

## **The Study of Inflectional Categories of Noun in Sarhaddi Balochi of Granchin<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

Sarhaddi Balochi dialect is a sub-branch of western (Rakhshani) Balochi. The western dialects of Balochi Language are spoken in: “[...] eastern Iran, in pockets in Khorasan and Golestan, then further south in Sistan and in the northern parts of Balochistan around Zahedan and Khash, with varieties often referred to as Sistani [...] and Sarhaddi [...]” (Jahani and Korn, 2009: 637), among other areas and districts out of Iran.

The present research is going to study the inflectional or morpho-syntactic categories of noun including: number, gender, definiteness, case and possession in Sarhaddi Balochi of Granchin. This synchronic investigation has been carried out based on the corpus collected through a fieldwork in Granchin district located about 35 kms southeast of Khash city in Sistan and Baluchestan province in Iran. The data were gathered

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via free speech recording and interviewing with 10 illiterate local resident speakers (5 males and 5 females) with an age range of 50-80 years with different social backgrounds.

The results showed that as to number category, Sarhaddi Balochi distinguishes between singular and plural number. In this regard, number is marked as zero morpheme (-Ø) in singular nouns (e.g., /zahg/ “child, son”) and /-an/ in plural nouns (e.g., /zahg-an/. “children, sons”) The plural morpheme is used with all types of nouns (animate , inanimate, countable and uncountable). Similarly, to express plurality, this morpheme is used with loan words (e.g., /wasael-an/ from Arabic meaning “means” and the adjectives as noun substitutes (e.g., /gwand-ok-an/ “the small” a substitute for “kids”) as well. In addition, the category of number is not employed with common nouns and the nouns with a unique reference; in case they take the plural number they have a different meaning. For example /hofter/ “camel” is used as a common or general noun and /hofter-an/ “camels” in spite of taking the plural form does not refer to the number of camels but is used as a common noun as well, as shown in (1a) and (1b) respectively:

(1) a. / **hofter** ruəʃ-iə se:      əp-a                  wə/  
          camel day.INDEF      three      water-V.EL  
          eat.PRES.3SG

‘Camel drinks water three times a day.’

b. /**hofter-an**                  ruəʃ-iə                  se:      əp-a  
          war-an/  
          camel-PL      day-INDEF      three      water-V.EL  
          eat.PRES-3PL

‘Camels drink water three times a day.’

Similarly, as given in (2a) and (2b), the meaning of the noun /ruə(ʃ)/ “sun” with a unique reference changes to “days” if it is pluralized as /ruəʃ-an/:

(2) a. /**ruə(ʃ)**      ʃa      kuəh-a                  sar-a                  kan/  
          sun      from      mountain-OBL                  on-V.EL  
          do.RES.3SG

‘ The sun rises from the top of the mountain.’

b. . /**ruəʃ-an**      tah      kuəʃi-j-an      ʃap-an                  ham-  
          edan-iən/

day-PL            inside room-HI –PL night-PL  
EMPH-here-COP.PRES.1PL  
' We are in rooms in days, (and) here at nights.'

Although this dialect lacks any inflectional marker for grammatical gender, it actively employs, for instance, lexical gender (though with no morphological marker) to differentiate between nouns referring to males and females. This type of gender can be found in family terms (e.g., /pess/ "father" and /mas/ "mother"), address terms (e.g., /wadʒa/ "sir" used to address males versus /balli:/ "grandmother" used for addressing grandmothers), the names of people (e.g., /mah bi:bi:/ "a proper for women" and /dʒomma/ "a proper name for men) as well as animals (e.g., /sag/ "dog" as a common noun, but /naraz/ "male dog" and /mend/ "female dog").

Besides, in regard with definiteness in Sarhaddi Balochi, it is manifested in nouns in three ways: intrinsic definiteness, (proper nouns (e.g., /rostrom/ "a proper noun for men") and generic nouns (e.g. /draht/ "tree"), morphological definiteness (using a case marker, e.g. the direct object marker -a in /tʃahi-j-ɑ/ "the tea"), and definiteness in the syntactic context (e.g., possessive adjective + noun: /mni: nakuəzəht/ "my cousin"). On the other hand, to show indefiniteness, the suffix /-iə/ is added to the noun, or the number /jakk/ 'one' plus the indefinite suffix may be used, too (e.g., / (jak) sahat-iə/ "a watch").

The case system of this dialect is a nominative–accusative system and the case is displayed in the form of nominative (e.g., /zahg/ "child, son") and oblique cases. In this regard, oblique case is morpho-syntactically manifested as accusative/dative (e.g., /zahg-ɑ(ra)/ "the child (as direct object) / to the child"), genitive (e.g., /zahg-ej/ "child's") , vocative (e.g., /zahg/ (e.g., oh you child!)), locative (e.g., / be... kabretan-ɑ/ "to ....graveyard"), allative (e.g., /be beheʃt/ "in heaven"), ablative (e.g., /ʃa riək-ɑ/ "from sand" and instrumental (e.g., /guə dʒəl-ɑ/ "with bucket") case forms. However, this dialect of Balochi makes use of split ergative system in its past system of verb as well. In ergative structures, the agent of transitive verbs appears in the form of suffixed pronouns and bears the oblique case. Also, the verb is realized as third person singular with all subject agents and does not agree with the agents in number, as shown in (3):

(3) /jak patʃen-ɛʃ                      dʒat                      ham-angu/  
      one        goat-PRON.SUFF.3PL hit.PAST.3SG EMPH-  
      that side  
      ‘They hunted a goat over there.’

Furthermore, in Sarhaddi Balochi, possession is, apart from genitive case marking, expressed via the use of third person singular form of the copula, adpositions, the verb /dʒʃt-en/ ‘to have’ and some borrowed expressions from Persian.

**Keywords:** Sarhaddi Balochi, noun, number, gender, definiteness, case, possession