiom that is already shared by both languages.

4. Simplification vs. Complexification

Language contact can equally perceptibly be associated with both simplification and complexification. Based on Trudgill (1996), it seems clear that linguistic simplification consists of a diachronic development that involves as its major processes the following:

- a. an increase in regularity
- b. an increase in transparency
- c. a reduction in redundancy, which in turn consists of (i) the loss of morphological categories, and (ii) the loss of syntagmatic redundancy i.e. repetition of grammatical information, as with agreement.

Typically, pidgin and creole languages have no irregularity, high transparency, no morphological categories, and no syntagmatic redundancy.

For less drastic developments along the same line in languages which are not pidgins and creoles, we can note examples from the history of English such as:

- a. The loss of irregular past tense forms such as *rew* as the preterite of *row*; and the loss of irregular nominal plurals such as *kine* as the plural of *cows*
- b. The loss of *thrice* and its replacement by the more transparent *three times*; and the (currently ongoing) gradual replacement of *seldom* by *not often*.
- c. (i) The loss of the dual number, and grammatical gender; and (ii) The loss of person and number agreement on verbs.

On the other scale, there is also very considerable support for the view that contact leads to complexification—which obviously involves the reverse of the developments associated with simplification: an increase in irregularity, opacity, morphological categories, and syntagmatic redundancy. Nichols (1992: 192) argues that “contact among languages fosters complexity, or, put differently, diversity among neighboring languages fosters complexity in each of the languages”.

Furthermore, Nichols claim is that morphological complexity is promoted by language contact because languages in contact borrow morphological categories from one another. In other words, this is not replacement borrowing, but *additive* borrowing, where features are acquired from other languages in addition to already existing features.

5. CONCLUSION

According to Thomason (2003), historical linguists traditionally appeal to three ultimate causes of language change: drift, which refers to structural tendencies inherent in a given language, resulting from what is often called pattern pressures or structural imbalances; dialect borrowing; and foreign interference. She believes that the last two are not separable in any precise way, for two reasons. First, the spread of every linguistic change is due to contacts among speakers; and second, dialect borrowing and foreign interference are points on a continuum—it is impossible to draw a neat line between situations in which dialects influence each other and situations in which separate languages influence each other, because the overall process by which sister dialects become sister languages is gradual. Still, different methods have been developed for the study of dialect borrowing, i.e. interference between systems that are lexically and structurally very similar, and foreign interference, primarily the study of interference between systems that are not close lexically and/or structurally.

In the present study, the contact situation - Iran - is an ethnically and linguistically diverse country with a population of over seventy million, where diversity in race and language has provided a suitable situation for languages of the region to come into contact. As a result, different kinds of changes have occurred in the languages involved. Such is the case in Khuzestani Arabic. Matter replication of Persian material is found in Khuzestani Arabic primarily in the domain of lexical vocabulary, and in part in grammatical vocabulary, covering discourse markers that operate strictly on the interaction level (i.e. not conjunctions), focus particles, a correlative particle, a complementizer and relative particle, and concessive subordinating conjunctions. Pattern replication is most notable in the emerging change of constraints on word order (extension of marked word-order patterns), the favoring of analytic constructions and emergence of a new analytic past tense (pluperfect), and the reduction of overt marking of definiteness. Perhaps the most remarkable contact-induced change, one which strongly affects the typology of attribution in the language, is the identification of Khuzestani Arabic grammatical morphemes in attributive constructions – the Construct State marker (visible in the feminine singular only) and the definite article that appears between head and attribute – with the Persian attributive particle, and the consequent merger of two historically distinct attributive constructions – adjectival and

nominal – into a single type, replicating the state of affairs in Persian.

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