Numeral Composition 10+n

One aspect of numeral expressions is the sequential order of elements in complex cardinal numerals, i.e. numerals that combine one or more multiplicational bases with a single lower numeral to express numbers above 10. Due to differential behaviour, the composition of the numerals 11-19 were treated as a feature separate from the composition of the numerals 21-29. The present feature deals with the composition of the former series (see Numeral Composition 20+n for the latter). This aspect is not to be confused with the use of decimal versus vigesimal bases (see Decimal Numeral Base; Vigesimal Numeral Base). The positive value is defined as following the order 10+n, and the negative as following the reverse order, n+10, alternatively applying an altogether different organizing principle. 10 is here not to be regarded as necessarily homophonous or even synchronically fully recognizable from the expression of the numeral ‘10’. Instead, the formula stands for an underlying syntactic or morphological structure in which the form of the corresponding lower numeral *n*, and its relative sequential order as preposed or postposed in the complex expression, has been taken as diagnostic. Wakhi of Afghanistan exemplifies the order 10+n in the formation of the numerals 11-19, as can be seen in ‎(1), displaying all the numerals 1-20.

1. Wakhi, Afghanistan [wbl(a)] (Iranian)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ‘1’ | iːu |  | ‘11’ | ðas jiːu | 10+1 |
| ‘2’ | *buːj* |  | ‘12’ | *ðas buːj* | 10+2 |
| ‘3’ | *təruːj* |  | ‘13’ | *ðas truːj* | 10+3 |
| ‘4’ | *tsəbɨːr* |  | ‘14’ | *ðas tsəbɨːr* | 10+4 |
| ‘5’ | *paːnts* |  | ‘15’ | *ðas paːnts* | 10+5 |
| ‘6’ | *ɕaːd* |  | ‘16’ | *ðas ɕaːd* | 10+6 |
| ‘7’ | *ɨːb* |  | ‘17’ | *ðas ɨːb* | 10+7 |
| ‘8’ | *aːt* |  | ‘18’ | *ðas aːt* | 10+8 |
| ‘9’ | *naːu* |  | ‘19’ | *ðas naːu* | 10+9 |
| ‘10’ | *ðaːs* |  | ‘20’ | *biːst* |  |

The numeral composition order 10+n is present in a minority of the sample, in approximately a fourth of the languages, and primarily in the north, encompassing all Sino-Tibetan, Turkic and Burushaski varieties, but only a few of the Indo-Aryan and Iranian languages.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Feature value | # of varieties displaying it | % |
| Present | 14 | 24 |
| Absent | 45 | 76 |
| Indeterminate | 0 | 0 |