

Turkicisms in Persian as Indices Of Social and Cultural History

John R. Perry*
(Chicago)

Özet: Türkçe ve Farsçanın dilsel uzun eşyaşam geçmişinde (Tork-oTâjîk) bir dil-den diğere aktarılan yüzlerce sözlüksel kopyadan çok daha fazla şey yer alır. Türkçe üzerindeki Farsça etkisi Osmanlıca ve Çağatayca ve onların günümüz kuşaklarının yazınsal dillerinde en belirgin biçimde ortaya çıkar ve yalnızca sözlüksel olmayıp aynı zamanda dizimseldir de: Farsça *ezāfe/ ezāfat* gibi yapılarda Ad Öbeği tümüyle gövdelenenilmekte ve *Bāb-i ‘ālī* ‘Yüce Kapı’ örneğindeki gibi Farsça veya Farsça-Arapça sözvarlığı hemen hemen her zaman kullanılmaktadır. Ölçünlü Farsça üzerindeki Türkçe etkileri ise, yalnızca sözlüksel olanlar dışında, daha az görülmektedir. Bunlar yazınsal düzeylerden çok, sözlü düzeyler üzerinde işlerler (veya başlatılmışlardır) ve belirli bölgeler, dil türleri veya yazınsal türlerde yoğunlaşmış olmaktan çok, ölçünlü Farsçanın bütün katmanlarına yayılmış olarak bulunmaları gerekip Türkçeyle birlikte Farsça sözlükbirimleri de kapsarlar. Bunların en ‘görünmez’ olanları arasından bir takım örneklerinin Türkçe sözdizimsel kuralları izlediğini ve aynı zamanda toplumdilsel bakımdan dizgesel de olduklarını burada göstereceğim. Bu örnekler kökeni bakımından Türkçe olması dışında Türkçenin Farsçada bir sözlüksel yöney olarak ve belli toplumsal ve siyasal göstergeli bağlamlarda Ad Öbeği diziminin belirleyicisi olarak rolünü aydınlatmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Farçada Türkçeleşme, ad öbeği

Abstract: The long linguistic symbiosis of Turk and Persian (Tork-oTâjîk) is represented by much more than the hundreds of lexical copies exchanged by their respective languages. Persian influences on Turkish are most evident in the liter-

* The University of Chicago, j-perry@uchicago.edu

ary languages, Ottoman and Chaghatay, and their descendants today, and are not only lexical but also syntactic: Persian structures such as the *ezāfel ezāfat* NP may be incorporated wholesale, almost always using Persian or Perso-Arabic vocabulary, as in *Bāb-i ālī* ‘Sublime Porte’. Turkic influences on standard Persian, however—apart from the purely lexical—are less apparent. They operate (or were initiated) at the spoken rather than the literary levels, and are to be found spread over the whole domain of Standard Persian rather than concentrated in particular regions, registers, or genres; and they involve Persian as well as Turkish lexemes. I will show here that several of the most ‘invisible’ of them obey Turkish syntactic rules, and are also socio-linguistically systematic. These examples illuminate the role of Turkish in Persian as a vector of lexis other than the etymologically Turkic, and a determiner of NP syntax in certain socially and politically marked contexts.

Keywords: Turksizm in Persian, noun phrase (NP)

The lexicon

Of the thousands of loanwords from Turkish of all periods listed in Gerhard Doerfer’s works, many, perhaps most, were ephemeral military and administrative terms such as *dostāq* ‘captive’ (metathesized from *dut-sāq*) and *sōng* ‘confiscation’ (*sōng kardan* ‘to confiscate’), found in Classical Persian histories. They share with a like number of Mongolian borrowings in Persian the status of “guest words,” employed in military and administrative contexts during the Ilkhanid and Timurid periods (and in some cases up until Safavid times), then discarded when a new regime instituted new offices and procedures. They are predominantly of Eastern Turkic provenance. Together with the Turkish words and phrases (often of Western, Oğuz origin) that Persian poets occasionally inserted into their verse in order to flatter patrons or show off their polyglossia (Gandjei 1986), these phenomena attest to the historical and continuing symbiosis of Turks and Persians in the realms of politics and popular culture, but are no longer part of the modern corpus of Turkish in Persian.

The classic Turkish invasions of Iran came from the northeast, i.e., Central and Inner Asia. However, arguably the most important linguistic

intrusion came from the northwest—that of the Safavids, riding the waves of extremist-Shi'a Turkmen of Eastern Anatolia and Azerbaijan, recoiling from conflict with the expanding Ottoman empire of the late 1400s. These invaders counted among their number many turkicized Iranians (notably the Safavid family itself, probably of Kurdish origin). While the Safavid shahs promoted written Persian as the established language of bureaucracy and literature, the fact that they and their Qızılbaş officers habitually spoke Turkish in court and camp lent this vernacular an unprecedented prestige in Iran. This Oğuz Turkic dialect, palpably related to that of the ideological enemy, the Ottoman Turks, expanded its domains of usage, and competed with Persian as a badge of ethnic and social identity. Foreign visitors (Chardin, Pietro della Valle, Olearius, Kaempfer) noted that spoken Turkish was so common among all classes in Iran as to be the *lingua franca*, and upwardly-mobile Persians actively learned Turkish (Gandjei 1991: 311–313, 315).

Hence, many Turkicisms, esp. those originating in Safavid times (16th–17th centuries) through the Qajar period, have permanently entered Persian. Scores of everyday (Azeri) Turkish words attest to solid Turkish influence on the lexicon of standard (spoken and written) Persian: typical are *otāq* 'room', *ojāq* 'fireplace', *otu* 'smoothing iron', *qeyçi* 'scissors', *qandāq* 'swaddling bands', *qāčāq* 'contraband', *qadağan* 'prohibited' (originally a noun, 'decree'), *tutun* 'tobacco', *tup* 'ball'.

A Turkish lexical suffix, the agentive *-či*, was stabilized and widely used, independently of Turkish lexical models with their varied vowel and consonant assimilation, to coin more than a hundred Persian agentives, such as *šekār-či* 'hunter', *taqlid-či* 'mimic', *post-či* 'postman' (via French; cf. Turkish *posta-ji*, via Italian), *tutun-či* 'tobacconist' (cf. Turkish *tütün-jü*, Azeri *tütün-čü*). This formative fills a sensible gap in Persian's derivational morphology: the Persian agentive suffixes *-gar*, *-gār*, *-kār* typically (or at least, originally) attach to verb stems, while *-či* attaches to a noun, X, and incorporates a generalized verbal force, expressing 'one who has to do with X'. The base words chosen for this suffix are overwhelmingly non-Persian, whether Turkic, Arabic or other foreign copies.

The semantic domains of Turkish vocabulary in Persian include the pastoral, domestic, military, technological, and commercial – all testifying to the effects of interaction at the spoken, vernacular, practical day-to-day level of intermingled and bilingual populations. Where Turkish copies have Persian synonyms, it is often possible to range the two in contrasting social registers, the etymologically Persian (or Perso-Arabic) being the more formal, literary, or refined in connotation, and the Turkish (or Turco-Mongol; which I shall here designate as Turco-Persian) the more informal, prosaic, or vernacular (Fig. 1).

Persian	Turco-Persian
<i>asb</i> ‘horse, steed’	<i>yābu</i> ‘packhorse, nag’
<i>xar</i> ‘ass’ (wild; figurative)	<i>olāg</i> ‘donkey’
<i>kārd</i> ‘(table) knife’	<i>čāqu</i> ‘shiv, switchblade’
<i>bānu</i> ‘lady; madame’	<i>xānom</i> ‘lady; Mrs., ma’am’
<i>āheste</i> ‘slowly, gently’	<i>yāvāš</i> ‘slow, easy does it’

Figure 1 Registerial selection

This parallels the sociolinguistic history of other imperial languages in contact or transition. The contrast between *asb* ‘horse, steed’ and *yābu* ‘packhorse, nag’ echoes that of literary Latin *equus* versus Vulgar Latin *caballus* (the term used by soldiers and passed on to local grooms → the etymon of Romance vernacular words such as French *cheval*). Similarly, when the Normans conquered England in 1066 (a decade after the Seljuks occupied Baghdad), they introduced a layer of French vocabulary into English. Some of the resulting synonyms were neatly distributed, with appropriate semantic specialization, in accordance with the social class and typical function of the original speaker, with (Old) English as the vernacular and (Norman) French as the elite language; so that when the Anglo-Saxon farmer delivered his English *swine*, *kine*, *calves* or *sheep* to the Norman lord of the manor, they would be served up at table as *pork*, *beef*, *veal* or *mutton*.

Some cultic terms stemming from the Safavid establishment of Shi'ism are of Turkish provenance. These include the Turco-Mongol *tug*, a battle standard nowadays serving as a Moharram processional standard, and the originally Arabic *ta'zie* 'Moharram passion play' (or, in Indo-Persian usage, 'cenotaph carried in Moharram procession'). *Ta'zie* is of course etymologically Arabic, but its morphological and semantic evolution show it to be a re-borrowing (Rückwanderer) into Persian through Turkish (Fig. 2).

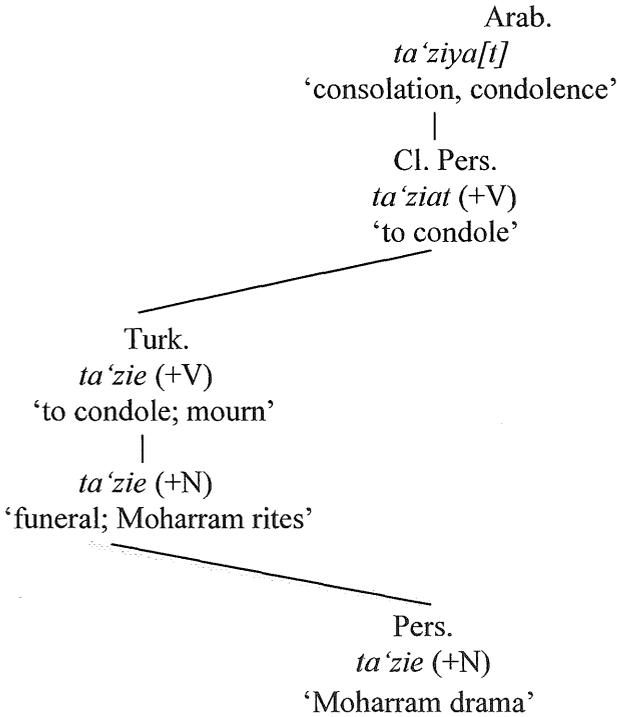


Figure 2 Derivation of Persian *ta'zie*

The etymon was incorporated into Persian as *ta'ziat* 'mourning; condolence', as seen in a variety of compounds and idioms such as *ta'ziat-nāme* 'letter of condolence' (copied as such into Ottoman Turkish) and *ta'ziat goftan* 'to express condolences'; in this VP it has been superseded in both Persian and Turkish by forms of *tasliat* and *tasalli*.

The shifted form *ta'zie*, and the specialized meaning 'funerary procession', are not found in written Persian before the late 19th century (Dehxdōdā 1993–1994, Vol. 4: 5962; Perry 1991: 182–83). This is the usual and earlier form, however, in all Turkic dialects, and the senses 'obsequies, funeral' and 'Moharram commemorative rites' are found in Turkish of Azerbaijan, where Iranian national Shi'ism began (Peyfun 1983). We may thus infer that the Classical form and meaning of the word entered through Persian into Turkish, where it lost final *-t* and (among the Qızılbaş) gained its specialized cultic sense, then was re-acquired in Persian to designate a popular Shi'i practice that developed under Safavid tutelage.

I say "*ta'ziat* lost final *t*" as a shorthand explanation representing the linguistic model for this process. A real-time description of the process, invoking a socio-linguistic model, would need to be rephrased somewhat as follows: A specialized vernacular variant, *ta'zie*, of literary *ta'ziat*, evolved among the Turcophone Shi'i supporters of the Safavids, which spread to Persophone adherents and converts, producing a doublet which eventually superseded the Persian form *ta'ziat*.

Incidentally, this formal dichotomy between the endings *-at* and *-al/-e* in Persian copies of some 1500 Arabic etymons in the feminine ending (Perry 1991) is an "exaptation" from the syntactically-conditioned Arabic variants of the pre-juncture and pre-pausal forms—irrelevant in Persian—to a semantically-conditioned lexical sorting, which continued into, and was independently expanded in, Turkish. It functions in both languages, inter alia, in lexical expansion through formation of doublets (Perry 1995).

Another example of an etymologically Perso-Arabic Rückwanderer from Turkish to Persian is, arguably, *mosāfer* in the sense 'temporary resident; guest at a (cheap) hotel'. This cannot be demonstrated morphologically, as in the case of *ta'zie*; but the primary "static" meaning of Anatolian *misafir* and Azerbaijani *müsafir* as 'visitor, resident, guest at an inn or hostel' (Redhouse 1983; Peyfun 1983) argues a back-formation from the common compound *mosāfer-xāne* 'inn, hostel, transient hotel'. The primary meaning of *mosāfer* in modern literary Persian is still the dynamic 'traveler, passenger' (reinforced by the cognate *mosāfarat* (pronounced

/mosâferat/) ‘journey, traveling’ and the compound [*mâšin-e*] *mosâfer-bari* ‘passenger [vehicle]’; however, in a colloquial context involving speakers of limited means in, for example, south Tehran (where many of the cheap hotels are still run by Azerbaijani Turks), the meaning would more commonly be that of ‘hotel guest’.

Beyond the Lexicon: NP Syntax

A subtle and lasting relic of Turkish in Persian is seen in Persian noun phrases that are actually Turkish in syntax. By this I do not mean obvious Turkish collocations such as ‘*âli qâpu* ‘lofty portal’: lexically Arabic and Turkish, contextually Safavid Persian, but syntactically Turkish (a counterpart to *bâb-e âli* ‘lofty portal’: lexically Arabic, contextually Ottoman, but syntactically Persian). I refer to lexically Persian NPs where, instead of the right-branching *ezâfe* construction with modifier following noun (e.g., *xorešt-e sabzi* ‘vegetable stew’ or *dolme-ye beh* ‘stuffed quince’) their word order is reversed, with modifier preceding noun, such as *sabzi polow* ‘vegetable rice’ and *barre kabâb* ‘grilled lamb’. Several common culinary phrases are of this Turkish left-branching type, and some have an alternative formulation of Persian type, as *kabâb-e barre* (Perry 1990: 226–27; see Fig. 3).

Persian	Turco-Persian
(a) Historical	
šâh Esmâ‘il, šâh ‘Abbâs...	Nâder šâh, Ahmad šâh, Rezâ šâh...
mirzâ Sâdeq, mirzâ Malkom...	Šâhrox mirzâ, ‘Abbâs mirzâ...
soltân Sanjar...	Rostam soltân...
(b) Contemporary	
šâh ‘Abdol-‘azim, šâh Rezâ...	
âqâ-ye / xânom-e Tehrâni...	Hasan âqâ, Žâle xânom...
xorešt-e sabzi, dolme-ye beh,	juje polow, sabzi polow;
kabâb-e barre	barre kabâb, šiš/ six kabâb...

Figure 3 NP syntax

This kind of Turkish NP is usually invisible in Persian, I suggest, because of (1) the deletion of the Turkic possessive suffix in a nominal NP: Tk. *šiš kebab-ı* > P. *šiš kabāb*; (2) the rather weak distinction (formal and semantic) between noun and adjective in Persian, which permits some ambivalence between head and modifier in an adjectival NP (cf. the well-known *pir-e mard* ‘old man’, properly to be analyzed as ‘male senior’).

Safavid chronicles repeatedly testify to the perceived functional specialization of Turks and Tajiks (the contrastive term for Persian-speakers) as, respectively, *xān* and *mirzā*, Men of the Sword and Men of the Pen, and to their rivalry for status and power in the imperial structure. This is reflected in a socio-historically significant variation of the same NP switch that pervades the Persian menu. It is a process that began centuries before the Safavid dynasty, outside Iran, and concerns Persian onomastic phrases in contrasting Turkish and Persian syntax.

This shift had begun in Transoxiana in Timurid times (15th–16th centuries), when the etymologically Persian title *mirzā* ‘born of a prince’ was postposed to designate a prince of the ruling (Turkish) house, presumably in imitation of the postposing of Turkish titles such as *bey*, *xān* and *āqā*: thus Šāhrox Mirzā (up to his accession in 1405), ‘Abdallāh Mirzā (1450–1451). To speak of *mirzā* being postposed may not be strictly accurate, since it does not seem to have been used in Persian-style preposed position before this period; however, the analogous case of the Persian honorific *x^wāja* (as in *X^wāja Nezām al-Molk*, *X^wāja Hāfez*), which was regularly postposed in Turkic contexts (Ottoman and modern Nasreddin Hoca, Uzbek and turkicized Tajik Ibrohim Xūja, etc.) sufficiently illustrates the pattern. This usage spread to Iran and continued through Safavid, Afsharid and Qajar times: thus Tahmāsb Mirzā, Šāhrox Mirzā (grandson of Nāder Šāh), Iraj Mirzā, etc.

Turning to the question of royal titulature, there appear to be no clear and regular occurrences of the Middle or New Persian title *šāh*, or its Old Persian antecedent, in conjunction with the personal name of a monarch of Iran before Safavid times. The case of Šāh-šojā‘, Hafez’s patron, is actually a compound name; the name of Timur’s son Šāh-rox, too, originates as

a term for a move in chess, ‘king to rook’, i.e., ‘castling’. However, by analogy with other old and etymologically Persian titles or honorifics such as *x^wāja* and *bābā*, we may assume that the title normally precedes the name, as in *X^wāja Hāfez* or *Bābā Tāher*. In onomastic NPs such as these, the title or honorific (king, master, grandfather, etc.), as being the constant term, is the head noun; the given name, as being the variable, is the modifier. We are asking, “Which king/ master/ grandfather?” for the answer “King John” or “King Edward,” etc. Accordingly, when the title *šāh* was reintroduced in Iran from 1501, the expected Persian syntagm with a preposed title appears: *Šāh Esmā‘il*, *Šāh ‘Abbās*, etc.

However, in the Indo-Persian realms, from eastern Afghanistan to Bengal, the reversed word order is found as early as 1118. From the later Ghaznavid rulers *Bahrām Šāh* and *Khusraw Šāh*, through the various “slave dynasties” of the Delhi sultans (*Ārām Šāh*, *Tuğlaq Šāh*, *Mohammad Šāh* and a score of others between 1210 and 1450) to the sultans of Bengal and Gujarat, and the Afghan Suri dynasty (*Eslām Šāh*, *Sekandar Šāh*) well into the sixteenth century. All the earlier such dynasties were of Persianized Turkish slave soldiers. Whether or not some of their onomastic compounds involved a name or epithet rather than *šāh* as a title (e.g., *Jalāl al-din Firuz-šāh*), the word order attests that this onomastic pattern was a calque on Turkic usage, as exemplified in *Toğril Beg* or *Mohammad Khan*, and is in fact an instance of left-branching Turkish NP syntax in a Persian context.

Safavid usage, perhaps alluding more consciously to a link with the Persian imperial past, initially preposed the title as we have seen. But with the fall of the dynasty to the Afghans, in 1723, the Ghelzay usurpers (to the extent that Persians dignified them with the royal title) were referred to (in the Dutch merchants’ reports) both as *Šāh Mahmud* and *Mahmud Šāh*, or *Šāh Ašraf* and *Ašraf Šāh* (Floor 1998: 185, 237). The surviving pretender to the throne, *Tahmāsb Mirzā*, once his cause was espoused by *Nāder-qoli Khan*, was referred to formally as *Sāh Tahmāsb*. But from *Nāder’s* accession in 1736, and thenceforth from the Afsharid to the Pahlavi dynasty, the word order of royal titulature in Iran switched consistent-

ly to the type with a postposed title (Nāder Šāh, Fath-‘Ali Šāh, Mohammad-Rezā Šāh). This was simply a case of Systemzwang, the belated and unconscious adoption of Turkish syntax (i.e., modifier before head, as in Mehmet Āqā or ‘Ali-qoli Xān, and emulating Tahmāsb Mirzā) in what had previously been a Persian noun phrase (head before modifier).

This produced an interesting reaction. Mirzā when preposed in accordance with Persian syntax came to designate a bureaucrat or writer, while the devalued titles *šāh* and *mir*, preposed, appeared in the titulature of Sufi leaders (Šāh Mir Ḥamza, Mir Ḥaydar, etc.). Scribe, poet, and dervish represented social niches in which Persians retained cultural and quasi-political prominence, in continuing contrast with the functions of soldier and ruler, as exercised traditionally by Turks (Perry 1990: 218–23; 2003: 118–23). Up until today in Iran, though the usual titles have been reduced to two (both of Turkish origin), the formal, “Western-style” onomastic phrase is of Persian ezāfe type (Āqā-ye/Xānom-e Tehrāni), while the informal one is syntactically Turkish (Rostam Āqā, Žāle Xānom; cf. Fig. 3).

Thus, although *šāh* is of Persian etymology, its earliest use as a title in pre-modern times was by Turkish rulers in India, in a predominantly Turkic onomastic syntagm; in Iran, this was converted to a Persian syntagm for two and a quarter centuries, as used by the Turcophone Safavid dynasty, before lapsing into the Turkic syntagm. *Mirzā* (often written *merzā* in Indo-Persian), though its first element *mir* is indubitably New Persian in origin (a copy of Arabic *amir* truncated in colloquial use, like *abu* > *bu*), is arguably not well formed in Persian: the active verb stem *-zā(y)* should denote ‘-genic, giving birth to’ (as in *por-zā* ‘multiparous’), not ‘born (of)’, which is properly the sense of the passive stem *-zād* as a suffix (cf. *nawzād* ‘newborn’, *ādami-zād* ‘human, born of mankind’). I suggest therefore that the compound *mirzā*, which appears first in a Turkic sociolinguistic context, is wholly a Turkic formation—on a Persian model, to be sure, but with reduced phonology and semantic precision.

Again, this semantic chiasmus has its sociolinguistic analogy in the Norman Conquest of England and a similarly specialized layer of the lexical collocations of the ruling elite. Norman rule introduced military and

legal terms ordered in accordance with French syntax (head before modifier), which are still in English, such as *attorney general*, *sergeant major*, *court martial*. While *court martial* is still pluralized pedantically as ‘courts martial’, most of these other Gallicisms are as opaque to the English ear as are syntactic Turkicisms to the Persian, and are pluralized as, e.g., ‘major generals,’ as if the first element were the modifier and preceded the head, English style. Like their Turco-Persian analogues, their contrasting word order corresponds to a contrast in social register with vernacular NPs such as *common criminal*, *private soldier*, *traffic court*.

A Note on Tajik

Tajik Persian of Central Asia has been so massively influenced by the Turkic (specifically, Uzbek) lexicon and syntax, and so widely studied in this respect, that I will leave it out of consideration here; except to note that there are at least seventeen serial-verb constructions in Tajik that are evidently calqued on Uzbek models (Doerfer 1992; Perry 2005); and that in my Tajik Persian Reference Grammar I enumerate sixteen points of convergence (counting serial verbs as only one) between Tajik and Uzbek morphology and syntax.

I will mention only one point of phonological interference with social significance in Tajik. Since /f/ is absent from the original Turkic consonantal repertory, the Perso-Arabic name *Yusuf* tended to change to *Yusup* with final /p/ in Uzbek, and to become *Yusupov* in the Russianized type of surname popular during the Soviet period; this form was often adopted even by those of Tajik nationality (a complex issue, outside the scope of this paper). When the language reform of 1989 encouraged both de-Russianization and de-Uzbekization of Tajik, this double devolution was marked by a change of name to *Yusufi* or *Yusufzoda*, reversing both features to ensure total re-Persianization.

In conclusion, I hope this selection has underlined the importance of consulting socio-linguistic as well as purely linguistic models in questions of the diffusion of Turkic lexis, and of seeing some Persian NPs as socially sensitive and syntactically adjustable to Turkish input in their historical contexts.

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