

CHAPTER FOURTEEN A

THE PAMIR LANGUAGES

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

“Pamir languages” is the generalized conventional term for a group of languages that belong to the eastern branch of the Iranian language family, and are spoken in the valleys of the western and southern Pamirs and adjacent regions: the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Region (Tajik *Viloyati Kuhistoni Badakhshon*) of the Republic Tajikistan; the Badakhshan province in Afghanistan; parts of northern Pakistan (Chitral, Gilgit, Hunza); and parts of the Xinjiang-Uygur Autonomous Region of China.

The Pamir languages constitute four distinct genetic sub-groups that derive from several distinct proto-dialects of East Iranian origin (see also Chapters 14b and 15 on Shughn(an)i and Wakhi):

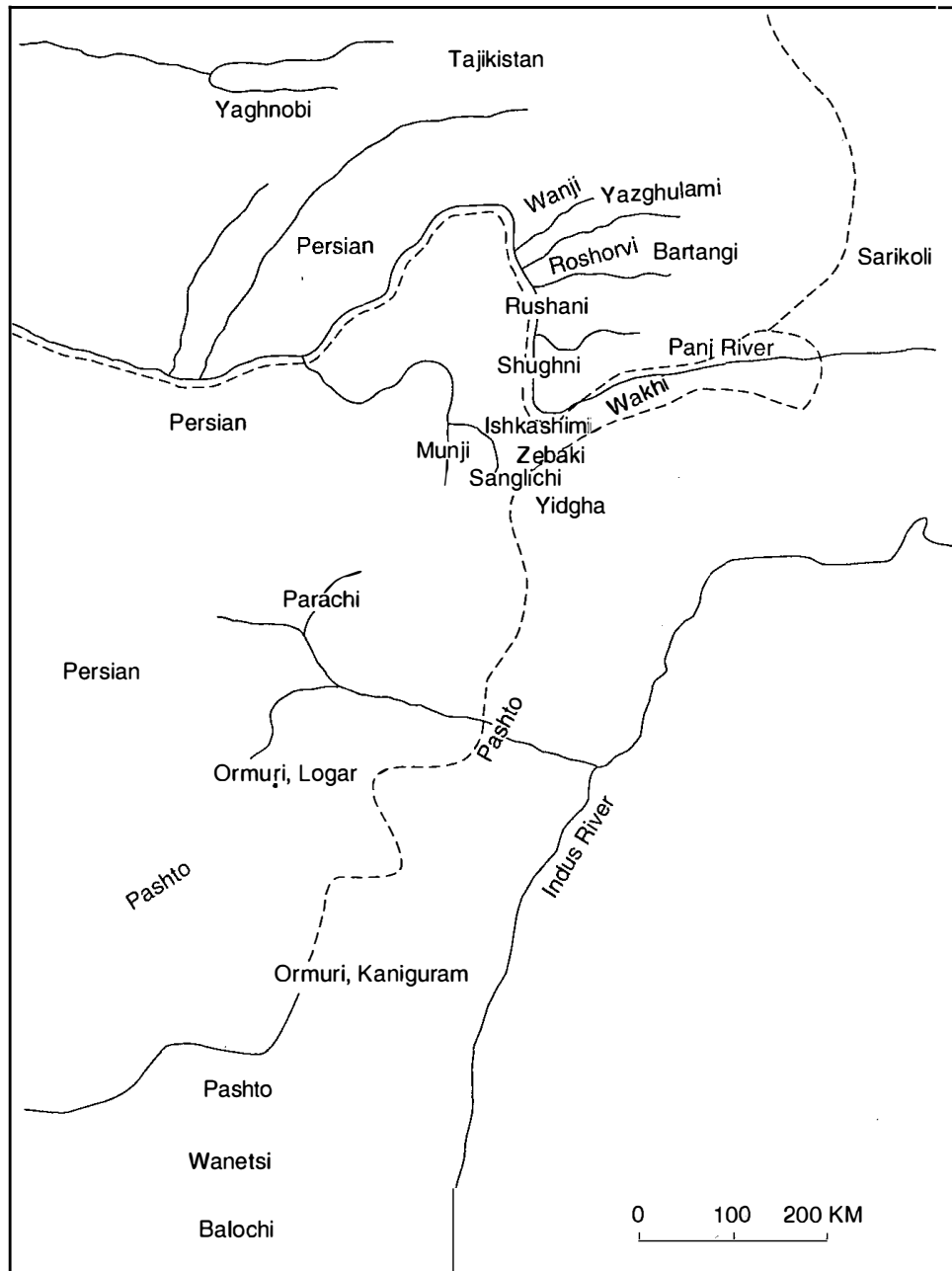
1. “North Pamir” group
 - (a) Old Wanji (extinct), relatively close to (b) Yazghulami, and (c) the Shughni-Rushani group to the south of it (see Chapter 14b).
2. Ishkashimi group
 - (a) Ishkashimi proper, (b) Sanglichi, (c) Zebaki (extinct).
3. Wakhi.
4. Also, owing to a series of features
 - (a) Munji, (b) Yidgha.

Extinct Sarghulami in Afghan Badakhshan is usually included. However, the very existence of this particular vernacular is doubtful. The material, described by Prof. I. I. Zarubin in the 1920s, could never be verified. It is based on the information from a speaker of one of the neighboring villages of Sarghulam, who called it *lavz-i mazor* ‘the speech of *mazār*’, presumably referring to the Afghan village of Sarghulam, which had such a shrine.

1.2 Social status and survival

The various groups of speakers of the Pamir languages consider themselves ethnic minorities. In official statistics and the census of Tajikistan they are not recognized as such, but identified as Tajiks of the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Region.

The official language policy until 1989 did not recognize the independent status of these languages. It was only in 1989, with the “Tajikistan Republic Law on language”, that the existence and the special status of Pamir languages was acknowledged *de jure*.



MAP 14A.1 PAMIR LANGUAGES, PARACHI AND ORMURI

It stipulated special actions for “the independent development and usage of the Mountainous Badakhshanian (Pamir) languages”, but did not include official permission for writing in these languages. Thus, de facto the Pamir languages remain spoken languages only. In fact, one among them has gained the status of lingua franca, Shughn(an)i, at least in less official situations, beside official Tajik.

All Pamir languages can be called endangered languages to a certain extent. Some of these languages were included in the “Red Book of endangered languages of the world” (UNESCO 1995), *viz.* Rushani, Yazghulami and Ishkashimi. However, other languages, particularly those with fewer speakers, like Roshorvi, Bartangi, Sarikoli, Khufi and Sanglichi, are not included.

Moreover, a number of vernaculars are not well known to scholarship, or not described at all such as the vernaculars of Barwoz in Shughnan, Sawnob, and Bardara in Bartang. While some are still spoken, like Bajuwi and Sanglichi, others, like Barwoz, are apparently no longer used, and still others have been completely lost. Only in some cases, such as Old Wanji and Zebaki, there exist short preliminary descriptions.

The official figures given for the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Region in the census of 1989 (last Soviet census) and the census of 1999 (the first sovereign Republic Tajikistan census after the migration caused by civil war) are as follows: 1989, total 154,554 (21,000, Khorog, Taj. Khorugh, administrative center of the region; 20,150, Wanj region including Yazghulam; 17,868, Rushan; 48,806, Shughnan; 19,287, Ishkashim; 11,843, Murghab). – 1999, total 211,292 (25,000, Khorog; 29,987, Wanj region including Yazghulam; 25,157, Rushan; 37,574, Shughnan; 23,915, Roshtkala; 27,265, Ishkashim; 15,885, Murghab; Darwaz, 25,952, not included).

In rough approximation, then, the total number of speakers of Pamir languages proper in Badakhshan can be estimated to be about 120,000 for 1989 and 170,000 for 1999.

2 LINGUISTIC SETTING AND DYNAMICS

2.1 Substrate and superstrate

The Pamir languages are the successors of several distinct ancient East Iranian dialects that penetrated the region, though probably not simultaneously. It is rather difficult to ascertain the time of divergence of this group from the other Iranian languages, but it most likely coincided with the period of the disintegration of the common East Iranian proto-language some time before the end of the first millennium BC.

Spreading to the Pamir valleys and adjacent regions, speakers of these emerging Iranian dialects formed layers over a common substratum of pre-Indo-European Pamir languages, or groups of languages. This substrate layer gave the immigrating East Iranian groups as a whole a set of shared characteristics on all linguistic levels, be it phonology, morphology, syntax, or lexical inventory. Significantly, the substrate features include, in comparison with other Iranian languages, shared shifts in the semantics not only of certain sets of terms, but also of the content of some grammatical categories. Thus, numerous structural parallelisms and shared loans provide the evidence for the continuous substratal coherence of this group, even though in the course of time, there developed internal divergences in phonetics and other characteristics due to the problem of communication between the speakers of these language groups in these mountainous regions.

In turn, during the last several centuries a new unifying layer was superimposed over all languages in the Pamir region by dialects of Fārsi, specifically Fārsi-ye Dari of Afghanistan, and Tajiki and its regional dialects. These gradually came to function as the language of oral communication, having been first introduced in the Middle Ages through the missionary activities of Islam. Today, Modern Literary Tajik is the official language in Tajik Badakhshan.

That the original area of the Pamir languages was considerably larger than today, particularly towards the north and north-west, can be demonstrated on the basis of documented but now extinct East Iranian languages as well as the toponymy and the areal and substrate lexicon. It is apparent that the expansion of the Tajik dialects occurred not only on the margins, but also into its inner parts due to forced migrations, as shown by the dialect of Ghoron and some Tajik dialects of Ishkashim. The various Tajik dialects with which closest contacts and connections developed include Darwaz, Wanj, Vakhiyo, Qarategin, Rogh, and Badakhshan in the North and West, while various Dari dialects provided contacts in the West.

Other contact languages in the larger Pamir area include Pashto, Burushaski and the Nuristani and Dardic languages in the south, and south-east, as well as Urdu, Kyrgyz and Uzbek dialects in the east and north-east along with Uyghur and Chinese.

2.2 Genetic relationships and Sprachbund

Comparative-historical research, prominently expounded in the works of Georg Morgenstierne in the 1930s, has demonstrated that the Pamir languages show divergent historical developments. They represent several groups each with its own distinct sets of characteristic features, including shared early innovations. Significantly, the features typical for each group individually are not shared with other groups inside the Pamir region proper, but with other East Iranian groups both within or outside of the larger region. That is, the Pamir languages constitute distinct genetic sub-groups that derive from several distinct proto-dialects of East Iranian origin. These facts contradict the assumption, still sometimes found, that the Pamir languages represent a unified family of related languages that derive from a common Iranian “pre-Pamirian” proto-language.

The degree of genetic relationship among the Pamir languages varies considerably. There is only one group that exhibits a genetic relationship on the basis of their historical phonology, morphology and shared innovations that is sufficiently close to allow for the reconstruction of a common inner-Pamir proto-language, or a group of very close dialects. This is the group which by some is called the “North Pamir” group, with three members: (1) extinct Old Wanji, relatively close to Yazghulami; (2) Yazghulami; and (3) the Shughni-Rushani group to the south of it. The reconstruction of their shared proto-language was partly undertaken by Valentina S. Sokolova (1967) and D. (Joy) I. Edelman (1980, 1986, 1987, 2009).

In turn, the Shughn(an)i-Rushani group itself (see Chapter 14b) consists of several local members that genetically constitute sub-groups, with various degrees of relationship: (a) Shughn(an)i-Bajuwi-Barwozi; (b) Rushani; (c) Khufi, (d) Bartangi-Roshorvi; and (e) Sarikoli. Further, each of these has its own internal subdialects and varieties, with clear geographical boundaries and mutually intelligible.

As indicated above, genetically related to the North Pamir group are: (4) Ishkashimi with Sanglichi and extinct Zebaki; further (5) Munji with Yidgha, which constitute closely related, but relatively independent, groups that share a set of features with the

others, but show sufficient number of substantial differences that makes a close relationship doubtful; finally, (6) Wakhi, which is genetically more distant, originating in a North-East Iranian dialect (see chapters on Khotanese and Tumshuqese, and Wakhi).

At the same time, there is convergence among the Pamir groups. It is evidenced by the fact that, typologically, there is a well-defined resemblance in structure (somewhat less so for Munji and Yidgha among the six groups) as well as shared vocabulary. However, those shared features are not due to close genetic relationship, but to the effect of convergence in the region. It is a process that was enhanced by the influence first of the common early substrate and then in the last few centuries by the penetration of Tajik. We are therefore justified in considering this region to be a “linguistic area” (Sprachbund).

Table 14a.1 combines the Cyrillic and Latin transcriptions developed for the alphabets of the individual Pamir languages.

3 MAIN LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS AND TYPOLOGY

The main structural and typological characteristics (especially the more recent ones) as a whole are similar for all Pamir languages.

3.1 Phonology

3.1.1 *Vocalic systems*

The vocalic systems show various types of qualitative and quantitative opposition. The inherited Iranian opposition of length, $i \bar{e} \bar{a} \bar{o} \bar{u}$ vs. $i a u$, is not retained as such. In general, length distinction is lost on the “margins”, but retained in the inner area. Thus, Shughni has a pair of low vowels \bar{a} and a , and also two series of three long vowels each which are apposed to a single short vowel, i and u , respectively, which have a wide range of phonetic realizations. Similar systems are found in the other members of the Shughni-Rushani group (except distant Sarikoli), and in Munji.

In Yazghulami, Ishkashimi and Sarikoli length distinctions are essentially lost. Distinctions in vowel quality are replaced by opposition of relative stability; thus, unstable central vowels are in opposition to all the other, stable vowels. Yazghulami, though, does retain length distinction in the low pair $\bar{a} a$. Wakhi has no quantitative gradation, and length distinction is not phonemic but conditioned by position, differing by the subdialect. The various systems are shown in Table 14a.2:

3.1.2 *Consonantal systems*

A common typical feature of the Pamir languages is the absence of an independent phoneme $/h/$, and the conditioned, non-phonemic “rough breathing” sound $[h]$ before word- or syllable-initial vowel.

3.1.2.1 Velar and uvular fricatives

In Yazghulami, the Shughni-Rushani group and in Wakhi the phonemic pair x and y has shifted to uvular position (like in Tajik), and the emptied velar place was occupied by the new phonemic velar pair \check{x} and \check{y} . In Ishkashimi, however, such velar phonemes did not develop. In Munji, x remained velar, and a new pair \check{x} and \check{y} developed from other sources.

TABLE 14a.1: TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR THE PAMIR LANGUAGES

C = Cyrillic, L = Latin

C	L	C	L	C	L	C	L
a	a	ж	ž	o	o	ц	c (ts)
ā	ā	ж	ž (W, I)	ō	ō	ч	č (tš)
б	b	з	z	ö	ö (B, Rsh)	ч	č (tš) (W, I)
в	v	з	j, ʒ (dz)	п	p	ч	č (dž)
б̄	w	и	i	р	r	ч	č (dž) (W)
г	g	й̄	ī	с	s	щ	š
ѓ	ǰ	й̄	y	т	t	щ	š (I, W)
г°	g° (Y)	к	k	ћ	θ	ь	ʔ (I i)
ѓ	ǰ	ќ	ќ (Y)	т	ʔ (I, W)	ы	ʔ (i) (I i)
ѓ°	ǰ° (Y)	к°	k° (Y)	у	u		
ђ	ǰ̄	к	q	ӯ	ū		
д	d	к°	q° (Y)	џ	ǰ		
ď	ǰ̄	л	l	ф	f		
д	ǰ (W, I)	л	l (I)	х	x		
е	e (Y, I)	м	m	х°	x° (Y)		
ē	ē	н	n	х̄	x̄		
ê	ê (Sh)			х̄°	x̄° (Y)		
э	ə (Y, W)			х	h		

B = Bartangi; I = Ishkashimi; Rsh = Rushani; S = Shughni; W = Wakhi; Y = Yazghulami.

TABLE 14a.2: PAMIR VOCALIC SYSTEMS

Long vs. Short

ī ē	ā	ō ū ū	Rushani (Shughnani-Rushani group)
i e	a	o u	
ī ē œ	ā	ō ū ū	Khufi (Shughnani-Rushani group)
i e	a	o u	
ī ē ê	ā	ō ū ū	Shughnani (Shughnani-Rushani group)
i e	a	u	
ī ē	ā	ō ū ū	Bartangi-Roshorvi (Shughnani-Rushani group)
i e	a	u	
ī ē	ā	ō ū ū	Munji
ə	a	u	
ī ē	ā	ō ū ū	Sanglichi
i e ə	a	o u	

Stable vs. Unstable*

i e *ə	ā	o ū u	Yazghulami
	a		
i e *b	a	o ū u	Ishkashimi
*i e *bl	a	o ū u	Sarikoli (Shughnani-Rushani group)
i *bl ə	*a	o *u	Wakhi of Wakhan proper

(For Wakhi, see also Chapter 15, section 2.1.1.)

3.1.2.2 Palatalized affricates and fricatives

In the North-Pamir languages **k* and **g* of the proto-language were conditionally palatalized. These variants developed into phonemic palatals in Yazghulami, and into phonemic *č* *ǰ* *ž* in the Shughn(an)i-Rushani group.

3.1.2.3 Labialized velars and uvulars

In Yazghulami, a series of six labialized phonemes developed as correlates of non-labialized phonemes. As a result, there is a triple post-palatal opposition (reminiscent of, but certainly distinct from, the triple Indo-European series): *k-k-k̠* and *g-g-g̠*.

3.1.2.4 Cerebrals

In Munji (with Yidgha), Ishkashimi (with Sanglichi and Zebaki), and Wakhi there developed sets of cerebral phonemes opposed to the unmarked sets varying by language group. These included the dental plosives stops, palatal affricates, and the sonorants. It is not only the very inventory of these phonemes, but more importantly the frequency of their use and their distribution (different frequency and use of classes) that show that they were not borrowed from the Indo-Aryan languages, but from a language like Burushaski. The conclusion that cerebralization in an intrusive process is further supported by the absence of cerebrals in the North-Pamir languages, i.e. Yazghulami and the Shughni-Rushani group. The various systems are shown in the following table, using digraphs for affricates.

TABLE 14a.3: PAMIR CONSONANTAL SYSTEMS

	Labial		Dental		Palatal		Velar		Uvular	Sonorant	
Yazghulami	<i>p b</i>	<i>t d</i>	<i>ts</i>	<i>dz</i>	<i>tš</i>	<i>dž</i>	<i>k̠ g̠</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>q</i>	
	<i>f v</i>	<i>θ δ</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>š</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>k^o</i>	<i>g^o</i>	<i>q^o</i>		
							<i>č</i>	<i>ǰ</i>	<i>x γ</i>	<i>w y m n r l</i>	
							<i>č^o</i>		<i>x^o γ^o</i>		
Shughn(an)i-Rushani	<i>p b</i>	<i>t d</i>	<i>ts</i>	<i>dz</i>	<i>tš</i>	<i>dž</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>q</i>		
	<i>f v</i>	<i>θ δ</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>š</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>ǰ</i>	<i>x γ</i>	<i>w y m n r l</i>	
Ishkashimi	<i>p b</i>	<i>t d</i>	<i>ts</i>	<i>dz</i>	<i>tš</i>	<i>dž</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>q</i>		
		<i>t̪ d̪</i>			<i>(tš)</i>						
	<i>f v</i>		<i>s</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>š</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>γ</i>		<i>w y m n r l</i>	
					<i>ṣ̌</i>					<i>(l)</i>	
Sanglichi	<i>p b</i>	<i>t d</i>	<i>ts</i>	<i>dz</i>	<i>tš</i>	<i>dž</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>q</i>		
		<i>t̪ d̪</i>			<i>tṣ̌</i>						
	<i>f v</i>	<i>θ δ</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>š</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>ǰ</i>	<i>x γ</i>	<i>w y m n r l</i>	
										<i>ŋ !</i>	
										<i>ŋ</i>	

Continued

TABLE 14a.3: *Continued*

	Labial Dental				Palatal		Velar		Uvular	Sonorant
Munji	<i>p b</i>	<i>t d</i> (<i>ʔ d</i>)	<i>ts</i>	<i>dz</i>	<i>tʃ</i> <i>tʃ̣</i>	<i>dʒ</i> <i>dʒ̣</i>	<i>ḳ g̣</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>g</i>	(<i>q</i>)
	<i>f v</i>		<i>s</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>ʃ</i> <i>ʃ̣</i>	<i>ʒ</i> <i>ʒ̣</i>	<i>x̣</i>	<i>x̣</i>	<i>x γ</i>	<i>w y m n r l</i> (<i>ŋ</i>)(<i>ʔ</i>)
Wakhi	<i>p b</i>	<i>t d</i> <i>ʔ d</i>	<i>ts</i>	<i>dz</i>	<i>tʃ</i> <i>tʃ̣</i>	<i>dʒ</i> <i>dʒ̣</i>		<i>k</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>q</i>
	<i>f v</i>	<i>θ ð</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>ʃ</i> <i>ʃ̣</i>	<i>ʒ</i> <i>ʒ̣</i>	<i>x̣</i>	<i>ɣ̣</i>	<i>x γ</i>	<i>w y m n r l</i>

3.1.3 Suprasegmental features

The pattern of stress in nominals tends to be word-final, while that of the verb forms varies according to language, except for obligatory stress on the negative prefix. In general word stress is rather weak and subordinate to a sentence stress.

3.2 Morphology

For nominal morphology, the absence of distinct morphological boundaries between substantive, adjective and adverb is characteristic, e.g. Bartangi *tor* 'top; upwards; upper' may function in all three categories. That is, the function is largely determined on the basis of semantic and syntactic criteria.

3.2.1 Nominal morphology and categories

3.2.1.1 Gender

The category of gender, distinguishing masculine and feminine, is preserved in a rather reduced form in Yazghulami, the Shughni-Rushani group (with the exception of Sarikoli), and Munji (with Yidgha). In Yazghulami gender is exposed only by correlation with gender-marked 3s pronouns in the oblique case which derive from demonstrative pronouns. In the Shughn(an)i-Rushani group and Munji (with Yidgha) gender is formally expressed only in a small set of nouns. Otherwise, the gender of a noun is indicated by demonstrative pronouns, as well as by those adjectives and verb forms that have retained gender distinction. In Ishkashimi, Sanglichi, Wakhi and Sarikoli the category of gender is lost.

Semantically, one observes the tendency towards transformation of the category of gender to a system that is defined by semantic classes, evidencing a shift that is due to the substratum. The process is practically completed in Yazghulami. In the Shughni-Rushani group, the category of gender is partially shifted to the category of concreteness, concrete/general (abstract). Thus, irrespective of natural gender, names of inanimate objects, of animals (when sex is not specified), and objects appear in the masculine gender when they indicate the general, categorical idea, or the totality of objects, while a concrete object is in the feminine gender. For example, in Rushani *māwn* 'apple' has feminine

gender when referring to a single apple, but masculine gender when the totality of apples is referred to.

3.2.1.2 Number

The category of number in most Pamir languages is expressed by the opposition of the bare, unmarked noun (as an object, concept, or totality) and the noun with plural markers (distributed multitude). In most of the Pamir languages the markers are agglutinative suffixes. Munji, Wakhi, and Sarikoli distinguish plural direct and oblique forms. In Bartangi plural is indicated syntactically by the combination of the bare noun with demonstrative pronoun and the verbal number markers. In all Pamir languages, with the exception of Munji, the singular is required after numbers higher than two, which thus implies totality.

3.2.1.3 Case marking

Case marking is partially preserved in Munji (and Yidgha), Wakhi, and Sarikoli, in form of two main cases: direct and oblique, sometimes with the addition of adpositions. In the Shughn(an)i-Rushani group (excepting Sarikoli) the case (as well as gender and number) of the substantive is denoted by the case of a demonstrative pronoun that serves as a definite article. In Yazghulami and Ishkashimi nouns are not inflected, and their syntactic function is determined by position within the clause, as well as adpositions, adpositional phrases, and other markers such as adverbs.

3.2.1.4 Definiteness

The category of definiteness is marked morphologically by articles that have largely lost the semantic distinctions of their origin. The indefinite article is derived from the numeral 'one', usually in truncated form. Definiteness is indicated by articles that are inflectionally reduced sets of the demonstrative pronouns. The Shughni-Rushani group is noteworthy for having retained gender, number, and case distinctions in these demonstrative pronouns, which thereby serve not only as definite articles, but also to identify noun and noun phrases grammatically.

3.2.2 Adjectives

The inflection of adjectives is even more reduced than that of substantives. Gender is preserved only in the Shughn(an)i-Rushani group (with the exception of Sarikoli) and in Munji (with Yidgha); number is preserved in Munji (with Yidgha); case is lost everywhere.

Comparison is marked by reflexes of OIr. **-tar-a*, e.g. Sh. *-di*, Rsh. *-dōr*, Y. *-dūr*). There are also degrees of intensity, 'a little more', etc. expressed by either old or recent means such as reduplication, e.g. Sh. *-dar-di*, Y. *-dar-dūr* < **-tara-tara*. – The superlative is expressed descriptively.

3.2.3 Pronouns

In most of the languages the 3rd person pronoun is not developed and the demonstrative pronouns serve in this function. A special case is Yazghulamii, where historically

demonstrative sets were redistributed into personal pronoun function and demonstrative function. In general, the 1st and 2nd personal pronouns reflect the ancient personal pronouns, albeit with considerable and varying assimilations between the forms. The exception is found with the second person plural pronouns. They were innovated, on the model of substrate system, by copying initial *t-* from the 2s pronoun, thus, Shughni *māš* ‘we’ – *tama* ‘you’, Yazgh. *mox* – *təməx*. This is not the case in Munji (with Yidgha) and Wakhi, even though there the 2p personal pronouns are likewise innovative.

The demonstrative pronouns preserve (with the exception of Yazghulami) the ancient Indo-European system of triple deixis: (1) *ich*-deixis, nearest to speaker ‘this’ < **ima-*; (2) *du*-deixis, nearest to addressee (interlocutor) and not that far, ‘this, that’ < **aita-*, also used as emphatic and anaphoric pronouns ‘that very’, ‘that one that’, and (3) *er*-deixis, either distant or neutral, ‘that; he’ < **awa-*.

The declension of pronouns is relatively archaic, and is preserved even in those languages that have lost the declension of other nominal classes, as is the case in Yazghulami, the Shughn(an)i-Rushani group and Ishkāshimi.

3.2.4 Numerals

Numerals up to ten are usually indigenous. Higher numbers are often loaned from Tajik (in Sarikoli from Uygur), but the older generation tends to preserve indigenous composite numbers. The teens are additive, ‘ten (and) digit’. From 40 and above, Yazghulami, Munji (with Yidgha) and Wakhi have a vigesimal system; thus ‘twice 20’ = 40, ‘twice 20 and ten and five’ = 55, ‘four times 20’ = 80. By contrast, the system of the Shughni-Rushani group is decimal; thus ‘four times ten’ = 40, ‘five times ten and five’ = 55.

3.3 Verb morphology and system

3.3.1 Past tenses

The basic two subsystems are present and past, typical for most Iranian, and three stems, typical for this group. Present forms, present-future, and imperative, are derived from the present stems. In the past tenses, forms are based on the past stem, usually originating in the OIr. perfect participle in **-ta*, very rarely in **-wa*, in Wakhi also in **-na*. The perfect and pluperfect forms are based on the extended participle masc. **-taka*, fem. **-tačī* (with *i*-umlaut).

In the present tenses, person and number are marked by endings that reflect, on the whole, the OIr. “primary” active endings. In the past and perfect tenses, participles of intransitive verbs have gender and number agreement. Person and number in all Pamir languages are typically marked by enclitics that resulted from the partial merger of the OIr. enclitic pronouns with copula forms. By that merger the earlier ergative construction, where agents of past transitive verbs were expressed by the personal clitics, was mostly lost. However, the markers still show traces of that construction, e.g. in the Shughni-Rushani group (with the exception of Sarikoli), the 3s past marker *-i* with transitive verbs originates in the 3s personal enclitic **-hai*.

The various patterns of present and past person markers are shown in the following table. Parentheses indicate optional marking; note that past tense markers are clause clitics.

TABLE 14a.4: PAMIR PERSON MARKING IN PRESENT AND PAST

	1s	2s	3s	1p	2p	3p
<i>Yazghulami</i>						
Present	-in	-ay	-t/-	-əm	-it	-an
Past	əm	at	ay	an	əf	an
Trans.			(ay)			
<i>Shughni</i>						
Present	-um	-i	-t/-d	-ām	-ēt	-ēn
Past	um	i	∅	ām	ēt	ēn
Trans.			i			
<i>Rushani</i>						
Present	-um	-i	-t/-d	-am	-at/-af	-an
Past	um	at	∅	am	af	an
Trans.			i			
<i>Ishkashimi</i>						
Present	-bm	-i	-u	-on	-bv	-on
Past	bm	bt	i	on	bv	on
Sanglichi has the same endings, except for pres. 3s -∅						
<i>Munji</i>						
Present	-əm	-əy	-t/-d	-ām	-āf	-āt
Past	ām	āy	∅	ām	āf	āt
Trans.	əm	ət	a	ām	āf	āt
<i>Wakhi</i>						
Present	-əm	-i	-t/-d	-ən	-əv	-ən
Past	əm	ət	∅	ən	əv	ən
<i>Sarikōli</i>						
Present	-am	-∅	-t/-d	-an	-it	-in
Past	am	at	i	an	af	af

4 LEXIS

4.1 Word formation and semantic sets

All Pamir languages share the same word-building models. A noteworthy phenomenon is the contextually restricted use of certain sets of words and of acts, including taboos, e.g. the name of the wolf or mouse in different situations, as well as different kinds of acts of prohibition protected by taboo, such as Ishkashimi *pbčbrbm* which is the ritual prohibition to enter the house at Nawruz. In response to the need of new vocabulary items, new words with descriptive semantics or old words that already exist in some Pamir languages are used in new senses, or words are borrowed.

In general, the lexicon continues the inherited one, but also includes innovations and semantic shifts at various stages, dating from Indo-European to relatively recent periods. Thus, ancient is Yazghulami *doyd* ‘daughter’ < IE. **dhugō₂ter-*, whereas Rushni *razēn* ‘daughter’ < **fra-žanyā-* (fem.) ‘born’ is an early innovation.

4.2 Loans

The largest number of loan words in all Pamir languages comes from Tajik. Of interest are loans that have become obsolete in Tajik, as well as in Persian and Dari, though preserved in all or several Pamir languages, and sometimes show semantic shifts. There are also numerous terms loaned from Arabic via Tajik, etc. mostly in the religious and cultural spheres. Loans from Indo-Aryan and Burushaski generally are terms of material culture. There are also a small number of loans from Turkic, mainly from Kyrgyz, and from Uygur and Chinese in Sarikoli. More recent are loans from European languages, mainly Russian and English that were incorporated during a rather long period, most intensively from the end of nineteenth century onward.

There have also been some mutual borrowings among the Pamir languages. Certain lexical strata and sets of words are of substrate origin, or are areal words whose source or origin is unknown.

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