

Chapter 1

Kholosi

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This chapter studies the word order configuration of Kholosi, an Indo-Aryan outlier spoken in the Southwest of Iran. Kholosi shows considerable influence of Persian and other western Iranian languages, including phonology and morphology, but also in syntax: It exhibits regular OV, but predominantly post-posed goals in a manner that matches that of the neighbouring Iranian languages. Kholosi appears to have converged more closely with Iranian than other Indo-Aryan outliers in Iran have (e.g. Jadgali). The Kholosi case illustrates how languages that have shifted comparatively recently into the Western Asian Transition Zone can adapt their syntax to match the profile of neighbouring languages.

1 Introduction

Although Kholosi is spoken in Iran, it belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of Indo-European, and is thus separated from the core location of its closest relatives by hundreds of kilometres. This chapter provides the first available analysis of word order in Kholosi, and explores the respective roles of inheritance and contact in shaping its syntax. Kholosi is predominantly verb final, but exhibits mixed adpositional typology, with age-graded variability: younger speakers mix Iranian prepositions and Indo-Aryan postpositions, while the older speakers produce only postpositions. Unlike its Indo-Aryan relatives (Dahl & Stronski 2016), most of which exhibit some form of split ergativity, Kholosi shows accusative alignment throughout, possibly through the influence of Persian and other contact languages lacking ergativity. The data for the present study are extracted from two tales which are available in the WOWA corpus (see full details in Nourzaei 2022a), and were supplemented by texts from my on-going analysis.

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Kholosi is spoken mainly in two villages, Kholos and Gotav, in Hormozgan province, Iran (see Figure 1). Additional small speech communities are found in other regions such as Bastak, Jenah, Bandar Abbas, Bandar Lenge and Bandar Khamir. In addition, Kholosi is also spoken by Kholosi people living outside of Iran for example in Bahrein, Doha, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi. The total population of the Kholosi speakers is uncertain. However, based on recent field studies by myself, the number of speakers is estimated as at least 2,300.

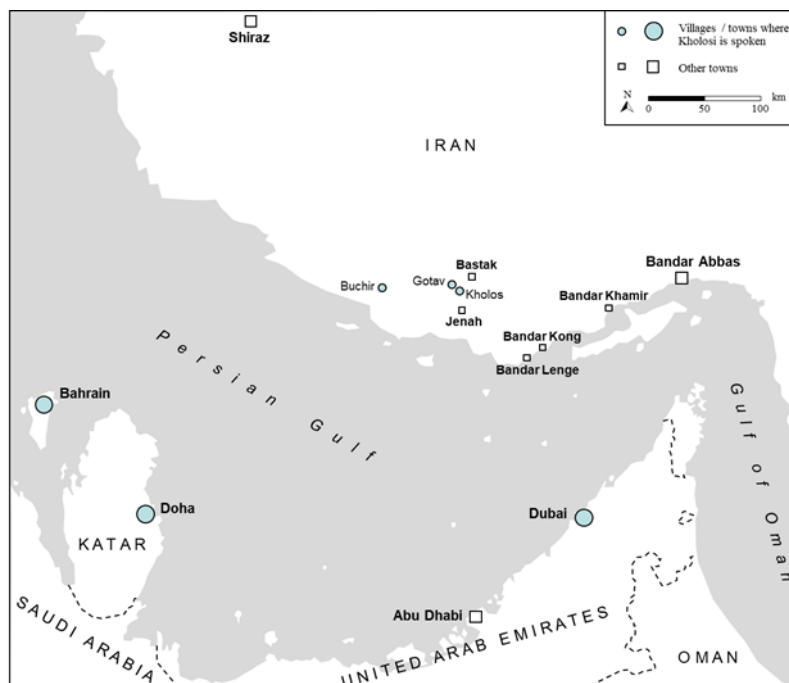


Figure 1: Location of Kholosi Speakers (from Nourzaei 2023)

There is another Indo-Aryan language spoken in Iran, Jadgali, located mainly in Chabahar, Dashtiyari, and Polan regions in Sistan and Balochistan province (Barjasteh Delforooz 2008). The distance between the Kholosi community to the Jadgal communities is more than 600 km. The Kholosi and Jadgali speakers have not traditionally had any contact and only became acquainted with each other recently (see Nourzaei 2023). The location of the Jadgali speech communities is indicated in Figure 2.

The question of how the Kholosi reached their current location, and what their historical connection to the Jadgali speech community may have been, remains controversial. There are four different accounts: (a) they directly moved

to their present homeland from India (see Anonby & Mohebbi Bahmani 2016); (b) they moved here via Dashtiyari in Balochistan; (c) they migrated to their present homeland from Sindh during the Safavid dynasty; or (d) they migrated from the Makoran coast as a separate group, distinct from the Jadgal.



Figure 2: Location of Kholosi and Jadgali speakers (taken from Nourzaei 2023)

The area where Kholosi is spoken is linguistically highly diverse, and Kholosi speakers are multilingual. Contact languages include two different language families: Indo-European (Iranian) and Semitic. Kholosi speakers in Iran are in direct contact with Bastaki, Lārestāni (both West Iranian) as local vernaculars, and Persian as the official language of Iran via TV, Radio, and education, and Arabic as a liturgical language via the Koran and Islamic literature. Likewise, Kholosi speakers outside of Iran are in contact with Arabic as an official language (see also Anonby & Mohebbi Bahmani 2016: 2). In addition, Kholosi would have been in contact with other languages during the migration of the Kholosi speakers to their current location, but the identity of these languages has not been established with any certainty.

Kholosi is used as the first language in the Kholosi community. Parents speak Kholosi with their children to a large extent. In Gotav village, however, there is a tendency for the Kholosi residents to use Bastaki among themselves and with their children. In Kholos, many parents speak with their children in Persian to prepare them for school. Outside these two villages, e.g., Buchir, it is observed that Kholosi speakers have lost their language and have switched to

Bastaki/Lārestāni (known as Achomi, Khodemuni), which are the vernacular languages in these regions. In Kholosi families with an exogamic marriage pattern, the Kholosi parents do not use Kholosi as their first language. Instead, the common language between parents and children at home is Bastaki, Lārestāni, or even Persian. Among Kholosi speakers living abroad, a tendency to use Arabic at home is reported. Note that some of the Kholosi speakers switched to Arabic.

Kholosi lacks an established writing system, and is generally restricted to oral domains. For example, speakers use standard Persian when texting each other via cell phone or writing letters. There are also no TV or radio programmes in Kholosi. The language of teaching is Persian; however, if the teacher is a Kholosi speaker, Kholosi can be used in the classroom. For religious instruction, Arabic and Persian are used. In the past, Kholosi served as a language of religious instruction in Islamic schools; however today, only Persian is used. Their religious leaders (Mullah) use Persian for their sermons after Friday and Ids (festival) prayers.

1.1 Previous studies

Kholosi is an under-documented language (see Nourzaei 2022a). The first paper (a questionnaire-based investigation) on Kholosi was published by Anonby & Mohebbi Bahmani (2016), which confirmed that Kholosi is an Indo-Aryan language. In addition, Anonby et al. (2019) published a short paper in *Encyclopædia Iranica*. The first Kholosi text to be transcribed, glossed and translated into English in FLEX has been published by myself, and includes a sociolinguistic study of Kholosi Nourzaei (2023). I have also written a grammar sketch (Nourzaei 2024), and an outline of the Kholosi nominal and pronominal system is under review. Arora & Etebari (2021), Nourzaei (In press) published online a list of Kholosi lexical items, based on English words presented to one speaker via the medium of Persian translation and through an online messenger service. The present study is the first contribution to the word order in Kholosi, with special focus on post-predicate elements.

1.2 Data and methodology

The background analysis for this paper is based on the ongoing documentation described above, while the quantitative data stems from two tales entitled “Untidy fox,” recorded from a 32-year-old female speaker from Kholos in 2020, and “Prophet Musa,” recorded from a male speaker from Kholos in 2017 and available in the WOVA database (Nourzaei 2022b). I have also included data from

a growing corpus of Kholosi narrative speech including folktales, biographical tales, and procedural texts spoken by one male and two female Kholosi speakers from Kholos and Gotav. The speakers have different social backgrounds and are between 32 and 82 years of age. All speakers are fluent in Persian and vernacular languages such as Bastaki and Lārestāni, and can read Arabic very well. One of the female speakers is an Arabic teacher at an Islamic school in Kholos, and the male speaker is fluent in Arabic. The texts were recorded in WAV and MP3 format. They were then imported into ELAN software,¹ transcribed phonemically, and double-checked by the linguistic consultants. After that, a morpheme-by-morpheme glossing was carried out using FLEx software.² Finally, a free clause-by-clause translation of the texts was produced.³

1.3 Word order in Indo-Aryan

Like the Iranian languages, the Indo-Aryan languages show an OV order in the clause. Noun phrases across all of IA are left-branching (Modifier + N) *Masica* (1991: 370). Examples from Sindhi, one of Kholosi's presumably closest Indo-Aryan relatives, illustrate this feature: *vada vātō* 'big mouth'; *sāfu dīle* 'pure heart'; *čau darō* 'four doors' and *ghara jō dhanī* 'house-of the master' i.e. the master of the house (*Trumpp* 1872: 88, 119). *Masica* (1991: 218) states that across Indo-Aryan, primarily nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and in some languages, also certain numerals and adverbs may inflect for gender, number, case, and definiteness. While case is found in all IA languages, gender is not universal, and a grammatical marker for definiteness characterizes only certain languages. Case, number and gender are noted for Sindhi (*Trumpp* 1872: 119, 131), but reliable information on definiteness is not available. *Masica* (1991: 373) mentions that for all VP arguments, e.g. the direct and indirect objects, goals and source of motion, all occur to the left of the main verb stem (except in aberrant Kashmiri). Examples (1-2) from Gujarati and Sinhalese demonstrate preverbal Goal and direct object in turn, glosses added.

- (1) Gujarati (*Masica* 1991: 352)
māre/mane gher javānū che
 1SG.OBL home go.INF COP.3SG
 'I have to go home.'

¹<https://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/elan/>

²<http://fieldwork.sil.org/>

³Both the texts and sound files can be found online, see *Nourzaei* (2022b).

- (2) Sinhalese (Masica 1991: 333)

mama bat kanavā

1SG rice eat.PRS

‘I eat rice.’

We are unaware of any corpus-based investigation of post-posed elements in Indo-Aryan that might assist in reconstructing the ancestor word order of Kholosi. Preliminary consideration of available material, such as Liljegren (2016) on Palula (Indo-Aryan, Dardic) indicate a dominant head-final VP, and in the experimental investigation of Hindi word order by Patil et al. (2008), only verb-final variants are considered. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, I will therefore assume that the Indo-Aryan relatives of Kholosi are consistently verb-final, from which we can provisionally infer that the ancestor language of Kholosi was likewise verb-final.

2 Some elements of Kholosi grammar

2.1 Alignment

Some basics are needed as background information for the discussion which follows. Kholosi exhibits accusative alignment with all verbal categories, as in Persian. The subject is canonically in the nominative case and the object in the oblique case. The verb agrees with the subject both in number and person. Note that in the past domain, transitive and intransitive verbs have different sets of endings, which presumably reflects an earlier ergative alignment in Kholosi. The following examples present accusative alignment for transitive and intransitive verbs in the present (3-4) and past (5-6) domains.

- (3) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0234)

sandūḡ=e čūb-ī deres ker-aw

box=INDV wood-ADJV complete do.PRS-3SG

‘He makes a wooden box.’

- (4) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0160)

yak hāro=e denyā t=eĵ-aw

one boy=INDV world to=come.PRS-3SG

‘A boy will be born (lit. comes to the world).’

- (5) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0019)
hoko roz robā šamšer=es pale pord-ū
 one day fox sword=PC.3SG PREV search.PST-3SG
 ‘One day the fox, (he) searched for his sword.’
- (6) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0005)
robā nōk-ō dar he sere mā vad-ō t^ho
 fox.M small-M in textscprox house in big-M become.PST.3SG
 ‘The small fox grew up in this house.’

2.2 Morphological case system

Kholosi shows three morphological cases: Direct (unmarked), oblique =*ke*, and genitive =*jō/jī* cases.⁴ The genitive case is partially replaced with Iranian Ezafe construction (see for more details Nourzaei 2024, and Nourzaei In press). Kholosi has Differential Object Marking, though the exact nature of the triggering factors has not yet been established. Indefinite and inanimate objects such as ‘wooden box’ in (3) are unmarked for case, while other objects can be marked with =*ke*, as in (25).

2.3 Person marking clitics

Similar to Iranian spoken in this region, e.g. Koroshi, Kholosi has a full set of person-marking clitics, which have different functions, e.g., possession, direct and indirect object markings. The person-marking clitics in Kholosi are presented in Table 1. The person-marking clitics attach to various hosts: nouns, *kolāh=ās* ‘his hat,’ adverbs, *roz=e baad=os* ‘its next day,’ postposition, *ag=es* ‘to him,’ relational nouns, *ak=es* ‘his front,’ verbs, ‘*čai=ves* ‘says to him’. Note, some of these forms are copied from Iranian, such as 2nd person =*ū* and 3rd person =*es/eš*.

2.4 Morphological gender marker

In other respects, Kholosi differs from Iranian. This includes a grammatical gender distinction in some verb endings - in particular the 1st, 2nd and 3rd persons singular - numbers, and adjectives (preferably Indo-Aryan), comparative suffix

⁴It is currently unclear whether these ‘case markers’ should be considered to be some form of particle (i.e. postpositions), or phrasal affix, or clitic. They are provisionally treated here as clitics.

Table 1: Person-marking clitics in Kholosi

SG	1st	=oe/=e/oy/=ī/yāe
	2nd	=o/ū/āv/āo/
	3rd	=ās/yās/os/es/eš
PL	1st	=om=ām=mām/em
	2nd	=om=ām
	3rd	=ān/on/en

-r, imperfective suffix -d, and genitive suffix -j, which distinguish masculine and feminine gender. Masculine adjectives are marked with (o/ō) and feminine adjectives with (ī). In (7), -ō on the adjectives *gahr* ‘red’ agrees with the river Nile, which is masculine. Gender agreement can be within the NP, as in (8), or between subject and predicate, as in (7); the details remain to be elucidated.

- (7) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0542)
rūd=e nīl gahr-ō t^h=ū
 river=EZ Nile.M red-M become.PST=COP.PRS.3SG
 ‘The river Nile turned red.’

Similarly, in (8), -ī on the adjective *kalt* ‘big’ agrees with ‘dragon’, which is feminine.

- (8) Kholosi (UP)
aždehā=ye kalt-ī
 dragon.F=EZ big-F
 ‘a big dragon’

Gender is also marked directly on some nouns, with phonologically comparable suffixes to those outlined above: *nonō* ‘grandfather’ and *nonī* ‘grandmother’; *čōrkō* ‘boy’ and *čōrkī* ‘girl’; *hārrō* ‘boy’ and *herri* ‘girl’.

3 Word order in the NP and the clause

3.1 Adjective/noun

In the noun phrase, Kholosi has adopted some Persian syntactic features. For example, some adjectives may follow the noun and be linked to it via the ‘ezafe’, as in (9), or occur without an ‘ezafe’, as in (10).

- (9) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0044)

moškel=e vad-o

problem=EZ big-M

‘a big problem’

- (10) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0005)

rōbā nōk-ō

fox small-M

‘the small fox’

3.2 Possessor/possessed

Kholosi also follows the general Persian pattern in that the possessed precedes possessor, either with an intervening ‘ezafe’ (EZ), as in (11), or without, as in (12). Note the use of the genitive marker on the possessor in (12).

- (11) Kholosi (UP)

laškar=e ferawn

army=EZ pharaoh

‘pharaoh’s army’

- (12) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0148)

māv rūbāh kočūlū=jo

mother fox small=GEN.M

‘mother of small fox’

However, the data demonstrate some variation, and the possessor can also precede the possessed, as (13), which also illustrates the expected Indo-Aryan genitive marking of the possessor.

- (13) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0266)

hazrat mūsā=jī doḏā

prophet Musa=GEN.F sister

‘the sister of the prophet Musa’

Possession and similar relations have also been attested with juxtaposition, as *māre šahr* ‘people of the city’ which have no marking of possession in (14).

- (14) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0549)

tamām=e sāher-ēn=ke māre šahr daʔvat dī-yaw

all=EZ magician-PL=OBL people city invite give.PRS-3SG

‘He invites all the magicians [and] people of the city.’

3.3 Demonstrative/noun

Demonstrative pronouns precede the head nouns without any linker.

- (15) a. Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0005)
he sere
PROX house
'this house'
- b. Kholosi (UP)
ho motor
DIST car
'that car'

3.4 Numeral/noun

In Kholosi, numerals precede head nouns. The head nouns show number and gender agreement with only Indo-Aryan numerals, as in the following examples.

- (16) a. Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0160)
hēk-ō hār-ō
one-M boy-M
'a boy'
- b. Kholosi
bahr-ā hēr-ā
two-M boy-M.PL
'two boys'
- (17) a. Kholosi (UP)
hīk-ī čōrk-ī
one-F girl-F
'a girl'
- b. Kholosi (UP)
bahr-ī čōrk-ī-ū
two-F girl-F-PL
'two girls'

3.5 Adpositions

Kholosi has a mixed typology with respect to adpositions, with prepositions, postpositions, and combinations of the two. The most widely attested prepositions are obvious borrowings from Iranian, while postpositions are Indo-Aryan.

(18) shows a combination of an Iranian preposition and an Indo-Aryan postposition and (19) just Indo-Aryan postposition.

- (18) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0032)
az mān=ās tāv soāl ka-ī
 from mother=PC.3SG from question do.PST-3SG
 ‘he asked of his mother’

- (19) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0034)
mov=ās gen=ās mā pēr-ī
 mother=PC.3SG room=PC.3SG in look.PST-3SG
 ‘His mother looked inside his room.’

There is a tendency to use the Iranian preposition *dāxel* as a postposition in Kholosi, with the same meaning, as in (20)

- (20) Kholosi (UP)
ham=e atte dāxel māyexamīr kar-e
 EMPH=PROX dough inside yeast do.PRS-2SG
 ‘You add yeast to (lit. in) this dough.’

3.6 Auxiliary/main verb

Independent auxiliaries expressing tense, aspect, mood, or voice, are not attested in the present data; TAM categories are expressed by suffixes on the verb. There are no TAM prefixes that would parallel the widely-attested aspectual and modal prefixes of the Iranian system (Persian *mi-* and *be-*, for example). However, modal verbs such as ‘want’ precede the main verbs, as in Iranian (32), and this could well be considered a result of contact influence, in line with the claim that clause (or predicate) combining is a favoured domain for contact influence (Haig 2001).

3.7 Complement clause/matrix verb

The subordinators *jō* and *ke* ‘that’ introduce various subordinate clauses, including relative, complement and adverbial - as well as quoted speech. The particle *ke* is an Iranian borrowing. Similarly, to Persian, the complement clause follows the matrix verb in Kholosi, and complementizers generally occur in the initial position within the complement clause. In these respects, Kholosi entirely matches Persian and other West Iranian languages.

- (21) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0457)
čī-ya jō hat=i mā lat=e
say.PRS-3SG CMP hand=PC.1SG in stick=COP.PRS.3SG
‘He says, “There is a stick in my hand”.’
- (22) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0247)
pesa-vān jō bale yak sandūg=e hat
see.PST-3PL CMP yes one box=INDV COP.PRS.3SG
‘They saw that, yes, there is a box [on the water].’

3.8 Light verb complements

Kholosi follows the widespread Iranian pattern of combining non-verbal elements with light verbs, in that order, to create complex predicates. The attested light verbs are ‘become,’ ‘come,’ ‘do,’ and ‘give’ as in examples (23) and (24).

- (23) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0166)
ferawn pejal tāv bīdār t^hi-yaw
pharaoh sleep from awake become.PRS-3SG
‘The Pharaoh gets up (lit. wakes up from sleep).’

4 VP constituents in the Kholosi WOVA data

In this section we exemplify the main combinations of non-subject constituents and verb, based on the quantitative analysis of the WOVA Kholosi data set (Nourzaei 2022b). An overview of the findings is presented in Table 3 below. Kholosi makes extensive use of pro-drop in different syntactic functions, so pronominal arguments are infrequent in the data. In line with general practice in the WOVA framework (see Haig et al. 2024 [this volume]), we will not consider the position of subjects.

4.1 Direct objects

In Kholosi, generally nominal direct objects occur in pre-verbal position, as in the following example. They may be separated from the verb by other constituents, as in (24), but are only very rarely post-posed after the verb.

- (24) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0139)
šamšīr=os o=te āvīzān ker-a-va
 sword=PC.3SG there=to hang do.PRS-3SG-SBJV
 ‘He should hang his sword in the other direction.’

In the Kholosi data used for this project, only 2% of all direct objects are in postverbal position, which makes it even lower than obtained for most Iranian languages, which range between 3–10%. This may be a reflex of the Indo-Aryan origins, but the differences are certainly not great.

Free pronouns as direct objects are rare in Kholosi (14 examples), of which all are pre-verbal, as in (25). Direct objects (and other objects) may also be expressed through a clitic pronoun on the verb, which then follows the verb, but as it is part of the same phonological word as the verb, these are not counted as ‘post-verbal’ in line with standard practice for WOVA. An example of a clitic object is provided in (26).

- (25) Kholosi (UP)
meskīn=e golī p^hepī=yāe mo=ke vađ-o ka-ī
 poor=EZ goli aunt=PC.1SG 1SG=OBL big-M do.PST-3SG
 ‘My poor aunt, Goli, raised me.’
- (26) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 305)
ferawn konjān-do=sū čembī dīv=es-ī-ya
 pharaoh want.PST-IPFV=COP.PST.3SG kiss give.PRS=PC.3SG-3SG-SBJV
 ‘Like this pharaoh was about to kiss him.’

4.2 Copula complements

Copulas are generally clitics which cliticize to the copular complement, and are thus generally clause-final, as in (27–28). This is in line with a near-universal structure for copular constructions across the Western Asian Transition Zone, though with exceptions at the western periphery (see Haig & Khan 2019, Haig et al. 2024 [this volume], Mohammadirad 2024 [this volume]).

- (27) Kholosi (UP)
pon=āe=īl mīrī=ya
 father=PC.1SG=GEN wife=COP.PRS.3SG
 ‘She is my father’s wife.’

- (28) Kholosi (UP)
čekada zaīfā=e čang-ī=ū
how_much woman=INDV kind-F=COP.PST.3SG
'She was a very kind woman.'

Note that in the present data, one example of a postposed complement of copular verb is attested (29):

- (29) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0230)
hat jīnd-o
COP.PRS.3SG alive-M
'He is alive.'

4.3 Goal/verb

In Kholosi, the largest number of post-verbal elements are goals of caused motion, such as 'throw', 'put', and 'hit' (see Table 3) as in (30-31).

- (30) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0193)
hazrat=e mūsā=ī māv petr=es=ke lār-aw tanūr mā
prophet=EZ musa=GEN mother boy=PC.3SG=OBL throw.PRS-3SG tanur in
'The Prophet Musa's mother throws her son into the Tanur.'
- (31) Kholosi (UP)
kolan lī-yāv=es fer mā
you_know put.PRS-1PL=PC.3SG oven in
'You know, we put it into the oven.'

Similarly, goals of simple motion verbs such as 'go', 'come', 'fall', are often post-verbal (see Table 3).

- (32) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0024)
ho konjān-do=sū ven-a-va rafīk-en=des akaya
DIST want.PST-IPFV=COP.PST.3SG go.PRS-3SG-SBJV friend-PL=PC.3SG front
'He wanted to go to his friends.'
- (33) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0366)
eč-aw yek jā=e
come.PRS-3SG one place=INDV
'He comes to a certain place.'

4.4 Recipient/verb

Similarly to goals, the majority of recipients also follow the verb, as in (34-35), though the absolute number of recipients in the data is quite low, cf. Table 3.

- (34) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0394)
t^hio ponj=ās dī-aw payambar mūsā=ke
 daughter REFL.GEN=PC.3SG give.PRS-3SG prophet Musa=OBL
 ‘He gives his daughter to the prophet Musa.’
- (35) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0205)
xebar dī-yen hazrat=e mūsā=ī māo=ke
 news do.PRS-3PL prophet=EZ Musa=GEN mother=OBL
 ‘They informed the Prophet Musa’s mother.’

4.5 Addressee/verb

Nominal addressees in Kholosi precede the verb as in (36), but addressees expressed by a person marking clitic attach directly to the verb as in (37), or attach to a postposition as in (38).

- (36) Kholosi (UP)
am=te xodā=ke ča-yen
 this=at God=OBL say.PRS-3PL
 ‘At this point they said to God...’
- (37) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0520)
payāambar hazrat=e mūsā xayle kām-hā vet-ī=yās
 prophet prophet=EZ Musa very thing-PL say.PST-3SG=PC.3SG
 ‘The Prophet Musa said to him a lot of things.’
- (38) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0172)
tā yek nafar manī=os čī-yaw ag=es
 till one person meaning=PC.3SG say.PRS-3SG to=PC.3SG
 ‘Till a person says its meaning to him.’

4.6 Complements of ‘become’

In Kholosi complements of ‘become’ are preverbal, as in the following examples.

- (39) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0334)
ferawn motmaen t^ho ĵo...
pharaoh relaxed become.PST.3SG CMP
‘The Pharaoh became relaxed that...’
- (40) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0483)
heždehā=te t^hī-aw
dragon=to become.PRS-3SG
‘It will turn into a dragon.’

4.7 Place constituents and place constituents of a copular verb

Locative constituents of a copular verb i.e., (‘X is in the garden’) (41) precede the predicate.

- (41) Kholosi (daily conversation)
Hasan dar sere mā=e
hasan in home in=COP.PRS.3SG
‘Hasan is at home.’

4.8 Other obliques

Most other obliques such as instruments, ablatives, comitatives, and beneficiaries appear before the verb; see the figures for ‘other’ in Table 3 below. The following examples demonstrate various other semantic relations.

- (42) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0003)
hok-ō xānavāda hīnkī sānda zendegī kar-d=ayaū
one-M family each other life do.PRS-IPFV=COP.PRS.3PL
‘A family used to live with one another.’
- (43) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, A, 0065)
xers bā šamšīr=os be havā=te be zarba
bear with sword=PC.3SG with air=at with beat
čīn-d=ū
beat.PRS-IPFV=COP.PST.3SG
‘The bear was striking with his sword into the air.’
- (44) Kholosi (Nourzaei 2022b, B, 0162)
yak mangāl=e az ġawm=e banī esrāīl tāv boland t^ho
one fire=INDV from tribe=EZ sons_of Israel from upright become.PST.3SG
‘A fire rose from the people of Israel.’

5 Summary

So far, I have discussed various word order parameters, and the post-verbal placement of different constituents related to the verb. This historically head-final language shows some shifts towards head-initial syntax, leading to some degree of inconsistency in head-directionality (see [Dryer 1992](#)). We also note the occasional use of mixed head-final and head-initial constructions involving borrowed prepositions combined with inherited post-positions, see (18). The head-initial configurations which have been illustrated in this chapter are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Head-initial configurations

Head	Complement
Noun	Adjective
Possessed	Possessor
Matrix clause	Complement clause
Complementizer	Complement clause
Verb	Goal
Verb	Recipient

Within the VP, most kinds of verbal arguments remain consistently pre-verbal (90% or more), with the sole exception of goals and recipients. Table 3 shows the relevant figures for the most important roles, as identified in the WOVA framework (see [Haig et al. 2024 \[this volume\]](#)). Note that “Goals” subsumes both goals of verbs of motion and of caused motion (both of which are predominantly post-verbal in Kholosi).

Compared to its Indo-Aryan relative Jadgali, Kholosi exhibits greater influence of Iranian. Kholosi has adopted some features of Persian noun phrases, for example post-posed adjectives, and some prepositions, while Jadgali retains the Indo-Aryan structures. Jadgali also retains its split ergative alignment, while Kholosi shares the same alignment (accusative) with Persian, and makes more extensive use of person-marking clitics. Overall, it seems that Kholosi has undergone a greater degree of syntactic convergence with Iranian languages. Kholosi nevertheless maintains grammatical features that distinguish it from (neighbouring) Iranian. These include a grammatical gender distinction on some numerals, verb endings, and adjectives (if the host item is Indo-Aryan), and also postpositions, which are a prominent feature of Indo-Aryan languages. Note that its morphological gender system is not strong as such (see Nourzaei [Nourzaei In press](#)). Unlike Iranian languages, Kholosi lacks any prefixal TAM elements.

Table 3: Percentages of post-predicate placement of different constituents in Kholosi

	Total number of tokens	preverbal	post-verbal	% post-verbal
Ablative	22	22	0	0%
Addressee	14	13	1	7%
Become	14	13	1	7%
Comitative	13	13	0	0%
Copular expression	41	39	2	5%
Direct object	67	65	2	3%
Definite direct object	88	86	2	2%
Goal	56	21	35	62%
Static location	43	42	1	2%
Other	128	126	2	2%
Possessed	12	12	0	0%
Recipient	8	2	6	75%
Totals	506	454	52	

At the level of the clause, Kholosi has adapted to the profile of the Iranian languages of Western Asia: Modal verbs precede main verbs, subordinate clauses follow matrix clauses, and complementizers occur clause-initially. One of the most salient features of these languages is the combination of near-categorical OV with a high frequency of post-verbal Goals. Kholosi likewise exhibits this combination (>90% OV, and >60% VG, cf. Table 3). Note, however, that rates of post-verbal Goals do not reach the levels found further westward in the Iranian languages of Mesopotamia. But Kholosi does share with several Iranian languages the spread of post-verbal placement to include recipients, entirely in line with the sequence predicted in Haig et al. (2024 [this volume]). Other types of constituents (such as locatives, copula complements, adverbs, addressees) show significantly lower rates of pos-verbal position.

Although Kholosi retains abundant evidence of its Indo-Aryan origins in the lexicon and in morphology, it exhibits syntactic convergence with areally contiguous languages, which has rendered it significantly different from its Indo-Aryan relatives located outside the Western Asian Transition Zone. The Kholosi case thus has considerable implications for assessing the role of contact versus inheritance in predicting word order.

Abbreviations

ADJV	adjectivizer	PC	person-marking enclitic
CMP	complementizer	PL	plural
COP	copula	PREV	preverb
DIST	distal	PROX	proximal deixis
EMPH	emphasis	PRS	present
EZ	ezafe particle	PST	past
F	feminine	REFL	reflexive pronoun
GEN	genitive	SBJV	subjunctive
IA	Indo-Aryan	UP	Unpublished text
IPFV	imperfective	WATZ	Western Asian
INDV	individuation clitic		Transition Zone
M	masculine	WOWA	Word Order in
OBL	oblique case		Western Asia

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Kholosi speakers, in particular Hawa Sabui, Mosaeheb, Said and Yusef Sabui for double checking the data, two reviewers for comments on earlier versions, and Geoffrey Haig for discussion and feedback throughout. The responsibility for all remaining errors is of course my own.

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