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## Kinship terms variation among speakers of Bahmaie dialect in Khuzestan Province of Iran

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### Abstract

Language indicates the social and cultural identity of the nations, and literature is of great value in reflecting ideas, beliefs and visions in language. Considering the fact that the local dialects that lack written literature are more subject to convergence and death, extensive research is required for further documentation and investigating the factors leading to their infrequency of use. Bahmaie, a variant of Luri dialect spoken in the southwest of Iran, is an example in which the stylistic variation of kinship terms represents dialect endangerment and necessitates in-depth analysis of the factors affecting this variation. The present study aims at examining the variation of Bahmaie kinship terms and their Persian equivalents across different contexts, with respect to age, gender, educational level, and third person presence. To this aim, a 32-item questionnaire was designed and distributed among 275 Bahmaie speakers divided into four age groups: 15–19, 20–29, 30–39, and 40 – above. The findings of the study indicated that the 15–19 age group speakers favored the Persian terms while those aged 40 – above were more likely to use Bahmaie terms. They also showed the impact of other contextual characteristics on variation of kinship terms (interlocutors' status, gender, educational level, and third person presence). Results further demonstrated that Bahmaie speakers have a tendency towards being persified, and this trend is more pronounced among young speakers. This tendency is attributed to the dominance of Persian as the only high-status language, language contact, and migration causing a generation gap. The implication of the research is that documenting Bahmaie dialect, encouraging educated speakers to use it and fostering intra-cultural communication, are the strategies that can be helpful in keeping this dialect alive.

**Keywords:** *language variation, identity, kinship terms, Bahmaie dialect, language change, Persian language*

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## Вариации терминов родства среди носителей диалекта бахмайе в иранской провинции Хузестан

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### Аннотация

Язык определяет социальную и культурную идентичность нации, при этом большой ценностью обладает литература как средство отражения идей, верований и языковой картины мира. Местные диалекты, не имеющие письменных литературных источников, в большей степени подвержены опасности слияния и исчезновения, в связи с чем необходимо их дальнейшее исследование для фиксации их особенностей и изучения факторов снижения их популярности. В диалекте бахмайе, варианте лурского диалекта, на котором говорят на юго-западе Ирана, проявляются стилистические вариации использования терминов родства, угрожающие существованию этого диалекта, что обуславливает необходимость их углубленного анализа. Цель настоящего исследования – рассмотреть вариативность терминов родства в диалекте бахмайе и их персидских эквивалентов в различных контекстах, с учетом возраста, гендера, образовательного уровня и присутствия третьих лиц. С этой целью был разработан опросный лист, включающий 32 пункта, который был роздан 275 носителям диалекта бахрайе, поделенным на четыре возрастных группы: от 15 до 19 лет, от 20 до 29 лет, от 30 до 39 лет, от 40 лет и старше. Полученные результаты показали, что представители возрастной группы от 15 до 19 лет отдают предпочтение персидским терминам, в то время как респонденты в возрасте 40 и старше – терминам бахмайе. Также был сделан вывод о воздействии на вариации использования терминов родства других факторов (статус собеседника, гендер, образовательный уровень и присутствие третьего лица). Исследование продемонстрировало влияние персидского языка на диалект бахмайе, особенно заметное среди молодежи. Эта тенденция обусловлена высоким статусом персидского языка, языковыми контактами и миграцией как источником межпоколенных различий. Сделан вывод о том, что для сохранения диалекта бахмайе необходимо фиксировать его особенности, поощрять его использование среди образованных носителей и продвигать интракультурную коммуникацию.

**Ключевые слова:** языковые вариации, идентичность, термины родства, диалект бахмайе, языковые изменения, персидский язык

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## 1. Introduction

According to Yarmohammadi (1995), the language of each nation constitutes its identity. Language indicates the social and cultural characteristics of each nation, and the culture and literature of each nation are of great value in reflecting ideas, beliefs and visions. Considering that some local dialects lack written literature, they are subject to convergence and death. Working on understudied languages and linguistic regions contributes to understanding the “ways in which processes of language change are sensitive to social, cultural, and/ or typological variables” (Epps et al. 2022: 4). Kinship terms frequently used in addressing relatives and in

daily communication are rich areas for identifying these changes. Parkin (1998) notes that kinship changes are associated with the changes in social organization. These terms vary across languages and their varieties. In the Persian language, kinship systems include distinct terms to address people of various ages and statuses. Iranian dialects like Luri, Kalhori, and Gilaki have their own kinship terms. Luri dialect, among all, has different dialectal variants, while Bahmaie as a variant of Luri has its own kinship terms. For instance, the paternal uncle is addressed as *Amu* in Persian and as *Tate* in Bahmaie. In this study, we attempt to specify the factors affecting the speakers' choices among these pairs of terms. Identifying such factors and delineating the circumstances under which these changes happen can add to our understanding of regional changes in favor of the dominant culture and language. These findings can add valuable information to the existing body of knowledge on kinship terms, socio-cultural studies, language change, language imperilment, and intra-cultural communication.

Kinship terms, with linguistic and sociological significance (Parkin 1989), have been in the focus of many studies. In a recent study, Wierzbicka (2017) worked on the meanings of kinship terms in English and European countries, noting that they should be approved by ordinary native speakers and posited in line with the whole picture of kin term uses. To reach this developmental and cross-linguistic knowledge, semantic components are helpful. Acknowledging the value of semantics, Morozova (2019) focused on language contact as a viable tool for construction and reconstruction of kinship terms (borrowing), which might happen in the structure or the whole word. Sagdieva et al. (2019) moved further and stated that the use of kinship terms are indicators of genetic relationships. They investigated the use of kin terms in some languages such as Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkish, Uzbek and Uyghur, showing that each language has its own peculiarities, although they are included under the main Turkic class.

In Iran, a considerable number of studies have been done on the Persian dialects and their current status. For instance, Bistoon et al. (2020) worked on the semantic and pragmatic aspects of Hawrami (a Kurdish dialect spoken in the west of Iran) kinship terms. They considered age and education as two main factors affecting kin choice among Hawrami speakers. The results of the study also showed that older generations were constantly using Hawrami kin terms while younger speakers preferred Persian terms. Likewise, Saeidfar and Tohidian (2012) noted that the younger speakers demonstrated less knowledge about the old Isfahani dialect. Hasanvand Amozade (2014) confirmed that younger generations preferred Persian kinship terms at the mercy of Laki kin terms. Amini (2020), in another study, conducted a descriptive-analytical research on the Nænæji dialect spoken in Malayer County, Hamedan province, Iran. The findings of his study indicated that the use of kinship terms in this dialect is confined to the middle-up age groups. Additionally, migration, language contact, and urbanization were regarded as the reasons for the change of kin terms among Nænæji speakers. The frequent use of Persian equivalents for Nænæji kin terms confirmed the dominance and acceptance of Persian norms. For this reason, Nænæji was considered an endangered dialect in

Iran. Jamali Nesar and Gowhari (2020) conducted a survey on the use of Kalhori Kurdish and Persian kinship terms regarding age, education, and gender factors. Results of their study indicated that Kurdish terms were more frequently used by the participants. The findings also showed that variations of use were significant regarding education and age. The researchers ignored the context of use in their questionnaire.

The younger generation's tendency towards Persian is significant in the above-mentioned studies. Therefore, age is regarded as an important factor in studying kinship terms among Iranian speakers. Another important factor is the speakers' educational level. It is reported that dialectal terms are less frequent among higher educational levels. Gender is also considered to be a determinant factor in using kinship terms. Accordingly, all these factors were considered in this study focusing on the Bahmaie dialect.

Luri, rooted in the Indo-European languages, is a widely spoken dialect with diverse varieties used among different groups living in the South and Southwest of Iran (From Lorestan Province to Khuzestan and Kohgeloje-and-Boyerahmad provinces). The dialect of Bahmaie is one of the varieties of Luri dialect spoken in these provinces, especially in territories like Baghmalek, Ramhormoz, and the cities located in their proximity (Behbahan, Bahmaie, and Dehdasht). Among these cities, considerable linguistic variations have been observed in Ramhormoz, wherein more Persian native speakers are living. As Khan (2022) emphasized that the processes of linguistic change can be greatly understood by studying the context in which language contact is observed, territory, among others, was selected for in-depth study. Use of language at work, home, street, etc. regarding the interlocutor's language and social status as well as the presence of a third person determines the context in which we extract the data.

### **1.1. Ramhormoz city**

Ramhormoz, a city in the Eastern part of Khuzestan province, is divided into urban and rural parts. The urban area is the populated region wherein almost two-thirds of the permanent population lives. The rural area is the region of villages, farms, rivers, and a large area of uninhabited mountains and hills. Figure 1 shows the general outlines of Ramhormoz city, and Table 1 includes the population of the city reported from the National Census Center.

As the table indicates, most of the Ramhormoz population lives in the urban areas. Giving frequency of residents based on their age range illuminates the dominance of females over males. It also shows that age groups can be ranked in terms of frequency from 40 – above, 20–29, 30–39, to 15–19.

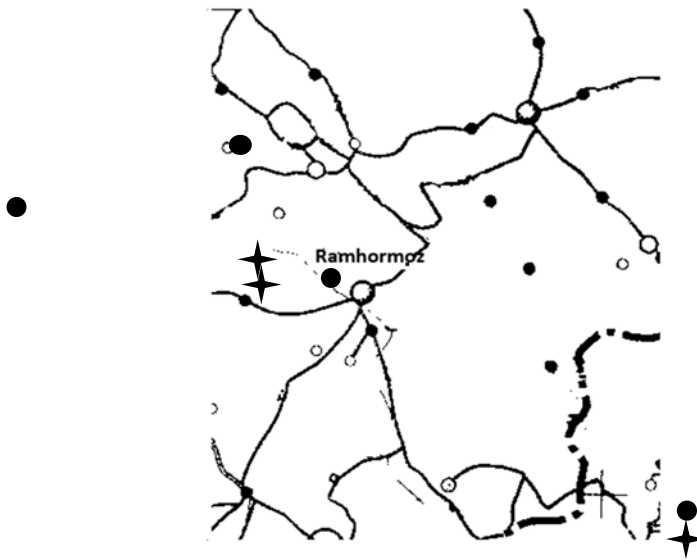
The 105,418 Ramhormozians are Muslims and fall into two linguistic groups: Persian and Bahmaie. Most of the Persian native speakers live in the urban regions and Bahmaie speakers mostly reside in rural areas. Since the majority of governmental organizations, private and public companies, hospitals, gas stations, institutions and universities are located in the main area of the city, people from the

rural areas frequently commute to the urban areas. This accounts for frequent interactions between people across various contexts which may cause variation in their language use. This variation is more observed in the use of lexical items rather than structures or speech sounds. Among various plausible classifications of vocabularies, the researchers decided to pay close attention to the factors of inconsistency and alternations of kinship terms among Ramhormozian speakers.

*Table 1. Frequency and percentages of males and females across rural and urban areas of Ramhormoz regarding their age (N=77082)*

Age group	Urban areas		Rural areas		Total	
	Female F(%)	Male F(%)	Female F(%)	Male F(%)	Female F(100%)	Male F(100%)
15-19	3489 (63.92)	3832 (66.71)	1969(36.08)	1912 (33.29)	5458	5744
20-29	8262 (67.52)	7829 (65.63)	3975(32.48)	4099 (34.37)	12237	11928
30-39	5591 (67.72)	6057 (70.49)	266 (32.28)	2535 (29.51)	8256	8592
40-above	7971(63.64)	8325 (67.45)	4554(36.36)	4017 (32.55)	12525	12342

*Note:* The total population of Ramhormoz is 195,418. The population of people below 15 was not included in the table.



Bahmaie  
Persian

**Figure 1. Locations in which Bahmaie dialect and Persian language are spoken**

### **1.2. Theoretical Background**

Following Feagin (2003), a quantitative sociolinguistic study of linguistic variation begins with the selection of linguistic variables depending on age, sex, social class, and ethnicity, or stylistic parameters such as causal, careful, or formal speech. Among different linguistic variables, it seems that kinship terms have the

potential of demonstrating such features. Indeed, kinship terms, as a universal feature of language, behold the cultural load of a community. People in their daily activities exhaustively refer to various kinds of kin (Wardhaugh 2006). Most societies make use of factors such as age, gender, generation, blood, and marriage in their kinship systems. Perhaps, the major reason that kinship systems are attractive for investigators is that one can “relate them with considerable confidence to the actual words that people use to describe a particular kin relationship” (Wardhaugh 2006: 229). Therefore, any change or variation in their use could possibly imply the speakers’ movement towards change in their social behaviors and language.

Kinship terms are socio-cognitive categories used to address our relatives (Racz et al. 2020). The use of these terms, as Suryanaryan and Khalil (2021) noted, depends on their roles in a specific society. These categories and roles are somehow culture-specific (Malone 2004). However, generally, they are designed for addressing and speaking about relatives (Suryanaryan & Khalil 2021). Holmes (2013) goes further and maintains that the use of kinship terms mirrors our cultural values and relationships. Similarly, Gaby (2017), points to the role of cultural context in understanding kinship term uses and Wierzbicka (2016) refers to kinship terms as the indicators of social realities, thoughts, and relationships. Therefore, it is implied that kinship terms can foreground social values, relations, and any differences in their uses can be attributed to the social changes.

Kinship terms vary across and within varieties of languages. They provide valuable information about the social structures and norms of a speech community (Khalil & Larina 2022). Picking up specific kinship terms in different contexts depends on different factors such as age, gender, solidarity, degree of intimacy, degree of distance, and social status (Keshavarz 2001). Khalil and Larina (2022) assert that kinship terms are “cultural messages and contain information about the norms, values, and social practices of a given society” (P 29). Cultural context is considered as the main indicator of kinship term uses. Age is also important in this regard (Suryanarayan & Khalil 2021, Geng 2015). For Manjulakshi (2004), the use of kinship terms is associated with the age, status, and gender. Likewise, Wardhaugh (2006) considered status, age, gender, intimacy, and race as the effective factors governing choices of kin terms.

In Persian and Bahmaie, distinct kinship terms are used to address relatives. For instance, *Amme* and *Mame* are the terms used to address the paternal aunt in Persian and Bahmaie, respectively. When the speaker is in a situation to choose one of these two terms, different factors can be influential. For instance, a speaker wanting to say ‘*I visited my aunt*’ might use ‘*Man amme ro didam*’ (in Persian) or ‘*Mo mame ro didom*’ (in Bahmaie), under certain circumstances. In this study, we were looking for the factors affecting this choice.

To reach this aim, the answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. To what extent are nonlinguistic factors of age, gender, educational status, and context influential in stylistic variation of Bahmaie kinship terms?

2. What are the main reasons for stylistic variation of kinship terms among Bahmaie dialect speakers?

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Participants**

All the participants selected for this study were born and raised in the common-geographical area of Ramhormoz city. The profession, gender, age, and status of the subjects were considered as effective and separate social variables. The subjects were randomly selected based on the age-range predefined cells. The cells included the age-range of 15–19, 20–29, 30–39 and 40–above. Though the age cell of the subjects was predetermined, their educational level, gender, and context of language use were not identified in advance. However, according to Feagin's (2003) suggestion, the two genders were kept numerically fair in each age group in order to confound its effects and differences with the other distinctions. Therefore, 320 questionnaires, which were distributed among each age group, were fairly handed out among two genders. Though it was attempted to survey an equal number of males and females, the number of questionnaires turned back to the researchers violated this presupposition. 45 questionnaires were incomplete or never received. From the 275 received questionnaires, social variables such as educational level and gender were identified as posteriori and correlated to the chosen linguistic variable.

The sampling procedure for this study was a stratified judgment sample. The reason for this selection was that the study only focused on Bahmaie speakers and overlooked Persian and other spoken languages. Other criteria were gender, educational level, age, and place of living, i.e. it was attempted to select equal speakers from both rural and urban areas.

It is worth noting that though the respondents' level of education and status has been considered as two separate social variables, their social class and ethnicity have been disregarded in the analysis. These important and influential variables in the language variation processes could be investigated in another study.

Feagin (2003) contends that except for studies that draw special attention to the language of children, "it is better to avoid speakers younger than adolescents, since there is the possibility of confounding phonological or grammatical development with local variation" (27). Following this suggestion, age 15 was set as the lowest age for filling out the questionnaires. It needs to be noted that age-grouping procedure was done according to the psychological, employment, marital status and cultural norms. Each age group reveals similarities in these factors.

### **2.2. Instrumentation**

Questionnaire is the best form for eliciting data in large-scale studies. Wardhaugh (2006) commented that questionnaires designed for the purpose of determining language variation must contain items which elicit data in a variety of contexts and circumstances. For this study, a questionnaire was used and the

speakers of both rural and urban areas were required to pick the Bahmaie or Persian kinship terms they would use in the determined contexts and circumstances. The questions were used to elicit what external linguistic variables were related to the selection and use of the kinship terms. The questionnaire, firstly, required the speakers to answer the bio-data items about their gender, educational level, marital and occupational status, and also the first language they acquired, their proficiency in Bahmaie dialect and Persian language, their preference in selecting Bahmaie or Persian for communicating with their spouses, relatives, and parents. Secondly, 32 items were provided which asked the speakers to pick variants of kinship terms they might use across contexts such as home, office, hospital, ceremony, etc. Also, variables such as third person presence regarding gender, language, and relational status of the interlocutors were taken into account in relation to the choice of kinship terms. The instrument was a researcher made scale which was designed based on the open ended items and piloted to a similar sample, the reliability and validity of which was reached through pilot study and expert judgment.

### **2.3. Determining kinship terms and contexts**

Since there are many kinship terms in Bahmaie, it was not possible to manage all in one study. So, observation was made in many predetermined and casual situations: in the valleys, cars, cabs, villages, hospitals, and many places where kinship terms were frequently used. The results of this kind of pilot study indicated that 13 types of kinship terms were used more than others (see Appendix A). So, it was decided to include these terms and disregard others. Similarly, to find the most plausible contexts wherein variation occurs, in addition to observation, the researchers conducted a pilot study asking the given respondents “when and where do you think stylistic variation may happen?” Answers led us to include 10 contexts and made use of different social variables in contextualizing the questions.

## **3. Results**

To begin with, frequency of females and males, educational level, occupational status, accommodation, and marital status of four determined age groups were given in Table 2.

As given in Table 2, there were more males assigned to different age groups than females (54.89% vs. 45.07%). Regarding educational level, most of the 15–19 age group speakers were students in schools or universities (100%). 39.63% of the participants did not have a high school diploma, including 12.73% from the 40–above age group. Most of the participants with high school diplomas were in the 20–29 age group. Likewise, BA and MA degrees were more seen in the 20–29 group. Interestingly, most of the students at university or pre-university were in the 15–19 age group. About 37.08% of the subjects were unemployed, 27.27% were students, and 17.82% of them were employees or self-employed. 46.54% of them lived in rural areas and 53.46% live in urban areas. About 55.46% of the



subjects were married and 44.36% were single. Table 3, as discussed in the instrumentation section, depicts the subjects’ answers indicating the first language they learned, their proficiency in Bahmaie dialect and Persian language compared to their parents, and their preference for Bahmaie or Persian while communicating with their spouses, relatives, and parents. According to the table, 80% of the subjects acquired Bahmaie as the first dialect and 20%, mostly belonging to the 15–19 age group, replied that they first acquired the Persian language. In terms of proficiency in Bahmaie, about 75.3% of the subjects believed that they are weaker than their parents. In contrast, 84.4% of them answered that they are better than their parents at speaking Persian.

*Table 2. Frequency and percentages of speakers’ gender, educational level, occupational status, accommodation, and marital status based on their age groups (N= 275)*

	Age group								Total F (%)
	15-19		20-29		30-39		40-above		
	F (%)		F (%)		F (%)		F (%)		
<b>Gender</b>									
Male	36(13.09)		45(16.36)		40(14.55)		30(10.90)		151 (54.89)
Female	34(12.37)		40(14.55)		30(10.90)		20(7.28)		124(45.07)
<b>275 (100)</b>									
<b>Educational level</b>									
Under diploma	28(10.18)		13(4.72)		33(12)		35(12.73)		109(39.63)
Diploma	12(4.37)		38(13.81)		13(4.72)		0		63(22.9)
Pre- or university students	30(10.91)		0		0		0		30(10.91)
Associate degree	0		6(2.18)		8(2.90)		5(1.82)		19(6.91)
BA	0		22(8)		11(4)		10(3.64)		43(15.64)
MA	0		6(2.19)		5(1.82)		0		11(4.01)
<b>275 (100)</b>									
<b>Occupational status</b>									
unemployed	12(4.37)		40(14.55)		27(9.82)		23(8.34)		102(37.08)
Student	58(21.09)		17(6.18)		0		0		75(27.27)
Employee	0		11(4.01)		23(8.36)		15(5.45)		49(17.82)
Self-employment	0		17(6.18)		20(7.27)		12(4.37)		49(17.82)
<b>275 (100)</b>									
<b>Accommodation</b>									
Rural	30(10.91)		45(16.36)		30(10.91)		23(8.36)		133(46.54)
Urban	40(14.55)		40(14.55)		40(14.55)		27(9.81)		142(53.46)
<b>275 (100)</b>									
<b>Marital status</b>									
Married	4(1.45)		34(12.37)		65(23.64)		50(18.18)		153(55.64)
Single	66(24)		51(18.54)		5(1.82)		0		122(44.36)
<b>275 (100)</b>									

Note: F: frequency of distribution, %: of use by speakers.

Table 3. Frequency and percentages of subjects' answers to the preference questions

	Age group				Total
	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-above	
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
<b>First language</b>					
Bahmaie	15(5.45)	85(30.91)	70(25.45)	50(18.18)	220(80)
Persian	55(20)	0	0	0	55(20)
<b>Proficiency in Luri compared to parents</b>					
Better	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Equal	12(27.15%)	25(29.5%)	16(23%)	15(30%)	68(24.7%)
Weaker		60(70.5%)	54(77%)	35(70%)	207(75.3%)
58(82.85%) <b>Proficiency in Persian compared to parents</b>					
Better	50(71.4%)	75(88.2%)	64(91.5%)	43(86%)	232(84.4%)
Equal	6(8.6%)	8(9.4%)	6(8.5%)	7(14%)	27(9.8%)
Weaker	14(20%)	2(2.4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	16(5.8%)
<b>Language used to speak with spouse</b>					
Persian	4(100%)	4(11.8%)	3(4.6%)	4(8%)	15(9.8%)
Bahmaie	0(0%)	30(88.2%)	62(95.4%)	46(92%)	138(90.2%)
<b>Language used to speak with parents</b>					
Persian	25(35.7%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	25(9.1%)
Bahmaie	45(64.3%)	85(100%)	70(100%)	50(100%)	250(90.9%)
<b>Language used to speak with old relatives</b>					
Persian	6(8.6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	6(2.2%)
Bahmaie	64(91.4%)	85(100%)	70(100%)	50(100%)	269(97.8%)
<b>Which language do you encourage your children to speak?</b>					
Bahmaie	0(0%)	12(35.3%)	5(7.7%)	7(14%)	24 (15.7%)
Persian	4(100%)	22(64.7%)	60(92.3%)	43(86%)	129(84.3%)

About 90.9% of married participants preferred to speak Bahmaie with their spouses. Except for 9.1% of the subjects belonging to the 15–19 age group, 97.8% picked Bahmaie to speak with their parents, about 97.8% used Bahmaie to speak with their old relatives. Among those married people with children, 84% tended to encourage their children to speak and use Persian.

Following these questions, subjects were asked to answer which form of kinship terms they use across different contexts. Table 4 and 5 respectively show the general frequency and distribution of kinship terms regarding the females' and males' age groups.

Results in Table 4 indicate that most of the females in the 15–19 age group used Persian form of kinship terms. They only preferred to call their grandfathers and grandmothers in Bahmaie more than other kinship terms – 39.16% for ba:va: (grandfather) and 48.35% for nænə (grandmother). Four Bahmaie kinship terms ha:lu: (uncle), ta:tə (uncle), ma:mə (aunt), and xa:lə (aunt) were most significantly replaced by Persian equivalents da:ji: (96.5%), æmu: (95.4%), æmə (97.42%), and xa:lə (95.95%).

**Table 4. Frequency of distribution and percentages of kinship terms among females of four age groups**

Kinship terms	Age group (females)							
	15–19		20–29		30–39		40-above	
	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)
bɑ:bɑ: / bəʊ	912(83.82) / 176(16.18)	1088	800(62.5) / 480(37.50)	1280	390(40.62) / 570(59.38)	960	270(42.18) / 370(57.81)	640
mɑ:mɑ:n / dɑ:	914(84.0) / 174(16.0)	1088	784(61.25) / 496(38.75)	1280	405(42.19) / 555(57.81)	960	280(43.75) / 360(56.25)	640
bɑ:bɑ: bɔ:zɔ:rg / bɑ:vɑ:	662(60.84) / 426(39.16)	1088	610(47.65) / 670(52.35)	1280	390(40.62) / 570(59.38)	960	130(20.31) / 510(79.69)	640
mɑ:mɑ:n bɔ:zɔ:rg / nænə	562(51.65) / 526(48.35)	1088	524(40.93) / 756(59.07)	1280	45(4.69) / 915(95.31)	960	90(14.06) / 550(85.94)	640
dɑ:dɑ:f / gəʊ	968(88.97) / 120(11.03)	1088	782(61.09) / 498(38.91)	1280	368(38.33) / 592(61.67)	960	275(42.97) / 365(57.03)	640
ɑ:dʒi: / dædɑ	1004(92.28) / 84(7.72)	1088	938(73.28) / 342(26.72)	1280	577(60.1) / 383(39.9)	960	410(64.06) / 230(25.94)	640
æmu: / tɑ:tɑ	1038(95.4) / 50(4.6)	1088	1185(92.57) / 95(7.43)	1280	690(71.87) / 270(28.13)	960	440(67.75) / 200(32.25)	640
dɑ:ji: / hɑ:lu:	1050(96.5) / 38(3.5)	1088	1195(93.35) / 85(6.65)	1280	720(75) / 240(25)	960	430(67.19) / 210(32.81)	640
æmə / mɑ:mə	1060(97.42) / 28(2.58)	1088	1188(92.81) / 92(7.19)	1280	720(75) / 240(25)	960	430(67.19) / 210(32.81)	640
xɑ:lə / xɑ:læ	1044(95.95) / 44(4.05)	1088	1195(93.35) / 85(6.65)	1280	728(75.83) / 232(25.17)	960	445(69.53) / 195(30.47)	640
pəsær / kɔr	990(90.99) / 98(9.01)	1088	1050(82.03) / 230(17.97)	1280	668(69.58) / 292(30.42)	960	255(39.84) / 385(60.16)	640
dɔxtær / dɔwær	988(90.8) / 100(9.2)	1088	1054(82.34) / 226(17.66)	1280	675(70.31) / 285(29.69)	960	265(41.40) / 375(58.60)	640
pəsær xɑ:lə / xɔrzu	956(87.86) / 132(12.14)	1088	1123(87.73) / 157(12.27)	1280	728(75.83) / 232(25.17)	960	420(65.62) / 220(34.38)	640

Likewise, in 20–29 age group, speakers exhaustively tended to use Persian forms of hɑ:lu: (uncle), tɑ:tɑ (uncle), mɑ:mə (aunt), and xɑ:læ (aunt). However, they used Bahmaie forms of bɑ:vɑ: (grandfather) and nænə (grandmother) more than their Persian equivalents (52.35% and 59.07% vs. 47.65% and 40.93%, respectively). Stated otherwise, Persian equivalents were favored more.

Among 30–39 age group, five Bahmaie forms of kinship terms were used more than their Persian equivalents: bɑ:bɑ: 40.62% vs. bəʊ 59.38 (father), mɑ:mɑ:n 42.19% vs. dɑ: 57.81% (mother), bɑ:bɑ: bɔ:zɔ:rg 40.62 vs. bɑ:vɑ: 59.38 (grandfather), mɑ:mɑ:n bɔ:zɔ:rg 4.69 vs. nænə 95.31 (grandmother), dɑ:dɑ:f 38.33 vs. gəʊ 61.67 (brother). Other kinship terms were more used in Persian forms. Similarly, 40-above age group reported to use these Bahmaie forms in addition to kɔr and dɔwær instead of dɔxtær (girl) and pəsær (boy).

In Table 5, the frequency and distribution of kinship terms used by male speakers were shown. Males in 15–19 age group, in contrast with females who outstandingly favored Persian words for kinship terms, preferred to use nænə (52.41) more than mɑ:mɑ:n bɔ:zɔ:rg (47.59). Other kinship terms, except for bɑ:vɑ: (46.95), were mostly used in Persian form. In 20–29 age group, male speakers made use of Bahmaie words for bəʊ (54.79), dɑ: (54.13), bɑ:vɑ: (56.86), and nænə

(61.99). However, for other terms they tended to use Persian equivalents. This tendency is also observed among members of 30–39 age group, though they just used Bahmaie words of *bɑ:va:* (51.09), and *nænə* (59.22) more than Persian ones. Among 40–above speakers, the same as 20–29 group, *bəu* (65.16), *da:* (69.47), *bɑ:va:* (68.25), and *nænə* (75.76) were used more than their Persian equivalents

Table 5. Frequency of distribution and percentages of kinship terms among males of four age groups

Kinship terms	Age group (males)							
	15–19		20–29		30–39		40-above	
	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)
<i>bɑ:bɑ:/bəu</i>	946(80.99) / 222(19.01)	1168	651(45.21) / 789(54.79)	1440	674(52.65) / 606(47.25)	1280	332(34.84) / 621(65.16)	953
<i>mɑ:mɑ:n / da:</i>	992(81.18) / 230(18.82)	1222	678(45.87) / 800(54.13)	1478	656(51.25) / 624(48.75)	1280	291(30.53) / 662(69.47)	953
<i>bɑ:bɑ: bɑ:zɑ:rg / bɑ:va:</i>	748(53.05) / 662(46.95)	1410	620(43.14) / 817(56.86)	1437	632(48.91) / 660(51.09)	1292	302(31.75) / 649(68.25)	951
<i>mɑ:mɑ:n bɑ:zɑ:rg / nænə</i>	572(47.59) / 630(52.41)	1202	547(38.01) / 892(61.99)	1439	522(40.78) / 758(59.22)	1280	231(24.24) / 722(75.76)	953
<i>da:da:f / gəu</i>	994(82.69) / 208(17.31)	1202	909(63.16) / 530(36.84)	1439	802(62.56) / 478(37.44)	1280	504(52.99) / 447(47.01)	951
<i>ɑ:dʒi: / dædæ</i>	1076(88.05) / /146(11.95)	1222	984(66.53) / 495(33.47)	1479	908(72.99) / 336(27.01)	1244	630(66.25) / 321(35.75)	951
<i>æmu: / ta:tə</i>	1038(95.4) / 50(4.6)	1088	1232(85.61) / 207(14.39)	1439	1154(89.87) / 130(10.13)	1284	774(81.13) / 180(18.87)	954
<i>da:ji: / ha:lu:</i>	1154(89.32) / 138(10.68)	1292	1238(86.03) / 201(13.97)	1439	1140(89.06) / 140(10.94)	1280	769(80.86) / 182(19.14)	951
<i>æmə / mɑ:mə</i>	1116(94.25) / 68(5.75)	1184	1224(85.06) / 215(14.94)	1439	1098(85.78) / 182(14.22)	1280	739(77.46) / 215(22.54)	954
<i>xɑ:lə / xɑ:læ</i>	1142(85.35) / 196(14.65)	1338	1191(82.08) / 260(17.92)	1451	1134(88.59) / 146(11.41)	1280	774(81.13) / 177(18.87)	951
<i>pəsær / kər</i>	1066(87.23) / 156(12.77)	1222	1089(75.68) / 350(14.32)	1439	1066(83.41) / 212(16.59)	1278	632(66.46) / 319(35.54)	951
<i>dəxtær / dɔwær</i>	1070(87.56) / 152(12.44)	1222	1066(74.08) / 373(25.92)	1439	1076(84.19) / 202(15.81)	1278	616(64.77) / 335(35.23)	951
<i>pəsær xɑ:lə / xɔrzu</i>	1146(94.4) / 68(5.6)	1214	1031(71.4) / 413(28.6)	1444	904(70.73) / 374(29.27)	1278	605(63.42) / 349(36.58)	954

After presenting the frequency and distribution of kinship terms among females and males of different age groups, it was found that the movement towards Persian forms of kinship terms was common among all speakers. This variation, as discussed by language analysts, happens for some factors. The first factor can be the context of use. Table 6 presents the speakers’ tendency towards using Persian or Bahmaie forms of kinship terms.

Based on the results depicted in Table 6, age group 15–19, regardless of the context, used Persian terms more than Bahmaie ones. 20–29 age group members used Bahmaie terms in contexts such as home, shopping center, educational setting, hospital, park, and ceremony, but used Persian in other contexts such as work, party, and phone talk. Speakers in the 30–39 age group used Persian terms in contexts such as party, educational setting, and office while they reported using Bahmaie terms across home, shopping center, hospital, park, work, ceremony, and phone

talk. 40–above age group speakers reported to use more Bahmaie terms than Persian ones in all contexts except party.

*Table 6. Frequency and percentages of Persian and Bahmaie kinship terms across different contexts*

Contexts	Age group				
	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-above	Total
	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (100%) Persian Bahmaie
Home	652(35.4)	514(27.9)	445(24.18)	229(12.45)	1840
	258(17.6)	590(40.35)	488(33.4)	426(29.14)	1462
Work*	802(28.8)	873(31.34)	678(24.35)	432(15.52)	2785
	108(14.08)	214(27.9)	229(29.86)	216(28.17)	767
Shopping center	766(31.9)	760(31.66)	541(22.55)	333(13.88)	2400
	144(13.8)	344(33.1)	235(22.62)	316(30.42)	1039
Party	770(74.1)	701(67.46)	736(70.84)	406(39.07)	1039
	140(14.15)	403(40.7)	171(17.28)	276(27.88)	990
Educational setting	742(31.5)	654(27.75)	614(26.07)	346(14.69)	2356
	168(13.8)	450(37.06)	293(24.14)	303(24.96)	1214
Hospital	702(30.6)	667(29.07)	599(26.12)	326(14.22)	2294
	39(3.5)	437(39.61)	314(28.47)	313(28.38)	1103
Park	716(33.02)	650(30)	506(23.34)	296(13.66)	2168
	194(13.85)	454(32.4)	401(28.63)	352(25.13)	1401
Ceremony	684(31.03)	650(29.5)	547(24.82)	323(14.66)	2204
	146(11.32)	454(35.22)	363(28.17)	326(25.3)	1289
Office**	822(27.63)	913(31)	776(26.34)	436(14.8)	2947
	82(13.31)	191(31)	130(21.11)	213(34.58)	616
Phone talk	676(30.03)	743(33)	509(22.62)	323(14.35)	2251
	234(18)	342(26.3)	398(30.62)	326(25.07)	1300

\*when the speaker is working in an office

\*\*when one of the speakers' relatives work there

Another factor reported to be effective in language variation is the educational level of the interlocutors. Table 7 shows the results of different age groups' use of kinship terms in relation to their interlocutors' educational status. According to the table, the speakers of four age groups tended to use Persian terms in talking with interlocutors with higher and same-level educational status. For interlocutors with lower educational levels, though it is shown that Persian terms were more preferable, differences were not outstandingly significant. In Table 8, the effects of the interlocutor's dialect on the choices of kinship terms are shown.

Based on the results given in the table, females in 15–19 and 20–29 age groups used more Persian forms of kinship terms when the interlocutor spoke Bahmaie. However, in 30–39 and 40–above groups, speakers selected Bahmaie terms. In the same situation, except for the 40–above group, male speakers of the other groups used Persian terms more than Bahmaie terms. In situations where the interlocutor speaks Persian, both females and males in all age groups, replied that they would

pick Persian kinship terms more than their Bahmaie equivalents. And finally, in situations where both Persian and Bahmaie are used, females in all groups, except 40–above, used Persian terms more preferably.

**Table 7. frequency and percentages of Persian and Bahmaie kinship terms regarding educational status**

Educational Status	Age group				
	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-above	Total
	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (100%) Persian Bahmaie
Higher Educational level	802(28.9) 108(13.6)	839(30.23) 265(33.38)	692(24.94) 215(27.08)	442(15.93) 206(25.95)	2775 794
Lower Educational level	742(31.55) 740(38.38)	650(29.39) 452(23.45)	474(21.43) 433(22.46)	346(15.65) 303(15.72)	2212 1928
Equal Educational level	744(32.4) 166(18)	694(30.23) 410(32.29)	506(22.04) 398(31.34)	352(15.34) 296(23.31)	2296 1270

**Table 8. frequency and percentages of Persian and Bahmaie kinship terms regarding interlocutor's language**

Age group	Interlocutor speaks Bahmaie		Interlocutor speaks Persian		Interlocutors Speak both Bahmaie and Persian	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>15-19</b>						
Persian F (%)	962 (76.35)	992(69.37)	1240(93.51)	1338 (95.3)	788(87.95)	820(90.7)
Bahmaie F (%)	298 (23.65)	438(30.63)	86(6.49)	66 (4.7)	108(12.05)	84(9.3)
Total F (100%)	1260	1430	1326	1404	896	904
<b>20-29</b>						
Persian F (%)	957(62.22)	755 (42.6)	1421(91.26)	1575(89.69)	837(80.4)	737(63.15)
Bahmaie F (%)	581(37.78)	1017(57.4)	136(8.74)	181(10.31)	204(19.6)	430(36.85)
Total F (100%)	1538	1772	1557	1756	1041	1167
<b>30-39</b>						
Persian F (%)	510 (46.57)	864(54.06)	765(68.49)	1372(87.55)	510(66.66)	850(81.42)
Bahmaie F (%)	585 (53.43)	734(45.94)	352(31.51)	195(12.45)	255(33.34)	194(18.58)
Total F (100%)	1095	1598	1117	1567	765	1044
<b>40-above</b>						
Persian F (%)	275(38.46)	564 (46.84)	490(62.82)	799 (68.47)	220(42.3)	490(62.9)
Bahmaie F (%)	440 (61.54)	640(53.16)	290(37.18)	368 (31.43)	300(57.7)	289(37.1)
Total F (100%)	715	1204	780	1167	520	779

The last factor considered as effective in language variation among Bahmaie speakers was third person presence. Speakers of all age groups were asked to answer what form of kinship terms they selected in a situation where a third person, male or female, was present nearby. Results are presented in Table 9. As the results showed, speakers in all age groups reported that they used Persian kinship terms whenever a third person was present during their conversation with an interlocutor.

*Table 9. frequency and percentages of Persian and Bahmaie kinship terms regarding third person presence*

Age group	Third person is a female		Third person is a male	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>15-19</b>				
Persian F (%)	1518 (76.35)	1764 (69.37)	1442(93.51)	1861(95.3)
Bahmaie F (%)	158 (23.65)	186 (30.63)	148(6.49)	186 (4.7)
<b>Total F (100%)</b>	1676	1950	1590	2047
<b>20-29</b>				
Persian F (%)	1731(62.22)	1822 (42.6)	1708(91.26)	1796(89.69)
Bahmaie F (%)	362(37.78)	503(57.4)	364(8.74)	547(10.31)
<b>Total F (100%)</b>	2093	2325	2072	2343
<b>30-39</b>				
Persian F (%)	1092 (46.57)	1165 (54.06)	949(68.49)	1662(87.55)
Bahmaie F (%)	510 (53.43)	303(45.94)	615(31.51)	416(12.45)
<b>Total F (100%)</b>	2412	1468	1564	2078
<b>40-above</b>				
Persian F (%)	600(38.46)	998 (46.84)	605(62.82)	935 (68.47)
Bahmaie F (%)	550 (61.54)	487 (53.16)	445(37.18)	619 (31.43)
<b>Total F (100%)</b>	1150	1485	1050	1554

#### 4. Discussion

This study attempted to examine language variation among Bahmaie (a variant of Luri dialect) speakers living in Ramhormoz city, Khuzestan Province, Iran. The main objective of the study was to find out what factors, mainly nonlinguistic ones, might affect language variation in that specific part of Iran. To pursue this aim, a questionnaire with 32 questions related to the use of kinship terms across different contexts was designed and handed out among Bahmaie speakers. The findings and their related discussions are presented below.

##### 4.1. Speakers' judgments of their proficiency in Bahmaie and Persian

To begin with, the speakers were required to answer how they judge their proficiency in Bahmaie and Persian compared to their parents. Most of them believed that their proficiency in Bahmaie is weaker than their parents' (75.3%); however, they know Persian better than their parents (84.4%). This judgment means that the expansion of relationships, developments in technology especially in mass media, migration, studying at high academic levels which are more ostensibly observable among new generations, blurred the demarcation lines of Bahmaie dialect and Persian language. Through these changes and developments, Bahmaie dialect with its vocabularies and structures are to be weakened and forgotten. Instead, Persian language is expanding its dominance.

Though most married speakers reported that they used Bahmaie for communicating with their spouses, parents, and old relatives, they encouraged their children to learn and use Persian more extensively (84.3%). The reason for using Bahmaie dialect to talk with their spouses, parents, and old relatives is 'ease of

communication’. Most parents and old people, particularly in rural areas, do not know Persian well and this inability forced others to talk with them in Bahmaie dialect. When the subjects were asked to write their reasons for using Bahmaie or Persian, different reasons were given. The main ones are given in Table 10. As the table shows, the main reasons for using Bahmaie were preserving it as a mother tongue and making communication easier with others. Ease of communication in society, making progress, higher applicability of Persian, future needs, and even keeping prestige were considered as some reasons for learning and using Persian by children.

*Table 10. Speakers’ reasons for encouraging their children to speak Bahmaie or Persian*

	Age group			
	15–19	20–29	30–39	40–above
<b>Bahmaie</b>	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– this is our mother tongue</li> <li>– to understand our culture</li> <li>– to retain our nobility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– keeping this dialect alive</li> <li>– this is our common language</li> <li>– this is our mother tongue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– its use is easy</li> <li>– common language among relatives</li> <li>– this is our mother tongue</li> <li>– for keeping sincerity</li> <li>– some relatives do not know Persian well</li> </ul>
<b>Persian</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– common language in society</li> <li>– for the future needs</li> <li>– For the ease of communication</li> <li>– more prestigious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– to make progress</li> <li>– learning our formal language</li> <li>– to learn social customs</li> <li>– Persian is more applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– for the ease of communication</li> <li>– better future</li> <li>– understanding our society</li> <li>– learning our formal language</li> <li>– to make progress</li> <li>– for success in schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– it is necessary for communication</li> <li>– young boys cannot understand Bahmaie</li> </ul>

The main implication is that Bahmaie speakers believed that learning Persian provides more opportunities for their children in the future and somehow, they see success connected to the proficient use of Persian in academic and non-academic situations.

#### **4.2. Use of kinship terms by Bahmaie speakers across age groups**

The results of using kinship terms among different age groups of Bahmaie speakers indicated that some of the terms are about to be changed and replaced by their Persian equivalent. The main evidence for this claim is that 15–19 age group with more than 90% preferred to use Persian forms for ha:lu: (uncle), ta:tə (uncle), ma:mə (aunt), and xa:læ (aunt). This trend with a little difference was observed among other age groups. This unity of preference regardless of age, gender, and even contexts means that use of these kinship terms is about to be forgotten. Wolfram (2006) proposed that simultaneous use of the same term across different



situations can be regarded as the sign of linguistic change. Speakers' use of Persian kinship terms for ha:lu:, ta:tə, ma:mə, and xa:læ, regardless of the contextual and environmental factors, indicates that they are accelerating the changing process of the terms. Likewise, Labov (2010: 9) argues that "within the speech community, change in progress is reflected by the steady advance of younger speakers over older speakers within each social group". This trend reflects the increase in levels of change during the first language acquisition.

To see if this tendency towards using Persian kinship terms by Bahmaie speakers is a stylistic variation, different social variables were examined. The first factor was general contexts such as home, party, school, hospital, etc. Findings indicated that regardless of the context, 15–19 age group speakers favored the Persian terms and 40–above members favored Bahmaie terms. It means that parents' insistence on encouraging their children to learn and use Persian has been reflected in all contexts. And it can be implied that contexts such as those mentioned in Table 6 do not affect the 15–19 age group speakers' use of kinship terms. For the 40–above age group, variation is not systematic. As a matter of fact, their diction is being fixed and changes in some vocabularies are more difficult than other age groups. Hence, with observing some variation in their use of kinship terms, no systematic tendency was observed. Nevertheless, results indicated that context affected 20–29 and 30–39 age groups' use of kinship terms. It seems that they vary their use of kinship terms based on the contexts.

The second factor supposed to be effective in stylistic variation was the educational level of the interlocutors. Bahmaie speakers over different age groups reported that they highly preferred to use Persian kinship terms during conversation with speakers of higher and the same educational level (2775 vs. 794 and 2296 vs. 1270, respectively). However, this difference was not so significant for lower educational levels (2212 vs. 1928). So, it can be concluded that stylistic variation towards using Persian kinship terms while talking with a speaker with a higher educational level is systematic. This systematicity is not surely generalized for lower and same educational level speakers.

The third factor found to be important in language variation was the language of interlocutors. The subjects were asked to answer what kinship terms they use during communication with a Bahmaie or Persian speaker. According to the results given in Table 8, both males and females in the 40–above age group and females in the 30–39 age group used Bahmaie kinship terms more than Persian ones during conversation with a Bahmaie speaker. Males of 30–39 and females and males of 1519 and 20–29 age groups used Persian terms more than Bahmaie ones. In talking with a Persian speaker, all age groups significantly used Persian kinship terms. For the contexts with mixed language use, except for females in 40–above age groups, the speakers used Persian kinship terms. So, the interlocutor is important in choosing kinship terms. This stylistic variation was more observed among 30–39 and 40–above age groups.

The last factor considered in relation with stylistic variation among Bahmaie speakers was third person presence during conversation with an interlocutor. Results of analyzing this factor in Table 9 demonstrated that third person presence was not influential, at least for the use of kinship terms among Bahmaie speakers. Some Bahmaie kinship terms are about to be replaced by their Persian equivalents. Bahmaie speakers especially in 15–19 and 20–29 age groups are internalizing these changes and without attention to the context, educational level, interlocutors' language, and third person presence use them in their everyday interactions. These changes are common among males and females. In other words, in the context of Ramhormoz, age, as a non-linguistic factor, is more important in language variation than gender.

## 5. Conclusion

This study examined the stylistic variation of kinship terms among Bahmaie dialect speakers living in Ramhormoz, an eastern city in Khuzestan province, Iran. The factors investigated in this regard were age, gender, educational level, and context of use. The findings showed that age is an important variable in stylistic variation of kinship terms among Bahmaie speakers. The 15–19 age group reported to use Persian terms more frequently. They believe that Persian is a prestigious language and they should get accustomed to it for a more successful future life and communication. The convergence of Bahmaie dialect with Persian is rooted in its limited areas of use, lower social status, lack of documentation, and absence in the media. This convergence and shift from the local dialect to the formal national language have put this dialect in danger, and this needs to be attenuated by the speakers and linguists. As Epps et al. (2022) warn, the rates of language endangerment are sharply increasing over recent years. Lack of linguistic diversity has been considered as evidence for this language change and loss. Additionally, the changes in using linguistic varieties in cultural contexts imply the practice of language change and the culture reproduced in that variety (Ibid). The dialectal changes observed in Ramhormoz and the cultural contact have endangered the Bahmaie dialect. Therefore, it is required to study this prediction in detail in order to identify the main factors and provide insightful findings for making facilitative decisions.

The language of interlocutors was also effective in kinship choices. This finding is in line with the sociolinguistic theories acknowledging the roles of interlocutors' language and status in communication. The speakers' choices of kinship terms based on the context and the addresses confirmed that nonlinguistic factors are significant in dialect change and communication preferences. These insights offer significant implications for the studies of language change, language dominance and maintenance, stylistic variation, and effects of language contact. Also, understanding the factors that affect kinship choices enriches our comprehension of universal models of language change. At the same time, in-depth

knowledge about the factors affecting these changes can hinder language imperialism and promote cultural maintenance.

Educational attainment was also found to be important in stylistic variation of kinship terms. Most of the educated speakers in our study preferred to use Persian as the higher status language of communication. This acceptance of Persian terms and norms is in line with the process of uniformity. Labov (1972) and Lass (1997) pointed to the similar processes occurring over time. Therefore, the interaction of uniformity and linguistic variability in regions like Ramhormoz shows the effects of Persian language and the tendencies towards producing linguistic and cultural changes in this region. Additionally, as Epps et al. (2022) noted, these findings can be consistent with cross-linguistic and cross-cultural changes and insightful in making possible predictions.

The correlation of age and language variation, as Sankoff and Thibault (1981) claimed, may be regarded as evidence of language change. The high frequency of Persian kinship terms across different contexts in this study suggests that Bahmaie dialect is about to be Persified. This process of change and hegemony of Persian terms was in line with language imperialism. As language imperialism is defined as a theory analyzing the associations between the dominant and the dominated culture (Philipson 2013), the changes in the subcultures in favor of the dominant culture within a country like Iran is also regarded as language imperialism. Different signs of linguistic change can be traced in subcultures like Luri. In this study, the changes in the use of kinship terms over different contexts were observed to be the signs of Persian dominance over the Bahmaie speakers' dialect. Lack of Bahmaie kinship terms in the youths' discourse is an evidence for this dominance. The new generation tend to use Persian kinship terms and this is dangerous for the Bahmaie culture and dialect. Philipson (2013) noted that such changes in discourse are the symptoms of linguistic imperialism. In fact, the power of the dominant language, Persian, is negotiated and practiced in the discourse of the new generation of Bahmaie speakers, and this structure is an imperialist structure. According to Obler (1993), retrieving less-frequent items is difficult. Therefore, if the new Bahmaie generation continues using Persian terms, they might forget the Bahmaie equivalents due to the Persian dominance. Erfani (2013) and Aliakbari & Khodakarami (2013) emphasize that it is necessary to provide opportunities such as holding seminars and conferences, publishing books, budgeting research projects, for making speakers aware of this language change. Therefore, Bahmaie scholars along with sociolinguists should shoulder this responsibility and save Bahmaie dialect.

The findings of this study were based on the age groups and some nonlinguistic factors. This grouping procedure might be a limitation for the generalization of these findings. Similar studies with different grouping procedures can be a good complement for the issues presented here.

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#### Appendix A: Kinship terms in Bahmaie dialect

English	Persian	Luri
father	/ba:ba:/	/bæʊ/
Mother	/ma:ma:n/	/dæ:/
grandfather	/ba:ba: bɔ:zɔ:rg/	/næna/
grandmother	/da:da:f/	/gæʊ/
brother	/a:dʒi:/	/dædə/

English	Persian	Luri
Sister	/æmu:/	/ta:tə/
uncle	/dɑ:ji:/	/ha:lu:/
uncle	/æmu:/	/ta:tə/
Aunt	/æmə/	/mɑ:mə/
Aunt	/xɑ:lə/	/xɑ:læ/
son/boy	/pəsær/	/kɔr/
daughter/girl	/dɔxtær/	/dɔwær/
cousin	/pəsær xɑ:lə/	/xɔrzu/

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