Pashto Radical Simple Verbs and the Linguistic Border

Matteo De Chiara | ORCID: 0000-0002-8083-2303
Institut National de Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, France
matteodechiara76@gmail.com

Daniel Septfonds
Institut National de Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, France
dseptfonds@gmail.com

Abstract

This article intends to focus on the concept of linguistic border in the verbal system of contemporary Pashto, an Iranian language mainly spoken in Afghanistan and Pakistan. A careful, systematic, and detailed analysis of used radical simple verbs in different Pashto dialects draws attention to a certain degree of variation in one third of these verbs, which are switching from one category to another. Thanks to our research on Pashto verbs, we could identify four main trends of change, displaying as morphologic regularization, syntactic simplification, morphologic differentiation, and semantic clarification.

Keywords

1 Introduction

The Pashto language belongs to the Iranian group of languages and is spoken mainly in Afghanistan (from Kabul to Qandahar) and in Pakistan (the whole region extending from Swat, Peshawar, Kalat to Quetta, and, more locally, in the big towns of Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore). Pashto speakers can be found also in Dubai, in Malaysia and in many other countries, due

to the previous and recent emigration. Pashto language is spoken by about 50 million peoples (cf. Simons/Fennig 2018). In Afghanistan, it is the official language, along with Dari (Afghan Persian) since 1937, while in Pakistan it is one of the regional languages of the provinces of Khyber Pukhtunxwa (KPK)—the ancient North West Frontier Province (NWFP)—also including the FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) and Baluchistan.

Pashto language, studied since the beginning of the 19th century unfortunately for military purposes by the British, the Russians and more recently by the Americans, is an Indo-European language showing many interesting features, which would merit further research: indeed, while the number of publications of practical tools grows year by year, not the same can be said of theoretical and more scientific works.

With this concern, we published in the next three years two volumes on the verbal morphology, dealing with the Pashto verbal system (DCS1[1]) and with Pashto simple verbs (DCS2[2]): as a result of this research, a fundamental theoretical concept emerged, that of linguistic border.

In this article,[3] we will present the main features characterizing Pashto verbal system, with their basic parameters, then we intend to focus on the innovative idea of linguistic border and to draw the consequences and the underlying dynamics for Pashto and in a methodological perspective, implying feasibility to other linguistic domains.[4]

2   Definitions

Pashto verbal system can be analysed from to two main point of views, syntactic and morphologic.

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1   The first volume, *Le verbe pashto: parcours d'un territoire du verbe simple à la locution verbale* (Reichert, Wiesbaden, 2019), presented the whole Pashto verbal system, from the simple verbs to the light verb constructions: the verbal domain was treated there as a territory, with different countries and therefore borders.

2   The second volume, *Le verbe simple en pashto. État des lieux* (Reichert, Wiesbaden, 2022), aimed to offer a presentation of all the "radical simple verbs" (see below), that is to say simple verbs without suffixes: **any verb that prefixes the accented /wə́-/ morpheme to form its perfective** (DCS1: 27) is defined as a "simple verb".

3   It is the result of close collaboration between the two authors and, therefore, each is responsible for 50% of the work. For the transcription system used, see DCS1 and DCS2.

4   For all details and in-depth analysis, cf. DCS1 and DCS2.

2.1   *Syntactic Perspective*

From the syntactic point of view, all Pashto verbs can be split into three classes:
a)   intransitive verbs
b)   transitive verbs
c)   "anti-impersonal" verbs

This syntactic classification is based on the notion of transitivity, which it is easy to determine in Pashto. Indeed, it is sufficient of cross-check:

1)   the number of constructions in which the verb enters depending on the opposition present/past

The most striking fact in Pashto, when examining relations of actancy (French "actance", cf. Lazard 1995; idem 1998; on the "construction actancielle", see also Hachard 2018; Septfonds 2018), is that certain verbs enter into different constructions (split ergativity (among others, cf. Plank 1979; Dixon 1994; Lazard 1994; Coon/Massam/Travis 2017)) depending on whether they are conjugated in the present or in the past tense—transitive and anti-impersonal verbs—while others only enter into a single construction—intransitive verbs. The alternance of these constructions makes it possible to identify the different classes of verbs.

2)   the valency (cf. Tesnière 1959; Przepiórkowski 2018) of the verb

We emphasize that it is important to clearly distinguish between "valency" and "actancy", a verb can be monovalent but biactancial [one participant (semantic role)/two arguments, cf. anti-impersonal verbs in Pashto] or with zero valence but uniactancial (no participant/one argument, cf. impersonal in French "il pleut"). If an "actant" can be treated as an agent or a patient, it can be empty (simple morphosyntactic trace), without semantic role, and not to be treated as a participant.

a)   Intransitive verbs

In the present tense as in the past tense (in fact, whatever the tense) an intransitive verb enters into an actantial relation of the type:[5]

$$(Z_D) \quad V_Z$$

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5   All conventions (see list of abbreviations) used in this article, as +, −, 1, 2, etc., represent a metalanguage that escapes natural languages: indeed, we are not simply speaking of phenomena internal to Pashto, but we are rather proposing new general theoretical considerations. "+1", for instance, is a neutral "universal" formulation that can be translated in every natural language according to its norms; on the contrary, a formulation such as "imperfective present" cannot be understood clearly from one language to another, being limited only to some of them.

In other words, the verb agrees with the subject, which
1)   on the one hand, is in the direct case,
2)   on the other hand, is omissible (which the parentheses symbolize).
Examples of present/past tense (*xatəl: xež-* 'to ascend' RSV irregular):[6]

+1   *saṛay   γrə ta   xeži*
      man/D mountain to +1/to ascend/3SG
      Z_D V_z
      "The man 'ascends to' (climbs) the mountain"

−1   *saṛay   γrə ta   xātə*
−2   *saṛay   γrə ta   wə́-xātə*
      man/D mountain to −1/2/to ascend/3SG
      Z_D V_z
      "The man 'was ascending/ascended to' (was climbing/climbed) the
      mountain"

b)   Transitive verbs
The accusative construction
In the present tense (more exactly, in all the "tenses" formed on the theme of
the present) a transitive verb enters an actantial relation of the "accusative"
type:

(X_D) $Y_{OBL/D}$ V_X

In other words, the verb agrees with the subject, which 1) is in the direct case;
2) is omissible (which the parentheses symbolize).

The object (Y), for its part, is
1)   necessarily expressed,
2)   in the oblique case (OBL) for the first and second person, in the direct
      case (D) from the third person (3rd person pronoun, demonstratives,

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6   All examples cited in this article derive from our corpus, consisting of *nos propres enquêtes*
    and the manual of Pashto (Septfonds/Kabir 2013).
        All the verbs studied and here mentioned have been checked with Pashto-speakers,
    after having been extracted from the following main dictionaries (in order of consultation):
    Aslanov (and Pashtoon), KA, Akbar, PP, Daryāb, Raverty, Bellew. We made use of all dialecto-
    logical uses available for Pashto: Lorimer, LSI, EVP, Penzl, Hall, NEVP. Also the *Ganǰ-e Paẋto*
    (Hughes 1872; Plowden 1875), the *Mellī hendāra* (Nūrī 1939/1940) and Malyon 1912 have been
    useful.

proper nouns, common nouns), according to the Differential Object Marking (see, among others, Lazard 2001; Mardale/Montrul 2020 and bibliography).

The ergative construction

In the past tense (more exactly, in all the "tenses" formed on the theme of the past) a transitive verb enters an actantial relation of the "ergative" type:

$$X_{\text{OBL}} \quad (Y_{\text{D}}) \quad V_{\text{Y}}$$

In other words:

1) The subject of a transitive verb in the past tense is put in the oblique case and is obligatorily expressed.

2) The transitive verb in the past tense does not "agree" with the subject but with the object—when the latter is explicit.

3) The object of a transitive verb in the past tense is put in the direct case and, unlike the subject, can be omitted under certain conditions (which the parentheses symbolize).

It is the conjunction of these three rules that constitutes what is called the "ergative" construction, in the Pashto version.

Examples of present/past tense (*taṛəl: taṛ-* 'to tie' RSV regular):

+1	*saṛay*	*pə wəne pore*	*as*	*taṛi*
	man/D	to the tree	horse/D	+1/to tie/3SG
	X_{D}		Y_{D}	V_{X}

"The man ties the horse to the tree"

−1	*saṛi*	*pə wəne pore*	*as*	*tāṛə́*
−2	*saṛi*	*pə wəne pore*	*as*	*wə́-tāṛə*
	man/OBL	to the tree	horse/D	−1/2/to tie/3MSG
	X_{OBL}		Y_{D}	V_{Y}

"The man was tying/tied the horse to the tree"

c)   Anti-impersonal verbs

In some languages that have a non-homogeneous actancial configuration (whether Iranian-Aryan, Indo-Aryan, Caucasian, etc.) we find that there is a category of verbs, which, in the past tense, have an agent obligatorily expressed and an inexplicable object. Class of verbs that Lazard chose to call "anti-impersonal":

> J'ai proposé d'appeler de ce nom [anti-impersonnels] les verbes, qui, dans certaines langues ergatives, sont pourvus d'un agent quelconque et d'un objet à la 3e personne inexplicitable. Ces verbes sont symétriques des précédents [impersonnels]: dans les impersonnels la place de l'agent est marquée, mais vide, dans les anti-impersonnels c'est celle de l'objet. (Lazard 1986: 62[7])

This is the case in Pashto: in the past tense of certain verbs, the agent—obligatory—is in the oblique case and the object—impossible to explicit—is represented by an indicator of third person plural.[8]

$$X_{OBL} \quad V_{3MPL}$$

If we agree to gloss "empty actant" by morpho-syntactically expressed actant, in the absence of any explicit reference to a participant (whatever the semantic role of the latter), there is no obstacle to hearing "Z" as an "X", which is not entirely trivial, since it comes down to considering this statement as biactancial *but* monovalent.

Examples of present/past tense (*žaṛǝl: žāṛ-* "to cry" RSV irregular):

+1   *saṛay   žāṛi*
      man/D +1/to cry/3SG
      X_D V_X
      "The man cries"

−1   *saṛi   žaṛǝl.∅*   ⟪"The man was crying"⟫
−2   *saṛi   wǝ́-žaṛǝl.∅*   ⟪"The man cried"⟫
      man/OBL −1/2/to cry/3MPL
      X_{OBL} V_{3MPL}
      "The man was crying/cried"

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7   Cf. also Septfonds 1997: 287: "Si l'on reprend l'énumération des champs sémantiques couverts par les verbes AI dans les langues iraniennes (Lazard 1995: 288): (I) des cris d'animaux, (II) des manifestations physiologiques semi-volontaires, (III) des mouvements, (IV) des visées, (V) prendre un bain (en pashto et en hindi) auquel j'ajoute (VI) paître, on ne peut qu'être frappé par la pauvreté de cette classe en dzadrāni. Outre l'hypothétique 'paître' (hypothétique pour le dialecte), on ne relève que deux verbes: 'pleurer' et 'rire'. Le moins surprenant n'étant pas que le champ V, qui repose pour moitié sur le pashto, n'est pas représenté".

8   In the present tense this class of verbs has the same actantial relation of the intransitive verbs: $(Z_D) \quad V_Z$.

The singularity of this class at the morphosyntactic level, i.e., what constitutes its originality compared to the major classes of verbs (transitive *vs.* intransitive), is to enter into a specific construction that—one giving its name to the other—we will call "anti-impersonal". However, after this terminological choice, it is necessary to distinguish between anti-impersonal verbs (verb class[9]) and anti-impersonal construction, because:

1)   The extension of the anti-impersonal construction in Pashto goes beyond that of the verbs of the class of the same name.

2)   This anti-impersonal construction is only a variant of the actance fracture (commanded by the TAM) which opposes ergative construction to accusative construction.

3)   This construction is found as soon as the object is "discarded".

| Valence | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | |
| constructions | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |

Transitivity scale

| – | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | + |
| Actant | integrated | tied | free | integrated | tied | free | + |

SV			*xatəl* 'to ascend'			*taṛəl* 'to tie'	
				xandəl 'to laugh'		*xandawəl* 'to make laugh'	
				dangəl 'to jump'		*xeǰawəl* 'to raise'	
			rasedəl 'to arrive' *ɣaǰedəl* 'to converse'			*rasawəl* 'to deliver' *ɣaǰawəl* 'to pronounce'	

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9   Class that is far from being taken into account by all authors: Aslanov 1966 (followed by Pashtoon 2009), for instance, codes these verbs as "transitive".

(*cont.*)

Valence	0	1	1	1	2	2
constructions	1	1	1	2	2	2

Transitivity scale

–	1	2	3	4	5	6	+
Actant	integrated	tied	free	integrated	tied	free	+
CV	*ɣaǧ·kedəl* 'to converse'		*ɣaǧ·kawəl* 'to make noise'				
	špa·kedəl 'to become night'			*ṭop·kawəl* 'to jump'			
			kuz·edəl 'to be lowered'			*kuz·awəl* 'to lower'	
LVC		*ɣaǧ kedəl* 'to converse' *špa kedəl* 'to become night'			*ɣaǧ kawəl* 'to pronounce' *ṭop kawəl* 'to jump'		

Syntactic classification of the Pashto verb: summary

2.2 *Morphological Perspective*

Morphologically, Pashto verbs fall into three groups:

1) Simple verbs (SV) which, apart from a very specific category—that of verbs based on onomatopoeia—is a closed class, of which the inventory can be taken.

   They are essentially divided into two clearly distinct types, which does not exclude frontier zones [henceforth F = frontier]:

   a. The stem cannot be analysed: we are dealing with a Radical Simple Verb (henceforth RSV[10]).

   Stem = (verbal) Radical

   Examples:

   – present tense (accusative construction): *leǧəl: leǧ-* 'to send' RSV régulier: *leǧ·í* 'he sends',

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10 We speak of "radical simple verbs" (we defined this class as "verbes simples nus" in DCS1 and DCS2) in opposition with "suffixed simple verbs" (in French "verbes simples suffixés").

– past tense (ergative construction—accord with the object): *de leǧ·ə́* 'she was sending it' Vy / y = 'it', *de wə́-leǧ·əl* 'she sent them' Vy / y = 'them', etc.

b.   The stem can be analysed: we are dealing with a Suffixed Simple Verb (henceforth SSV). SSV have the particularity of being in pairs, "double-sided": intransitive *vs.* transitive.

Stem = (verbal) Radical + Suffix

Examples:

– Intransitive: *daredəl: dareǧ-* 'to stop' SSV IRR. Radical /dar/ + suffix ·*ed·/·eǧ·*: *dar·eǧ·í* 'he stops', *dar·ed·ə́* 'he was stopping', *wə́-dar·ed·ə* 'he stopped', etc.

– Transitive: *darawəl: daraw-* 'to stop' SSV REG. Radical /dar/ + suffix ·*aw·*: *dā dar·aw·í* 'he stops it', *de dar·āw·ə́* 'she was stopping it' Vy / y = 'it', *de wə́-dar·āw·ə* 'she stopped it', etc.

c.   Two verbs, however, do not fit into these "drawers": the verbalizing verbs (VV):

The two verbs 'to do' and 'to become', like any simple verb, prefix /wə́-/ (defining criterion of VS) in the perfective but, moreover, present an alternation of the radical according to the perfective/imperfective axis. Here is their conjugation:

to become	Imperfective (1)	Perfective (2)
Present (+)	**keǧ**	wə́-š
Past (−)	**ked**	wə́-šw

to do	Imperfective (1)	Perfective (2)
Present (+)	**kaw**	wə́-k(ṛ)
Past (−)	**kaw**	wə́-kṛ

In addition to their use as simple verbs, they are used to form—as verbalizers—the (open) set of denominative compound verbs (DCV): ex. from the adjective 'old', *zoṛ*, we will form a transitive 'to grow old', *zaṛ·awəl* (with /(k)awəl/[11]), and an intransitive 'to grow old', *zaṛ·edəl* (with /(k)edəl/).

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11   The *k-* can be dropped when the nominal base ends by consonant.

As RSV: /kedəl/ 'to become' and /kawəl/ 'to do'.

As VV: /·(k)edəl/ 'to become' and /·(k)awəl/ 'to do'. Hence the label verbalizing verbs.

This distinction of use is most important at the dialectal level.

2) Compound verbs (CV): an open and productive set—unlike the SV.

a. Denominative CV (DCV)

Verbs composed of a nominal base (B) and a "verbalizer" presenting themselves under two faces: one intransitive, the other transitive.

Examples (B = /xabar/ 'informed, information'):

– Intransitive: *xabr·edəl: xabr·eǧ-* 'to be informed' CV IRR

– Transitive: *xabr·awəl: xabr·aw-* 'to inform' CV REG

[To these two groups, which constitute the set of Pashto verbs, it is advisable to add—but not to confuse—the light verb constructions (LVC)]

b. CV with preverb.

Examples:

– B = preverb: *pore·watəl: pore·wəj-* 'to cross, traverse (rivers, etc.)' CV IRR [/pore/: postposition expressing the bringing into contact of two elements.]

– B = directional (/rā/ for the 1st person, /dar/ for the 2nd, /war/ for the 3rd): *rā·wṛəl: rā·wṛ-* 'to bring to me/us' CV REG, *dar·wṛəl: dar·wṛ-* 'to bring to you', *war·wṛəl: war·wṛ-* 'to bring to him/her/ them'.

3) Mixed verbs (MV), six verbs that can be defined as mixed: SV (regular or irregular) in the imperfective forms (1), CV in the perfective forms (2).

a. MV with nominal base (B). Only three verbs belong to this category: *wṛəl* 'to carry' MV REG, *bo/iwəl* 'to drive, take away' MV IRR, *tləl* 'to go' MV IRR.

b. MV with preverb (P). In this category there are also only three verbs: the first: *iẍodəl* 'to put' MV IRR opposes forms 2 to forms 1 by the systematic use of the preverb /ke/ only in the forms 2; the other two: *m/winjəl* 'to wash' MV REG and *mi/undəl* 'to find' MV IRR are in the process of being regularized.

Classes of verbs: summary table

SV	RSV	Stem = Radical	+ ≠ −	irregular	90 % transitive
			zone frontier 1		
			+ ≠ − & + = −		
			+ = −	regular	
	VV		1 ≠ 2		*kawəl/kṛəl, kedəl/šwəl*
	RSV → SSV		**zone frontier 2**		
	RSV → CV		**zone frontier 3**		
	SSV	Stem = Radical + Suffix	+ ≠ −		intransitive
			+ = −		transitive
MV	**PMV**	RSV → PCV	P = relateur		*iˇxodəl, minjəl, mundəl*
	DMV	RSV → DCV	1 ≠ 2		*bo/iwál, wṛəl, tləl*
CV	**PCV**	Stem = B + V B = preverb (P)	P = directional or relateur		
	DCV	Stem = B + Verbalizer	B + (k)edəl		intransitive
			B + (k)awəl		transitive

Morphological classification of the Pashto verb: summary

4)   To these groups, we can add a fourth class: the LVC
A light verbal construction is a noun + verb (SV, CV, MV) set that only has meaning through the link established between these two entities. Either the noun is a subject function—then we have an intransitive LVC—or the noun is an object function (complement)—then we have a transitive LVC.

In the description of Iranian languages, there is a tendency to speak of CV or LVC interchangeably—as if these terms were interchangeable. The actancial structures of Pashto help to find one's way and allow to oppose without any ambiguity verbal phrases and compound verbs.

Same problem as in Persian:

Il est extrêmement difficile d'estimer, même approximativement, le nombre de ces verbes. Comme nous allons le voir, la définition d'un verbe composé [= "Light verb construction"][12] pose des problèmes tels qu'il

12   See also Samvelian (2001: 351): "L'étiquette «verbe composé» regroupe en persan un ensemble d'éléments hétéroclites ayant des propriétés syntaxiques et sémantiques fort

est impossible pour les lexicographes de fournir une liste exhaustive de ces constructions. Celles-ci varient considérablement d'un dictionnaire à l'autre. (Samvelian 2001: 351, fn. 2)

Le nombre des verbes simples en persan est relativement limité. **Beaucoup de notions exprimées en français par un verbe simple sont rendues en persan par une périphrase verbale formée d'un verbe simple accompagné d'une détermination nominale** (substantif complément, adjectif attribut, adverbe). Les locutions verbales ainsi constituées sont extrêmement nombreuses et très usitées [«étudier» = lire leçon, «s'éveiller» = devenir éveillé, «sortir» = aller dehors]. (Lazard 2006: 259)

Three characteristics distinguish a CV from LVC:

a) of stress

/tayára/ 'prepared', base of the compound verb, has the same accentual and combinatory characteristics as /wə́/ in /wə́-kṛəla/:
/tayára/ *and* /wə́/ are stressed.
The sequence /tayára-kṛəla/ just like the sequence /wə́-kṛəla/ forms only one accent unit.

b) combinatory

If we replace the subject (/sawdāgər/ MS, 'merchant') by the third person personal index /=ye/, we can form the following statements:
LVC /tayārí kawə́l/ 'to make preparations': *tayārí=ye wə́-kṛəla, sawdāgəráy la* 'he made preparations for the trade'.
CV /tayāri·kawə́l/ 'to prepare': *qāfilá=ye tayára-kṛəla* 'he prepared the caravan'.

c) semantics

One can take word by word, for the object of the LVC of Pashto, what Pollet Samvelian (2001: 355) says about the "bare" complements of Persian: "Du point de vue sémantique, n'étant pas référentiels, ils entrent en «coalescence» avec le verbe pour former un prédicat ou une unité de sens".

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variées. Elle désigne traditionnellement une séquence contenant un verbe précédé d'un nom, d'un adjectif ou d'une préposition (ou une combinaison de ces éléments) et se comportant comme une seule unité de sens. **Cette définition sémantique assez vague et intuitive est généralement en corrélation avec d'autres propriétés:**
a. La séquence met en jeu des phénomènes de collocation ou de figement.
b. Le sens de l'ensemble n'est pas compositionnel ou pas totalement compositionnel".
This has nothing to do with CV as defined for Pashto but corresponds to LVC.

3   Radical Simple Verbs

The conjugation of Pashto verb is based on a pattern common to most Iranian languages—or at least, widely shared. To restrict oneself only to the finite forms of the verb, we find a "square" crossing time and aspect:

	Imperfective (1)	Perfective (2)
Present (+)		
Past (−)		

"Imperfective" and "perfective": for Pashto. Terms taken from Penzl 1955, which codes them 1 and 2 respectively. We have adopted this usage to facilitate the comparison of data—simple labels

For each of these boxes, we will speak of a **theme.** Strictly speaking: **theme of present** *vs.* **theme of past**—constitutive opposition of the classification of verbs in Pashto as in many Iranian languages. In a broader sense, for simple convenience we speak, if necessary, of **imperfective theme** *vs.* **perfective theme**, and even of theme of past 1 or theme of past 2 (called by Boyle David (2014: 212–214, ch. 8.2.6) base (*vs.* stem)).

Below we will find a morpheme (or an absence of a morpheme), which can be prefixed to the verb.

Simple verb		
	Imperfective (1)	Perfective (2)
Present (+)	∅·V	wә́-V
Past (−)	∅·V	wә́-V

This should be read:
a)   In the present 1, the verb is not preceded by any morpheme: [∅·V]
b)   In the present 2, the verb is preceded by the morpheme /wә́-/, which carries the accent, from which it can be separated (by different morphemes: negation, various clitics, etc.): [wә́-V]
c)   In the past 1, the verb is not preceded by any morpheme: [∅·V]

d)   In the past 2, it is preceded by the morpheme /wə́-/, which carries the accent, from which it can be separated (by different morphemes: negation, various clitics, etc.): [wə́-V]

The regularity of the process leads to making it a defining criterion: **a simple verb is any verb that prefixes the morpheme /wə́-/ accented to form its perfective.** It should be noted that this prefix *wə́-* is present only in the finite forms of the verb, and not in the compound forms (on the conjugation of Pashto, see DCS1 87–96).

Among the RSV, we can list 154 verbs, which can be listed according to their belonging to (a) the "norm", (b) a territory of "frontier" or "border", (c) a "complexification" connected with aspect:

(a)   all regular ($V^+ = V^-$) and irregular verbs ($V^+ \neq V^-$)
(b)   the verbs belonging to the three "frontiers"
(c)   the two verbalizers and the mixed verbs.

In this paragraph, we will quickly present the category (a) (class (c) does not deserve here more analyses than what has already been written above), while in the next paragraph we will focus on category (b).

3.1   *Regular Verbs*

The RSV which does not show any alternation along the present-past axis are regular: present radical and past radical are identical. In other words:

$$T+ = T-$$

The radical ends:

1.   In principle by a single consonant. In principle, because in certain dialects (essentially in STD "hard"[13]), an /h/ or a final semi-vowel are no longer pronounced: this generates a particular conjugation, that of the verbs called "contracted", characterized by the fusion of the final vowel of the stem with the ending. This is the resulting scheme: (C)CVC.
      Example: *leǧəl: leǧ-* 'to send'

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13   The Pashto dialects are traditionally divided in three zones: southern dialects, or "soft" (A), approximatively in the area between Qandahar and Quetta; central or "middle" dialects (B), i.e., in the area of the Dzadrāni and Waziri speakers; and northern dialects, or "hard" (C), in the areas adjoining Jalālābād and Peshawar. From here our choice of the six survey points: Qandahar, Quetta, Dzadrani, Waziri, Bar-Kunaṛ, Swāt. On the presentation of Pashto dialects and of the dialectological phonetic and morphologic features, as contractions, see DCS1 33–48 and references.

2.   Sometimes by a voiced group: nasal + occlusive. Consider the diagram:
      (C)CVC$_1$C$_2$, with C$_1$ nasal, C$_2$ occlusive.
      Example: *gaṇḍəl: gaṇḍ-* 'to sew'

3.2   *Irregular Verbs*

RSV that alternate along the present-past axis are irregular: present radical and
past radical are not identical. In other words:

T+ ≠ T−

It is more or less possible to account for the relationship between these by a
rule relating either to the stem vowel or to the final consonant(s).[14]

   Examples: *axistəl: axl-* 'to take', *katəl: gor-* 'to look', *lidəl: win-* 'to see', *watəl:
wuz-* 'to go out', *xwaṛəl: xwr-* 'to eat'.
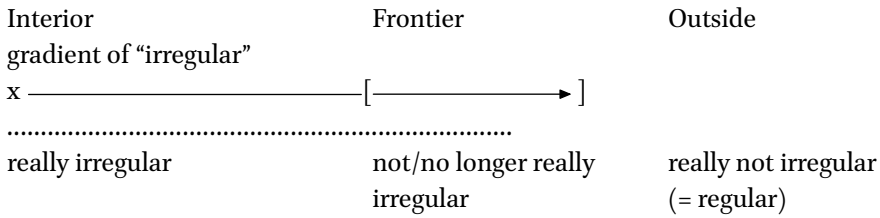
4   The Linguistic Border

In this paragraph we will present category (b): the verbs that can be placed in
the three linguistic "borders". What do we mean by "borders"?

   For example, there are irregular verbs which are opposed to regular verbs.
But we should consider that certain verbs are treated as regular in one part of
the territory, in others as irregular. Then, we have here the "picture" of a bor-
der zone (in this case the "Frontier 1") in progress: an irregular verb becoming
regular.

   The border is what, as Michel Viel notes (Culioli 2002: Sixième jour, note 9,
p. 218), Antoine Culioli never ceased to focus his attention, but in a disconcert-
ing way: "L'usage que fait A. Culioli du mot frontière peut paraître déroutant
parce que nous avons l'habitude de nous représenter la frontière comme une
ligne. En ce sens nous sommes ici en France, là en Suisse, mais il n'y a pas de
lieu où nous ne serions plus tout à fait en France sans être véritablement encore
en Suisse".

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14   This synchronic rule can mainly be detected on the base of diachronic (etymologic) anal-
      ysis: for instance, verbs ending in *-st-* in the past stem can have a present stem in *-l-* (ex.,
      axistəl 'to take', *lwastəl* 'to read', etc.) or in *-n(d)-* (ex., *aɣustəl* 'to dress'), depending on the
      ending of the OIr. root in *°d-* or *°(n)d-*. For the complete list of irregularities, see DCS1
      50–51.

To adapt Culioli's drawing (ibid.) to our example, we would have:

Interior	Frontier	Outside
gradient of "irregular"		

x —————————————————[————————————→]
....

really irregular	not/no longer really irregular	really not irregular (= regular)

The border testifies to the evolution of the language and reflects the diversity of use, diversity opposed to a "standard" version of the language. We are no longer quite in France or quite in Switzerland.

RSV are 90 % transitive. As a result, the opposition between a present theme and a past theme—the opposition defining the "irregularity" of a RSV—is only useful for the 10 % of the intransitive verbs belonging to this set. As far as transitive RSV are concerned, the syntax alone makes it possible to unambiguously distinguish statements in the past tense from those in the present tense.

Consequences:

1. Transitive irregular RSV tend to be "regularized": to lose one of their themes (irregular RSV → regular RSV / frontier 1).
2. Irregular intransitive RSV tend to display their intransitivity by suffixing themselves (RSV → SSV / frontier 2) and thus generating "double-sided" versions of themselves.
3. A number of RSV have a CV variant (RSV → CV / frontier 3).

4.1   *Frontier 1 (F1)*

The 14 verbs belonging to this frontier 1 are the only ones that experience a real "**morphological regularization**". All are irregular **transitive**; they abandon the distinction between two stems (for present *vs.* past) to adopt, in certain parts of the territory, only one stem and thus join the class of the regular verbs.[15]

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15   Classified F1, precisely because they are regular in certain areas, irregular in others. Eventually, some might become regulars if the irregular version were to disappear, which no doubt has already happened. To cite just one example: the verb *nɣərəl/nɣəṛəl* 'to swallow' (formerly IRR *nɣaṛ(d)əl: nɣəri*) then F1 regularization (from the present theme or the past theme) in certain parts of the territory and, finally, disappearance of the IRR variant in favour of two REG verbs, *nɣərəl: nɣəri* and *nɣəṛəl: nɣəṛi*.

That there is only one stem and not two does not in any way affect the understanding of the opposition present *vs.* past, evident because of the fracture of actancy in Pashto which, only for transitive verbs, opposes two syntactic constructions: present tense (accusative construction) *vs.* past tense (ergative construction) (see above). An F1 regularization is impossible for an intransitive verb: there would be confusion between present tense and past tense.

To this will be added, for the "regularized" version, the opposition between short forms and long forms (see DCS1: 45–47).

The regularization can be done starting from the radical of present or from the radical of past. As a general rule, dialects favour regularization from the present stem. The following table shows, for each verb, its use according to the dialects: if it is not used (empty box), if it is kept irregular (X), if it is regularized from the radical present tense (REG+), or if it is regularized from the past tense stem (REG−).

INFINITIVE	+ IRR	MEANING	QAND	QUET	BKR	SWAT	DZA	WAZ
u/odəl	*uw/y-*	weave	X	REG−	REG−		X	X/REG−
axxəl	*aɣǧ-*	knead	X/REG−	X	X/REG+	REG+	REG+	REG−
baləl	*bol-*	call	X	X	X/REG+/−	REG−	X	X
darlodəl	*lar-*	have	X	X/REG+	REG+	REG+	REG+	REG+
kə/indəl	*kan-*	dig	X	X	X/REG−	X/REG+	X/REG−	X
mə/uxəl	*məǧ-*	rub	X/REG+	X/REG+	X/REG−	REG+	X	X/REG+/−
rebdəl	*reb-*	reap	REG+	REG+	X/REG+	REG+	REG+	X/REG+
skəstəl	*skəl-*	shear	X	X/REG−	REG−			X
skə/axtəl	*skaṇ-*	cut out	X	X	REG+	X	REG+	X
swəl	*sej-*	burn	REG+INTR	REG+	REG+	X/REG+	X	X/REG+
wartəl	*wreš-*	spin		X	REG+	REG+	X/REG+	X
xodəl	*xāy-*	shaw	X	X	X	X	REG+	X/REG+
xkəl	*kāǧ-*	draw	X/REG+	X	X	X	X	X
žowəl	*žoy-*	chew	X	REG−	X	X	X/REG+	REG−

Sometimes, in the same dialect, a verb can be irregular and at the same time regularized, even with two different types of regularization, from the radical of present or past (as for the verb *baləl* 'to call' in BKR). Some dialects favour regularizations from the present radical: SWAT. Others show a preference for regularization from the past: WAZ.

Examples of morphologic regularization of the verbs belonging to the Frontier 1:

– The verb *o(w)dəl* 'to weave' is irregular in QAND (*odəl: óyi*), DZA (*wawdəl = wewdəl: wewí*) and WAZ (*wawdəl: webī*), but regularized from the past stem in QUET (*wodəl: wodi*), BKR (*odəl: odi*) and WAZ (*awdəl: awdi*).
– One of the most representative verbs is *darlodəl* 'to have'. It is irregular only in few variants, QAND and QUET (*dərlodəl: larí*), while it is regularized from the present stem in the most part of dialects: QUET, BKR, SWAT, DZA and WAZ (*larəl: lari*).
– The verb *žowəl* 'to chew', irregular in QUAND (*žowəl: žoyi*), BKR (*ǰuwəl = ǰwewəl: ǰwɛi*), SWAT (*ǰuwəl: ǰuyi*) and DZA (*žewəl*), knows two kinds of morphologic regularizations, from the present stem, in DZA (*žeyəl: žeyi*), and in the past stem, in QUET (*žowəl: žowi*), PEX (*ǰwəl: ǰuwi*) and WAZ (*žewəl: žewī*).

4.2 *Frontier 2 (F2)*

Two groups of verbs belong to this frontier (cf. DCS1: 53–54): 1. the anti-impersonal (13 verbs); 2. the intransitives (5 verbs).

4.2.1 F2.1: Anti-impersonal Verbs

The "regularization" consists here in simplifying the syntax ("**syntactic simplification**"), namely the suppression of the fracture of actancy specific to this class of verbs (see above), and therefore elimination of the ergative construction in the past tense. Indeed, the "intransitivizing" suffix *-ed-*, added to the stem of past tense, renders the construction to the past tense intransitive—a process which leads to the suppression of the category of anti-impersonal (for the dialects which experience this "simplification").

The following table gives the use of each verb according to the dialects: if it is not used (empty box), if it is maintained as RSV (X), if it is regularized ("simplified") from the present stem (SSV+), or if it is regularized ("simplified") from the past stem (SSV−).

INFINITIVE	+ IRR	MEANING	QAND	QUET	BKR	SWAT	DZA	WAZ
carəl		graze			X/SSV	X/SSV	X	X
dangəl	*dāng-*	jump	X	X	X	X/SSV−		
ɣapəl	*ɣāp-*	bark	X	X/SSV−	X/SSV−	X/SSV−	X/SSV−	X/SSV−
ɣṛa/umbəl		roar	X	X/SSV		X/SSV−		
jɣastəl	*jɣal-*	run	X	X/SSV+	SSV+	X/SSV+		
lambəl	*lāmb-*	bath	SSV−	SSV−	X/SSV−	X	SSV−	SSV−

(*cont.*)

INFINITIVE	+ IRR	MEANING	QAND	QUET	BKR	SWAT	DZA	WAZ
naṛəl	*nāṛ-*	bray		SSV–		X/SSV–		SSV–
prəčəl		sneeze	X		SSV	X		
puxtəl		ask	SSV	SSV		SSV		X
ṭuxəl		cough	X	X/SSV	X/SSV	X/SSV		SSV
xandəl	*xānd-*	laugh	X	X	X/SSV	X	X	X
zangəl	*zāng-*	swing	X/SSV–	X/SSV–	X/SSV–	X	X	X
žaṛəl	*žāṛ-*	cry	X	X/SSV–	X/SSV–	X	X	X

Unlike F1 verbs, the "simplification" of F2.1 verbs, when the verb is irregular, is always done starting from the past tense stem, with one exception: the verb *jɣastəl* 'to run'.

Examples of syntactic simplification of the verbs belonging to the Frontier 2.1:

– The verb *ɣapəl* 'to bark' (irregular present *ɣāpi*), SBV in QAND, QUET, BKR, SWAT and WAZ, is also attested as SSV from the past stem (*ɣapedəl*) in QUET, BKR, SWAT, DZA and WAZ.
– The verb *lambəl* 'to bath', (irregular present *lāmbi*), SBV in BKR and SWAT, knows a syntactic simplification, from the past stem (*lambedəl*), in nearly all the dialects, with the exception of SWAT.

4.2.2   F2.2: Intransitive Verbs

The verbs belonging to this category are all intransitive. Intransitive verbs all have the same construction in the present tense as in the past tense (see above) and, therefore, unlike transitive verbs, the possibility of distinguishing the two radicals is based solely on the use of the long forms *vs.* short forms. For this reason, 1) none of the intransitive verbs belong to regularized F1; 2) the verbs belonging to the F2.2 add the "intransitivizing" suffix *-ed-* (already seen for the anti-impersonal verbs [F2.1])—to achieve a "**morphological differentiation**". This suffix is added to the past stem, while the present stem remains RSV. In this way, we have re-established an opposition between radical of present *vs.* radical of past, which allows a better and immediate understanding of the tense used in a particular sentence.

The following table provides the usage of each verb according to the dialects: if it is not used (empty box), if it is maintained as regular or irregular RSV (X), if it is differentiated (SSV)—for irregular RSV: from the present stem (SSV+) or from the past stem (SSV–).

INFINITIVE	+ IRR	MEANING	QAND	QUET	BKR	SWAT	DZA	WAZ
awux̌təl	*awṛ-*	turn	X	X	X	X/SSV+	X	X
čāwdəl	*čəw-*	burst	X	X/SSV–	SSV–	X	X/SSV–	X
rɣəx̌təl	*rɣaṛ-*	roll	X/SSV+	X/SSV+	X/SSV+	X/SSV+	SSV+	X
swəl	*swaj-*	burn	X/SSV+	X	X	X	X	X
tix̌(w)əl	*təx̌t-*	run away	SSV+	X/SSV	SSV+	SSV+	X	X

For all these verbs, when the verb is irregular, the "differentiation" is always made from the present stem, with the sole exception of the verb *čāwdəl* 'to burst, to explode'. One could conclude that, when the frontier is morphological (F1 [transitive verbs] and F2.2 [intransitive verbs]), the starting point for the change is preferably represented by the present stem, whereas, when it is syntactic (F2.1 [anti-impersonal verbs]), the starting point of the change is the past stem.

Example of morphologic differentiation of the verbs belonging to Frontier 2.2:

The verb *rɣəx̌təl* 'to roll', whose irregular present is *rɣaṛi*, is attested as SBV in all dialects, with the exception of DZA: QAND (*lɣəx̌təl: lɣəṛi*), QUET (*rɣəx̌təl, nɣəx̌təl: rɣəṛi, nɣəṛi*), BKR (*rɣəxtəl = lɣəxtəl: rɣəṛ = lɣəṛ*), SWAT (*rɣəxtəl: rɣəṛi*) and WAZ (*rɣəštəl: rɣəṛi*). However, it knows also a morphologic differentiation from the present stem in all the dialects, with the exception of WAZ: QAND (*lɣəṛedəl: lɣəṛéži*), QUET (*rɣəṛedəl, nɣəṛedəl*), BKR (*lɣəṛedəl: rɣəṛi*), SWAT (*rɣəṛedəl: rɣəṛi/rɣəṛigi*) and DZA (*rəɣredəl: rɣəṛi*).

4.3   *Frontier 3 (F3)*
The process of "regularization" to which this category is subjected is neither morphological nor syntactic: it is about verbs which know a "**semantic clarification**". The 14 verbs belonging to this group are all **transitive** which add the "transitivizing" suffix *-aw-*, in the present stem as in the past stem,[16] to form either a) SSV or b) CV.

a)   The suffix *-aw-* makes the meaning of the verb more transparent.

b)   We are dealing with what is traditionally called a denominative verb. It is moreover under this name that Shafeev 1964 (cf. DCS1: 31) categorizes

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16   This "clarification" process can only affect transitive verbs, a class of verbs, which because of the actancy fracture linked to the TAM/Tense-Aspect-Mode (accusative construction in the present tense, ergative in the past tense), knows no ambiguity present *vs.* past.

what is here simply classified as CV. In fact CV = denominative V. The choice of CV stems from the absolute existing parallel, in Pashto, between CV and SV: formation of the aspecto-temporal "square", accentual properties, etc. (see above). While everything differentiates CV from LVC (contrary to what these designations would suggest to linguists familiar with Persian, for which CV and LVC are only one and the same class—LVC are distinguished by the opacity of the link between the name and the verb which constitute them[17]).

The following table gives the use of each verb according to the dialects: an empty box indicates that the verb is not attested; an X, that this verb is attested ("clarification" or not) as RSV, type of "clarification" adopted (SSV or CV).

INFINITIVE	+ IRR	MEANING	QAND	QUET	BKR	SWAT	DZA	WAZ
artəl		throw			X/SSV	CV		
čə/uṇəl		sift		X/CV	X	SSV/CV		SSV/CV
ču/opəl		suck			X/CV	X		
či/uxəl		thrust		X/CV	X/SSV	SSV/CV		
ckəl		drink/smoke	SSV	SSV	X	X	SSV	SSV
cirəl		tear		X/CV	CV	X/CV	X	X
guṭəl		swallow				X/CV		
(pa)laṭəl		look for		X/SSV	X	X/SSV		SSV
mečəl		measure			X	X/CV		
pukəl		blow	X	X	X	X		SSV
po/uwəl	*pyāy-*	graze	X	X			X	X/SSV[a]
tukəl		spit	X	X/CV	X	X		CV
t(a)rāšəl		cut/sculpt	X	X		CV		
xrə/i/ayəl		shave	X	X/SSV	X/SSV	X		X

a   Afridi dialect.

17   Cf. Lazard 2006: §263: "Outre les verbes composés, le persan possède un grand nombre de locutions formées d'un verbe et d'un complément nominal, unis dans une même représentation. Ces locutions se différencient des verbes composés par le fait que le verbe y garde plus ou moins complètement son contenu sémantique et concourt avec le nom à former la signification de la locution" [«étudier», etc.].

Examples of semantic clarification of the verbs belonging to the Frontier 3:

– The verb *cə/uṇəl* 'to sift', SBV in QUET and BKR, is also attested as SSV (*čaṇawəl*) or CV (*čuṇʾkawəl*) in QUET, BKR, SWAT and WAZ. In QAND and DZA it is not used at all.

– The verb *xrə/i/ayəl* 'to shave', SBV in all the dialects with the exception of DZA, where it is not attested at all, knows a semantic clarification as SSV *xarawəl* in QUET and BKR.

5   Conclusion

46 RSV out of 154 belong to the three "frontiers": almost one third of the total RSV. This great number of verbs on the borders accounts for widespread phaenomena of variation. These changes would have been invisible without a systematic investigation of at least the main dialectal variants. Indeed, taking into account dialectal variants, and not simply giving ourselves the illusion of a standardized and normative Pashto, seemed to us to be more scientifically scrupulous and serious. Our objective not being purely dialectological, we considered that the six points of inquiry above-mentioned (QAND, QUET, BKR, SWAT, DZA, WAZ) were sufficiently representative.[18] The results proved we were right.

The three frontiers show different forms of interference:

1) the first frontier is internal to the RSV and implies a **morphologic regularization**. All verbs belonging to this group are transitive;

2) frontier 2 can be split into two groups, according to the syntactic aspect of the verb, and in both cases implies interference between the RSV and the SSV:

   a) the anti-impersonal verbs of the first group of F2 undergo a **syntactic simplification**;

   b) the second group of F2 is represented by intransitive verbs, showing a **morphologic differentiation**;

3) all verbs belonging to the third frontier are transitive and show a **semantic clarification**: in this last case RSV can become SSV or CV.

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18   The Waneci dialect has not been taken into account, being too eccentric. Cf. Septfonds 1994: 30: "Le **waṇeci**, bien que partageant plus de traits avec les parlers pashto du sud, s'oppose globalement à tous les parlers pashto. Il faudrait plutôt le considérer comme issu directement d'un état de langue plus ancien que comme un dialecte du pashto. Il se serait développé dans les régions de l'actuel Wazirestân et du Paktyâ pour finir par se limiter
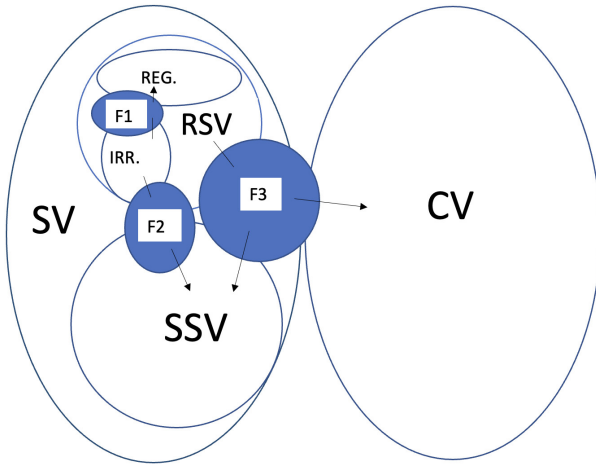
FIGURE 1
The dynamics of the Rad-
ical Simple Verbs in a
synthetic view

As shown in the figure below, this means that while a part of these verbs in the border remains in the same class of RSV (14 verbs: all the F1), the other two classes of verbs show a tendency to migrate towards the SSV and the CV: on the long duration, this could lead to disappearance of most of RSV, with the possible exception of the verbs used in the LVC.

Be that as it may, the RSV at the border represent a field of investigation of the dynamics operating on contemporary Pashto. The border reveals being a crossroads, a place of contact, a source of dynamic processes originating new linguistic entities, new states of balance.

Abbreviations

–	Past tense	BKR	Bar Kunaṛ
+	Present tense	CV	Compound verb
1	Imperfective	DCV	Denominal compound verb
2	Perfective	DMV	Denominal mixed verb
AI	Anti-Impersonal	DZA	Dzadrāni
B	Nominal base	F1	Frontier 1

à la région de Harnai où il n'est plus parlé que par 1000 à 2000 personnes (province du Balouchistan)".

See also Vogel 1988: 349: "Le Wanetsi est pratiquement inintelligible à un Paštun, même pratiquant un dialecte géographiquement voisin, qui n'aurait jamais été en contact avec des locuteurs de Wanetsi".

F2	Frontier 2	QUET	Quetta
F3	Frontier 3	REG	Regular
INTR	Intransitive	RSV	Radical simple verb
IRR	Irregular	SG	Singular
LVC	Light verb construction	SSV	Suffixed simple verb
MV	Mixed verb	STD	"Standard" Pashto
OIr.	Old Iranian	SV	Simple verb
P	Preverb	SWAT	Swāt
PCV	Compound verb with preverb	TR	Transitive
PL	Plural	V	Verb
PMV	Mixed verb with preverb	VV	Verbalizer verb
QAND	Qandahar	WAZ	Waziri

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