

# The Sandbox

## Bukhari Chancery Persian Textbook Development

### future-ani

PDF version of this file: [future-ani.pdf](#)

### Grammatical Explanation

Central Asian Turki and Persian share an 'uncertain present-future tense' or 'future participle' that expresses intentionality and probability, which is constructed simply by adding  $\bar{\text{ī}}$  ( ) to the end of the infinitive verb: / . In terms of orthography, Central Asian scribes often (but not always) wrote this form with the past stem and -nī separated: . The meaning is not quite "he *will* do something": it is closer to "he *intends* to do something" or "he *might* do something."

Central Asian Persian also retains the present-future tense using the / particle, which structurally indistinguishable from habitual action: / can mean 'he is doing,' 'he will do,' or 'he (habitually) does'. However, this form )( most often indicates *habitual* action when used in Central Asian Persian.

- NM: Is this your sense from spoken Tajik? I.e. is generally "he often does something" because Tajiki has -anī for future tense, and istodaast for present continuous?
- JP: Check Bukhari document corpus for examples of mē- being used for future or present continuous?

Modern Iranian Persian and classical Persian also have a dedicated future tense that implies greater certainty, which is uncommon rare in Central Asian Persian, though used in modern, high-register Tajik and included in high school language textbooks in Tajikistan: /

Turkic languages have multiple ways of expressing future actions that imply either intentionality or indeterminacy. Two in particular, -ar and -maqchi, overlap with meanings of the -ani ending in Central Asian Persian.

The uncertain present-future tense is expressed with an -ar ending attached to the verb stem in Turki. In Uzbek and Chaghatay, the ending is invariable: -ar and , respectively. In Uyghur, it can be either or depending on whether the preceding consonant is voiced or unvoiced.

There is also significant overlap with the -moqchi / - verbal mood in modern Uzbek and Uyghur, which designates the intention to do something in the future. This verb form, however, is less common in pre-Soviet Turki texts, which makes the correspondence between -ar (Turki) and -anī (Central Asian Persian) perhaps closer. However, the -moqchi is structurally the most similar to the -anī ending in Persian because both the -chi ending (in Uyghur / Uzbek) and the -ī ending (in Persian) can participialize the infinitive verb for an animate agent.

- JP: NM agrees that assertion is true that -moqchi verb form tends to be less common in pre-Soviet Uzbek / Chaghatay. Check with other scholars on this question.

Thus, the -anī ending helps the reader narrow down the intended meaning in Central Asian Persian: means that the action of 'going' is likely or intended to take place in the future, but that the outcome is not certain to take place (unlike in modern Iranian Persian).

## Examples

bukh:

uzb: bir uy qolgan bo'lib, uni ham Bukhoro hukumati olmoqchi dirlar.

fars:

eng: One dwelling remains which the government of Bukhara also intends to confiscate .

## Comments:

- NM: The verb for both the Bukhari original and Uzbek translation is plural, but the noun (hukumat-i Buxoro) is technically singular: is this common practice?

In this example, olmoqchi better approximates the intended meaning of the Persian than olar because it emphasizes the intentionality of the action, rather than the indeterminacy. However, olar is also a possible translation, and the -moqchi ending would have been less likely in nineteenth-century Turki.

- NM: As with the remark in the introductory explanation, we need to confirm if it is indeed the case that -moqchi is less common in premodern texts.

This example was drawn from a bi-lingual document (common for correspondence between Bukharan and Russian colonial respective authorities), which

means that we know exactly how the colonial translator understood this construction: , "the Bukharan government also wishes to confiscate..."

The 'hovli' is a type of Central Asian house with an open courtyard, and the term is still used. Though it might be understood in Iran as well, it is here translated to the more generic Farsi term for 'house' .( )

bukh:

uzb: 27-rajab oyining dushanba kuni Jo'rabek Mirzoboshi mazkur besh nafar gunohkorlarni bir ayol bilan gunahkor qilib Buxoroi sharifga olib bormoqchi bo'ldilar

fars:

eng: On Saturday, the 27th of the month of Rajab (Islamic calendar), Jura Bek Mirza Bashi escorted five aforementioned criminals, along with one girl, who he had (also) accused of criminal activities, and it was decided that they were all to be brought to Bukhara.

**Comments:** In Bukharan chancery orthography, the ending is often separated from the verb (here instead of . This convention makes it easy to mistake this future tense for a negated sentence (e.g., burda na-shudand, 'were not taken'). This orthography may be evidence of the vernacular character of this construction, i.e., the scribes transcribed the pronunciation of the verb form, rather than reproducing a participle derived from the infinitive reproduced from the literary tradition.

Jura Bek Mirza is the grammatical subject of the first part of the sentence, but not of the final verb (burdanī), which makes a succinct translation of the passive verb form into English and Farsi wordier. We approximated the meaning with "it was decided that" / , even though the original does not necessarily state that a decision was made.

The term (lit. 'weak' in Arabic) is a common synonym for ('woman') in Central Asian Persian.

Note that this scribe freely uses even Arabic conjunctions , ) 'with'), a common practice in this kind of text.

bukh:

uzb: Shuningdek, men yana ruslarga javob bermoqchimanki , qayerda islom ahli (musulmonlar) bo'lsa men o'sha yerda Islom ahkomlarini tatbiq qilaman. ...

fars:

eng: This humble servant intends to seek permission from the Russians to spread the principles of religion to all lands where Muslims reside.

**Comments:** The basic meaning of jawāb is 'answer', but in this context it is an 'answer' to his request for permission (and is used elsewhere in the same file in conjunction with rukhṣat, lit. 'permission').

- JP: Revisit the original document, revisit English translation to see if there is a way to work in the literal meaning of javob while also retaining the contextual meaning that the petitioner is seeking permission.

bukh:

uzb: Karki viloyatidan bo'lgan Shohmardon Quli ismli bir muhtoj odam muhtojligi (majburligi) sabab Chorjo'y viloyatiga borib Devona Bog'dan hujra olib o'z ishi bilan shug'ullanmoqchi bo'lgan bir paytda, bir guruh odamlarning bergan xabariga ko'ra, o'sha yerdagi bolsheviklar uni ushlab qamashibdi.

- NM: We need a gloss explanation for ghimmārān: can you suggest a reference for this?

fars:

/

- LS: Added your new translation, but our discussion may change it... (e.g. use of giriftar)

eng: A poor man named Shahmardon-quli, a subject from the province of Kerki, out of necessity went to the province of Charjuy with the intention of renting a room in Devona Bagh and engaging in his own work. At that time, based on information given by a group of people, the Bolsheviks there arrested and imprisoned him.

**Comments:** This example is particularly helpful for conveying the point that the uncertain future is relative to other actions in the sentence: Shohmardan had been in the process of renting a room - and action that took place in the past, but in the context of the narration was intended to happen in the future - when something else occurred (he was arrested).

Middle Persian (Pahlavi) verbs formed "nouns of agent" by replacing the final -t or -d with -tār or -dār, respectively, which closely translates to adding -er to a verb in English (e.g., 'laborer').. This construction formed an active noun of agent by default, but certain verbs, including giriftar, were in the passive voice, which is still the standard usage in New Persian. In this example, however, is being used as an active noun of agent.

- NM: In spoken Central Asian Persian, how is giriftar usually used: passively, or actively ('taking' or 'captive')?

## Historical-Grammatical Exploration

There is some uncertainty about whether — from a morphological perspective — this tense is formed from the stem or the infinitive (a distinction that does not matter from the standpoint of reading comprehension). As mentioned in some of the examples above, orthographic clues seem to suggest that Bukharan scribes understood this construction as an *-nī* suffix added to the past stem, which is suggested by (inconsistently) separating the two components with a space: *‎*.

In modern Persian, "adjectives of merit / worthiness," also known as "liyāqat adjectives," are a type of verbal adjective formed by adding the suffix *-ī* / *-i* to the infinitive stem. For instance: *‎*. As in Central Asian Persian, these adjectives belong to the future tense category in terms of their aspectual modality. However, in practice this form tends to imply desirability or worthiness of action (hence *liyāqat*, lit. 'worthiness') in the future, rather than intent or possibility: *‎*, 'this film is worth seeing'. For this reason, the subject of *-ani* constructions tend to be animate in Central Asian Persian, but inanimate in Iranian Persian.

- LS: Do we want to include some examples from classical Persian and /or further discussion?

## References

- Central Asian Persian / Tajik: Perry, 264-267 discusses this construction as the "future participle" meaning "about to do something" with the "connotation of volition or intention."
- Uyghur: De Jong (128-130) discusses *‎* / *‎* as the "uncertain present-future tense," which expresses an action in the future with "vague intention, or probability."
- Farsi: The classic studies of the *liyāqat* construction are Ṣādiqī, °Alī Ashraf (1993/1372) "Shīviḥā va imkānāt-i vāzhisāzi dar zabān-i fārsī-yi mu°ašir", Nashr-i dānish, sāl-i 13, shumāri-yi 3 pp, 9-15 va shumāri-yi 4, pp 15-23.