

LANGUAGE FACTSHEET



Farsi, Dari, Pashto & Tajik Facts

Understanding The Differences

Farsi and Dari are two languages that may appear similar in written form but have significant variations in their spoken variations.

Pashto, on the other hand, stands as a separate language with its own, unique characteristics.

Tajik is also related to Farsi and Dari but have veered in its written and spoken form.



Where are Farsi, Dari, Pashto and Tajik spoken?

Dari and Pashto are the two official languages of Afghanistan, whereas Farsi is the official language of Iran. Tajik, in the other hand, is the official language of Tajikistan.

Because of their proximity, shared history and influence, some of these languages are widely spoken in each one of these countries.

Dari is also known as the Afghan Farsi and is also spoken in Iran, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and other neighboring countries. Dari is often spoken as a common language by the other minorities that form part of the Afghan territory.

Farsi is the official language of Iran. It is also spoken by large sections of the population in neighboring countries (mainly in Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Bahrain, Iraq, and Oman).

Pashto is a different language from Dari and Farsi. Pashto is a member of the southeastern Iranian branch of Indo-Iranian languages spoken in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran. It has a rich oral tradition of poetry and storytelling.

Tajik is one of the official languages of Tajikistan (the other being Russian) and is also spoken in parts of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and China. It belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family and is closely related to Farsi and Dari. In Tajikistan, Tajik serves as the primary language of communication and administration.



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Farsi



Farsi, also known as Persian, is spoken primarily in Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. It is one of the oldest languages in the world, with a rich literary heritage dating back over 2,500 years.



In Iran, Farsi is the official language and is spoken by approximately 0-70 million people, constituting the majority of the population. It is also spoken by significant minority communities in neighboring countries such as Afghanistan and Tajikistan.



In Afghanistan, Farsi is known as Dari and serves as one of the country's official languages alongside Pashto. It is spoken by around 15-20% of the population as a first language and is widely understood by the majority of Afghans.



In Tajikistan, Farsi is known as Tajik and is the official language of the country. It is spoken by approximately 80-90% of the population and is written in the Cyrillic script.



Farsi is part of the Indo-Iranian language family and shares similarities with other Iranian languages such as Pashto, Kurdish, and Balochi. It has also borrowed vocabulary from Arabic, Turkish, and other languages throughout its history.



Farsi has a rich literary tradition and has produced many renowned poets, writers, and scholars throughout history. It is known for its elegant poetry, intricate calligraphy, and contributions to art, philosophy, and science.

Dari



Dari, also known as Farsi, is one of the two official languages of Afghanistan as defined in the 2004 Constitution; the other is Pashto.



Widely spoken, Dari is the native language of approximately 25-55% of the Afghan population. It serves as the common language of the country and is understood by up to 78% of the people.



Dari plays a crucial role in Afghan society, serving as a common language for communication and administration. Its widespread use makes it essential for business, education, and government interactions.

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Farsi - cont. -



With its roots in Middle Persian and Old Persian, Dari has a rich linguistic heritage that continues to shape Afghan culture.

Pashto



There are three main varieties of Pashto: Northern Pashto, spoken mainly in Pakistan; Southern Pashto, spoken mainly in Afghanistan; and Central Pashto, spoken mainly in Pakistan.



The exact number of Pashto speakers is not known for sure, but most estimates range from 45 million to 55 million. Pashto is the first language of between 40% and 55% (11 to 15.4 million) of the people of Afghanistan, and 10% to 28% (2.8 to 7.8 million) speak it as a second language, and the total is around 18 or 19 million.



Pashto has about 25 million speakers in Pakistan (15% of the population) in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and the provinces of Balochistan, Mianwali, Attock, Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Tajik



Tajik is one of the official languages of Tajikistan and is also spoken in parts of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and China. It belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family and is closely related to Persian.



It is estimated that Tajik is spoken by approximately 7.2 million people in Tajikistan, representing around 80% of the population. Additionally, significant Tajik-speaking communities exist in neighboring countries.



Tajik is written using the Cyrillic script in Tajikistan, but it can also be found written in the Persian script in some regions.



Despite its regional variations, Tajik remains a vital language for cultural identity and communication in Central Asia.



Tips & Recommendations

- ✓ Make sure you know if your audience speaks Farsi, Dari, Pashto or Tajik, either as a first language, or as a second dialect or language.
- ✓ This means, rather opt for native-speaking interpreters and translators to guarantee accurate interpretation and translation.
- ✓ Always furnish interpreters with background information about the subject matter to facilitate accurate interpretation and avoid misunderstandings.
- ✓ Seek professionals with expertise in specific fields such as legal, medical, or technical, for precise and contextually relevant translations.
- ✓ Establish a feedback mechanism with your interpretation and translation service provider. Continuous feedback ensures that your specific needs and preferences are met, leading to improved communication outcomes and overall satisfaction.
- ✓ When using the interpreting and translation services of an agency, clearly communicate your requirements, deadlines, and desired outcomes to ensure the delivery of quality interpretation and translation services.



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