Encoding the Agent in Persian Passive Construction: 
A Cognitive Approach

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Abstract
This paper is an attempt to explore the prepositions used to encode the agent in Persian passive constructions. According to Givón (1983) the main function of the passive constructions is to defocus the agent. As the general trend in Persian is to omit this defocused agent, we will stylistically divide the passive constructions into two main sub branches, namely unmarked and marked passives according to whether or not the agent is included. Having analyzed the prepositions using in the passive construction (e.g. tāvāssot-e, be dāst-e, ba, az suy-e, az tārāf-e, and be vāsile-y-e) a complete semantic characterization of the type of agent that normally occurs with these prepositions will be provided. The results indicate that, in contrast to some linguists who treated the prepositions in the passive construction as stylistic forms, they are not always interchangeable; in fact they are meaningful which have a prototype for the type of agent that co-occurs with them.

Keywords: Agent, Preposition, Passive Construction, Cognitive Grammar

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1. Introduction

Almost all the previous studies focused on the passive construction in Persian share a hypothesis which is basically rooted from Chomsky (1957): the passive construction is derived from an underlying active counterpart in which the passive transformation moves the underlying object into subject position, the demoted subject is codified by ‘by-phrase’, and some formal changes occur on the morphology of the active verb. However, Langacker (1982: 57-58) claims that the space [cognitive] grammar analysis differs from generativist’s in all points. He states “passive clauses do not derive from active clauses. All three grammatical morphemes are meaningful and figure actively in the semantic structure of the passive expressions. The object of by is simply the object of by: it is not demoted, and at not level is it the clausal subject”. On the basis of the principles of Cognitive Grammar in which all the constituents are meaningful, it is assumed that in Persian the passive construction is an independent phenomenon consisted of three basic meaningful components: 1) non-verbal element (X in general), 2) the verbal element (šod-ān), and 3) a preposition phrase encoding the agent. This combination has been illustrated in the following schemata:

(a) [PASSIVE]/[NP+(P-NP)+X+‘šodān’]

where X = N_{EV}, A, PERF₃, and P_{nom}

Ignoring the other components, this paper is fully concentrated on how the agent (‘P-NP’ in the above schemata) is encoded.

Methodologically, this study follows Langacker’s analysis of by-phrase in English passive and Arnett’s description of von (from/by), durch (through) and mit (with) in the German Passive (2004).

Langacker (1982:69) establishes that there are many meaningful uses of ‘by’ which form a lexical network. There is a link between the predicates that occur with ‘by’, although the predicates differ. The predicates of ‘by’ differ with respect to the domains in which this relation occurs. The meaning of the preposition ‘by’ is basically the same, but it is the domain that differs. He believes that the passive ‘by’ continues the pattern established in the active sentences. In other words, the usage of prepositions in the passive is motivated by their uses in other contexts. They are an extension of one of the meanings of these prepositions in the active.
This article includes four other sections: in § 2 some controversial issue on Agent-Phrase in Persian will be provided. In § 3 two types of passives will be introduced according to whether or not the agent is included. § 4 which is the main part of the paper concentrating on the prepositions used to encode the agent. In this part, we will also try to provide a complete semantic characterization of the agent occurs with the prepositions. The last section will naturally be devoted to results and findings.

2. Agent Phrase: A Controversial Issue in Persian

As far as we know the preposition phrase encoding the agent has not been deeply investigated by scholars who work on the Persian passive. Almost all of them (e.g. Golfam et al. (2006)) consider different prepositions encoding the agent as stylistic forms. Moyne is another linguist who speaks about preposition phrase in the Persian passive and according to his analysis concludes that it isn’t agentive but instrumental. Accordingly, Moyne (1974) was the first linguist who claimed that there is no passive in Persian and the ‘so-called’ passive is in fact an inchoative construction.

As Naderi (2010) asserts Moyne’s article is a prototypical example of what Croft (2001: xiii-xv; 2007: 464-472) calls the reductionist formal/componential approach to syntax. Moyne has brought two reasons against the existence of the passive construction in Persian. In addition to historical reasons, his second argument for the non-existence of the passive in Persian roots from the stylistic markedness of the agented passive in this language. However, cross-linguistic studies reveal that this fact is not limited to Persian: there are many languages that either do not have an agented passive or the agentless passive is their unmarked Passive (e.g. Limbu, Amharic, Latvian, Turkic and Kurdish) (Siewierska 1984; Haig 1998). Moyne believes that the ‘so-called’ passive in Persian is actually an inchoative construction to which a ‘by-phrase’ (i.e. Agent-phrase) is conjoined, and should the ‘by-phrase’ be omitted we will see the real inchoative structure of the ‘so called’ passive (Moyne 1974: 251-255).

Regardless of the fact that some of his examples (his evidence) are against our intuition as Persian native speakers, the main factor responsible for the confusion of
inchoative and passive by Moyne is the double function of šodæn as the marker of both constructions. He believes that the oblique phrase in Persian agented passive is not really an agent-phrase but rather an instrumental construction.

According to him “[t]hese instrumental constructions do not clearly specify an agent for the action” (Moyne 1974: 251); so the action is perceived as happened spontaneously and does not involve any agency. While it is true for many of his non-passive examples, there are some examples in his work which cannot truly be explained by his claim. Let us take Moyne’s original example:

(1) æž dæst-e æli košt-a from hand-of Ali killed šod. became

‘he was killed by Ali’.

(Moyne’s original example)

Moyne (1974: 251) interprets this example as follows:

“[I]t means that Ali was instrumental in the killing of someone, but it does not necessarily mean that he personally performed the killing”.

What which was considered as Moyne’s base of analysis is with no doubt ungrammatical to all Persian native speakers (at least in that variety of Persian spoken in the geography of Iran). He probably means the following example:

(2) be dæst-e æli košt-e to hand-Ez Ali killed šod Ø,
become.PAST 3rd pers.SG

‘S/he was killed by Ali’.

As Naderi (2010: 30) correctly points out Moyne’s analysis is obviously a wrong interpretation. The only possible interpretation of (2) is the one which takes Ali as the agent of košt-æn ‘to kill’. Moreover, it is not actually possible to encode a real instrument with the preposition ‘be dæst-e’, as illustrated in (3):

(3) *be dæst-e tofæng košt-e to hand-Ez gun killed šod Ø,
become.PAST 3rd pers.SG

Lit. ‘S/he was killed with the hand of gun’.

‘S/he was killed by gun.

adapted from Naderi (2010: 30)

Keeping these points in mind, we would like to demonstrate that:

- the prepositional phrase that encodes the agent is integral, but not required, part of the passive construction in Persian,
- the prepositions used to encode the agent are meaningful and not purely stylistic forms (against what Golfam
et al. claim),
- the prepositional phrase used in the passive construction is agentive rather than instrumental (against what Moyne claims).

3. Passive Construction in Persian: A Stylistic Classification

On the basis of a stylistic categorization we will divide Persian passive construction into two sub branches: 1) the agented passive which is stylistically marked and rather new in Persian. It is highly restricted to written language; 2) the agentless passive which is unmarked and is frequent in both spoken and written register.

Almost all the works on the Persian passive mention the novelty of the agented passive construction and some scholars have claimed that it is the result of translation from European languages (Najafi (1987) in particular). Of course, there are so many languages in which the agented passive is treated as marked but acceptable. The passive in Kurmanji (a northern dialect of Kurdish) is such an instance; however an agent might be introduced to the passive construction through the circumposition ji aliye...ve ‘lit. from the side of’ (Thackston 2006: 68). Turkish is another language in which the unmarked passive form is agentless, but “the introduction of the agent, though somewhat unnatural with the Turkish passive, is possible” (Comrie and Thompson 2007: 349). In Turkish the preposition tærefinden (from the side of) encodes the agent into the passive construction as exemplified in (4):

\[(4) \quad \text{mektub hæsen tærefinden} \]
\[
\text{letter Hassan by}
\]
\[
\text{yaz -il -di. write PASS 3rd pers.SG.}
\]

The letter was written by Hassan. 
(Comrie and Thompson 2007:350)

As it has been revealed in schemata (a) the passive construction in Persian is a two (or more-participant) construction in which the agentive nominal is almost always omitted. Van Oosten (1986b) quantifies the occurrence of the agent in English and finds that it is omitted from the majority of passives. In line with English and German (Arnett 2004), the study of data in this article reveals that the same findings also hold true for Persian. The general trend to omit the agent is also present in the corpus used in this paper; the agent is omitted in 403 of 452 examples or 89% of the time.

On the basis of this fact and in order to enhance the reliability of the research, we
designed a questionnaire in which the participants were asked to rewrite some passive sentences with a preposition phrase encoding the agent. According to both corpus and questionnaire, Persian native speakers use the following (compound) prepositions in order to encode the agent:

(a) **tavasot-e**
intermediation-Ez
by, by the intermediation of

(b) **be dast-e**
to hand-Ez
by the hand of

(c) **bu**
with

(d) **æz suy-e**
from/of direction/side- Ez
on behalf of

(e) **æz taraæf-e**
from/of direction/side- Ez
on behalf of

(f) **be væsile-y-e**
to instrument-Ez

Regarding this hypothesis that the prepositions in the passive follow their usage in the active, we will study the occurrence of the above prepositions in the passive construction.

4. Prepositions Used to Encode the Agent

4.1. **tavasot-e** in Active Clauses

In contrast to English preposition ‘by’ which is polysemous, the semantic domain of **tavasot-e** in Persian is restricted to the domain of responsibility. In the abstract domain of responsibility, **tavasot-e** is used to indicate the immediate origin of something, that is the originator or cause.

Consider the following examples:

(5) ... šahed-e edjray-e musiqi-y-e witness-Ez performance music-Ez zende **tavasot-e**
alive intermediation-Ez
šahram nazeri xah Shahram Nazeri want-PRES
-im bud.
1^purs.PL BE.PAST
‘...we will witness the performance of live music by Shahram Nazeri’.

(6) enqelab-i dær sistem-e revolution-INDEF in system-Ez danešgahi-y-e engelis university-Ez England **tavasot-e** æsatid dær intermediation-Ez professors in hal-e šeklæri æst position-Ez shaping BE.PRES. Ø.
3^pfs.SG
‘A revolution is shaping in the university system of England by professors’.
These examples draw on the knowledge of speakers that individuals are capable of carrying out actions and creating objects (as well as more abstract entities). Typically, individuals are responsible for the object or abstract things, and in this way, are considered as the originators (Langacker 1982:70).

Both example (5) and (6) show a trajector for tavaøssot-e that is the landmark of the process that brought the event into existence. The landmark of tavaøssot-e corresponds to the trajector of the base process. This configuration is represented by the following figure (Langacker 1982:70).

In the above figure which represents English 'by', German 'von' and Persian tavaøssot-e in the domain of responsibility, the process and its originator are located within the domain of responsibility. This represents the construal that the landmark of tavaøssot-e is the originator of the trajector. The landmark corresponds to the immediate cause or originator of a process.

4.2. tavaøssot-e in Passive Clauses

The usage of tavaøssot-e with an originator is most closely related to the use of tavaøssot-e in the passive construction. This claim is on the basis of Langacker's (1982) analysis of the English preposition 'by' that establishes the link between the use of 'by' with an originator in the abstract domain of responsibility and the use of 'by' to encode the agent in the passive. The claim is that a similar link can be established between the use of tavaøssot-e with an originator in the domain of responsibility and the use of tavaøssot-e with the agent in the passive. Consider the following examples:

(7) u (tavaøssot-e) ræfis-e
   s/he (intermediation-Ez head-Ez bæš) become.hæme
department) to all
možærefi šod
introduction become.PAST Ø.

1. In any relationship, varying degrees of prominence are conferred on its participants. The most prominent participant, called the trajector (TR), is the entity construed as being located, evaluated, or described. Impressionistically, it can be characterized as the primary focus within the relationship. Often some other participant is made prominent as a secondary focus. If so, this is called a landmark (LM).
‘S/he was introduced to all (by the head of department)’.

(8) dær-ha-y-e estadiyom yek
doors-PL-Ez stadium one
saæt piæ æz šoru?-e
hour before from beginning-Ez
mosâbeqe (tævæsot-e)
match (intermediation-Ez
maes?ulin-e værzešgah) baz
responsible-Ez club) open
šod Ø.
become.PAST 3rd pers.SG.
‘The doors of stadium were opened
(by the caretakers), one hour before
the beginning of the match’.

As it was pointed out, in Persian passive
sentences, tævæsot-e is used with the
originator or cause of an action. The
preposition tævæsot-e occurs thirty-two
times in the corpus and in almost two third
of the sentences of our questionnaire. The
originator or cause is prototypically human
in that it is animate, potent and able to act
volitionally. Let’s consider the following
examples:

(9) xæbær-e extelaf-e anha
news-Ez problems-Ez their
tævæsot-e morebi dær
intermediation-Ez coach in
resæne-ha montæšer šod
media-PL spread become-PAST Ø.
3rd pers.SG.
‘The news of their problems was
spreaded by the coach’.

(10) næqße-y-e elmi-y-e kešvær
map-Ez scientific-Ez country
tævæsot-e ræ?is dʒomhur
intermediation-Ez head republic
eʔlam šod
declaration become.PAST Ø.
3rd pers.SG.
‘The scientific map of the country
was declared by president’.

Similar to the kinds of agents co-occur
with ‘von’ in German (Arnett 2004: 131),
in examples (9) and (10) the agents are
human, and furthermore, they act
volitionally as the source or cause of the
action of the verb. The agents are potent
because they affect a change in the second
participant (xæbær-e extelaf, næqße-y-e
elmi-y-e kešvær). These agents, therefore,
correspond quite closely to the prototype
for an agent.

The prototype of an animate, volitional
agent can be extended via metonymy to
organizations, corporations, countries,
governmental entities and other collectives
that are construed to act as a single body
(ibid). For example:

(11) in dæmæne tævæsot-e
this domain intermediation-Ez
gugel edʒare ddæ-e
google rent give.PAST-PPRT

1. These examples are taken from both our corpus
and questionnaire.
mi-šæv -æd. PROG become.PRES 3rd pers.SG. ‘This domain will be rented by Google’.

(12) dær 1358 vey be hæmræh-e in 1358 s/he along with-Ez xanevade -?-æš tævæssot-e family his/her intermediation-Ez dolæt-e æraq eøædʒ governmen-Ez Iraq dismissal šød Ø. become.PAST 3rd pers.SG. ‘In 1358, he was dismissed by Iraq government along his family’.

(13) došmæn tævæssot-e ærteš enemy intermediation-Ez army be æqæb rand-e to back send.PAST.PPRT šød Ø. become.PAST. 3rd pers.SG. ‘The enemy was sent back by the army’.

In (11) and (12), the company and the governing bodies of countries are given the ability to act as a human as they rent something or dismiss someone. Companies, governments and countries are often seen as the representatives of their members or people, whether or not they actually represent them accurately (ibid). They are volitionally able to do like a human agent does. The second participants in the clause, in damæne and vey be hæmræh-e xanevade-?-æš are affected by the agents. Therefore, these social organizations behave like prototypical agents. Example (13) shows a group of individuals that acts like a single animate, potent and volitional agent. The enemy is affected by the actions of the ærteš. This example shows that collective bodies can be construed to act as one prototypical agent. The following figure is suggested for the passive counterpart:

![Diagram](image)

**Fig. 2**

4.3. be dæst-e in Active Clauses

The expression ‘be dæst’ in Persian is fairly frequent: in combination with the verbal element aærdæn ‘to bring’ (to earn), in combination with nouns to represent manner gitar be dæst (someone with guitar in his/her hands), in adverb dæst be dæst (transferring something through different people). Like tævæssot-e, the compound nominal preposition be dæst-e occurs in abstract domain of responsibility, it shows the originator or cause of something. Consider the following examples:

(14) …hakemiyæt hærekæt-e ma
…government movement-Ez us rā be dāst-e xodeman DO to hand-Ez ourselves modiriyyet mi- kon management PROG do.PRES -ēd.
3rd pers.SG ‘…the government is managing our movement by ourselves’.

(15) ešqal-e āntakiye be occupation-Ez Andalusia to dāst-e sælibiyun ruydād-i hand-Ez Crusaders event-INDEF āst Ø ke…
BE.PRES 3rd pers.SG that ‘The occupation of Andalusa by Crusaders is an event that…’

As it is illustrated, the agent in the above sentences is human and volitional. In these sentences the landmark is the direct originator of the action.

4.4. be dāst-e in Passive Clauses

The compound preposition be dāst-e is another preposition which occurs six times in our corpus. The participants who have inserted a preposition phrase into the passive sentences of the questionnaire have often used be dāst-e as an alternative form of tāvæssot-e (written as tāvæssot-e/be dāst-e). But the point is that they have used this preposition in sentences in which:

- the agent is either human (therefore a volitional agent) or the feature of human (having hand) can metaphorically be extended to,
- the action/event represented in the passive form is done through hands;
we call these kinds of actions/events ‘handi-actions’.

(16) in diplomat ke be dāst-e this diplomat that to hand-Ez polis dāstgir šod police arrest become.PAST Ø…
3rd pers.SG. ‘This diplomat who was arrested by police…’

(17) mæsa?el-e mântæqe bāyād problems-Ez region must be dāst-e kešvær-ha-y-e to hand-Ez country-PL-Ez mântæqe hāl šēv region solve become.PRES -ēd.
3rd pers.SG ‘The problems of the region must be solved by the countries of the region’.

Directly analogous to tāvæssot-e, the prototypical agent encoded by be dāst-e (human) can be extended via metonymy to organizations, corporations, countries, governmental entities and other collectives that are construed to act as a human (i.e. personification).

Predictably, the landmark and the trajector of be dāst-e are located within the
domain of responsibility. In the passive construction the landmark is construed as the cause or originator of a process. The preposition be dæst-e can be used to represent the originator in the domain of responsibility in both active (Figure 1) and passive constructions (Figure 2). Now consider the following examples:

(18) *dærs be dæst-e
lesson to hand-Ez
mo?ælem tædris šod
teacher teaching become.PAST.
Ø.
3rd pers.SG.
‘The lesson was taught with the hand of teacher’.

Example (18) is ungrammatical because the event encoded in the passive is not a handi-action; e.g. tædris kærdæn is not an action done necessarily through hands.

(11') *in damæne be dæst-e
this domain to hand-Ez
gugel edʒare dad-e
Google rent give.PAST-PPRT
mi- šæv -æd.
PROG become.PRES 3rd pers.SG.
‘This domain will be rented by Google’.

This sentence is also ungrammatical because having hand is a feature restricted to what which is animate. Thus, it cannot be extended to Google. The fact that tævæssot-e and be dæst-e are not always interchangeable suggests that these prepositions are meaningful.

4.5. ba in Active Clauses

The preposition ba ‘with’ is polysemous. Yussefi Rad (2008) mentions a number of functions for ‘ba’ (e.g. accompaniment, instrumentality, manner, contrastive, addition, reason, possessive relation, and etc.) in Persian. Here, we will only focus on the first three functions. In active clauses, ba is used to express accompaniment, instrumentality, and manner. Consider the following examples:

(19) ba màn bi- ya
with me IMP come
Come with me!

(20) dæst -æm ra ba čaqu
hand my DO with knife
cut-PAST 1st pers.SG.
I cut my hand with knife.

(21) čer ba tæmæssør hærf
why with ridicule speech
mi- zæn -1?
PROG hit 2nd pers.SG.
Why are you speaking ridiculously?

As Arnett (2004) points out the combination of instrumentality and accompaniment is one common to many languages. King (1988:559) states that “since an instrument is controlled by an
agent, it must also accompany the agent. Hence it is no accident that the preposition marking an instrument is the same in many languages as the preposition used to mark accompaniment”. On the basis of this fact, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:134) give the combination of instrumentality and accompaniment as an example of ‘metaphorical coherence in grammar’, as reflected by the metaphor ‘instrument as a companion’.

Figure 3 shows the preposition ba as it is used to express accompaniment (Langacker 1987:218):

![Diagram](image)

The trajector is located with respect to two landmarks. The trajector of the preposition ba is located in the neighborhood of its landmark. Indeed, the neighborhood itself is also a landmark (Langacker 1987:217). However, the two landmarks differ in terms of their salience. The landmark that is located near the trajector is profiled and the neighborhood is not profiled.

4.6. ba in passive clauses

In Persian passive sentences ba is used with the originator or cause of the event which is not animate. Consider the following examples:

(22) ژاپن از چهار سو ba
Japan from four side with
water surround become.PAST-PPRT
BE.PRES 3rd pers.SG
‘Japan is surrounded by water from four sides’.

(23) دør ناغهان ba fešar-e
door suddenly with force-Ez
wind open become.PAST
Ø. 3rd pers.SG
‘The door was suddenly opened by the force of wind’.

(24) دزیگاه-e fa?el ba mæf?ul
position-Ez subject with object
occupation PROG become.PRES
-æd. 3rd pers.SG.
‘The subject position is occupied by object’.

In addition to inanimate objects, natural forces are inanimate sources of action that are potent and they also fit the extension of the prototype for agents with ba. Natural forces are not normally under the control of an outside agent and they are usually
perceived to be the sole cause of the action (Arnett 2004:141). This type of agent is construed as one that acts under its own power to cause a condition or process to come about (King 1988:565). The point is that \( ba \) is totally restricted to inanimate agent. It makes the sentence ungrammatical if it comes with animate agent:

\[
\text{The news of their problems was broadcasted by the coach}. 
\]

\[
\text{The scientific map of the country was declared by the president}. 
\]

4.7. \( az \) suy-e/\( az \) tæraf-e in Active Clauses

\( az \) suy-e is the formal counterpart of \( az \) tæraf-e. They can easily be exchanged without any semantic difference. Similar to the English preposition ‘by’, these two prepositions have some related meanings. The domains under consideration here are space and responsibility. In its most basic domain, space, the prepositions ‘\( az \) suy-e/\( az \) tæraf-e’ are used to express motion from a point of origin. Consider the following examples:

\[
\text{Some breeze blew from the North}. 
\]

\[
\text{Please move from your right side}. 
\]

In addition to their use in the spatial domain as a preposition, \( az \) suy-e/\( az \) tæraf-e also expresses the source from which an action is accomplished. For example:

\[
\text{I received a letter from the ministry of science that…’} 
\]
Like ‘durch’ in German in these examples, the nouns that occur with از سعی‌های/از تاریف‌های are the origins out of which the action travels from agent to patient. But the point is that in contrast to the noun occurs with direct prepositions, the trajector of از سعی‌های/از تاریف‌های doesn’t have an immediate agentive role on the action chain. Thus, direct prepositions occur with an agent that is the immediate originator or cause of an action; however, از سعی‌های/از تاریف‌های is used to express a source or origin from which an action/event is brought about. An agent used with the preposition از سعی‌های/از تاریف‌های is not construed as the direct cause of the process; it is merely the source of energy that doesn’t transfer energy to goal by itself. The following figure is suggested for از سعی‌های/از تاریف‌های in the domain of responsibility.

4.8. از سعی‌های/از تاریف‌های in Passive Clauses

The meaning of از سعی‌های/از تاریف‌های in passive clauses follows the pattern established in active clauses. The diagram illustrated the transfer of energy among the participants is the same for both active and passive sentences. The trajector of از سعی‌های/از تاریف‌های, the indirect originator, is not the most prominent participant in the passive clause.

As it has been shown in the schemata (1), in passive sentences, it is the affected entity that is the most prominent. The landmark of از سعی‌های/از تاریف‌های is the head of the action chain and it is not encoded at all. The exclusion of the primary/real agent, -هم, and مان of examples 27-28, is the skewed perspective that is the characteristic of the passive
construction. The affected participant is the most prominent in the passive, whereas in the active clause the primary agent is the most prominent. This fact is represented by figure (5):

Consider the following examples in which the direct and immediate role of the agent effects on the kind of preposition

(29) * džæsæd-i æz suy-e
corpse-INDEF from side-Ez
ostad dær kelas tæšrīh
professor in class dissection
šod Ø
become-PAST 3rd pers.SG
‘A corpse was dissected on behalf of the professor in the class’.

(29') džæsæd-i tævæssot-e
corpse-INDEF intermediation-Ez
ostad dær kelas tæšrīh
professor in class dissection
šod Ø
become-PAST 3rd pers.SG
‘A corpse was dissected on behalf of the professor in the class’.

The last point worthy to mention is that similar to tævæssot-e, the preposition æz suy-e/æz tæraef-e can be extended to inanimate agents via metonymy.

4.9. be væsile-y-e in Active Clauses
The compound preposition be væsile-y-e is another preposition found in both our corpus and our questionnaire. At first sight, it seems that this preposition generally comes with those NPs which are either inanimate or hold low degree of animacy. One might think that this preposition has instrumental function (the same domain we studied for the preposition ba); this semantic implication might be because of the existence of the word væsile ‘instrument’ in the morphology of this preposition. Look at the following examples in which the preposition be væsile-y-e represents such meaning:

(30) ...mætn ra be væsile-y-e
... text DO to instrument-Ez
mos kopi kærd
mouse copy do.PAST
Ø.
3rd pers.SG
‘S/he copied the text with the mouse’.

On the other hand, the study of the corpus, questionnaire and also searching on Google motor search reveal that there are clauses in which the complement of the preposition be væsile-y-e is animate. Therefore, in the case of be væsile-y-e we face another semantic domain which is similar to the domain of responsibility mentioned in tævæssot-e.

(31) ændʒam-e in fæ?alæet-ha
doing this activity-PL
be væsile-y-e mærdom væ...
to instrument-Ez people and...
‘Doing these activities by people…’

Thus, the preposition be væsile-y-e has two semantic domains: responsibility and instrumentality. Like active clauses, these two domains are also present in the passive counterparts.

4.10. be væsile-y-e in Passive Clauses

In line with what discussed about the other prepositions, especially tævæssot-e and ba, the application of be væsile-y-e with an agent in active clauses motivates its application in passive ones. However, in contrast to the prepositions tævæssot-e and ba which are restricted to different degrees of animacy, be væsile-y-e is neutral; it occurs with both animate and inanimate agents:

(24’) dæstur-e næqš væ erdʒa? grammar-Ez role and reference
be væsile-y-e van Valin
to instrument-Ez van Valin
mo?ãrefi ʒod introduction become-PAST Ø,
3rd pers.SG ‘The Grammar of Role and Reference was introduced by van Valin’.

5. Conclusion

This paper totally focused on that component of the passive constructions which is integral but not necessary in Persian, namely agent. Having introduced different prepositions used to encode the agent, a semantic characterization of the agent was provided. Generally, these prepositions can co-occur with the agent which is human, non-human, natural forces, or abstract concepts. The preposition tævæssot-e is used with agents that are causative, animate, volitional and potent. The preposition be dæst-e comes with agents which have hands or are the agent of handi-actions. ba is used with the originator or cause of the event which is not animate. The preposition æz suy-e/æz tæræf-e is used with participants which has no immediate role on action chain, but that are means to carry out an action. be væsile-y-e
has a neutral essence which can come with both animate and inanimate agents. These prepositions are not always interchangeable, because they occur with different kinds of agents according to their semantic characterizations.

The analysis of these prepositions shows that two factors play role in the kind of preposition used to encode the agent:

- the degree of animacy of the agent.
- the direction of the effect of the agent on the patient.

On the basis of the first factor the following continuum is assumed:

![Fig. 6]

As you see the preposition *be væsile-y-e* is in the middle of the continuum whose ends reveal two different degrees of animacy. On one side there are the prepositions *tævæssot-e, be dæst-e* and *æz suy-e/æz tæraef-e* holding the semantic domain of responsibility, with the most degree of animacy. On the opposite side *ba* with the semantic domain of instrumentality has the least amount of animacy. As pointed out before, these two domains are the semantic domains of *be væsile-y-e* in between.

The second factor categorizes the prepositions as follows:

- direct agent: *tævæssot-e, be dæst-e, be væsile-y-e* and *ba*
- indirect agent: *æz suy-e/æz tæraef-e*

References


Encoding the Agent in Persian Passive…


رمزگذاری کششگر در ساخت مجهول زبان فارسی: رویکردهای شناختی

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این مقاله تلاش می‌کند به بررسی حروف اضافه‌ای که در رمزگذاری کششگر در ساخت مجهول دخیلند.

بردازد. همانطور که گفته (1983) تصمیم می‌کند نقشه اصلی ساخت مجهول کانونی کوانتیزداهنده کششگر است.

گرایش کلی در زبان فارسی حذف این کششگر غیرکانونی است. براساس یک طبقه‌بندی سبکی ساخت مجهول در زبان فارسی را به دو طبقه اصلی طبقه‌بندی می‌کنیم. در واقع، با توجه به این نتیجه که آیا کششگر در ساخت مجهول ظاهر می‌یابد یا خیر دو زیرگروه مجهول نشان دارد و مجهول یا نشان را معرفی کرده در ساخت مجهول به کار می‌رود (وسطین، به دست، با از بین رفته، از طرفی و به وسیله) ویژگی‌های معنایی کششگری که به طور معقول با این حروف اضافه به کار می‌رود را از آنها خواهیم کرد. نتایج این تحقیق نشان می‌دهد که برخلاف برخی خواندانان که این حروف را غونه‌های سبکی یک‌دیدگر قلمداد می‌کند این حروف همواره قابل جابجایی با یکدیگر نیستند.

بلهک همانندند و هریک با نمونه نوع تخصصی از کششگر به کار می‌رود.

کلیدواژه‌ها: کششگر، حرف اضافه، ساخت مجهول، دستور شناختی.

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