

Bukhari Chancery Persian Textbook Development

future-ani

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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 *ī* (ی) to the end of the infinitive verb or *-nī* to the verb stem, depending on how you look at it: کردنی / карданӣ. 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 می / ме particle, which structurally indistinguishable from habitual action: می‌کند / мекунад can mean 'he is doing,' 'he will do,' or 'he (habitually) does'. However, this form (می‌کند) most often indicates *habitual* action when used in Central Asian Persian.

- NM: Is this your sense from spoken Tajik? I.e. мекунад 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 also has dedicated future tense that implies greater certainty, which is present (though uncommon) in classical Persian, and unknown in Central Asian Persian (though used in modern Tajik): خواهد کرد / хоҳад кард

- *NM: Is this an overstatement, i.e. that **хоҳад кард**-type future constructions are completely absent in Central Asian Persian?*

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 ار, respectively. In Uyghur, it can be either ار or ار depending on whether the preceding consonant is voiced or unvoiced.

There is also significant overlap with the -moqchi / مهکچی - ماقچی 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, it is the -moqchi that 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.

- *NM: Is the above assertion true that -moqchi verb form tends to be less common in pre-Soviet Uzbek / Chaghatay?*

Thus, the -anī ending helps the reader narrow down the intended meaning in Central Asian Persian: او به آنجا رفتنی است 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 خواهد رفت in modern Iranian Persian).

Examples

bukh: یک باب حویلی مانده گی می باشد که مذکور را حکومت بخارا نیز **گرفتنی** هستند

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

fars: یک باب خانه باقی مانده است که دولت بخارا **مایل به گرفتن** آن است

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

Comments:

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: Бухарское Правительство также хочет конфисковать, "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' (خانه).

bukh: در روز شنبه ۲۷ ماه رجب پنج نفر گنه گان مذکور شده را جوړه بيک ميرزا باشی مع یک ضعیفه: *bukh* گنه کار گردانیده آورده در بخارای شریف **برده نی** شدند

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: در روز شنبه ۲۷ ماه رجب جوړه بيک ميرزا باشی پنج گناه کرده نامبرده را همراه با یک زن، گنه کار شمرد و آورد و **قرار شد که** به بخارای شریف **برده شوند**

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 *نی* ending is often separated from the verb (here *بردمنی* instead of *بردنی*). 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" / قرار شد که, even though the original does not necessarily state that a decision was made.

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

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

bukh: و دیگر اینکه بنده با روس جواب کردنی است که تا هر جائی که اهل اسلام است بنده احکام دین و مذهب خود را جاری میکند

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

fars: و دیگر این که اینجانب مایلم از روسیه اجازه بگیرم تا هرجایی که اهل اسلام هستند احکام دین و مذهب خود را جاری کنم

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 *rukḥṣat*, lit. 'permission').

bukh: شاهمردانقلی نام فقرا از ولایت کرکی ادم بیچاره از برای کار بیچاره گی خود بولایت چهار جوی رفته بدیوانه باغ حجره گرفتار بیچاره گی کرده نی بوده است که بگفته غماران بلشویکان انجا مذکور را دست گرفته محبوس نموده

uzb: Bir guruh odamlarning bergan xabariga ko'ra, 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'ullanmoachi bo'lganda o'sha yerdagi bolsheviklar uni ushlab qamashibdi.

fars: farsi example

- LS: Can you suggest a Farsi translation.

eng: Shahmardan-quli, a subject from the province of Kerki, went to the province of Charjuy to work in manual labor. When he was looking for a low-cost room to rent in Divana-bagh, the Bolsheviks imprisoned him based on false pretext.

- *NM: Check this translation.*

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).

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 stem, which is suggested by (inconsistently) separating the two components with a space: کردفنی.

In modern Persian, "ability adjectives," also known as "liyāqat adjectives," are a type of verbal adjective formed by adding the suffix -ī / یی to the infinitive stem. For instance: خوردنی، دیدنی، گسستی. However, this verb form occurs less commonly, and often with a different connotation. 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: این فیلم دیدنی است, '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: Is "ability adjectives" the right English equivalent of liyaqat?*
- *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 ار / مر 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 Şādiqī, ‘Alī Ashraf (1993/1372) “Shīvihā va imkānāt-i vāzhisāzi dar zabān-i fārsī-yi mu‘āṣir”, Nashr-i dānish, sāl-i 13, shumāri-yi 3 pp, 9-15 va shumāri-yi 4, pp 15-23.