

Peculiar Alignments in Modern Iranian Languages

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This paper deals with the alignment peculiarities of a number of Modern Iranian Languages. For instance, as a unique peculiarity of Birjandi (of two generations ago), Khaniki, and Ferdowsi (called Tun in historical Persian texts) which are three varieties of the Southwestern Iranian languages spoken in Khorasan, the S and A of verbs formed with present stems are encoded as verbal agreement suffixes whereas the S and A of verbs formed with past stems are encoded via pronominal clitics. Therefore, we observe agreement systems which are merely tense-sensitive contrary to the majority of Iranian languages whose split agreement systems are sensitive to tense and transitivity. As an illustration, we may compare examples (1) and (2) from Ferdowsi dialect/ the dialect of Ferdows. In examples (1), S is realized as the verbal agreement suffix, but in examples (2), S is encoded as a pronominal enclitic.

- 1.a. *mæ-r-æ*
INCOMPL-go-2PL
'You go.'
- b. *mæ-r-æn*
INCOMPL-go-3PL
'They go.'
- 2.a. *be-ræf=tæ*
COMPL-went=2PL.OBL
'You went.'
- b. *be-ræf=šæ*
COMPL-went=3PL.OBL
'They went.'

To these patterns, I can add the pattern which is exemplified in (3) in which S is expressed as a full personal pronoun and the verb takes no agreement marking.

- 3.a. *šoma be-ræf*
you COMPL-went
'You went.'
- b. *uno be-ræf*
they COMPL-went
'They went.'

These observations are part of a number of other alignment peculiarities (including peculiar case and agreement markings) in Northwestern and Southwestern Iranian languages of Iran. The data will be reported from my own corpus and from a number of published studies (books and articles) in Iran. Furthermore, the implications of the findings for typology as well as language change and language shift will be discussed.