Numeral Composition 20+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 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 latter series (see Numeral Composition 10+n for the former). 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 20+n, and the negative as following the reverse order, n+20, alternatively applying an altogether different organizing principle. 20 is here not to be regarded as necessarily homophonous or even synchronically fully recognizable from the expression of the numeral ‘20’. 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. Iranian Shughni exemplifies the order 20+n in the formation of the numerals 21-29, as can be seen in ‎(1), displaying the numerals 1-30. As can be seen, the numerals 11-19 follow the same order, which however is not necessarily the case in all of the sample languages with a 20+n order.

1. Shughni [sgh(a)] (Iranian)

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| ‘1’ | jiːw |  | ‘11’ | jiðiːsat jiːw | 1x10+1 | ‘21’ | ðəðiːsat jiːw | 2x10+1 |
| ‘2’ | *ðəjyːn* |  | ‘12’ | *jiðiːsat ðəjyːn* | 1x10+2 | ‘22’ | *ðəðiːsat ðəjyːn* | 2x10+2 |
| ‘3’ | *haraːj* |  | ‘13’ | *jiðiːsat haraːj* | 1x10+3 | ‘23’ | *ðəðiːsat haraːj* | 2x10+3 |
| ‘4’ | *tsavoːr* |  | ‘14’ | *jiðiːsat tsavoːr* | 1x10+4 | ‘24’ | *ðəðiːsat tsavoːr* | 2x10+4 |
| ‘5’ | *piːnts* |  | ‘15’ | *jiðiːsat piːnts* | 1x10+5 | ‘25’ | *ðəðiːsat piːnts* | 2x10+5 |
| ‘6’ | *χoːɣ* |  | ‘16’ | *jiðiːsat χoːɣ* | 1x10+6 | ‘26’ | *ðəðiːsat χoːɣ* | 2x10+6 |
| ‘7’ | *wuːvd* |  | ‘17’ | *jiðiːsat wuːvd* | 1x10+7 | ‘27’ | *ðəðiːsat wuːvd* | 2x10+7 |
| ‘8’ | *waxt* |  | ‘18’ | *jiðiːsat waxt* | 1x10+8 | ‘28’ | *ðəðiːsat waxt* | 2x10+8 |
| ‘9’ | *noːw* |  | ‘19’ | *jiðiːsat noːw* | 1x10+9 | ‘29’ | *ðəðiːsat noːw* | 2x10+9 |
| ‘10’ | *ðiːs* |  | ‘20’ | *ðəðiːs* | 2x10 | ‘30’ | *harajðiːs* | 3x10 |

The numeral composition order 20+n is present in the majority of the sample. The languages applying the reverse order are exclusively found in the southern half of the region, most of which are Indo-Aryan.

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| Feature value | # of varieties displaying it | % |
| Present | 40 | 68 |
| Absent | 17 | 29 |
| Indeterminate | 2 | 3 |