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Mapping the Languages of Kohgiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad Province, Iran: Is This Region Uniformly Lori Speaking?

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Abstract: Kohgiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad Province, which constitutes less than one percent of Iran's land area and a similar proportion of its population, is located in the mountainous south-west of the country. In the literature as well as in popular discourse in Iran, this region has been regarded as uniformly Lori-speaking. In this paper, we survey the distribution of languages in the province and investigate whether any languages other than Lori are spoken there as a mother tongue. Adopting the methodology outlined in the *Atlas of the Languages of Iran*, this article presents static and interactive maps showing each of the province's languages. The results of our survey indicate that in addition to seven distinct varieties of Southern Lori, Ghashghāi Turkic, Khuzestāni Arabic, and Bakhtiari are spoken as ancestral languages in the southern districts of Kohgiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad. Further, we signal the growing prevalence of Persian, the dominant prestige language across Iran, as a mother tongue.

Keywords: Kohgiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad Province, Linguistic geography, Southern Lori, Persian, Ghashghāi (Qashqāi) Turkic, Arabic

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Conflict of Interest
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

1. Introduction

Kohgiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad Province, with a population of approximately 700,000 people across over 2,000 settlements (ISC 2016), is located within the Zagros Mountains of south-western Iran. This tiny province makes up less than one per cent of Iran's land mass, but it shares borders with five other provinces: Chahar Mahal va Bakhtiari (C&B) to the north, Khuzestan to the west, Bushehr to the south-west, Esfahan to the east, and Fars to the south-east and east. Kohgiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad (hereafter K&B) is often regarded as a linguistically homogenous region where only Lori is spoken. Important studies on the region's Lori varieties have been conducted by scholars such as Lecoq (1989), Moqimi (1994), Loeffler and Windfuhr (1989), Anonby (2003a; 2003b; 2012), Nazari et al. (2015), and Taheri (2016). From the perspective of linguistic geography, Behnstedt (1990), Hourcade (2013), and Izady (2006–2025) have mapped the languages of this area in the wider context of Iran, and language distribution in most of the neighbouring provinces has been detailed (see *Section 2*). That said, it has not been clear, whether to experts or non-experts, how many different languages are spoken in K&B Province. For this reason, a more thorough investigation of linguistic composition in K&B is needed.

In this article, we seek to address the following three research questions:

1. Beyond Lori, are there any other languages spoken as a mother tongue in K&B?
2. How do speakers of Lori conceptualize and identify their language varieties, and what major varieties do they recognize?
3. To what degree has shift toward Persian, which is now impacting all parts of Iran, affected the transmission of ancestral languages as a mother tongue in the region?

The structure of the article is as follows: Section two provides a brief introduction to the *Atlas of the Languages of Iran* (ALI) project, a wide-ranging initiative in the field of Iranian linguistics. The third section describes the research process followed to investigate language distribution in K&B. After this, section four presents the key results of our research through province-level language maps, while the fifth part examines the individual languages spoken in K&B and their classification. The final section summarizes and reflects on our findings, and suggests avenues for further research.

2. The *Atlas of the Languages of Iran* (ALI) project

In Iranian linguistics, a large body of studies is devoted to the documentation, description and analysis of specific languages or language groups. However, it remains challenging to find scholarly publications that provide detailed

accounts of language distribution across particular regions. Two important studies in Iran are those of Bazin et al. (1982) and Papoli-Yazdi (1988), who produced maps of language distribution to the level of each settlement for parts of Gilan and Khorasan, respectively.

Recently, research on language distribution in Iran has gained further momentum. The initiation of the *Atlas of the Languages of Iran* (ALI) (Anonby and Taheri-Ardali et al. 2015-2025), a multi-institutional project carried out in collaboration with the Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre (GCRC) at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, has progressively brought attention to this subject, engaging both scholars and the wider public. The ALI project was initiated in 2009 and launched online in 2015 through the website https://iranatlas.net. The project's structure and objectives are discussed, along with sample maps, in Anonby et al. (2019). Since its inception, the atlas has evolved in both technical and linguistic aspects. The website has been expanded, and various modules have been added in both Persian and English. In terms of the linguistic research that drives the atlas, several significant steps have been taken, including collection of language distribution and linguistic data in diverse geographical areas in Iran. Language distribution methodology is set out in Anonby, Mohammadirad and Sheyholislami (2019). Results of language distribution research for 10 of Iran's 31 provinces so far have been completed and published online: Hormozgan (Mohebbi Bahmani et al. 2015), Chahar Mahal va Bakhtiari (Taheri-Ardali and Anonby et al. 2015), Kordestan (Mohammadirad and Anonby et al. 2016), Bushehr (Nemati et al. 2017), Ilam (Gheitasi and Anonby et al. 2017), Hamadan (Izadi et al. 2021), Esfahan (Talebi-Dastenaei et al. 2022), Gilan (Poshtvan and Anonby et al. 2022), Lorestan (Taheri-Ardali and Anonby et al. 2023), and Khuzestan (Bozorgmehr et al. 2024). With regard to linguistic documentation, linguistic data questionnaires have been collected and oral texts have been recorded to date in the provinces of C&B, Zanjan, Hormozgan, Kermanshah, Ilam, Hamadan, Gilan and Esfahan. Proof-of-concept maps produced using linguistic data from C&B Province are available online (e.g., https://iranatlas.net/module/linguistic-data.cb-lexicon-leaf) and results of research have been shared and analyzed in other venues as well. For example, Anonby et al. (2021) reported findings on language distribution and carried out a lexical analysis of data from 31 language varieties in C&B.

The present study continues this line of research, drawing on a streamlined methodology and the cumulative knowledge and insights from earlier works. It is the most recent effort to identify the linguistic composition of a province as a piece in the larger puzzle of Iran's linguistic tapestry. The next section details the research process adopted for this study.

3. Research process

The present research on K&B Province followed that of Khuzestan (Bozorgmehr et al. 2024), where co-author Mansour Bozorgmehr gained substantial knowledge of pertinent research methodology and the neighbouring province's languages. The initial phase of work on K&B therefore drew on his own expertise as well as the available literature, together with observations from colleagues and acquaintances, to compile a provisional list of languages spoken in K&B. At the same time, ALI colleagues Hamideh Poshtvan and Mahnaz Talebi-Dastenaei compiled a spreadsheet containing demographic data from Iran's 2016 census (ISC 2016) – the most recent publicly-available dataset – and geographic coordinates for each of the province's 2257 listed populated places, using data from the National Cartographic Centre (NCC) of Iran and other sources.[1] These data, which are organized differently in the source documents, were manually aligned. Subsequently, Mansour Bozorgmehr conducted a two-week field survey across K&B in January 2024 to collect insights from local residents about the languages spoken in each city and village, and the estimated proportion of each language used as a mother tongue in that place. This survey resulted in a complete dataset on the geographic distribution of languages spoken in K&B. In tandem with this research, as a way of reinforcing local representations of language in the atlas, as well as familiarizing ourselves with linguistic forms characteristic in each region, local place names of each of the province's cities and villages were recorded and transcribed following the ALI transcription conventions[2]. Once data collection was complete, Mansour Bozorgmehr inserted the research findings into the spreadsheets containing the demographic and geographic data. To help ensure consistency, the entries were subsequently reviewed by Erik Anonby and Mortaza Taheri-Ardali. Hamideh Poshtvan and Mahnaz Talebi-Dastenaei conducted a final check of the spreadsheets to detect any remaining content and formatting issues.

4. Mapping language distribution

Having collected the data through fieldwork, filled in the ISC spreadsheet, checked and refined the data for language distribution as well as the Persian and local pronunciation of place names, the data were incorporated into the ALI website to map out the distribution of languages varieties with the support of technicians at GCRC.

---

[1] National Cartographic Centre, *National Database of Geographic Names of Iran*, Ministry of the Interior, National Cartographic Centre, 2025, https://gndb.ncc.gov.ir.

[2] For the ALI's transcription conventions: www.carleton.ca/iran/transcription/.

ALI makes use of two main types of maps to show language distribution and associated data: point-based interactive maps, and static polygon maps. Each plays an important but distinct role in representing language distribution. The interactive maps, which are constructed using the open-source Nunaliit Atlas Framework (https://nunaliit.org), provide detailed data at the settlement level, allowing users to explore each location individually. Static maps, built using the open-source mapping program QGIS (https://qgis.org), offer a broader overview that is useful for quick reference. The static maps have certain limitations, however: the boundaries they display do not clearly indicate how many settlements are included within each polygon-defined area, and they represent solely the dominant language in each community. Simply put, while interactive maps allow for in-depth exploration, static polygon maps provide clearer, but simplified, representations of complex patterns.

Figure 1 shows the interactive map generated for K&B Province on the ALI website. The map, constructed by a team of colleagues at GCRC, shows only languages spoken as a mother tongue, and only the main language in each place. However, clicking on any of the places brings up estimated proportions for all languages spoken as a mother tongue in that location. Places where no single language constitutes a majority, or portions of a community's population that includes people from all over Iran, with no further groups easily identifiable there, are designated as "mixed".

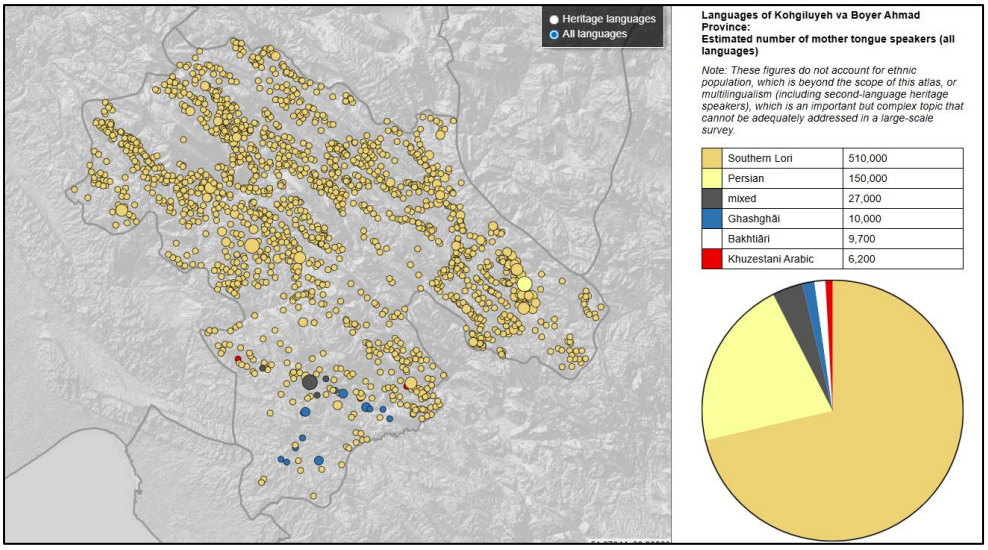


Figure 1. *Interactive map of language distribution in K&B Province at the settlement level. Source: https://iranatlas.net/module/languagedistribution.kohgiluyeh_va_boyer_ahmad.*

Figure 2 presents a static polygon map generated with QGIS, based on the same language distribution data. This map was constructed by GCRC colleague Adam Stone, along with Erik Anonby. In addition to marking the centre of each provincial sub-district (P. *shahrestān*), it situates italic labels for each Lori variety in the primary geographic zone where it is spoken.

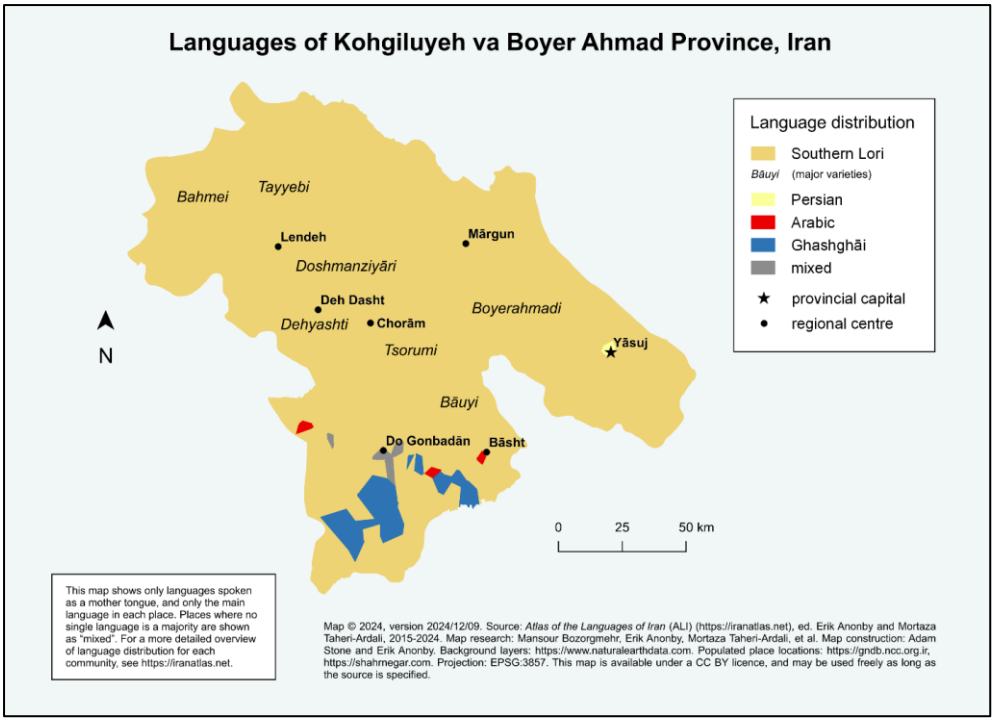


***Figure 2**. Polygon map of language distribution in K&B Province. Source: https://iranatlas.net/module/languagedistribution.kohgiluyeh_va_boyer_ahmad_static.*

Both maps show that there are several languages spoken as a mother tongue in K&B. As anticipated, Lori – and more specifically, Southern Lori (see 5.1) – is the dominant language of most of the province. However, Persian, Ghashghāi (Qashqāi) Turkic and Khuzestāni Arabic are also spoken here, and each of these is dominant in some locations. Bakhtiari speakers do not constitute a majority in any location, but their presence is signalled by the discussion and figures in the interactive module's side panel, and can be found by clicking on the dot for the city of Do Gonbadān (see Figure 10), which is the primary location where they are found.

5. Languages in K&B and their classification

Here, we provided a detailed description of these languages and their sub-varieties. For the purposes of discussion, we divide our account into

Southern Lori (5.1), other ancestral languages (5.2), and Persian (5.3). We follow this with a discussion of language distribution in Gachsārān in the southern part of the province (5.4), which is an area of higher linguistic diversity.

5.1. Southern Lori

Our findings confirm that Southern Lori, with over half a million mother-tongue speakers, is the dominant language of the province, and is spoken in all districts throughout the province. However, speakers distinguish a number of Lori sub-varieties, generally based on their association with different ethnic groupings.

Lori varieties belong to the Southwestern division of Iranian (Iranic) languages, and have been classified by Windfuhr and Perry (2009: 418) among what they refer to as "Perside" varieties of south-west Iran, as they share a range of features also seen in Early New Persian. The group of related varieties collectively known as Lori is spoken by the Lori and Bakhtiari peoples in the Zagros Mountains of western and south-western Iran and in surrounding lower-altitude regions (Anonby 2012). Within the Lori continuum, three major divisions (or languages) can be identified: Northern Lori, Bakhtiari, and Southern Lori (Anonby 2003b; Anonby 2012; Taheri-Ardali et al. 2025).

Due to historical movements of people and administrative actions, Lori speakers are now dispersed across twelve provinces of Iran. They constitute a significant portion of the population in four provinces: Khuzestan, Lorestan, C&B, and K&B. In Khuzestan, communities representing all three divisions (Northern Lori, Bakhtiari, and Southern Lori) are found; Northern Lori and Bakhtiari are spoken in Lorestan; and in C&B, Bakhtiari dominates. This study confirms that Southern Lori is the main language in K&B. Significant Lori-speaking minorities are also found in the provinces of Fars, Esfahan, Hamadan, Ilam, Bushehr, Markazi, and Gilan.

Although the Lori varieties documented in K&B – namely, Bahmei, Bāuyi (P. Bāvi), Boyerahmadi, Dehyashti (P. Dehdashti), Doshmanziyāri, Tayyebi, and Tsorumi (P. Chorāmi) – exhibit internal linguistic diversity, they share enough features to be classified collectively under the broader term Southern Lori.

Through the ALI website's navigation features, we can observe the geographic distribution of each language variety in the region. The following figure, a screenshot from the website, shows the distribution of Boyerahmadi, with specific data about the capital city of Yāsuj, as an example, displayed in the side panel. Consultants estimated that while just over half of the city's

population now speaks Persian as a mother tongue, approximately a third of the people in the city have learned Boyerahmadi as their first language.

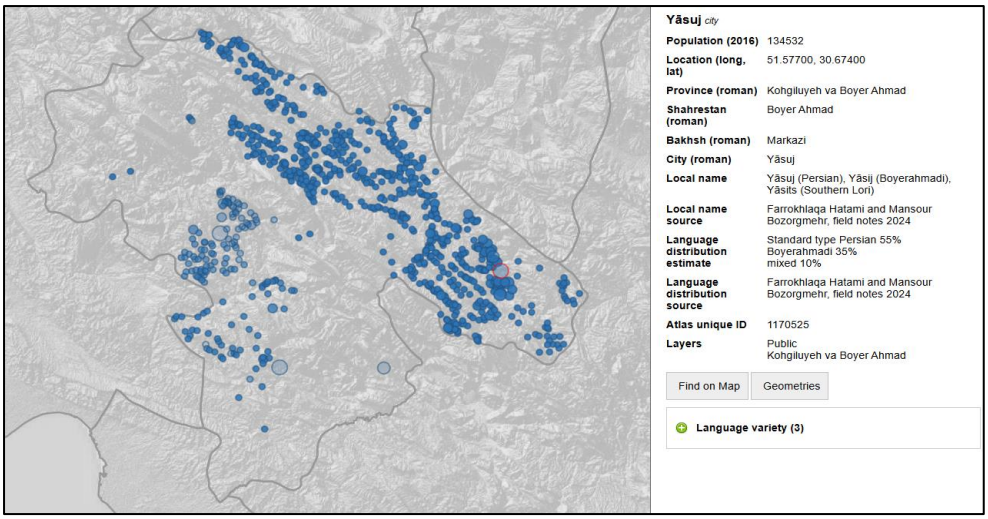


Figure 3. *Distribution of Boyerahmadi in K&B Province.*

As seen in the above figure, Boyerahmadi extends to the northern, eastern, and western parts of K&B. The side panel also provides information on population, coordinates, local place name transcription, estimated proportion of mother tongue speakers of each language community, and the unique Atlas ID for each settlement. The darker blue dots represent a higher proportion of speakers in each settlement.

The Bahmei grouping within Southern Lori is mainly distributed in the north-western part of the province (Figure 4). Data for the city of Dishmuk are illustrated in the right panel. Bahmei-speaking areas are located near the border of Khuzestan Province. The language distribution map of Khuzestan Province (see Bozorgmehr et al. 2024) reveals that the Bahmei speakers are also present in the south-eastern part of that province, adjacent to K&B.

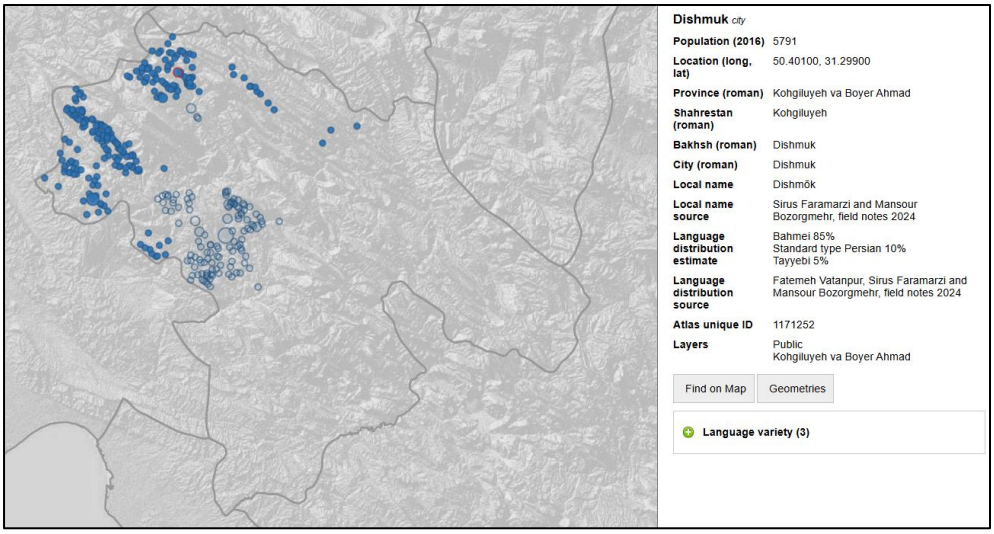


Figure 4. *Distribution of Bahmei in K&B Province.*

Bāuyi (P. Bāvi) is a Southern Lori variety spoken in the southern part of K&B near the border with Fars Province (Figure 5). Bāsht is one of the main centres with Bāuyi speakers, as shown in the side panel. In this city, about 70% of the population speaks Bāuyi.

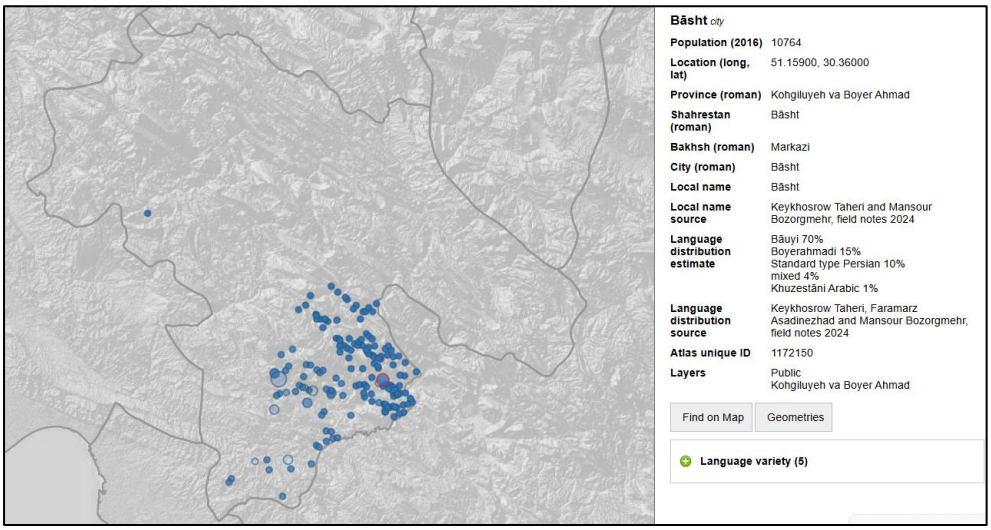


Figure 5. *Distribution of Bāuyi (Bāvi) in K&B Province.*

The next sub-variety of Southern Lori encountered in our research is Doshmanziyāri. The settlements where it is spoken as the mother tongue are shown in Figure 6. The main concentration of Doshmanziyāri speakers is located in the mid-western part of the province, extending southward toward the border with Khuzestan Province. The data for Dāryāb, as a small village in this part of the province, are shown in the following figure. The local pronunciation for this settlement is transcribed as Dāryow.

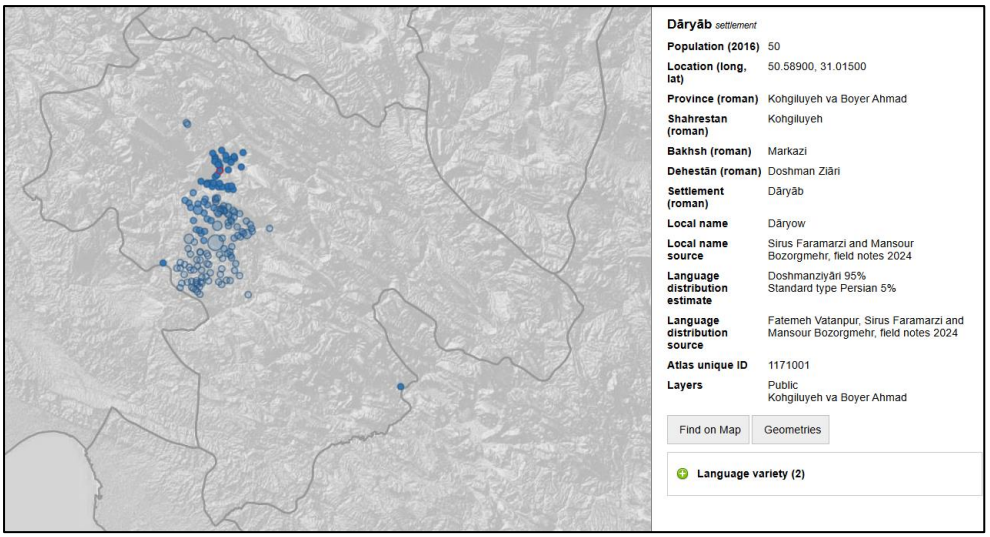


Figure 6. *Distribution of Doshmanziyāri in K&B Province.*

Tayyebi, another sub-variety of Southern Lori, is depicted in Figure 7. As evident in the map, certain dots are rendered in a darker blue, indicating a higher proportion of speakers in the given settlement. Jāvar Deh, with a population of 1276, and an estimated 95% of mother-tongue Tayyebi speakers, is shown as an example in the right panel. There are also a few Tayyebi speakers in Khuzestan Province, settled in pockets located near the provincial border with K&B (see Bozorgmehr et al. 2024).

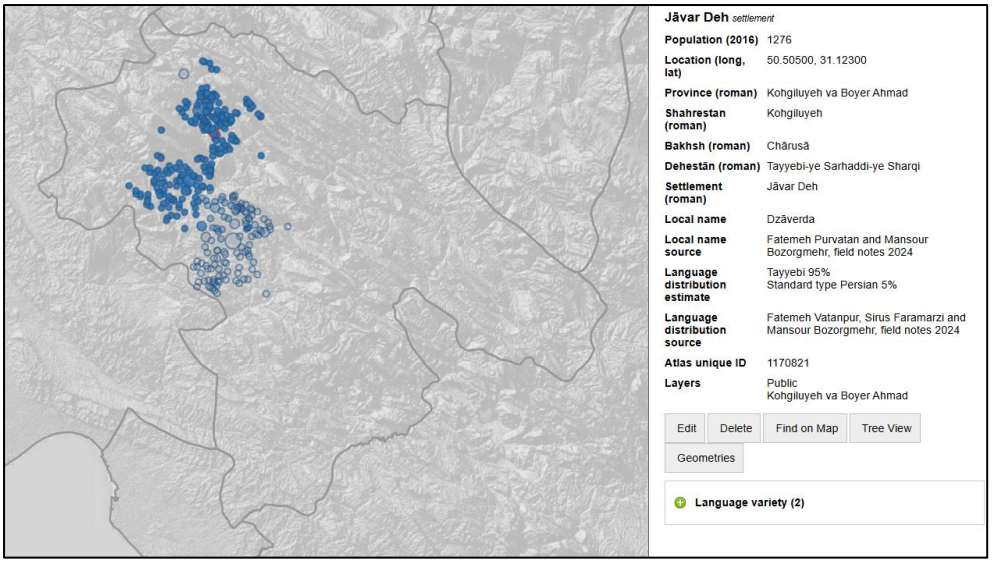


Figure 7. *Distribution of Tayyebi in K&B Province.*

Figure 8 shows the distribution of Tsorumi (P. Chorāmi) in the central part of the province. The city of Chorām is the largest community in that area, with an estimated 80% of the population speaking Tsorumi as a mother tongue.

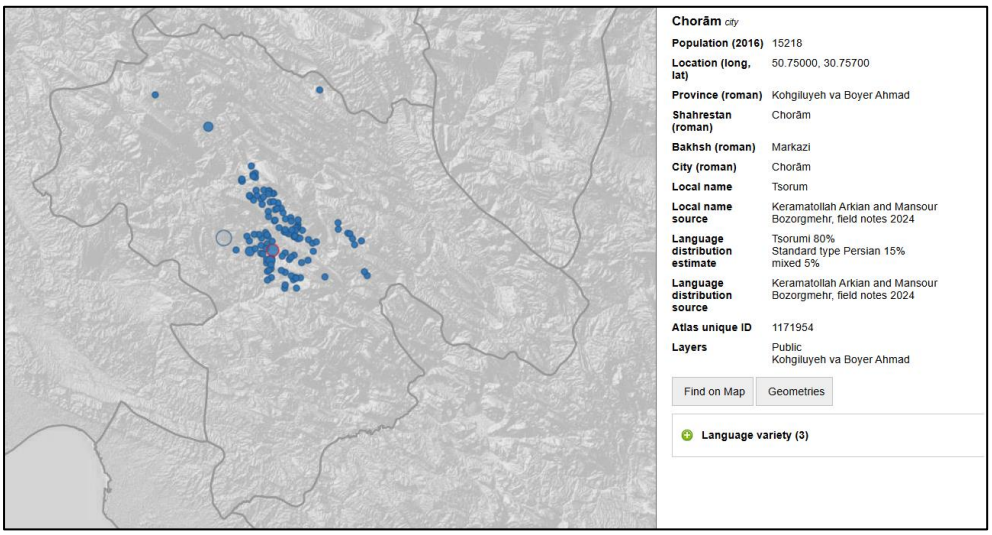


Figure 8. *Distribution of Tsorumi (P. Chorāmi) in K&B Province.*

A final sub-variety of Southern Lori, Dehyashti (P. Dehdashti), is the only variety reported by local residents as being spoken in a single location, namely, the city of Deh Dasht. As this sub-variety is attested in only one locality, a separate figure has not been provided. Consultants described Dehyashti as a fusion of other Southern Lori varieties, arising out of the mixture of people from many surrounding locations and resulting, over time, in a distinctive variety associated with the city itself rather than ethnic identification.

This brings the discussion back to the larger point that the other Southern Lori-speaking varieties documented in our research are identified by speakers using terms – Bahmei, Bāuyi (P. Bāvi), Boyerahmadi, Dehyashti (P. Dehdashti), Doshmanziyāri, Tayyebi, and Tsorumi (P. Chorāmi) – which reflect ethnic identities and conceptualizations rather than strictly linguistic criteria. Such categorizations, originating in the perspectives of the language communities themselves, are an important starting point for understanding language classification, and can be complemented by follow-up classificatory research based on comparison of linguistic structures from each of the areas (for further discussion, see Anonby and Sabethemmatabadi 2019; Anonby et al. 2020).

It is our impression that overall, from a linguistic perspective, the Southern Lori varieties of K&B fall within an intermediate position between Bakhtiari to the north, the Lirāvi varieties of Southern Lori to the west, and the Mamasani dialects of Southern Lori to the south-east.

During the transcription of place names, we observed three remarkable phonological patterns among Southern Lori varieties in K&B. First, in contrast to other Southern Lori varieties, where fronting occurs only before front vowels (for example, in Mamasani Southern Lori of Fars Province, cf. Anonby 2003a: 66-7), and in line with a similar sound change in Mukri Kurdish varieties much further to the north (Anonby and Öpengin 2026), in K&B there is sometimes a complete phonemic shift of the palato-alveolar affricates *č *ǰ to alveolar *ts* and *dz* respectively. The change in phonemic identity is confirmed by the alveolar pronunciation of *ts* before a vowel, for example, in the local names [t͡s]āl Gerru (cf. the official name, rendered Chāl Gerru in Persian) and Mela-y Ghu[t͡s]un (P. Tol-e Quchān). The voiced counterpart *dz* patterns similarly in the name [d͡z]āverda (P. Jāvar Deh). The palato-alveolar slot, for its part, is sometimes filled by a fronted allophone of *k* before front vowels, for example, in the local name Garda [t͡ʃ]alāt (P. Gard-e Kalāt).

Second, in a smaller subset of these varieties, a three-way contrast has emerged between *ts č k*. Contrast between *k* and *č* is found before the front vowel a. In contrast to the fronted stop in Garda Kalāt, mentioned just above,

both stops are velar in the first word of the local name [k]a[k]e-y Mobārak (P. Kākā Mobārak). It is unclear whether this pattern extends to the voiced counterparts; place names with forms like [d͡ʒ]owrensun (P. Gabrestān) do occur, apparently contrasting with *g* in [g]urow (P. Gurāb), but as the underlying first vowel in [d͡ʒ]owrensun may be a, as in some other Southern Lori varieties, contrast among the voiced stops *dz ǰ g* is less certain. To our knowledge, these three-way contrasts have not been reported in other Iranian (Iranic) languages.

Finally, as we previously observed in Southern Lori varieties in Khuzestan, and has been reported for Mamasani Southern Lori in Fars Province (Anonby 2003a: 83-84), in many varieties in K&B both *e* and *o* are realized as a mid-central [ə] in unstressed open syllables, and thus the distinction between them is neutralized (or perhaps **o* has shifted to *e*) in this position. Examples of place names where this neutralization occurs are:

S[ə]kandari	P. Eskandari
M[ə]la Owgir	P. Meleh-ye Ābgir
B[ə]nāri	P. Bonāri
H[ə]seyn Ābāy Mokhtār	P. Hoseyn Ābād-e Mokhtār

5.2. Other ancestral languages: Southern K&B

Although Southern Lori is the dominant language of K&B as a whole, the southern corner of the province shows significant linguistic diversity. Three other ancestral languages are spoken here: Turkic, Arabic, and Bakhtiari. Turkic and Arabic in particular are the main languages in a number of communities in this area.

The Turkic variety spoken in this region is Ghashghāi (also spelled Qashqāi, Qašqā'i, and Kashkāy). Ghashghāi belongs to the Southwestern (Oghuz) sub-branch of the Turkic language family together with, for instance, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, and Turkish of Turkey (Dolatkhah et al. 2016; Knüppel 2015). This language is spoken by traditionally nomadic members of the Ghashghāi tribal confederation in the southern provinces of Iran, centred in Fars Province. There are about 20 locations where Ghashghāi speakers maintain residences in southern K&B, which is a geographical continuation of the main Ghashghāi language area in Fars. In total, about 10,000 people speak the language in K&B. Bid Zard, with a population of just under 400, is one such place, and an estimated 90% of people speak Ghashghāi as a mother tongue in this locality.

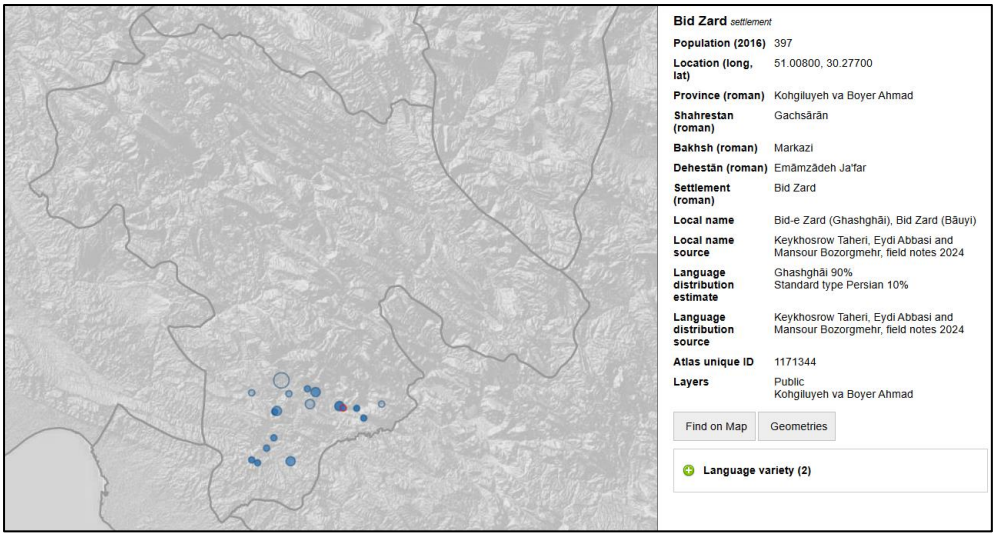


Figure 9. *Distribution of Ghashghāi Turkic in K&B Province.*

Arabic is another ancestral language spoken in Gachsārān District. The particular variety spoken here is Khuzestāni Arabic, which is centred in Khuzestan Province to the west. This variety has been classified among the Bedouin-type "gələt" dialects of southern Mesopotamia (Leitner 2020: 116). Originating in Khuzestan, speakers of Khuzestāni Arabic in southern K&B are scattered across nine locations, of which eight are in Gachsārān, and on (the village of Borghun) is in Bāsht District. In total, the results of our survey indicate that there are over 6000 mother-tongue speakers of this language in the province. Most live in the city of Do Gonbadān, where consultants estimated that approximately 5% of the city's population of over 97,000 speaks Khuzestāni Arabic as a mother tongue.

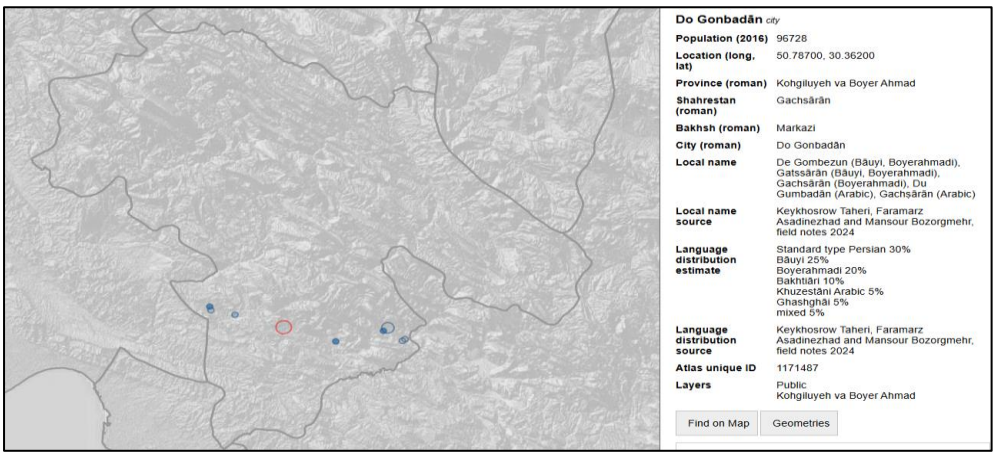


Figure 10. *Distribution of Arabic in K&B Province.*

Bakhtiari is the final ancestral language encountered during the course of our research in Gachsārān. Like Southern Lori (5.1), Bakhtiari is classified as Southwestern Iranian (Windfuhr 2009, McKinnon 2011, Anonby and Asadi 2014, Anonby 2025), and is a major group within the Lori continuum. Bakhtiari is spoken in the city of Do Gonbadān, which is the only location in K&B where consultants indicated that a significant Bakhtiari-speaking population is found. Consultants estimated that close to 10,000 people in the city speak Bakhtiari as a mother tongue. Similar to the Arabic speakers of this region, most of Bakhtiari speakers are originally from Khuzestan Province, and their presence in K&B is primarily attributable to the development of the oil industry.

5.3. Persian

Persian has emerged as a mother tongue in almost all locations throughout K&B, as many parents now speak Persian to their children at home. As a result, we estimate Persian is now the first language of 150,000 people, which is almost a quarter of the provincial population. In the capital city of Yāsuj in particular, consultants maintain that it is now the main mother tongue.

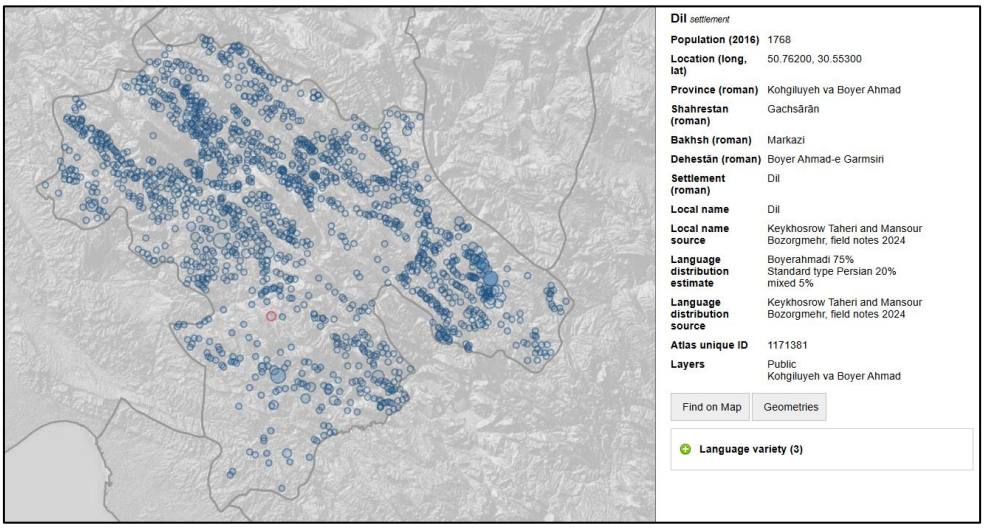


Figure 11. *Distribution of Persian in K&B Province.*

Figure 11 above shows an example of Persian spoken as a mother tongue by an estimated 20% of people in Dil, a town of about 1800 people in the west of the province.

5.4. Language distribution in Gachsārān

This Gachsārān provincial sub-district in southern K&B is one of the many hubs of the oil industry in Iran. Over the past century, many people have moved here from other areas of the province, and from other areas of Iran, particularly Khuzestan. In Gachsārān's capital city, Do Gonbadān, all of the province's ancestral languages come into contact with each other: Turkic, Arabic, and Bakhtiari, as well as the Bāuyi (Bāvi) and Boyerahmadi varieties of Southern Lori; and Persian is also spoken here. The interaction between languages in this city, and in southern K&B more general, is a worthwhile topic for further investigation.

Conclusion and future directions

This article presents the results of the first in-depth study of language distribution to be carried out in Kohgiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad Province. While this province has been viewed as uniformly Lori-speaking, our survey reveals significant linguistic diversity, with representatives of the Iranian (Iranic), Turkic, and Semitic language families.

For Southern Lori in particular, we found that ethnic identity, particularly affiliation with a given ethnic sub-grouping, is foundational in how speakers classify and label their varieties. The key Southern Lori varieties identified according to ethnic labels are Bahmei, Bāuyi (P. Bāvi), Boyerahmadi, Doshmanziyāri, Tayyebi, and Tsorumi (P. Chorāmi). In contrast, the Dehyashti (P. Dehdashti) variety is defined by its community of origin rather than ethnicity.

The other ancestral languages we encountered over the course of our research in K&B are Ghashghāi Turkic, Khuzestāni Arabic, and Bakhtiari. These three languages are found in various places in the southern district of Gachsārān, and they come into contact with one another and with Southern Lori in the district capital, Do Gonbadān.

In recent decades, Persian has emerged as a significant mother tongue, and its impact in displacing the ancestral languages of K&B Province cannot be underestimated. Based on discussions with consultants regarding the prevalence of parents introducing Persian as the first language of their children in the home in all parts of the province, we estimate that Persian is now the first language of nearly one quarter of the province's population. This phenomenon is happening in all of the language communities in K&B, indicating that intergenerational transmission of ancestral languages as a mother tongue is ceasing – a likely precursor to the eventual loss of these languages by the community as a whole.

While this study makes a foundational contribution by considering, for the first time, language distribution in each of K&B Province's 2257 listed populated places, because of the complexity of individual and community multilingualism (see Anonby and Yousefian 2011; Anonby et al. 2020), only the mother tongue is considered. The results of the study are also limited in that they are based on a survey rather than a census. It was neither possible nor practical to visit each populated place, and to inquire about language distribution from each person there, or even a representative cross-sampling of the population. Instead, we relied on consultants familiar with the language situation in each of the province's districts. The resulting language distribution figures are clearly indicated as estimates in the atlas, and need to be treated as such. This methodology has enabled a coherent picture of the language situation in a way that past censuses have not been able to achieve, but there is still room for improvement of language distribution estimates for each place. For this reason, the interactive atlas provides functionality for further, moderated contributions from people with additional local knowledge of the language situation.

In addition to addressing the research questions raised above, this study provides the necessary context for selecting field research locations for further linguistic documentation during the next phase of this project within the ALI framework. As is being done for other regions of Iran, the collection of linguistic data questionnaires and oral texts will help provide a complementary, and more detailed, understanding of the languages in this surprisingly varied province. The classification of Southern Lori sub-varieties can be re-examined, and the impact of contact among the various languages in the southern portion of the province can be explored. Along with the language distribution research presented here, this documentation will also contribute to a record of linguistic diversity in K&B at this final period in history where the ancestral languages of the province still resonate the streets and paths of each community.

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