On clausal constructions in Iranian languages
(*О конструкциях предложения в иранских языках*)
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It is well known that nominative and ergative clausal constructions exist side by side in the majority of Iranian languages. The ergative construction is characteristic of clauses with transitive verbs in their past-tense forms, where those past-tense forms are the reflexes of participles containing the suffix *-ta*. Nominative constructions, for their part, are characteristic for clauses containing non-past transitive or intransitive verbs.[1] Nominative constructions are also used with past-tense constructions containing intransitive verbs, even where those intransitive verbs are the reflexes of participles containing the suffix *-ta*. This state of affairs suggests an analysis whereby such past-tense nominative constructions are not a special "absolutive" construction, but are rather a subtype of nominative construction.[2] In other words, constructions with verbs in non-past forms and in past forms which are not the reflexes of participles containing the suffix *-ta* are used only with a nominative schema, whereas clauses with past-tense verbs which are reflexes of participles containing the suffix *-ta* can follow either an ergative model (in the case of transitive verbs) or a model which is for all intents and purposes nominative (in the case of intransitive verbs).

The fact that we find *both* nominative and ergative constructions in all languages which contain ergative constructions provides evidence that the typology of clauses in these languages is neither purely nominative (in which there would be a total absence of ergative constructions), nor purely ergative (in which all transitive verbs would require an ergative construction). Rather, we are dealing with languages where the clausal typology is mixed in nature. This typological feature results in the presence in Iranian languages of phenomena which are unusual for languages which are consistently nominative or consistently ergative. Thus, the ergative construction is opposed not by an absolutive construction, but rather by a nominative one, which is used for intransitive verbs in all their finite forms and for transitive verbs where the stem is not the reflex of a participle with the suffix *-ta*. In addition, most Iranian languages possess the category of voice and therefore also passive forms of verbs and clausal structures which correspond to the passive (see below). The passive, for its part, is considered to be a feature of languages with a nominative-accusative system, as strictly ergative languages do not possess voice. All of these phenomena allow us to characterize the typology of clauses in the majority of Iranian languages as mixed nominative-ergative with a clear predominance of the accusative type of construction and the subordinate role of the ergative construction.

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[1] In cases where past forms are not the reflexes of stems with the suffix *-ta* (as in Yaghnobi and in the imperfect of Munji and Parachi), nominative constructions are likewise used.

[2] .(CP: This is because the languages are not fully ergative-absolutive. There are nominative-accusative constructions in the present tense, and the nominative-like constructions with intransitive verbs in the past tense would be a subtype of these.)

The nominative construction here is expressed via the presence of a subject nominal in the nominative (or direct) case, verbal agreement with the subject, and the appearance of any direct object in a non-nominative structure, either (i) the oblique case (in languages which have two more oblique cases, a special object case is used), (ii) in an adpositional phrase which is equivalent to the oblique case, or (iii) as a pronominal enclitic. In some languages, an indefinite object is expressed in the direct case. Nominative constructions look like: "I go", "I do something", "I was going". The nominative clause model was inherited by Iranian languages from the Old Iranian period. For Old Iranian, judging by the syntax of linguistic records, the nominative type of construction was the most prevalent.

The ergative type of construction in Iranian languages is characterized by the presence of the subject noun in the oblique case (frequently in the historical genitive), or else as a pronominal enclitic. The object noun appears in the direct case, although in some languages it may also appear in the oblique case (or via an adpositional phrase) if the object is definite. Verbal agreement varies by language: in some languages, it is with objects, while in others it is with either/both subjects and objects, and in still others it is with subjects only or is null. Ergative constructions commonly look like the following: "(at/by) me this was done", etc. The ergative construction was apparently formed around the time when the Old Iranian period ended and the Middle Iranian linguistic period began. It formed from passive/possessive phrases of the type: O.Ir. *ima tya manā kartam (astiy)* "this (is) that which was done by/at me".[3] Subsequently, with the transformation of these phrases into stable syntactic constructions, they were reanalyzed as expressing an active/agentive action.[4] This caused some languages to develop a new means for expressing the passive and hence a new type of clause: the passive type.

Fundamental markers of the passive include the following: (i) the agent of the action is only optionally expressed in the clause; (ii) the agent may be expressed via an adpositional phrase or by a more wordy descriptive combination; (iii) the semantic object appears in the nominative/direct case. The predicate is expressed either via the analytical form of the passive or by a descriptive combination, generally composed of a non-inflected form of the main verb and an inflected form of the verb meaning "become", "go", or "come". This type of construction generally looks like: "by me / with my help / via me / from my side / from my hands (etc.), this became/went/came done".

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[3] L.A. Pirejko 1968: 9– *Fundamental issues in ergativity in materials on Indo-Iranian languages.* A different treatment of these phrases is given in the work of G. Cardona (1970: 46), where they are analyzed as constructions which belong to the passive verbal system, although this is not very plausible.

[4] For more on the differences between the ergative construction, which researchers of individual languages sometimes describe as a passive construction, and the passive proper, see Pirejko 1968: 39-40.

Thus, in many modern Iranian languages, clauses with transitive verbs may have three different types of constructions: nominative-accusative, ergative, and passive. The choice of the construction to be used is dependent on the voice of the verb and on which temporal-aspectual form of the verb is used. Clauses with intransitive verbs, for their part, are used with a single type of construction,[5] the nominative (see Tb. 1).

The data given in Table 1 show that in languages which exhibit a nominative-ergative typology (with the predominance of nominative features) – where the ergative construction is limited to a certain set of temporal-aspectual forms – the ergative construction is in fact in complementary distribution with with the nominative-accusative type of construction. It differs from the nominative-accusative type of construction only formally and not with respect to the (grammatical) relations expressed by each. The ergative construction can therefore be considered a type of active construction. This is unusual from the point of view of the theory of ergativity developed on the basis of data from strictly ergative languages. According to this data, the ergative construction does not participate in voice oppositions. However, for languages with nominative-accusative constructions in which there is an ergative-type construction with a lesser role in the grammar, and where the ergative construction is in complementary distribution with the nominative-accusative type of construction, the treatment of the ergative construction as a special subtype of active construction used with specific temporal-aspectual forms which differs only formally from the nominative-accusative type is entirely conceivable. This idea is supported by the fact that in many Iranian languages there are cases of contamination which are observed for ergative~accusative constructions, but there are no such cases of contamination between the ergative and passive types of construction. Moreover, there are some languages which do not possess an ergative construction anymore, but which exhibit its reflexes clearly in the form of the continuation of the genitive as a synchronically case-neutral form (cf. the plural marker *-ān* < O. Ir. genitive plural *-ānām* and the 1st singular pronoun *man* < O. Ir. 1st singular genitive *manā*).[6] In these cases, the loss of the ergative construction came about via its contamination with nominative-active constructions and not with passive constructions.

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[5] (CP: cf. intransitives with passive morphology and syntax in Shughni, such as *yid xac naxtūyjak sat*)
[6] See also B. V. Miller's (1938) work titled *The plural marker* ān *in Iranian languages*, where it is indicated that some authors consider *-ān* to be a continuation not of the genitive, but rather of the nominative type *-ānas*.

Table 1: Clausal constructions in Pashto

Temporal forms	Nominative			Ergative	Passive
	Intransitive verb	**Transitive verb**			
	–	**Active voice**			**Passive voice**
Present	*zə daréžəm* "I stay"	*zə day tarəm* "I tie him up"	– (no ergative construction in the present)		*day zmā lə xvā taṛə́l(ay) kêži* "he is tied up by me" (lit. "he from my side tied up becomes"
Past imperfective	*zə daredə́m* "I was staying"	– (no nominative-accusative transitive construction in the past)		*mā day tāṛə* "I ? him"	*day zmā lə zvā taṛə́l(ay) kedə́* "he was tied up by me" (lit. he from my side tied up became)

All of these clausal models, ultimately conditioned by the semantics of the verb (transitive/intransitive), have already been illustrated in the literature, and thus here I am merely attempting to establish their correspondences within a singe system.

Significantly less attention has traditionally been paid to other constructions which are characteristic for Iranian languages – constructions which, like those already analyzed above, are connected to the semantics of the predicate. The most universal of this type of construction is that of possessive constructions or existential constructions (of the type "there exists at/by me") and those which denote a physical or psychological state of the subject (of the type "I am cold/hungry", "I like", "I'm afraid", etc.).[7] These constructions are sometimes analyzable as variants of ergative constructions. In the literature on Iranian languages, the connection between the development of ergative constructions and the lack of a verb with the meaning "to have" has already been discussed.[8] This same factor also gave rise to the presence of [existential-like] possessive constructions in these languages.

The verb which in some Iranian languages developed an abstract meaning "to have" – PIE *dher*, *dherə-* (Pokorny 1952), Skt. *dhar-*, O. Ir. *dar-* – did not have this same abstract meaning in Old Iranian languages, but rather had a range of concrete meanings such as "hold", "retain", "seize", and "contain", as well as the somewhat more abstract meaning "own". (A couple examples are given here from Old Persian and Avestan.) The notion of possession in Old Iranian languages was

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[7] See B. V. Miller (1935: 310): *О полистадиальности иранских языков*

[8] A. Meillet (1923: 9—13) *Le développement du verbe* avoir ; E. Benveniste (1952 : 48) ; Pirejko 1968 : 28–

expressed exclusively via existential constructions in which the subject appeared in the genitive[9] or via a pronominal enclitic, as in possessive noun phrases such as that meaning "my house". The object of possession, for its part, is in the nominative, and the predicate is an optional copula or verb *ah-* "be", or else the verb *bav-* "be, become". (An example is given here from Old Persian.)

It is not the case that in all Middle and modern Iranian languages the verb which is the reflex of **dar-* developed an abstract meaning "to have", and in the same vein, it is not the case that in all Iranian languages there is a possessive construction of the type "I have . . .". In certain languages, such as in Ossetian and Yaghnobi, the verb which is the reflex of **dar-* retains the old concrete meaning and has not acquired the abstract one. In other languages, such as Kurdish (Kurmanji, Mukri), Yazghulami, and Wakhi, the verb **dar-* is not used independently (although etymologically it is found in certain frozen forms with historical preverbs, as in Yzgh. *pərðar-* 'hold; retain' and *paðir* 'remain'). In still other languages, such as Ishkashimi and the Shughni-Rushani group, this stem is used only in stable complex verbs or phrases of the type: Sh. *x̌oǰ ðêr-* 'fear' or *x̌oǰ ðū(y)d* (the infinitive *ðêr-* is a back formation), and in Rushani *x̌oǰ ðēr-* (where there is no past stem and the infinitive *ðertow* is likewise a back formation), etc.

In these languages, in which, as in Old Iranian languages, there is no verb meaning "to have", the notion of possession is expressed exclusively via existential constructions of the type "at me this exists". The details of such constructions vary in accordance with the morphological and lexical endowment of each language. The most universal principles, which are found, in particular, in the North Pamir languages, are as follows. The possessor appears in the oblique case (ultimately from the genitive) (if the type of noun in question distinguishes case), and usually together with a postposition: Sh. *ðu-aray vaz-en=en māš-**and** yast* 'we have two or three goats'; Ru. *mun-ā kurta yast* 'I have a shirt'. (A couple examples from Yazghulami are also given which illustrate the difference between *-and* and *-ǰa*, which apparently exists also in Yazghulami.)[10] There are also cases where we find the possessor expressed via historical pronominal enclitics, as in Yazghulami *ded-a nan=at yast-yo?* "Do you have a mother and a father?" or *ðow bon čiray=əf yast* 'you have two apricot trees." The possessed object is found in the direct case.

[9] See also the differentiation of (temporary) possession and (constant) ownership in other ancient Indo-European languages, where the former is expressed with the genitive and the latter with the dative; see Benveniste (1960: 123) *"Être" et "avoir" dans leurs fonctions linguistiques*. The lack of dative forms in Old Persian and the syncretism of the genitive~dative enclitics makes the identification of such a distinction in Old Persian difficult.

[10] The distinction in North Pamir languages of possession proper (or constant possession), on the one hand, and the presence of an object in one's personal space (temporary possession/existence), on the other, which is carried out via different postpositions, is reminiscent of the distinction made by genitive and dative constructions in ancient Indo-European languages (see fn. 7). This construction has correspondences in other Iranian languages as well. In particular, as was kindly pointed out by V. I. Abaev, in Ossetian in the case of inalienable possession, the possessor appears in the dative case, while in the case of alienable possession it appears in the directional case. (A couple examples from Ossetian are given to illustrate this.)

The predicate is commonly expressed via the existential and identificational verb *yast* "exists; is", which is distinct from the modern copula, which was generally syncretic with historical enclitics. Etymologically, *yast* is the frozen form of the 3sg copula **asti* and constitutes an exception with respect to conjugation, as it also exhibits person and number agreement via modern copulas or detachable clitics.

In existential constructions, when the possessor is expressed in the clause as a noun, as is the case in identificational constructions, the enclitic with *yast* acts as a separable person marker and agrees with the subject (i.e., with the possessum) in person and number. (Some examples are given here from Sarikoli and Yazghulami.) In existential constructions where the possessor is not expressed as a noun, the enclitic acts in its historical role of expressing the possessor and the stem *yast* has essentially null agreement (see the example below from Yazghulami).

In Yazghulami, the verb *yast* developed distinct negative forms for existential constructions, on the one hand, and identificational constructions, on the other. In existential constructions, the negative forms *na-yast* and *nest* are used, while in identificational constructions the negative form *nast* is used. (Some examples are given here, including *ðow poc-əm yást-ata wǔ ðoɣd-ǰa ná-yast* "I have two sons but not a single daughter'. In the majority of languages, the same negative form is used for both existential and identificational constructions, as in Rushani *mun-ā kitōb* **nist** 'I don't have a book.' and *az-um ablā* **nist** 'I am not a fool' (Fayzov 1966: 206).

It is typical that whereas the modern copula is used in identificational constructions (with the verb *yast* used only for stylistic purposes of emphasis here), the stem *yast* is preferred in existential constructions. The copula is seen only very rarely: (an example is given here from Sarikoli). In addition, since the grammatical subject – i.e. the object of possession – in existential constructions is often in the third singular, the copular form which corresponds to it is generally omitted (null), and such constructions without the stem *yast* do not have a formally expressed predicate: (examples are given here from Khufi and Bajuwi).

In the past tense(s) and in subjunctive environments, the verb meaning "be" is used in existential (and identificational) constructions with the same rules regarding the grammatical relations of possessor and possessum. (Some examples are given here from Rushani, Khufi, and Yazghulami.)

Therefore, the North Pamir languages practically continue the ancient Iranian existential constructions. A similar construction is also found in other Iranian languages – i.e., where the possessor is in the oblique case or expressed as an enclitic, the possessum is in the direct case, and the predicate is expressed via the verb "be" or an optional copula.[11] In languages in which there is no verb with an abstract meaning "have" (e.g., in Kurdish, Ossetian, Yaghnobi, Wakhi, and Ishkashimi), this (existential) construction is the only means of expressing possession. In other languages such as Persian, Tajik, Balochi, Gilaki, minority languages of Iran, Pashto, and Munji,

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[11] The distinction between the copula and the verb meaning "be; exist" is widespread in Iranian languages – cf. Tj. *ast* vs. *hast*, Balochi *in* vs. *ast*; Gilaki *isə* vs. *dərə*; Gorani *ā* vs. *han*; Pashto *dəy* vs. *s/šta*, etc. In certain languages this distinction is even found in the past (cf. Shamirzadi *bea* vs. *dävia*) and in some cases in the entire paradigm (Mukri *bûn* vs. *hebûn*).

in which the verb from *dar- developed an abstract meaning "have"[12] and there are possessive constructions of the type: Pers. dār-am "I have", the possessive construction (via the verb meaning "have") co-exists with the existential construction. In some languages these [possessive and existential] constructions differ by dialect, or else the possessive construction [which one?] is the literary norm and the other [existential?] one is preserved and developed in the colloquial language. This is the case, for instance, in Tajik. In other languages, both types of construction are used in parallel, which results in their frequent contamination.

Precisely through this frequent contamination we can apparently explain the fact that we have a subject in the oblique case with the verb lor- (<*dar-) 'have' in Munji present tense.[13] This contamination, in turn, eliminates the need for an ergative analysis for this type of construction. (Examples are given from Munji.) At the same time, in rare cases we also find the possessor in the direct case, possibly as a residual phenomenon. (More examples are given here.) In cases where have the continuing parallel usage of the possessive and existential constructions in the same segments of speech (examples), the contamination of these constructions goes even further and a frozen third-singular form of the verb "have" let begins to be used in existential constructions [in addition to possessive constructions] (more examples).

Similar types of existential constructions are observed in other Iranian languages as well. In Gilaki this is the construction with the defective verb dərə, "be found; exist" (this verb also acts as an auxiliary in "definite" forms, in the same places where in Persian we would find dāštan 'have') (see Rastorgueva 1972: 139-140, 150). The possibility cannot be excluded that the "irregular" conjugation of the verb "have" in some minority languages of Iran – e.g. Natanzi, Yarani, Farizandi (see Christensen 1930: 137, 249 and B. V. Miller (as cited above: 310)), Mahallati (see Mann & Hadank 1926: 77), etc., could be connected also with a phenomenon whereby constructions meaning "I have" and "at me exists" are contaminated. It is also typical that all more or less reliable examples of contamination suggest a tendency whereby the contamination is more in the direction of expressing possession by means of an existential construction [i.e. a (re-)interpretation of 'have' as 'exist'], and not the other way around, which attests to the greater resilience/sturdiness of the existential construction.

Existential constructions in some languages are similar to ergative constructions, which has provided occasion for certain authors to analyze them as a variant of the ergative construction. However, a comprehensive consideration of the facts does not provide evidence for this, as

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[12] In some languages the verb *dar- developed a new meaning "have" and also preserved its old meaning "retain; seize", a fact which is also reflected in its paradigm. In its concrete meaning, this verb has a full paradigm, while in its abstract meaning it has only a limited set of forms (e.g. in literary Tajik, Persian).
[13] cf. A.L. Gryunberg 1972: 428

existential constructions have the following characteristics: (i) they differ from ergative constructions in the nature of the specific [grammatical/semantic] relations they encode; (ii) their basis is the intransitive verb of being or existing; (iii) they are used the same regardless of the tense of the verb, which is not the case for the Iranian ergative construction; and (iv) they are found even in those languages where there is no ergative construction, and they are therefore not motivated by the ergative construction.

A special place is held by constructions observed in many Iranian languages which encode physical or psychological states: hunger, thirst, sleepiness, love, fear, shame, etc. The entity which experiences such states is expressed via a noun in the oblique case (though in some languages it may be in a prepositional or postpositional phrase), or else as an enclitic. This occurs regardless of the time at which the state occurs [i.e., regardless of the temporal reference or tense of the verb]. The distribution of these constructions across languages is not as uniform as with possessive constructions. That is, that which is expressed in one language via this so-called "oblique construction" of the type "hunger is unto me", "shame is unto me", "(it) pleases me", "pain is unto me", "it is scary to me", etc., may be expressed in another language via a "direct" construction of the type "I am hungry", "I feel ashamed", "I like", "I hurt", "I fear", etc., and vice versa.

In the North Pamir languages, for instance, the use of "oblique" constructions is characteristic for expressing love and desire. This type of construction is most consistent in Yazghulami, where the predicate is an uninflected stem or verbal noun *ɣu* "desiring; loving" or "desire; love" (in the past tense the past stem of the verb meaning 'be' – *vad* – is added). The noun representing the entity which experiences this state is expressed in the oblique case (that is, for those nouns which are capable of being inflected for case), or else this entity is represented by a pronominal enclitic. This construction is therefore on the whole similar to the ergative construction: (some examples are given here from Yazghulami)…

dim na xi ðoɣd manor ɣu	'she loves her daughter very much'
cf.	
dim na xi ðoɣd wint	'she saw her daughter'
na-ɣu-m	'I don't want'
cf.	
na-wint-um	'I didn't see'
čiǵ-at ɣu vad?	'what did you want'
cf.	
čiǵ-at wintá vad?	'what did you see'

This same type of construction is also found in the Shughni-Rushani group. Thus, Rushani and apparently also Khufi still preserves the «oblique» construction: Ru. *way rad niɣixt lap žīwǰ* 'he really loves listening to the radio'; *ca žīwǰi um* 'if he love(s/d) her'; Kh. *mu žū(w)ǰ* 'I want'. In other languages of the group we find the convergence of these oblique constructions with direct constructions (to a differing degree in different languages). In Bartangi, we find, on the one hand, the oblique construction *az mun-at žṏwǰ?* 'do you love me?', as well as a kind of transitional

construction which exhibits features of both the oblique and direct type in *mun-um az dī na-žīwǰ*, where we have the experiencer in the oblique case together with an enclitic at the same time, and finally we also see a direct type of construction with an intransitive verb in the past tense: *az-um yi čizaθ-um na-žȫwǰ* 'I don't want anything'. In Shughni and Bajuwi the experiencer is always expressed in the direct case with an enclitic, as is the case with any verb in the past tense (since the ergative construction has been lost in these varieties): cf. Sh. *wuz=um win na-žīwǰ* 'I don't love him.', Bj. *tu=t mu cŭnd žīwǰ* 'how much do you love me?'

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Thus, in the North Pamir languages, constructions with predicates of the type 'love; want; like' exhibit similarities with constructions which are formed on the basis of transitive verbs in the past tense – i.e. with the ergative construction in languages where it is present, and with nominative construction in languages where the ergative construction is not present. At the same time, in Shughni and Bajuwi, in which there is no ergative type of clause, but where transitive verbs, unlike intransitive verbs, have the 3rd-singular person marker *=i* used in the past tense (an old enclitic), this same enclitic is used in these oblique constructions. In Yazghulami and Bartangi, where in the 3rd plural the markers *-əf* (Yz.) and *-af* (Bt.) are used with transitive verbs, these same enclitics are used with these oblique types of constructions. Example from Bartangi:

uf wī virod=af az wī yičaθ na-žȫwǰ
'those brothers of his absolutely do not like him.

In the Shughni-Rushani group, this construction type tends toward a subsequent reconstruction on the basis of the typical model of clauses with transitive verbs. As a result, the back-formed compound verb with the light verb meaning "do" – *žīwǰ čīdow* (as well as the back-formed infinitive *žīwǰdow*) – are conjugated as typical verbs and are not used with a special type of clause. Example from Bartangi:

yā xu ɤan lap žȫwǰ=i čūg
'he loved his wife very much.'

«Oblique» constructions with the predicate 'want; love; like' are found in all other Iranian languages. Such, for example, are constructions with the verb *wistîn* 'want' in Mukri (examples); with the verbs *go-*, *gu-* meaning 'want; love' in Tati dialects; *bayistän* with the same meaning in Tati; *pie* 'love; want; desire' in Talyshi; *boyistan*, *voistan* meaning 'love; want; desire' in dialects of Tajik; the verb with the same meaning in certain languages of Iran (Semnani, Shemerzadi, Mahallati, Kokhrudi, Hunsari, and in dalects of Fars, etc.); and the verb *rimi-* 'be desirous' in Munji, among others.

It is curious that the prototype for this construction in Old Persian is found not with a genitive argument, as is the case for existential constructions, but rather with an accusative argument. This fact is particularly interesting if we consider that the Old Iranian accusative was used with a directional meaning. Examples:

yaθā mām kāma āha
'how desirous it was to me'

tya rāstam ava mām kāma
"that which is right is that which is desirous to me'

Clauses which denote other kinds of psychological states – fear, shame, etc., are constructed differently from language to language, even in such closely related languages as those of the North Pamir group. Yazghulami, for instance, displays an oblique type of construction for expressing these states. Examples:

mon x̌ᵒayek   'I fear'
tu mon qatay xᵒaraǰ fərmāg ? 'are you ashamed with me ?'

In the Shughni-Rushani group, the stem which corresponds to Yazghulami *x̌ᵒayek* is *x̌oǰ* and is used in direct constructions, either with the meaning "fear" in compound verbs with the reflex of **dar-* as their light verb (e.g. Bartangi *tū di-mand x̌ōǰ ðōr* 'because you are afraid'), or else with the meaning "fearing" with the copula or the verb *yat-* 'come' (e.g. Bt. *waz=um x̌ōǰ yat* 'I became ʼafraid'; *waz x̌ōǰ yádum* 'I fear'). The meaning of shame in the Shughni-Rushani group is given by a descriptive phrase of the type: Sh. *turd x̌arm, tu xu dars ca na-x̌ōyi* 'you are ashamed that you don't do your schoolwork'.[14]

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Similarly, oblique constructions are used in Yazghulami to express physical states of the type "I'm hungry/thirsty/sleepy", etc. These constructions are built on verbal nouns with the suffix *-ág* or adjectives of the type *təx̌nág* 'thirsty'. They require the experiencer to appear in the oblique case or else be expressed as an enclitic. Examples:

mon xᵒarag   « I'm hungry »
tu pəxsag ?   « Are you sleepy ? »
nast-əm pəxsag ?   « I'm not sleepy »
mů̇n təx̌nag nast   "I'm not thirsty" (lit. to me is not thirsty)

In the Shughni-Rushani group, a direct construction is used to express these same meanings. Examples from Bartangi/Bajuwi:

az=um lap mōwz   'I'm very hungry'
waz=um dů̇nd maɣdzů̇nǰ idi…   'I'm so hungry that…'

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[14] CP: By 'descriptive phrase', it appears that she refers – here and throughout – to constructions of the type EXP.DAT – V/N, e.g. *mu-rd fort*

A clausal model containing an oblique argument or enclitic in experiencer function together with an uninflected predicate [i.e. the 3rd singular form?] is found in many other Iranian languages. They are observed, for instance, in dialects of Persian, such as in Tehrani: *gošne-m-e* 'hungry-me-is'; *gošne-t*-e 'hungry-you-is'; garm-*et-e* 'warm-you-is', *če-tun-e?* 'what's with you guys', etc (Peysikov 1960: 56). They are also found in minority languages of Iran, including Gilaki: *tá-ra vištá-yə* 'to you hungry is'; *mi zaáka gərm-a be* 'my child will be hot'; in Tati: *in sägä kišnä-y-ü* 'this dog is hungry'. In Munji, the verb *laráviy-* 'be unwell; ail' forms such a construction.

All of these oblique constructions, despite their superficial similarity to ergative constructions, cannot be considered ergative essentially for the same reasons that existential constructions cannot be considered ergative, These constructions, which can be loosely called "affective state constructions", differ from ergative constructions in the following ways: (i) they encode specific [semantic?] relations; (ii) they are unaffected by notions of (in)transitivity (whereas the verbs meaning 'love/want' can be treated as transitive – although they commonly appear without an object and in this way emphasize the state of the experiencer, rather than the theme which is causing the state experienced – the predicates meaning "feel ashamed/embarrassed", "feel pain; ail", "feel sleepy", etc., do not lend themselves to such a treatment. These predicates can be formed not only with verbs, but are in many cases formed as nominal predicates via nouns or adjectives such as "cold", "hot", etc. Here we can also include the pronominal variant with *če* 'what' (cf. the Persian example in the paragraph above). (iii) they are unaffected by the tense of the clause; and (iv) they are used even in languages which do not have an ergative construction. Of course, these constructions should be treated as a special type of affective construction or construction which denotes a state,[15] and one which possibly has a prototype in Old Iranian which was built on an accusative experiencer.

To this type of affective/state construction we can add a variety of idiomatic phrases with similar meanings, where the subject/experiencer is expressed in the oblique and the compound predicate often includes a verb of motion of the type "come", "take", etc. Such verbs highlight the notion that the argument in question (i.e. the experiencer) is not the source of the state, but rather that the state "comes to him". This type of construction includes, for instance, the one which means "feel sleepy OR fall asleep", expressed as "sleep takes (him)", where this phrase means "he falls asleep". This type of construction is found in many languages, such as Khufi *uf ǰaldaθ xūðm yēst* 'they fall asleep quickly'; Persian *dard-eš umad* 'he (began to) feel pain', *bāvar-am ne-mi-yād* 'I don't believe (it)'; Tajik *xanda-am omad* 'I wanted to laugh'; etc. These constructions are found in Farsi, Tajik, Pamir languages, Pashto (Lorimer 1915: 31), and Gorani (MacKenzie 1966: 51–).

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This fundamental type of construction can be found in virtually all Iranian languages. At the same time, certain stems may call for a descriptive oblique phrase of the same type in different

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[15] Cf. the comparison of Iranian constructions of this type with a similar type of construction in Georgian (Miller, as cited above, p. 318). However, this author generally considers the origin of such constructions in Georgian to be the result of the spread of ergativity to intransitive verbs.

languages. Such, for instance, is the case for the stem *for-* 'be desirous; like', which is found in Tajik, as in *ba man na-me-for-ad* 'it is not desirous/pleasant to me'; in some Pamir languages (e.g. Sh. *mu-rd na-fort*, Wakhi *mārək ... nə fort*, Sanglechi *mum-ba na-bufõru* 'I don't like it', Ru. *úf-ri fẽrt* 'they liked it', Bt. *tǻ-ri na-fõrd* 'you don't like it'. However, all of these constructions are clearly late formations and have a descriptive nature which is idiomatic to differing degrees in different languages. This fact points more toward a tendency whereby certain syntactic phrases develop differently in different languages over time, rather than to the presence of a special type of clausal construction (cf. Ru. *way žĩwǰ* 'he loves' with the experiencer in the oblique case and the descriptive phrase which clearly formed later with the (dative) postposition *-re*: *way-re fõrt* 'he likes (it)'.

Summarizing the above, we can make the following generalizations. In the majority of Iranian languages, we can distinguish five types of clause. The use of each type of clause is fundamentally connected to the semantic nature of the predicate. The first three – nominative, ergative, and passive – are connected with the semantic criteria of the (in)transitivity of the verb. The latter two – existential and affective/state constructions – are connected with more particular semantic groups of predicates.

The vast majority of intransitive verbs (except for verbs denoting physical and psychological states in certain languages) require nominative constructions regardless of the tense or temporal relations of the predicate.

The majority of transitive verbs, for their part, (with the exception of certain verbs denoting states)call for different constructions depending on the voice and tense of the verb. Verbs in the active voice call for either ergative constructions (with past stems from forms which historically ended in the participial suffix **-ta*) or nominative constructions (in non-past forms and past forms which are not historically descended from stems ending in **-ta*). Verbs in the passive voice are used in passive constructions.

Verbs meaning "exist; be present", as well as the verb "be" – and the (enclitic) copula in cases where it denotes presence or existence – require a special type of existential/possessive construction, irrespective of the temporal relations or tense of the predicate.

Verbs and nominal predicates indicating physical and psychological states in some languages are formed with a special type of affective/state construction. This type of construction does not depend on the tense or temporal relations of the predicate and also exhibits particular conjugational patterns (i.e. agreement is generally not with the experiencer argument).

The history of these constructions varies. Nominative constructions can be traced to the general Proto-Iranian nominative scheme, and through it to the Proto-Indo-European nominative scheme. Similarly, the ancient stages of these languages exhibit possessive constructions with the Old Iranian genitive. (However, this does not exclude the possibility of possessive constructions with the dative in certain cases at older stages for which we have no textual evidence, as in Old Persian the genitive and dative merged into a single genitive case, which took on both genitive and dative functions. In Avestan, moreover, examples of possessive constructions are too scant to allow for the identification of the general principles whereby the notion of possession was expressed.) The

ergative construction arose from passive/possessive phrases – i.e. from a particular variant of the possessive construction (Benveniste *Être et avoir*: 123). Affective/state constructions have a possible prototype in the form of a model used for similar constructions in Old Iranian (for which we have evidence from Old Persian), whereby the experiencer argument appeared in the accusative case. Passive constructions, for their part, have a clearly innovative, descriptive nature, are construed differently in different languages, and developed apparently spontaneously in different languages from the nominative-active type of construction.

At the present time, we observe a tendency toward the contamination of certain clausal models in certain languages. This occurs for clausal types which express similar [grammatical] relations. The ergative construction, opposing the nominative construction only formally and not with respect to the grammatical relations it expresses (both express agent-patient and subject-object relations), tends to become contaminated with the nominative type of construction. Possessive and existential constructions can be replaced by constructions indicating possession through the use of a verb meaning "have". However, since these constructions are quite stable (by virtue of the isolated meaning of the verb and the particular relations of its arguments), we also observe a process whereby the parallel usage of "have" and "exist" types of constructions can facilitate the reanalysis of "have"-type possessive constructions as "exist"-type possessive constructions. Affective/state constructions in some languages are formally similar to ergative constructions and, in parallel with the latter, can be reanalyzed and reformulated on the basis of nominative constructions. In certain languages, however, they are quite stable.

In all Iranian languages we find the appearance of new "oblique" phrases of a descriptive nature with varying degrees of idiomaticity. These phrases express physical and psychological states. This phenomenon indicates a certain stylistic tendency whereby speakers of these languages highlight the lack of initiative or agency on the part of the experiencer when it comes to the occurrence of such states.

It is typical for existential-possessive and affective/state constructions to be observed both in languages with nominative-ergative typology (Pashto, Kurdish, Yazghulami, etc.) as well as in languages with strictly nominative typology (Farsi, Tajik, Shughni, etc.). Hence, the notion that the existence of existential-possessive and affective/state constructions is motivated by ergativity can be excluded.