



Research Article

Investigating Isoglosses in the Khogyani Dialect

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify, investigate, and describe the phonological isoglosses within a sub-dialect of the Pashto language-the Khogyani dialect. Isoglosses are geographical boundaries that illustrate differences between various linguistic features of a language, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammatical structures, and hold fundamental importance in dialectology for organizing dialect atlases. The research problem focuses on clarifying the phonological differences in the Khogyani dialect, their systematic nature, and their geographical distribution. The objectives of this research are to introduce the concept of isoglosses and to determine the differences in phonological isoglosses across three regional divisions (Areas A, B, and C) of this dialect. This study employed a qualitative method and field research, conducting interviews with residents of different areas of Khogyani district, observing their daily conversations, and collecting examples of linguistic variations. The collected data were analyzed according to phonological principles, and the differences between the three areas were recorded in tables. The research findings indicate that the Khogyani dialect possesses three distinct phonological isoglosses that respectively delineate the boundaries between Areas A, B, and C. The following phonological changes were recorded in this dialect: epenthesis, vowel shift, metathesis, sound shift, cluster simplification, and vowel lengthening/shortening. These changes are particularly evident in words such as *xārō* (cities) *jənāwər* (animal), *lāra* (road), *xwāla* (mouth), *wraj* (day), *zmənj* (middle), *pša* (foot), and *ayzāy* (angry). The conclusion is that the Khogyani dialect serves as a transitional dialect between the Eastern (Nangarhari) and Central Pashto dialects, with its internal phonological variations arising from the geographical, historical, and social conditions of the region. This research is considered a step toward compiling a comprehensive dialect atlas of the Pashto language.

KEYWORDS: *Dialect, Heterogloss, Isoglosses, Khogyani, Phonology.*

Introduction

Language is a social phenomenon that is acquired through interaction with the environment and shaped by the social, cultural, and geographical conditions of its speakers. As a result, different regions develop distinct linguistic characteristics, leading to variation in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures. These variations give rise to dialects, which can be defined as specific ways of speaking a language used by particular groups of people (Sapand, 2022). The greater the geographical and social diversity, the more variation emerges within a language, resulting in multiple dialects.

In dialectology, one of the most important concepts used to study such variation is the *isogloss*. An isogloss refers to a geographical boundary that marks differences in specific linguistic features, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammatical usage across regions (Shakir, 1350). Isoglosses play a central role in the construction of dialectal atlases, where linguists map the distribution of linguistic features and identify boundaries between dialects. Some isoglosses are more significant than others; for example, those that separate major linguistic regions are considered more important than those found in smaller or irregular areas. In some cases, multiple isoglosses overlap to form bundles, which define clear dialect boundaries, while scattered isoglosses create transitional or graded areas.

Within the Pashto language, the Eastern dialect includes several sub-dialects, one of which is the Khogyani dialect. This dialect exhibits internal variation, with noticeable differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntactic structures

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across different مناطق. These variations have led to the formation of distinct linguistic boundaries within the dialect. However, despite the importance of such variation, the phonological isoglosses of the Khogyani dialect have not been systematically studied.

The research problem

The research problem of this study arises from this gap in the literature. While isoglosses are essential for understanding dialectal variation and for developing comprehensive dialect atlases, there is a lack of detailed investigation into the phonological isoglosses of the Khogyani dialect. Specifically, it remains unclear what phonological differences exist within this dialect and how these differences are geographically distributed. Without such analysis, the linguistic structure and internal diversity of the Khogyani dialect cannot be fully understood.

The significance of this research

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to both theoretical and applied linguistics. This study provides a detailed analysis of phonological variation within the Khogyani dialect, offering new insights into how linguistic differences emerge and are shaped by geographical, historical, and cultural factors. It also contributes to the broader field of Pashto dialectology by helping to document and clarify dialect boundaries, which is essential for the development of a comprehensive dialectal atlas of the Pashto language. Furthermore, understanding these isoglosses enhances our knowledge of language change, language contact, and regional linguistic identity. The findings of this research will therefore not only fill an important gap in the existing literature but also support future linguistic research and documentation efforts.

Accordingly, this study aims to introduce the concept of isoglosses and to identify and analyze the phonological isoglosses within the Khogyani dialect.

Research Methodology

To explore the Khogyani dialect and map out its unique isoglosses, I used a qualitative approach-essentially, I dove into real conversations and everyday speech to see how language shifts across different parts of the region. The process unfolded naturally, starting with field research where I spent time listening to local people, chatting with them, and noting down words and expressions that seemed to vary from one area to the next. I paid close attention to pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence patterns, and then analyzed everything by grouping similar features together to spot meaningful differences. After gathering data through random interviews and careful observation -from small community circles to wider social groups- I looked at how geography, culture, and social life might be shaping those linguistic changes. In the end, I pieced together a clear picture of the dialect's phonological isoglosses and offered down-to-earth suggestions on how to preserve the region's language and cultural richness while still respecting natural language evolution.

Literature Review

Language is a system; the collective differences observed within this system constitute dialect. Dialectal differences can be social, arising from class or rank, or local, arising from geographical variations. Group differences observed in speech and the phonetic system are called dialect. A dialect differs from the original language and system in certain words and pronunciations. This difference manifests during communication between tribes, regions, cities, villages, groups, the educated and uneducated, the literate and illiterate, while maintaining the general structure of the language ([Bajawri, 1390](#)).

Various scholars have classified Pashto dialects in different ways. Some have divided them into two, some into three, and some into four categories. Scholar Ziyār, in an earlier study, divided Pashto dialects into three main branches, noting related complexities and difficulties, but nonetheless classified them as Kandahari, Central, and Nangarhari groups, also adding the Waziri group specifically ([Shpoon, 1389](#)).

Pashto dialects are divided into two main categories: major and sub-dialects. The major dialects are of three types, described as follows:

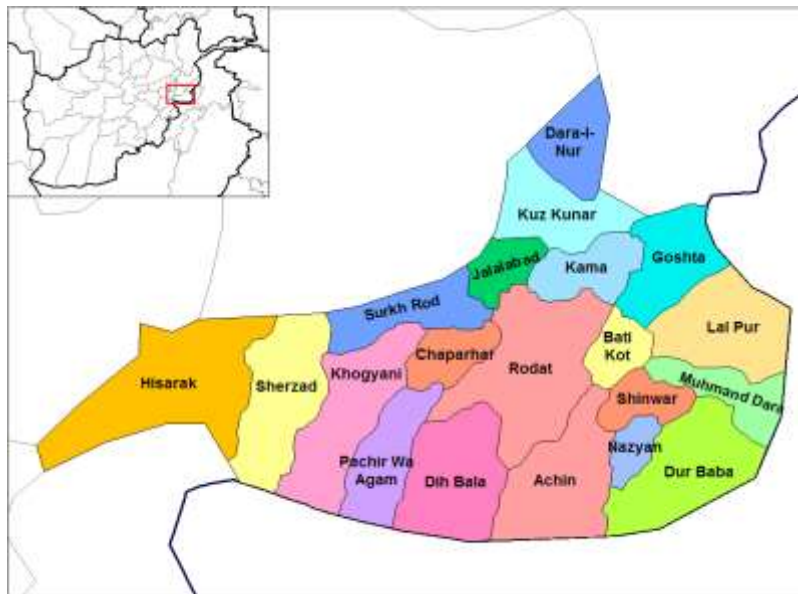
1. Western Dialect: Also known as the Kandahari dialect, spoken in the western and southern regions of historical Afghanistan. In this dialect, the two specific Pashto letters (ښ, ږ) are pronounced closer to (ش, ژ), and another distinct feature is that the (ش) sound in auxiliary verbs changes to (س), e.g., (وشو, شوی دی, شته, نشته), (وسو, سوی دی, سته, نستته).

2. Central Dialect: Also known as the Middle dialect, spoken in central regions of Afghanistan such as Ghazni, Wardak, Logar, Paktia, Paktika, and others. In this dialect, the specific Pashto letters (ږ, ښ) are pronounced in their original sound, with the middle part of the tongue touching the palate during pronunciation.
3. Eastern Dialect: Also known as the Nangarhari dialect, spoken in regions such as Nangarhar, Momand, Bajaur, Ashnagar, and Yusufzai. In this dialect, (ږ, ښ) are pronounced like (ځ, ځ) ([Rikhtin, 1372](#)).

Sub-dialects

Sub-dialects are those that exist within the major dialects. These are dialects not typically studied within the framework of the main Pashto dialects, but a large number of sub-dialects exist within the geography of each major dialect. These sub-dialects are numerous; according to some researchers, their number reaches up to 130. Alongside the main Pashto dialects, there are several sub-dialects within each main dialect. One sub-dialect within the Eastern or Nangarhari dialect is the Khogyani dialect.

Khogyani district is one of the 22 districts of Nangarhar province, a border district located west of Jalalabad city, between the Spin Ghar (White Mountain) and Tor Ghar (Black Mountain). Administratively, it is a first-class district with an area recorded as 677 square kilometers. It is situated 37 kilometers away from Jalalabad city. Khogyani district borders Sorkhrod district and Tor Ghar to the north, Spin Ghar (Pakistan) to the south, Pachir Agam district and a portion of Chaparhar district to the east, and Shirzad district and Tor Ghar to the west ([Mohammad Isa, 1392](#)).



([Rodat District - Wikipedia, n.d.](#))

(Figure 1: Map of Nangarhar Province showing all administrative units)

The Khogyani dialect shows connections and proximity to the Central dialect in many words, but in some words, it establishes connections with the Eastern dialect. It changes (و) to (ی), e.g., *ğwarí* (fat) becomes *ğerí*, and *xwālá* (cap) is called *xela* ([Bajawri, 1390](#)).

The Khogyani dialect is one of the sub-dialects of Pashto that is close to the main Central Pashto dialect. This dialect, among the Pashto sub-dialects, has a relatively large number of speakers in various parts of Nangarhar. Due to various geographical factors, this dialect has slight differences from the Central and Eastern dialects in certain words. Based on these differences, it has secured a distinct position among the sub-dialects. In this dialect, in some words, a vowel is either added or omitted, or one sound is replaced by another. Sometimes, letters in words are shifted forward or backward. Furthermore, in this dialect, the independent 'alif' in the middle of a word changes to (و) in certain specific regional areas, and similarly, the independent (و) in the middle of a word changes to (ی) ([Miakhil, 1393](#)).

Identifying and separating dialects on a large scale is an easy task, but pinpointing linguistic differences in very small dialects and communities is not simple. If we look at the definition and identification of dialect, we encounter two main concepts:

dialect and idiolect. Identifying a dialect on a large scale is easier than identifying an idiolect, but identifying and distinguishing idiolects within a dialect is somewhat challenging. However, in linguistics, to study this area, linguists use synchronic dialectology to highlight these differences, as this branch of linguistics systematically studies differences in linguistic habits between individuals and different groups. In this context, the primary focus is the "idiolect," which linguists refer to as an idiolect, meaning the totality of an individual's speech habits in a specific period ([Tagay, 1389](#)).

Regional Dialects: The Pashto language comprises several regional dialects. Linguists can identify the fundamental features of different regions and, using isoglosses, delineate the boundaries where non-standard dialectal forms cluster according to shared linguistic features. Of course, some overlap is inevitable; although non-standard words are often found in specific regions, non-standard grammatical features tend to remain similar on both sides of the boundaries ([Nordquist, Richard, 2025, April 22](#)).

Regarding dialectology and isoglosses within dialects as a branch of sociolinguistics, Ms. Bushra Ikram describes it as follows: "Dialectology is a branch of sociolinguistics in which we study dialects. Dialect-Geography is a branch of Dialectology in which we study geographical variation in dialects. When experts in Dialect-Geography study the various dialects of a language, they select certain linguistic terms, words, or sounds for study. A sound or word is used in one geographical area, and another in a different area. Experts show the variation of these words or sounds on a map—that is, they demarcate the geographical boundaries of these words or sounds, drawing a line on the map between the areas where a sound or word is used and where it is not. This boundary on the map is called an Isogloss. (Isogloss) is composed of two Greek words: (iso) meaning 'equal' or 'same,' and (gloss) meaning 'tongue' or 'language'" ([Ikram, 2018](#)).

In dialectology, terms like focal areas and relic areas are also used for differentiation using isoglosses. Isoglosses also indicate that certain linguistic features spread from a specific area, called a focal area, to neighboring regions ([Nordquist, Richard, 2025, April 22](#)).

Isogloss

The term isogloss (from Greek *ἴσος* *isos* 'equal' and *γλῶσσα* *glōssa* 'tongue, language') is generally defined as: an imaginary geographical line that separates two linguistic features ([Kabatek, 2023](#)).

The term isogloss is composed of two Greek words: "isos" meaning same/equal and "glossa" meaning language. An isogloss is sometimes also called a heterogloss. An isogloss is a geographical boundary where a specific linguistic feature is commonly found. This linguistic feature can be phonological, such as the pronunciation of a sound, or lexical, such as the use of a word, or any other aspect of language. The distribution and boundaries between dialects are usually shown through bundles of isoglosses ([Nordquist, Richard, 2025, April 22](#)).

An isogloss is a boundary where people in one area share a specific linguistic feature. Dialect areas are often marked by multiple isoglosses that indicate different linguistic features, such as words and sounds. Isoglosses show how linguistic changes spread from one area to another or remain unchanged in some areas ([Nordquist, Richard, 2025, April 22](#)).

In the *Linguistic Dictionary*, isogloss is defined as: "Isogloss: language boundary, linguistic border, dialect line, the line or boundary that separates dialects on a linguistic map" ([Solizay, 2022](#)).

An isogloss is a linguistic term used in linguistics. It is a line or boundary that shows differences in pronunciation, or specific features of a language (such as words, grammar, or sentence structure) across a particular geographical area. This line shows the differences between places where people use their language in different ways.

Types of Isoglosses

1. Phonological Isogloss: This is the line that shows differences in the pronunciation or sounds of a language. For example, in some areas, people pronounce certain words differently. Phonological changes in the Khogyani dialect are clarified in this research, allowing the phonological isoglosses of this dialect to be mapped.
2. Morphological Isogloss: This line is used to illustrate morphological differences (i.e., changes in word structure).
3. Syntactic Isogloss: This relates to differences in grammar or sentence structure. It is the line that distinguishes sentence structures or grammatical constructions in one area from others.

4. Lexical Isogloss: This line is used to identify differences in vocabulary. Different words are used for a specific concept in different places.

Kinds of Linguistic Features: Every language, and within it every major dialect, possesses certain specific features. Based on these features, differences between languages and between dialects within a language can be determined according to the type of linguistic feature. Types of linguistic features include:

- Isophone: A line that shows the boundaries of a phonetic feature.
- Isomorph: A line that determines the boundaries of a morphological feature.
- Isolex: A line that shows the boundaries of a lexical item.
- Isoseme: A line that shows the boundaries of a semantic feature (e.g., when words with identical phonetic structure have different meanings in different areas) ([Nordquist, Richard, 2025, April 22](#)).

Findings and Analysis

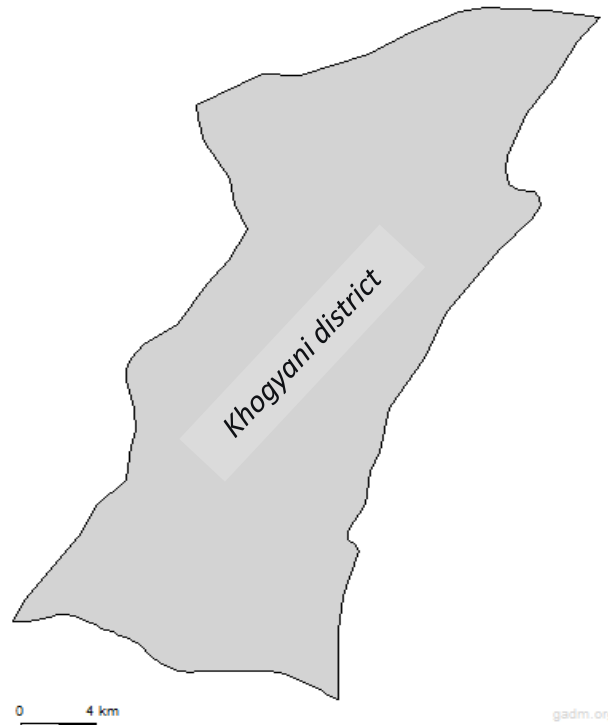
The Khogyani dialect exhibits certain dialectal differences, termed isoglosses in the terminology of dialectology and linguistic cartography. Based on the introduction to isogloss provided above, it can be stated that there are differences within the Khogyani dialect that constitute its isoglosses. These linguistic differences are frequently observed in this dialect. Since Khogyani is a border and mountainous district, and its people live in some mountainous and remote areas, they naturally have dialectal differences among themselves. This research has attempted to investigate and explore these differences, specifically in the phonological domain. Investigating other types of isoglosses in the Khogyani dialect falls beyond the scope of this article and could be explored within the framework of a dedicated thesis or book; therefore, only the phonological isoglosses of the Khogyani dialect are examined and discussed here.

These phonological differences in the Khogyani dialect are most prominent and numerous in three areas. First, we divide all areas of Khogyani district into three sections, naming the dialectal differences common among certain areas with one name and those common in other areas with another.

Area A: These areas are located in the southern, southwestern, western, and central parts of Khogyani district. Some well-known villages include Zawa, Wazir, Khwaza Khel, Ahmad Khel, Sanganai, Baghicha, Darga, Tuda China Jura, Chinarghi, and others.

Area B: These areas are located in the eastern and southeastern parts of Khogyani district. Some well-known villages include Lokhay, Saqawa, Kuz Bahaar, Bar Bahaar, Chenomiyagan, Kalikhal, Surdag, Adwar, Şandəli, Landai, and others.

Area C: These areas are located in the central and northwestern parts of Khogyani district. Some well-known villages include Kaža, Khwaran, Mamla, Arghach, Zor Bazar, Hakim Abad, Khairmana, Şakor Khel, Maidan Kani, and others.



(GADM, n.d.)

(Figure 2: Simplified map of Khogyani district)

Certain vowels in the Khogyani dialect appear in altered forms compared to Standard Written Pashto. In the Khogyani dialect, (á) changes to (a) ([Khogyanay, 1368](#)), as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Change of (á) to (a)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
بشارو (blackbird)	šāró	شارو	šaró	شارو	Šaró	شارو	Šaró
زناور (animal)	žnāwəɾ	زناور	zənawəɾ	زناور	zənawəɾ	زناور	zənawəɾ
بشېرا (curse)	šerā	خيرا	xera	خی را	Xayra	خيرا	Xera
راڅه (come)	rāja	راڅه/رڅه	raca/ rca	راڅه	Raja	راڅه	Raca
کښېناستل (to sit)	kšenāstal	کښوستل	kenostəl	کښناستل	kenastəl	کښناستل	Kenastəl

In the Khogyani dialect, (á) changes to (ya), as shown in the following table:

Table 2: Change of (á) to (ya)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
لاره (road)	lāra	لياره	lyara	لياره/لاره	lyara/lara	لياره	Lyara
لاري (went, fem.)	laɾe	لوري	loɾe	لاري	laɾe	لياري	lyəɾe
رېښتيا (truth)	rīštyā	رېښتيا	rīštya	رېښيا	rīštyā	رېښتيا	Rīštya

In the Khogyani dialect, (wa) changes to (e), as shown in the following table:

Table 3: Change of (wa) to (e)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
خوله (Sweat)	xwāla	خيله	xela	خوله	xela	خيله	Xela
خوله (mouth)	xwāla	خبله	xe-la	خوله	xe-la	خبله	xe-la
غور (ear)	ɣwaz	غیگ	ɣeg	غوگ	ɣwag	غیگ	ɣeg
غوري (Oil)	ɣwarí	غیري	ɣerí	غوري	ɣwarí	غیري	ɣerí

In the Khogyani dialect, (a) changes to (e), as shown in the following table:

Table 4: Change of (a) to (e)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
ور (to him)	war	ویر	wer	ور	war	ویر	Wer
ورته (to him/her)	wārta	ویرته	werta	ورته	wārta	ویرته	Werta
ورشه (to him)	warša	ویرشه	werša	ورشه	warša	ویرشه	Werša
در (to you)	dar	دیر	der	در	dar	دیر	Der
ورکه (lost)	warka	ویرکه	werka	ورکه	warka	ویرکه	Werka
ولي (why)	WalI	ویلي	WelI	ولي	WalI	ویلي	WelI
پزه (nose)	paza	پیزه	peza	پوزه/پیزه	poza/peza	سوکمه/پوزه	sogma/ poza
ورخ (day)	wraj	وریخ	wrez	ورخ	wraj	وریخ	wrez

In the Khogyani dialect, (u) changes to (ə), as shown in the following table:

Table 5: Change of (u) to (ə)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
سوری (hole)	surāy	سروی	sərwāy	سوری	surāy	سروی/خوخه	sərwāy/xoča
زموږ (our)	zəmuž	بمېگ	eməq	موگ	muž	منگ	manq
غومبوری (check)	ɣumburay	غمبری	ɣambə-ery	غمبری	ɣamburay	غمبری	ɣambə-ery

In the Khogyani dialect, (u) changes to (e), as shown in the following table:

Table 6: Change of (u) to (e)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
مورک (mouse)	mužāk	میگ	meqāk	موگ	muqak	میگ	meqāk
توتکی (amulet)	tuṭakay	تیت کی	teṭakay	توتکی	tuṭakay	توتکی	tuṭakay

In the Khogyani dialect, (a) changes to (o), as shown in the following table:

Table 7: Change of (a) to (o)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
رنا (light)	raṇā	رونا	roṇā	رنا	raṇā	رنا	raṇā
غت (big)	ɣaṭ	غوت	ɣoṭ	غت	ɣaṭ	غت	ɣaṭ
غنم (wheat)	ɣanam	غونم	ɣonam	غنم	ɣanam	غنم	ɣanam

In the Khogyani dialect, (i) changes to (ə), as shown in the following table:

Table 8: Change of (i) to (ə)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
وده (asleep)	wɪde	وده	wədē	وده	wədē	وده	wədē

In the Khogyani dialect, (o) changes to (ə), as shown in the following table:

Table 9: Change of (o) to (ə)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
موندل (to find)	mondəl	مندل	məndəl	موندل	mondəl	موندل	mondəl
سپوږمى (moon)	spozme	سپوږمى / سپوگمى	spəqməy / spəqmāy	سپوگمى	spogme	سپوگمى	spogme

In the Khogyani dialect, (əy) changes to (oy), as shown in the following table:

Table 10: Change of (əy) to (oy)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
ژول (to chew)	ʒəwəl	جويل	ʒoyoyəl	ژول	ʒəwəl	جويل	ʒoyoyəl

In the Khogyani dialect, (ə) changes to (e), as shown in the following table:

Table 11: Change of (ə) to (e)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
لشکه (ridge)	ləšāka	لېشکه	ləšāka	لېشکه	ləšāka	لېشکه	ləšāka
ولار (stood)	wəlār	ويلور	wilur	ولار	wəlār	ويلار	wəlār
خه شى (what)	cašāy	خې شى / چې شى	češāy	خې شى	češāy	خې شى	češāy

In the Khogyani dialect, (o) changes to (e), as shown in the following table:

Table 12: Change of (o) to (e)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
دروغ (lie)	droɣ	دروېغ	drweɣ	دروغ	droɣ	دروېغ	drweɣ
کوژدن(engagement)	kozda-n	کیزدن	kezdə-n	کوژدن/کیزدن	kozda-n/ kezdə-n	کیزدن	kezdə-n

In the Khogyani dialect, (i) changes to (a), as shown in the following table:

Table 13: Change of (i) to (a)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
کیندل(to dig)	kɪndə-l	کندل	kandl	کنل	kanl	کنل	kanl
شیندل(disperse)	ʃɪndə-l	شندل	ʃandə-l	شیندل	ʃɪndə-l	شیندل	ʃɪndə-l

The Khogyani dialect also exhibits differences in the pronunciation of consonants compared to Standard Written Pashto, which are indicated as follows:

In the Khogyani dialect, the sound (د / z) of Standard Written Pashto changes to (گ / g), as shown in the following table:

Table 14: Change of (د / z) to (گ / g)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
ډلی (Hail)	zale-l	گلی	gale-l	گلی	gale-l	گلی	gale-l
وډی (hungry)	Oz-ā	وگی	ogā	وگی	ogā	وگی	ogā
کوډ (bent)	koz	کوگ	kog	کوگ	kog	کوگ	kog
شپږ (six)	ʃpaz	شپېگ	ʃpeg	شپېگ	ʃpag	شپېگ	ʃpag

In the Khogyani dialect, the sound (خ / j) of Standard Written Pashto changes to (ز / z), as shown in the following table:

Table 15: Change of (خ / j) to (ز / z)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
ورخ (day)	wraj	وریز	wrez	ورز	wraz	وریز	wrez
ځوان (young)	jwān	زون	zwan	زون	zwān	زون	zwān
ځناور (animal)	jənāwə-r	زناوار	zənawar	زناور	zənāwə-r	زناور	zənawə-r
لمونځ (prayer)	lmuj	مونز	munz	لمونز /مونز	lmuz /munz	مونز	munz

In the Khogyani dialect, the sound (خ / j) of Standard Written Pashto changes to (خ / c), as shown in the following table:

Table 16: Change of (خ / j) to (خ / c)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
خم (I go)	jəm	خَم	cəm	خَم	jəm	خَم	cəm
خو (we go)	ju	خَو	cu	خَو	ju	خَو	cu
خي (he goes)	ji	خِ	ci	خِ	ji	خِ	ci
خى (go, pl.)	jəy	خِى	cəy	خِى	jəy	خِى	cəy

In the Khogyani dialect, the sound (ژ / ž) of Standard Written Pashto changes to (ج / ĵ), as shown in the following table:

Table 17: Change of (ژ / ž) to (ج / ĵ)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
ژمی (winter)	žəmay	جمی	ĵəmay	ژمی	žəmay	جمی	ĵəmay
ژوند (life)	žwand	جوند	ĵwand	ژوند	žwand	جوند	ĵwand
ژوبل (wounded)	žóbəl	خوگ	xug	ژوبل	žóbəl	جوبل/خوگ	ĵóbəl/xug
ژاوله (chewing gum)	žāwla	جوله	Jawla	ژواله	žāwla	جاوله	ĵāwla

In the Khogyani dialect, the sound (ښ / š) of Standard Written Pashto changes to (خ / x), as shown in the following table:

Table 18: Change of (ښ / š) to (خ / x)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
ښه (good)	ʃə	خه	xə	خه	xə	خه	xə
غوښتل (to want)	ɣoʃtəl	غوختل	ɣoxtəl	غوختل	ɣoxtəl	غوختل	ɣoxtəl
ښکر (horn)	ʃkār	خکار	xokār	خکر	xkār	خکر	xkār
ګواښ (threat)	gwaʃ	ګوځ	gwix	ګواخ	gwāx	ګواخ	gwāx

In the Khogyani dialect, the sound (ښ / š) of Standard Written Pashto changes to (ش / š), as shown in the following table:

Table 19: Change of (ښ / š) to (ش / š)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
ښورا (soup)	ʃorwā	شیروا	šerwā	شورا	šorwā	شیروا	šerwā
ښتیا (truth)	rɪʃtyā	رشتیا	rɪʃtyā	رښتیا	rɪʃtyā	رشتیا	rɪʃtyā
دښته (desert)	daʃta	دشته	daʃta	دشته	daʃta	دشته	daʃta
ګوښښ (effort)	koʃoʃ	ګوشش	košoʃ	ګوشش	košoʃ	ګوشش	košoʃ

In the Khogyani dialect, the sound (ژ / ž) of Standard Written Pashto changes to (ز / z), as shown in the following table:

Table 20: Change of (ژ / ž) to (ز / z)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
ژر (soon)	žər	زر/چست	zər/čəst	زر	zər	زر	zər
ژیر (yellow)	Žar	زیر	zeṛ	زیر	zeṛ	زیر	zeṛ
ژیری (yellowness)	zeṛāy	زیری	zeṛāy	زیری	zeṛāy	زیری	zeṛāy

In the Khogyani dialect, the sound (خ / c) of Standard Written Pashto changes to (چ / č), as shown in the following table:

Table 21: Change of (خ / c) to (چ / č)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
خېتن (lord)	caštə-n	چختن	čextə-n	چختن	čextə-n	چيختن	čixtə-n
خه شته (wherefore)	ce-šeta	چېشته	čēšeta	خه شته	ce-šeta	چېشته	čēšeta
خرمينکی (lizard)	cə-rmuskay	چرمخکی	čārmuxkay	چرمخکی	čārmuxkay	چرمخکی	čārmuxkay

In the Khogyani dialect, the sound (خ / c) of Standard Written Pashto changes to (ش / š), as shown in the following table:

Table 22: Change of (خ / c) to (ش / š)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
خېل (to drink)	çəl	شکل	škəl	شکل	škəl	شکل	škəl
اوبه خېل (to drink water)	wəbaçskal	اوبه شکل	wəbaškəl	اوبه شکل	wəbaškəl	اوبه شکل	wəbaškəl

Addition: This term refers to a phenomenon where a sound is added to a linguistic environment (syllable, word, or phrase) as a euphonic element, without causing any morphophonological change ([Chamtu, 1398](#)).

These differences exist across all areas of the Khogyani dialect, separated by isomorphs (Isomorph: the line that determines the boundaries of morphological features). In words of the Khogyani dialect that differ from Standard Written Pashto regarding addition, these differences are present across all isogloss lines. For example, in the Khogyani dialect, they say *wrež* (cloud), whereas the original word is *wraj* (day). Here, the letter (ر) has been added in the middle of the word. For further clarification, such words are shown in the table below:

Table 23: Addition (Epenthesis)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
وران (ruined)	wrān	ويرون	wirun	وران	wrān	ويران	wəṛān

ولار (stood)	wlār	ويلور	weloṛ	ولار	wlār	ويلار	welār
سورى (hole)	swray	سورى	sarway	سورى	swray	سورى	swray
پومخ (comb)	zmənj	گمنز	gməanz	گومنز	goməanz	گومنز	goməanz
غړپ (sip)	ʎṛap	غورپ	ʎoṛāp	غړپ	ʎṛap	غړپ	ʎṛap
جلى (girl)	ǰələ-y	جلكى	ǰəlkə-y	جىلكى	ǰəlkə-y	جىلكى	ǰəlkə-y

The table above shows the following phonological and morphological changes in the Khogyani dialect:

- Epenthesis: wr- > wir-, wl- > wel-, swr- > sarw- (internal vowel to simplify consonant clusters).
- Vowel Shift: -ān > -un, -āṛ > -oṛ (raising, lowering, or centralization of vowels).
- Metathesis: zm- > gm-, -nj > -nz (reordering of sounds).
- Sound Shift: /z/ > /g/ (replacement of one sound with another).
- Vowel Lengthening/Shortening: -ap > -āp, -ān > -un (change in vowel quantity).
- Morphological Change: -lə-y > -lkə-y (change in suffixes and structure).

These changes are indicative of the internal phonological diversity of Pashto, the natural tendency to simplify consonant clusters, and the independent evolution of regional dialects. Particularly, the word "zmənj" changing to "goməanz" is an excellent example of profound phonological changes in Pashto dialects.

Omission: If a sound falls from a morpheme, word, or lexeme, or if one sound assimilates with another, this process is called omission ([Kheshkay, 1401](#)).

In the Khogyani dialect, many words have one sound less compared to Standard Written Pashto. This difference is only observed in speech, while in writing, the standard written Pashto norm is considered. This omission of a sound does not cause a change in meaning but only has pronunciation value. For example, in the Khogyani dialect, they say *četa* (where), whereas the original form is *čerta* (where), with the (ر) sound omitted, forming the word *četa* ([Miakhil, 1393](#)). There are many such words in the Khogyani dialect, present across all dialect boundary areas, with examples shown in the table below:

Table 24: Omission (Elision)

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
خپور (spread)	xpor	خور	xor	اوار	āwar	اوار	āwar
سپور (mounted)	spor	سور	sor	سور	sor	سور	sor
څومره (how much)	cómra	څونه	cóna	څونه	cóna	څونه	cóna
کيندل (to dig)	kɪndə-l	کنل	kanəl	کنل	kanəl	کنل	kanəl
کېښودل (to put)	kɛşwdə-l	کېخول	kexwə-l	کېخودل	kexwdə-l	کېخول	kexwə-l
کېښناستل (to sit)	kɛnāstə-l	کېنوستل	kənostə-l	کېناستل	kənāstə-l	کېناستل	kənāstə-l

The table above illustrates phonological and morphological changes in the Khogyani dialect, for example:

- Lenition: spor > sor, xpor > xor
- Cluster Simplification: kɪnd- > kan-, kɛş- > kə-
- Sound Shift: /s/ > /x/ (خ > س) e.g., kɛş- > kex-
- Vowel Shift: ɪ > a, e > o
- Lexical Variation: xpor > āwar

- Morphological Simplification: -ra > -na, omission of the sound d

All these changes reflect the internal diversity of the Khogyani dialect, systematic sound changes across isoglosses, and the natural evolution of the Pashto language.

Metathesis: When a sound in a word changes its position with another sound, this process in Pashto is called metathesis ([Kheshkay, 1401](#)). Metathesis is a sound change that occurs in the arrangement and order of sounds in a syllable, word, or utterance ([Chamtu, 1398](#)).

This phenomenon exists in all isoglossal areas of the Khogyani dialect, where the order of a sound in some words has changed. For example, in the Khogyani dialect, they say *azyāy* (angry), while the standard form is *ayzāy*, where only the (ژ) sound has moved forward. However, there are also words where several sounds have changed order, such as *margalay* (friend), which in the standard language is *malgəray*, where the sounds (ل, گ, ر) have been shifted forward and backward. Other examples of metathesis in the Khogyani dialect are shown in the table below to clarify the isoglossal differences:

Table 25: Metathesis

Standard Written Pashto		Khogyani Dialect (Area A)		Khogyani Dialect (Area B)		Khogyani Dialect (Area C)	
Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form	Vernacular Form	Phonemic Form
لویدل (to fall)	lwedə-l	ولیدل	wledə-l	ولیدل	wledə-l	ولیدل	wledə-l
لویشت (span)	lwə-št	ولیشٹ	wle-št	ولیشٹ	wle-št	ولیشٹ	wle-št
ازغی (thorn)	ayzāy	ازغی	azyāy	ازغی	azyāy	ازغی	azyāy
لوشل (milk)	lwašə-l	ولیشل	wlešə-l	ولیشل	wlešə-l	ولیشل	wlešə-l
پښه (foot)	psa	خپه	xpa	خپه	xpa	خپه	xpa

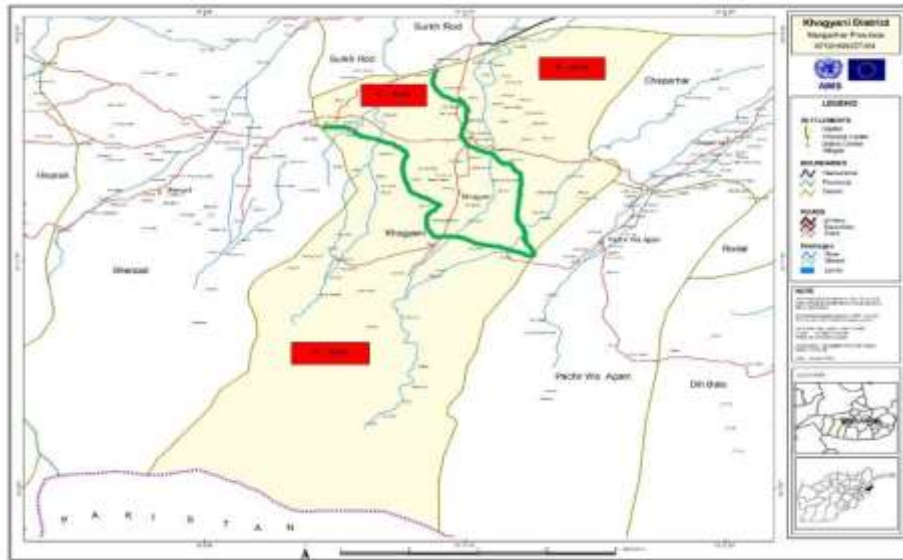
This Pashto table shows three phonological isoglosses of the Khogyani dialect:

- Initial Sound Change: e.g., lw- > wl- and p- > x-.
- Metathesis: e.g., yz > zy.
- Vowel Length Difference: e.g., ā and ē in various forms.
- Harmony and Semantic Differences: All these forms are used for the same meaning but have phonemic differences according to region. These differences clarify the historical distribution of Pashto, the influence of neighboring languages, and the internal phonological developments of the Khogyani dialect.

Isoglosses of the Khogyani Dialect

From the above description of the Khogyani dialect, it can be concluded that besides minor and individual differences, this dialect also has significant internal variations. These variations are the reason for changes within this dialect.

In the map below, the green lines represent the various isoglosses in the Khogyani dialect. Overall, it can be said that the Khogyani dialect has three areas where dialectal differences exist. Considering these differences, it can be concluded that the Khogyani dialect has three isoglosses.



(AIMS – Afghanistan Information Management Service (Author . . . , n.d.)

(Figure 3: Map of Isoglosses in the Khogyani Dialect)

Some isoglosses are considered more important than others. For instance, an isogloss separating two major regions is considered more important than one that runs irregularly through villages and small areas. A linguistic element used in a limited area, surrounded by an isogloss, designates that area as a focal area. In the Khogyani dialect, there are also some dialectal differences that can be named as focal areas, such as the Zawa area, which has specific dialectal features. Some linguistic elements

usage differences may be scattered sporadically, so isoglosses for such elements may intersect and intermingle. Areas where such isoglosses occur are called graded areas. This characteristic is very prominent in the Khogyani dialect because, due to various factors, people from different areas interact, and as a result of these interactions, many dialectal features are shared among residents of different areas.

Research Limitations

Although the geographical diversity of the Khogyani region provides a good context for research, the scope of this study was limited to measuring linguistic differences in specific areas.

Recommendations

1. Isoglosses should not be considered fixed lines but rather the result of the individual construction processes of a region.
2. Phonological isoglosses in the Khogyani dialect were investigated in this article. It is hoped that other types of isoglosses, such as morphological, syntactic, and lexical, will also be investigated.
3. The Khogyani dialect should be compared with other Pashto dialects to clearly identify the causes of linguistic differences and the formation of isoglosses.

Conclusion

This investigation of isoglosses in the Khogyani dialect demonstrates that the Pashto language, due to its historical and geographical expanse, exhibits diverse phonological, morphological, and lexical variations. Khogyani district, a border and mountainous region of Nangarhar province, has developed significant internal dialectal diversity due to its unique geographical location. This research has specifically described and illustrated the phonological isoglosses of this dialect, showing that the Khogyani dialect is divided into three distinct regional parts (Areas A, B, and C), each possessing specific phonological features.

The most important finding of this research is that the Khogyani dialect serves as a transitional dialect between the Central (Middle) and Eastern (Nangarhari) dialects of Pashto. The following phonological changes were systematically recorded in this dialect:

1. Vowel Shift: e.g., change of \bar{a} to a , a to e , u to \bar{e} , and o to e .
2. Metathesis: e.g., changes like $\gamma z > z\gamma$ and $zm > gm$.
3. Cluster Simplification: e.g., changes like $sp-$ > $s-$ and $k\check{s}- > k\bar{e}-$.
4. Sound Shift: e.g., changes like $/z/ > /g/$, $/j/ > /z/$, $/\check{z}/ > /j/$, and $/\check{s}/ > /x/$.
5. Epenthesis: e.g., changes like $wr-$ > $wir-$ and $wl-$ > $wel-$.
6. Elision/Omission: e.g., changes like $xpor > xor$ and $spor > sor$.

All these changes indicate that the Khogyani dialect is not merely a simple sub-dialect but a complex and independent example of phonological evolution in Pashto. The existence of phonological differences across all three areas (A, B, C) of this dialect confirms that sufficient conditions for linguistic diversity exist even within a relatively confined geographical area.

Another significant finding is that some areas within the Khogyani dialect, such as Zawa (part of Area A), function as a focal area, possessing specific phonological features. Furthermore, due to continuous interaction between people from different areas, some isoglosses do not form sharply defined boundaries but rather emerge as graded areas, exemplifying the gradual nature of linguistic change.

This research represents a step toward compiling a comprehensive dialectal atlas of the Pashto language. A complete dialectal atlas has not yet been prepared, and the findings of this research can contribute to a better understanding of the sub-dialects within the Eastern branch of Pashto.

Finally, the study of isoglosses in this research is essential not only for mapping linguistic differences but also for understanding the historical development of the language, the influence of neighboring languages, and the social and geographical factors involved. The Khogyani dialect represents a part of the Pashto language where both language preservation and language change processes are simultaneously active.

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