

# *Khalaj language*

## Map showing location of Khalaj (red) within Iran

Khalaj  
Spoken in: Iran  
Region: Northeast of Arak in Markazi Province of Iran  
Total speakers: 42,107 (2000)  
Language family: Altaic (disputed)  
Turkic  
Arghu? Northern?  
Khalaj  
Language codes  
ISO 639-1: none  
ISO 639-2: tut  
ISO/FDIS 639-3: klj



**Note:** This page may contain IPA phonetic symbols in Unicode. See IPA chart for English for an English-based pronunciation key.

Khalaj is a language spoken primarily in Iran and Afghanistan. It belongs to the Turkic family of languages. There were approximately 42,000 speakers of this language as of 2000.

## **Classification**

Khalaj has traditionally been classified with Turkoman or Azerbaijani dialects, primarily because of its proximity to those languages. However, features such as preservation of three vowel lengths, preservation of word-initial Proto-Turkic \*h, and lack of the sound change \*d > y has led to a non-Oghuz classification of Khalaj. An example of these archaisms is present in the word hadaq, which has preserved the initial \*h and medial \*d. The equivalent form in nearby Oghuz dialects is ayaq. Because of the preservation of these archaic features, some scholars have speculated that the Khalaj are the descendants of the Arghu Turks.

## **Geographic Distribution**

Khalaj is spoken mainly in Markazi Province in Iran. Doerfer cites the number of speakers as approximately 17,000 in 1968; the Ethnologue reports that the population of speakers grew to 42,107 by 2000.

## **Dialects**

The main dialects of Khalaj are Northern and Southern. Within these dialect groupings,

individual villages and groupings of speakers have distinct speech patterns.

## Sounds

### Consonants

Consonant phonemes

Labial- Alveolar- Palatal- Velar- Uvular- Glottal

Plosive p b- t d- ø -k g- q G - ø

Affricate ø- ø - ç c -ø -ø - ø

Fricative f v- s z- ş j- x ğ- ø - h

Nasal m- n- ø - ñ- ø - ø -ø

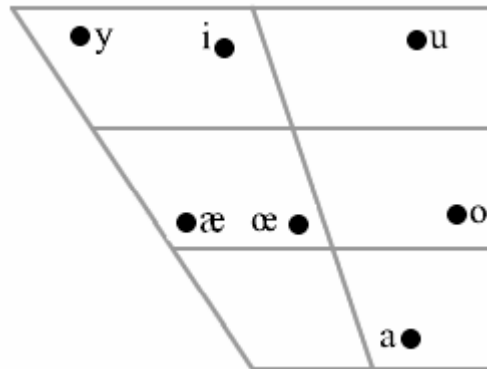
Flap/Tap ø - r- ø - ø - ø - ø

Lateral ø -l - ø - ø - ø - ø

Approximant ø - ø- y - ø -ø - ø

### Vowels

Vowels in Khalaj occur in three lengths: long (qân "blood"), half-long (baş "head"), and short (hat "horse"). Additionally, some vowels are realized as falling diphthongs, as in quôl "arm, sleeve".



### Grammar

### Morphology

### Nouns

Nouns in Khalaj may receive a plural marker or possessive marker. Cases in Khalaj include genitive, accusative, dative, locative, ablative, instrumental, and equative.

Forms of case suffixes change based on vowel harmony and the consonants they follow.

Case endings also interact with possessive suffixes. A table of basic case endings is provided below:

### Case Suffix

Nominative -

Dative -A, -KA

Accusative -I, -NI

Locative -čA

Ablative -dA

Instrumental -lAn, -lA, -nA

Equative -vāra

### Verbs

Verbs in Khalaj are inflected for voice, tense, aspect, and negation. Verbs consist of long

strings of morphemes in the following array:

Stem + Voice + Negation + Tense/Aspect + Agreement

### **Syntax**

Khalaj employs Subject Object Verb word order. Adjectives precede nouns.

### **Vocabulary**

The core of Khalaj vocabulary is Turkic, but many words have been borrowed from Persian. Words from neighboring Turkic dialects, namely, Azerbaijani have also made their way into Khalaj.

### **Numbers**

Khalaj numbers are Turkic in form, but some speakers replace the forms for "80" and "90" with Persian terms:

1 - bî
2 - əkki
3 - üş
4 - töört
5 - biêş
6 - alta
7 - yətti
8 - səkkiz
9 - toqquz
10 - uôn
20 - yiirmi
30 - hottuz
40 - qırq
50 - əlli
60 - altmiş
70 - yətmış
80 - saysan (Turkic), haştâd (Persian)
90 - toqxsan (Turkic), navad (Persian)
100 - yüz
1000 - min, miñk

### **Examples**

Excerpt from Dorfer & Tezcan (1994) p. 158-9

Translation IPA

Once, Mullah Nasreddin had a son. bî kinî Mollâ Nasrəddînîn oğlu vârti  
He said, "Oh Father, I want a wife." haüdi ki "əy bâba, mən kişi şəyyorum"  
He said, "My dear, we have a cow; take this cow and sell it. Come, with the proceeds, we  
will buy you a wife! haüdi ki "bâba bizüm bî sığırımüz vârt, yetib, bo sığırı sâtı, nağd şəyi  
pûlîn, yək biz sê kişi alduq

### **References**

- Doerfer, Gerhard (1971). *Khalaj Materials*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
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- Johanson, Lars & Csató, Éva Ágnes (1998). *The Turkic Languages*. London: Routledge.