

Preface

In December 2024, Moscow hosted a major international event — the First Eurasian Congress of Linguists, EACL-1 (<https://eacling.org/>). The Congress was organized on the initiative of the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences with support from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation as part of the events to mark the 300th anniversary of the Russian Academy of Sciences. A total of 18 sections presented the major avenues of contemporary linguistics. Among them, 11 were dedicated to specific languages or language families. A special focus was on languages of Eurasia, where Iranian languages were featured in a separate section organized by Oleg I. Belyaev and Arseniy P. Vydrin. The most significant reports of this section and the plenary lecture by Ayesha Kidwai (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India) form the basis of the 2026 issues of *Indo-Iranian Languages*. Some of the articles are published in present issue, while the remainder will appear in the next issue.

Opening this issue is “A short history of the official counting of India’s languages (1901–2011)” by Ayesha Kidwai who compares the methods used for counting languages in India over the past 100 years and analyzes the ‘mother tongue’ concept underlying the different censuses. She argues that the methodology behind the censuses after 1971 fails to reflect the actual linguistic diversity of India, whereas the earlier censuses, though conducted during the colonial period, provided a more adequate picture of the linguistic situation.

Mehrdad Naghzhguy-Kohan’s typological study “Similitive plurals in Western Iranian Languages” identifies four main similitive plural strategies: 1) echo-reduplication; 2) complementary distribution of echo-reduplication and suffixation; 3) extension of the functions of the plural marker *-hâ*; and 4) constructions with the lexeme ‘thing’.

The work by Maksim G. Melenchenko, “What we do in the shadows of the pear tree: Tense switching in Shughni Pear Stories” describes tense

usage peculiarities in Shughni narratives. The data are based on an experiment involving Shughni speakers. Participants were asked to describe the events depicted in the classic “Pear Stories”, a short stimulus video developed by Wallace Chafe in the 1970s.

Veronika T. Dzakhova’s article, “Realization of voiced plosives in modern Ossetic”, presents the results of an instrumental study of certain consonants in the Iron dialect of Ossetic. Her data show which positional and combinatory changes affect Ossetic voiced plosives. The author argues that in the final position, consonants represented in writing by the letters *ð* and *z* are realized as voiceless /t/ and /k/ respectively, while the consonant *ō* does not occur in this position.

Two articles in this issue deal with diachronic research in Iranian languages, offering a new perspective on a range of contentious issues in modern Iranian studies. In his article “Etymology of some Indo-Iranian cultural terms and the Indo-Iranian substratum theory. I. Indo-Iranian **Hišti*-/**Hišta*- ‘brick’”, David B. Buyaner critically examines the theory of an Indo-Iranian substrate originating from speakers of the Bactria–Margiana Archaeological Complex. He demonstrates that the words cited by proponents of this theory as key evidence for substrate influence on the Proto-Indo-Iranian lexicon mostly have reliable Indo-European etymologies. The article discusses the word ‘brick’, for which an Indo-European prototype meeting both semantic and formal etymological criteria is posited. Yuriy A. Dzitstsoity (“On the dialectal division of Scythian”) argues that at least two dialects can be distinguished within the Scythian language. The article demonstrates the fallacy of the tendency to generalize specific phonetic phenomena characteristic of one dialect to the Scythian language as a whole.

A detailed review by Roohollah Mofidi of the monograph “Typology of Iranian Languages” by Mohammad Dabir-Moghaddam, published in Tehran in Persian, concludes the issue. The review provides insights into the main content of this fundamental work in which modern typological methods are applied to Iranian languages. The results contribute to both specific research in Iranian languages and general theoretical issues of the linguistic typology. The author also dwells on some diachronic changes attested for Iranian languages.

The 2026 issues of *Indo-Iranian Languages* offer a high level of diversity in terms of both the topics covered and the languages selected. While

addressing both the Western and Eastern subgroups of Iranian languages they cover varying paths of modern linguistic research including diachronic linguistics, grammaticalization theory, synchronic typologically based description, acoustic analysis of phonetic data and sociolinguistic research based on the languages of India.

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