

# Major Phonetic Processes in Sabzevari Dialect

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**Abstract**—Sabzevar with an area of 19500 square kilometer is located in Northeast Iran, In Khorasan Razavi province. Northward, it is bounded to Quchan and Esfaryen, Eastward to Neyshabour, Southward to Kashmar and Shahrood and Westward to Semnan province. With a phonetic approach and after giving a short definition for “dialect”, this piece of writing attempts to introduce the most prominent phonetic processes of Sabzevari dialect –one of the Western new Iranian dialects- and introduce vocal changes of this dialect compared with Standard Persian. The findings of this research show that in Sabzevari dialect “mutation” is the main phonetic process and “metathesis” is of the lowest frequency.

**Index Terms**—Iranian dialects, Sabzevari dialect, phonetic processes, vocal change

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sabzevar with an area of 19500 square Kilometer is located in Northeast Iran, in Khorasan Razavi province. Northward, It is bounded to Quchan and Esfaryen, Eastward to Neyshabour, Southward to Kashmar and to Shahrood and Westward to Semnan province.

Sabzevar city is located on Mashhad- Shahrood way with 950 m above sea level. It is 226 km from Sabzevar to Mashhad and 664 km to Tehran. It is bound to Joghatay Mountains on the North and to Koohmish on the south. There are fertile plains and prairies within the high lands. The most important seasonal river is Kalshoor originated from Binalood Mountains in North of Neyshaboor and flowing to the West. After Mongols invasion to Iran, Sabzevar was called Sarbedaran for a while to the memorial of its brave defendants called "Sarbedaran". It was also called "Sasoyeabad, Biyeh and Beihagh.

Most people of Sabzevar and the surrounding villages talk in Sabzevari dialect which is a variety of modern western Iranian dialects. But in Northern villages different varieties of Turkish as well as Kurmanji are also prevalent. As other Iranian dialects and accents, Sabzevari dialect is moving backward affected by Standard Persian and only businessmen, craftsmen, and representatives of Sabzevar former generations talk it.

Since "The major part of history and cultural identity of people is hidden in their language and dialect"(Cristal, 2006, P. 7) and as Oliver Vandell Holmes puts it, "Each dialect is a temple containing the soul of its speakers and guards them."(Cristal, same, P. 85) Dialectology, as a branch of applied linguistics holds a high position in modern linguistics. "Studying dialects and their various aspects not only provides raw materials for other language researches, but also can help comprehend other language universals. Therefore the study of major phonetic processes in Sabzevari dialect and indicating their similarities and differences with standard Persian are the main subject of this article.

It should be noted that the language data used in this study are mainly gathered through field study, that is recording illiterate or little-literate local native speakers talks and interviewing in addition to getting benefit of the linguistic perception of one of the writers who is the native speaker of Sabzevari dialect to have an even more precise analysis of the data.

## II. DIALECT

Dialect is sometimes defined as an incorrect and inferior variety of standard language common in remote regions. While in linguistic point of view, dialects are to be considered as language, even though they are not "Formal" languages.

Dialects of a language are, in fact, varieties of that language with differences in phonetics, structure and vocabulary. If the difference among two or more variety is limited only to phonetics, they are called accents. Each language can have different dialects and accents and at the same time each dialect can have a variety of accents.

Dialects are divided in two groups: Social and Local. Social dialects are those current among people with common social, economic or cultural positions. Local dialects are those common in different geographical regions. (Fathi, 2001, P. 1)

### III. LITERATURE

"The history of systematized studies of dialects goes back to more than one century." (Mohebbi Bahmani, 2005, P. 21) a comprehensive list of the researches made on Iranian dialects are mentioned in "A list of Iranian languages and Accents" by Ross (1953) in the first chapter of the first volume of Iranzamin Glossary and "Iranian languages and accents bibliography : by Afshar (1955) in the first chapter of third volume of Iranzamin Glossary.

Among the researches made on Sabzevari dialect so far, we can refer to:

Mr. Behroz Ashnay Ghasemi Thesis for receiving Postgraduate Degree (1987) titled "Morphological Study of Sabzevari Dialect in First Volume of Kelidar" (Books 1&2)

Parvin Sedayee Postgraduate thesis (1987) titled "Morphological Study of Sabzevari Dialect in First Volume of Kelidar " (Books 3&4)

Zahra Safavi Mobarahan (1987) Postgraduate thesis titled: "Sabzevari Dialect in Kelidar" (Books 5&6)

Yasaman Taghibeigi Postgraduate thesis (1987) titled "Morphological Study of Sabzevari Dialect in Kelidar" (Books 7&8) and Alireza Sahebinezhad Postgraduate thesis (1994) titled "Study of Sabzevari Dialect"

Azam Staji has studied Vocal Coordination in Sabzevari Dialect in the article with the same title. Other researches made in this regard are: "Linguistic Study of Sabzevar Dialect "(2002) by Abolfazl Broghani and "Sabzevar Local Glossary" including Sabzevari Dialect Vocabulary and Expressions with samples of local poem (1996) and "Analytical Glossary of Sabzevari Proverbs" (1999) written by Hassan Mohtasham.

### IV. SABZEVARI DIALECT SOUND SYSTEM

#### A. Consonants

As in Persian, this dialect contains 23 Consonants as follows.

Phone Persian Equivalent	Phonetic description	Phonetic Sign
پ	Voiceless , Bilabial, Stop	/p/-
ب	Voiced , Bilabial, Stop	/b/ -
ت، ط	Voiceless , Dental, Stop	/t/-
د	Voiced , Dental, Stop	/d/-
ک	Voiceless , Velar ,Stop	/k/ -
گ	Voiced , Velar ,Stop	/g/ -
ق، غ	Voiced , Uvular ,Stop	/q/-
همزه، ع	Voiceless , Glottal ,Stop	/ʔ/-
چ	Voiceless +Affricate , Alveopalatal ,Stop	/tʃ/-
ج	Voiced +Affricate Alveopalatal ,Stop	/dʒ/ -
ف	Voiceless , Labiodentals ,Fricative	/f/ -
و	Voiced +Labiodentals +Fricative	/v/ -
ث، س، ص	Voiceless , Alveolar ,Fricative	/s/ -
ذ، ز، ض، ظ	Voiced , Alveolar ,Fricative	/z/ -
ش	Voiceless ,Fricative Alveopalatal	/ʃ/ -
ژ	Voiced , Alveopalatal , Fricative	/ʒ/ -
خ	Voiceless ,Uvular, , Fricative	/x/ -
ح، ه	Voiceless , Glottal , Fricative	/h/ -
م	Voiced +Bilabial +Nasal	/m/ -
ن	Voiced +Dental , Nasal	/n/ -
ل	Voiced , Alveolar ,Lateral	/l/ -
ر	Voiced , Alveolar , Trill	/r/ -
ی	+Palatal ,(Semi-Vowel) Approximant Voiced	/y/ -

It should be noted that:

a) Some words in this dialect are pronounced with more force like /qand/ in which phoneme q is pronounced with more force and is an allophone of /q/ and makes no meaning distinction.

b) In some words (like /haykal/, phoneme /h/ is pronounced as in Arabic language which makes no meaningful distinction and therefore is considered an allophone.

Points on Consonant Distribution:

All existing Consonant in this dialect can appear at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the word like their counterparts in Standard Persian.

Phoneme /ʔ/ can be omitted in the middle and at the end of the word, as: /do'a:/ /do'ā /: Pray, /šamʔ/ Candle /ša:m/:

In Sabzevari dialect /h/ in the middle of the word is usually omitted as: /behtar:/ /be:tar/ "Better"

This phoneme is also omitted at the end of the word after phoneme /ā / like

Well /čā/ Road and /rā/

#### B. Vowels

Like standard Persian, this dialect has 6 simple vowel (Short and long) as follows.

SIMPLE VOWELS:		
Phone Persian equivalent	Phonetic Description	Phonetic Sign
ای	Closed, Front, Spread	/ī/ و /i/ -
ا	Semi-closed, Front, spread	/e/ -
ا	Open, Front, spread	/a/ -
ا	Open, back, spread	/ā/ -
ا	Semi-closed, back, Round	/o/ -
او	Closed, Back, Round	/ū/ و /u/ -

DIPHTHONGS: THIS DIALECT HAS 8 DIPHTHONGS AS FOLLOWS:			
Meaning	Example	Phone Persian equivalent	Phonetic Sign
Wine	/may/	ای	/ay/ -
Link	/peyvan/	ای	/ey/ -
Second	/doyyom/	ای	/oy/ -
Slipper	/dempāyi/	ای	/āy/ -
Morbouy (A desert plant with yellow flowers)	/murbuy/	اوی	/uy/ -
Fever	/tow/	او	/ow/ -
Shoe	/kaws/	او	/aw/ -
Father	/piyar/	ای	/iy/ -

As in standard Persian, no word begins with vowel in this dialect.

#### V. MAJOR PHONETIC PROCESSES IN SABZEVARI DIALECT

"Phonetic units affected by Syntagmatics are changed. These changes are called Phonetic processes." (Haghshenas, 1992, P. 147)

##### A. Elision

Sometimes under certain conditions a phone is omitted from speech chain. Generally there are two elision processes in language.

1. Historical Elision: In which a phone is omitted from certain phonetic chains during the time, having passed historical procedures of the phone subject to certain historical-linguistic structures. (same, P. 157)

2. Structural elision: which is pursuant to the language sound system and governs phone combination in speech chain, that is, whenever an syntagmatics between segments occur, that is contrary to the language sound system or seems difficult based on language phonetic nature, a phonetic unit is omitted from speech chain to solve the problem. (Same, P. 158) beside historical and structural elision, there also exist some exceptional elisions for which no justification can be found. (Same, P. 159)

##### a) Middle Elision:

CONSONANT ELISION		
Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Akbar, The craftsman	/ <sup>h</sup> Ostād akbar/	/ <sup>h</sup> este akbar/
Old	/kohne/	/kona/

VOICED ELISION:		
Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
You, Yourself	/xod-e- šomā/	/xad šomā/
Scrambled eggs	/xāgine/	/xāgna/

VOWEL & CONSONANT ELISION:		
Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Veil	/čādor/	/čār/
Mohammad	/mohammad/	/mammad/

##### b). Ending Elision

VOICED ELISION:		
Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Gluttonous	/xorande/	/xorand/

## CONSONANT ELISION:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Miserable	/badbaxt/	/bedbax/
Kissed	/busid/	/busi/
Cooked	/poxt/	/pox/
Link	/peyvand/	/peyvan/
Soul	/jān/	/jo/
Wood	/čub/	/ču/
Street	/xiyābān/	/xiyābo/
said	/goft/	/gof/
Bread	/nān/	/no/
Deserted	/virān/	/veyrū/

## B. Addition

Sometimes in certain conditions a phone (or a segment) is added to the speech chain. This process is called "Addition". Like elision, addition follows language sound systems. That is whenever a syntagmatic occurs between language segments which is regarded as heavy based on the language phonetic nature or is contrary to language sound system, a chain segment is added to speech chain to remove this problem. (Same)

## 1. Beginning Addition:

Sometimes an inflectional "b" is added to the beginning of past tense verbs.

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
I read	/xāndam/	/boxondum/
I went	/raftam/	/beraftum/
I escaped	/gorīxtam/	/bogruxtum/

## 2. Middle Addition:

## VOWELS:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
wide	/pahn/	/pahen/
Fat	/čarb/	/čarob/
Noon	/zohr/	/zoher/
On odd	/qahr/	/qaher/
Weight	/vazn/	/vazen/

## CONSONANT:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Picking	/čidan/	/čīndan/
Abscess	/doma/	/demba/
All	/hame/	/hamma/

## 3. Ending Addition

## CONSONANT:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Jim	/jen/	/jend/
Lawn	/čaman/	/čemand/
What do you like?	/če-mixāhi/	/češ-mexi/
Living room	/nešīman/	/ničīmand/

## C. Vowel Harmony

In vowel harmony a vowel affected by another vowel in adjacent syllable loses some of its phonetic features or takes the features of the adjacent vowel or takes features similar to that. Vowel harmony can be progressive or regressive. (Haghshenas, 1992, P. 155,156)

## SOME EXAMPLES OF PROGRESSIVE VOWEL HARMONY:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Why	/čerā/	/čere/
Grate	/rande/	/randa/
Book-seller	/ketāb foruš/	/kotāb foroš/
I said	/goftam/	/goftom/

SOME EXAMPLES OF REGRESSIVE VOWEL HARMONY:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Fire	/ʔātaš/	/ʔataš/
Came	/ʔāmad/	/ʔama/
Iron	/ʔāhan/	/ʔahan/
Fountain-Pen	/xodnevis/	/xādnivis/

#### D. Assimilation

Sometimes a consonant loses some of its phonetic features in syntagmatic with another consonant and takes the phonetic features of its adjacent consonant instead. This process, perhaps one of phonetic universals, is called "Assimilation". If this process causes one of consonants to turn completely into another consonant, it is called "Complete Assimilation". However, if the assimilation does not end in complete assimilation, then it is called "Partial Assimilation." (Same, P. 152)

Assimilation can be progressive or regressive. In progressive assimilation of two syntagmatic consonants, the one in the first place remains fixed and unchanged and the one in the second place is assimilated. In regressive assimilation of two syntagmatic consonants, the one in the second place remains fixed and unchanged and the one in the first place is assimilated.

INSTANCES OF COMPLETE ASSIMILATION:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Worse	/badtar/	/battar/
Ill-natured	/badzāt/	/bezzāt/
Wicked	/badjens/	/bajjens/
Wrong	/badjūr/	/bajjūr/

INSTANCES OF INCOMPLETE ASSIMILATION:

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Pants	/tonbān/	/tembo/
Trace	/donbā/	/dombā/
Ghanbar	/qanbar/	/qembar/

#### E. Consonant-vowel Assimilation

It is possible that regressive and progressive assimilation occur between a syntagmatic consonant and vowel. This frequently happens in Persian. For instance, in syntagmatics with all palatal consonants /s/ ,/z/ ,/c/ and /j/ ,/e/ loses its half-closed feature and turns into "closed" although naturally they are pronounced closer than /e/ because they are consonants. (Same, P. 154)

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Eye	/čašm/	/čiš/
Boots	/čakme/	/čikma/
Gloves	/dastkeš/	/diskaš/

#### F. Consonants Dissimilation

In this process which is contrary to assimilation, a consonant, common with its syntagmatic consonant in one or some phonetic features loses some of its common features and gain other phonetic features. Dissimilation process can be progressive or regressive. (Same, P. 155). This process is much more unusual than assimilation. (Arlato , 1994, P.125)

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Map	/naqše/	/nexša/
Joy	/vajd/	/važd/
Conscience	/vojdān/	/voždān/
Time	/vaqt/	/vaX/

In all said above examples the assimilation is in regressive type.

#### G. Mutation

"Sometimes in speech chain a chain segment turns into another segment with no justification within assimilation, dissimilation, vowel-consonant harmony or other processes. (Haghshenas, 1992, P. 160) This process is called "Mutation." The only justification for this process can be the inadequacy of phonetic chains.

1). Vowel Mutation:

## 1- /ʌ/ → /E/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Morals	/ʰaxlāq/	/ʰexlāq/
If	/ʰagar/	/ʰeger/
Ax	/tabar/	/tevar/
Pants	/šālvār/	/šelvār/
Unless	/magar/	/mege/

## 2- /ʌ/ → /O/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Spring	/bahār/	/bohār/
Pray	/namāz/	/nomāz/

## 3- /E/ → /I/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Razor	/trɪ/	/teɪ/
Scream	/jɪrɪ/	/jeɪ/

## 4- /E/ → /ʌ/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
A saw	/ʰarre/	/ʰarra/
Cream	/xāme/	/xāma/
Letter	/nāme/	/nāma/

## 5- /E/ → /O/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Book	/ketāb/	/kotāb/
Tall	/derāz/	/dorāz/

## 6- /O/ → /ʌ/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Fountain Pen	/xodnevis/	/xādnivis/

## 7- /ʌ/ → /E/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Ewer	/ʰāftābe/	/ʰeftave/
Game	/bāzi/	/bezi/
Sweep	/jāru/	/jeru/
Carpet	/qālī/	/qeli/

## 8- /ā/ → /o/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Five Hundred	/pānsad/	/ponsad/
Duck	/morqābi/	/morqovi/

## 9- /ʌ/ → /ʌ/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Home	/xāne/	/xana/
Grain	/dāne/	/dana/
Womanly	/zanāne/	/zanana/
Comb	ne āš/	/šana/

## 10- /U/ → /E/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Pottage	/šurbā/	/šervā/

## 11- /U/ → /O/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Teapot	/quri/	/qori/
Book Seller	/ketāb foruš/	/kotāb foroš/

## 12- /U/ → /I/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Pennyroyal	/pune/	/pina/
Coffin	/tābut/	/tābid/
Knife	/čāqu/	/čeqi/
Knee	/zānū/	/zeni/
Bride	arus/	/ʰaris/

## 13- /l/→/E/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Shovel	/bīl/	/be/
Patch	/pālīz/	/pelez/
Forehead	/pišāni/	/pešeni/
Sharp	/tīz/	/tez/
Late	/dīr/	/der/
Garlic	/sīr/	/ser/
Pin	/mīx/	/mex/
That is	/ya'nī/	/ya.ne/

## 14- /ow/→/Ā/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Bright	/rowšan/	/rāšan/
Oil	/rowγan/	/rāγan/

## 15- /Ā/→/Ū/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Roof	/bām/	/būm/
Cup	/jām/	/jūm/
Dinner	/šām/	/šūm/
Palate	/kām/	/kūm/

The word "Salam" "Hello" is an exception, it does not change.

## 16- /A/→/U/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Has gone	/rafte/	/rufta/

## 17- /O/→/U/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Has said	/gofte/	/gufta/

## 2) Consonant Mutation

## 1- /M/→/N/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
possible	/momken/	/monken/

## 2- /B/→/P/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Dome	/qobbe/	/qoppa/

## 3- /B/→/V/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Open	/bāz/	/vā/
Axe	/tabar/	/tevar/
Pottage	/šurbā/	/šervā/
Duck	/morqābi/	/morqovi/

## 4- /P/→/F/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Visible	/peydā/	/feydā/
Victory	/pirūzi/	/firūzi/

## 5- /T/→/D/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Nursing	/parastāri/	/peresdāri/
Circumcision-Party	/xatne sūrān/	/xedne sūri/
Peach	/šeftālu/	ofdeli/š/
Kitchen	/matbax/	/modbax/

## 6- /Č/→/Y/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Female animal	/māče/	/maya/

## 7- /x/→/h/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Ditch	/xandaq/	/handaq/

## 8- /d/→/t/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Headman	/kad-xodā/	/ket-xodā/
Kick	/lagad/	/leqat (y) /
Mosque	/masjed/	/meččet/

## 9- /D/→/Z/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Jonbad (Name of a Village)	/jonbad/	/jombaz/
Dome	/gonbad/	/gombaz/

## 10- /D/→/Č/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Female Donkey	/māde xar/	/meče xar/

## 11- /R/→/L/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Fattened Animal	/parvār/	/polvār/
Cucumber	/xiyār/	/xiyāl/
Wall	/divār/	/difāl/

## 12- /z/→/j/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Ugly	/zešt/	/jiš/

## 13- /s/→/š/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Very hard land	/saxt/	/šax/

## 14- /ž/→/j/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Dew	/žāle/	/jāla/
Eyelash	/može/	/mija/

## 15- /k/→/g/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Akbar	/akbar/	/egbar/
Bank	/bānk/	/bāng/

## 16- /g/→/k/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Loose	/gošād/	/kešād/

## 17- /v/→/f/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Wall	/divār/	/difāl/

## 18- /v/→/Y/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Second	/dovvom/	/doyyom/
Third	/sevvom/	/seyyom/

## 19- /v/→/B/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Opium smoking tube	/vāfur/	/bāfur/
A barrier aganst water	/varq/	/barq/

## 20- /H/→/B/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Toilet	/mostarāh/	/mosterāb/

## 21- /H/→/Q/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Kidding	/mezāh/	/mezāq/



22- /s/ → /z/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Asqar	/ʔasqar/	/ʔezqar/

23- /L/ → /R/

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Mantle	/ʃeneL/	/ʃener/

### 3). Sound Cluster Mutation to a Vowel

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Gardener	/bāqbān/	/bāqvu/
Shop	/dokān/	/diko/
Hayrack	/kāhdān/	/kādo/
Nail	/nāxon/	/nexi/
Animal	/heyvān/	/hayvu/

### H. Metathesis

Sometimes two consonants in a combination change their place by syntagmatic in a way first consonant takes the place of the second and the second consonant takes the place of the first. This process is called "Metathesis" (Haghshenas, 1972, P. 156) the frequency of this phonetic process which is a rather unusual type of sound change is low in Sabzevari dialect compared with other processes.

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Photograph	/ʔaks/	/ʔask/
Wick	/fetile/	/pelita/
Lock	/qofl/	/qolf/
Kalyan	/qalyān/	/qeylu/
Shoulder	/ketf/	/keft/
Damn	/la.nat/	/na.lat/
Prescription	/nosxe/	/noxsā/

Metathesis is also occurred in the second example.

### I. Compensatory Lengthening

A special type of change covering both vowels and consonants is a trend called "Compensatory Lengthening. When a vowel is followed by two consonants and one of consonants is omitted, the previous vowel is lengthened to compensate the omitted phoneme. (Arlato, 1994, P. 127)

Meaning	Standard Persian	Sabzevari
Better	/behtar/	/be.tar/
Affection	/mehr/	/me.r/
Seal	/mohr/	/mo.r/
That is	/yaʔni/	/ya.ne/

## VI. CONCLUSION

The finding results indicate that mutation is the major phonetic process and metathesis holds the lowest frequency in this dialect. It should be said that the mutation seen in this dialect is mostly of consonant type.

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Caucasus Platform", published in the Journal of Research - Institute of Cultural Studies Aran and has won Appreciation, October 2009: Tabriz University.3) (High frequency phonetic processes, in two dialects Kermani Shirazi: one review coping.)Presented as a lecture on "International Conference dialects desert areas of Iran and ready to print in Proceedings of Conference: Persian date Azar 1389: University of Semnan, December 2010.

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