

## **Contrastive Analysis of Sentence Patterns in English and Persian**

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### **ABSTRACT**

***Complements, adjuncts and predicator are the three main elements of the clause structure. This paper primarily aims at presenting a general classification of clause structure in Persian. In this context, transitive and intransitive structures in Modern Persian are also analyzed. In this research, five canonical Persian constructions are identified based on Valency and transitivity. The paper also discusses the ways in which complements and adjuncts are distinguished from each other.***

***Since the study is oriented towards comparison with English, similarities and differences between the two languages are also discussed. In both languages the basic functions of the clause are the same. However, Persian contains five canonical structures whereas as English has just four of them. While in both languages the subject is the first element of the clause, the order of the elements is different in the two languages. In canonical structures in Persian, the predicator is always the final element of the clause, while in English it always fills the second position.***

***In the context of valency, both languages have the same functions. Intransitive clauses are either monovalent or bivalent. Monotransitive clauses are either bivalent or trivalent. English intransitive clauses are always trivalent.***

***Complements in the two languages are distinguished by factors such as licensing, obligatoriness, category and prepositional phrase. These factors are applicable in distinguishing complements from adjuncts.***

1.

### **Introduction**

Many Persian learners of English face different technical problems. Syntactic Differences between Persian and English form a significant part of such Difficulties. Following Huddleston and Pullum(2002),this paper outlines Elements of the clause structure in Persian: complements, adjuncts and thePredicator.

In the context of transitivity, concepts such as dual-transitive, monoTransitive, di-transitive, complex-intransitive and complex-transitive are analyzed.

in Persian. Using different types of complement in combination with transitivity, we identify five canonical

Persian clause constructions.

We also present a general classification of clause structure in Persian, based on valency and transitivity.

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We identify five canonical Persian clause constructions. We also present a

General classification of clause structure in Persian, based on valency and Transitivity.

The ways in which one can distinguish complements from adjuncts in Persian makes an important part of this

paper. Since this study is oriented

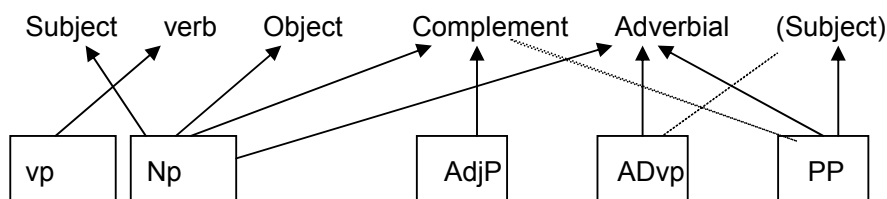
Towards comparison with English, we will outline similarities and differences Between Persian and English in

Terms of the above key concepts.

We hope that professional teachers of English to Persian speakers and Teachers of Persian to English speakers benefit from the outcome of this paper.

## 2. Literature review

In discussing clause elements, Quirk et al (1985: 60) divide the elements of Clause structure into two categories: 'phrases' and 'subordinate clauses'. The former include VPs, NPs, AdjPs, AdvPs and PPs. They represent clause elements in the following diagram. 'The broken arrows on the right indicate that the adverb phrases and prepositional phrases can exceptionally function as subjects ( . ..), and that prepositional phrases can' function as complements.



In the context of functions and categories of sentence elements, Aarts and Including predicator, complements and adjuncts. Complements and adjuncts Wekker (1987: 76) say: "Once we have established what the constituents of a

Sentence is, we must specify what functions these constituents have and to what grammatical categories they belong". In sentence structure, they think of

Functions as slots which we can fill by a certain range of linguistic structures.

They are of the opinion that in every language there are typical sentence Patterns. They also divide the functions into 'obligatory' and 'optional'.

Huddleston (1988: 49-67) goes into details of the structure of the kernel

Clauses. In the first instance he divides the clause into subject and predicate. According to him, the predicate represents the function of a constituent, Are dependents of the predicator which is the head of the predicate?

Complements include subject, object, PCs and PCo.

Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:242) write:

"Grammatical relations are a part of traditional grammar. They are important because if one thinks

*pretheoretically, or as pretheoretically as one can, it is obvious that there are a lot of syntactic phenomena that relate to grammatical relations."*

Radford (1997:508) defines the concept function as:

*"Expressions such as subject, specifier, complement, object, head and adjunct are said to denote the grammatical function which a particular expression fulfils in a particular structure (which in turn relates to the position which it occupies and certain of its morphological properties -e.g. case and agreement properties)."*

Finch (2000: 88) regards the clause as "a term used in some grammars to

refer to a grammatical unit intermediate between PHRASE and SENTENCE". According to him, "the distinctive

feature of clauses is that they have subject

Predicate structure." He mentions 'subject', 'predicate', 'object', complement

And 'adjunct' as the 'elements of the clause. He uses the acronym **SPOCA** for the elements

In the context of grammatical relations, Akmajian et al (2001: 181), define Some elements of the clause structure, including subject and object in English. Structurally, they regard the *subject* of a sentence as the NP immediately dominated by S which appears before (Aux) VP. Similarly, they define the *Object* as the NP immediately dominated by VP.

## **Background**

The field of second language research (very broadly speaking) is divided into three stages of development, roughly equitable with the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s, respectively. The 1960s and the flourishing period of behaviorists' habit-formation psychology and structural linguistics to the problems of foreign language teaching techniques and material; an objective model, which viewed teaching as doing and mastery of habits and actions. It was supported and informed by process-product research (a positivist view of research) towards learning difficulties. In this period, the results of linguistic and contrastive analysis research were directly applied to the field of second language teaching. Charles Fries, more than anyone else, tried to give language pedagogy a basis in linguistic research.

The 1970s and the abandonment of the 1960s' framework, the rebirth of cognitive psychology and upsurge of generative linguistics which viewed teaching as thinking and doing combined; a cognitive model. This period was a beginning of the rift between the applied and theoretical aims of researchers in this area which saw the learner as an autonomous creator of language systems who was involved in a complex process of decision-making. This view was supported by teacher-cognition research. According to Stern (1983), second language learning as a psychological research problem was discovered at most with suddenness by several applied linguists and psycholinguists as an important and uncharted area of investigation. The upsurge of research and theorizing between 1972 and 1978 or thereabouts on the psychology of second language learning was astonishing to anyone who had been aware of the lack of proper second language learning research in the preceding decades.

The 1980s onward saw an attempt to refine current models of language learning and seek closer links between second language research and other theoretical disciplines, especially linguistics. This era mostly views teaching as

knowing what to do; i.e., an interpretivist view and the teacher is viewed as an insider researcher. This period is associated with and informed by expertised research. Hereafter the debates on the relationship between research and practice, concerning the application of SLA research results to language pedagogy emerged.

### 3. Elements of the clause structure

In Persian, as in English, there are three basic functions in the clause: complements, adjuncts and the predicator.

(1)

C A A A C P  
*ali | har rUZ/ | do saat | dar xane | ketab | mi-xan-ad<sup>1</sup>*  
 Ali / everyday / two hour / in house / book / impfv-read.nps-3s  
 Ali/ everyday/ books/ at home /two hours/ every day.

C P C A A A

The most central function in the clause is the predicator. Complements Are related more closely to the verb than adjuncts. One can differentiate

Adjuncts on semantic grounds. *har rUZ*, *do sâ ât*, and *dar xane* are adjuncts of frequency, time period and location respectively.

In Persian, as in English, complements are classified as core and noneCore, which appear in the forms of NPs and PPs respectively. In the following *payâm* and *name râ* are core complements while *be maryam* is a non-core one:

C C C P

(2) *payâm | name râ | be maryam | dâd-ø*  
 Payam lette! Comp to Maryam give.ps-3sg  
 Payam gave the letter to Maryam

NPs that function as *core* complements are directly related to the verb, but Those that function within PPs are only indirectly related to the verb. The NP

*maryam* which is governed by a preposition is traditionally referred to as oblique. The preposition *be* 'to' in *be maryam* identifies the semantic role of *maryam* with regard to the verb.

In English whether a complement is core or non-core depends on the type of the category (NP vs PP)

and not its position in the clause. In the following,

*Alice* is a core complement in (i) and *to Alice* a non-core one in (ii):

(3)

- a. *Kim gave **Alice** the letter*
- b. *Kim gave the letter **to Alice***

Similarly, in Persian the deciding factor for a complement to be core or non Core is its category rather than its position. A core complement has the form of An NP and non-core one has

<sup>1</sup> 1 As far as the word order in Persian is concerned this is an unmarked on.e. Later in this paper the high flexibility of Persian word order will be discussed.

the form of a PP, no matter in what position of the clause they appear. Accordingly, in (4i-ii), *pul rā* is a core complement while *be Ali* is a non-core one. (4iii) is non-existent in Persian, because *ali* should have been preceded by the preposition *be* 'to'.

(4) i

*Payâm/ be/ ali /pul/râ/ dâd- ø*

Payam/ to/ Ali /money /comp/ give.ps.3sg

Payam gave Ali the money/ Payam gave the money to Ali

ii *payâm/ pul/ rā /be/ ali/ dâd- ø*

Payam/ money /comp /to /Ali /give.ps.3sg

Payam gave Ali the money/ Payam gave the money to Ali

iii \* *paymâ ali pul rā dâd ø*

\**paâyim pul rā ali dâd- ø*

I

The unacceptable forms in (4iii) imply a significant difference between Persian and English. It's a common practice in English to have a canonical structure containing a intransitives verb with three NPs as core-complements, as in (3i).

However, to express an equivalent clause in Persian, one is obliged to use twoNPs and one PP, as in (4i-ii).

Following our theoretical framework within which a non-core complement (PP) does not appear as an object, we claim that there is no ditransitive clause/verb in Persian (at least in the sense used in English).

Among the complements, the subject is external to the VP, as *payam* in

the above, while the other complements such as *be ali* and *pul fa* are internal to the VP.

Unlike English, in Persian the subject mayor may not be absent, for the person/number ending is always attached to the verb:

5) *man âmad-am*

(i) *come.ps.1sg*

*I came.*

However, any canonical clause has a subject (external complement). However, based on the nature of the verb a clause mayor may not contain a direct object (internal object). Accordingly, clauses are classified as transitive and intransitive. A transitive verb takes an object, while an intransitive does not. A clause which contains a transitive verb is referred to as transitive; a clause which contains an intransitive verb is called intransitive:

S                    P

(6) *mâ | david-im*

We run.ps-1 pi

We run

S            O            P

(7) *anhâ | xâne.râ | sâxt-and*

They house comp build.ps-3pl

They built the house

There are verbs which appear in two patterns: in transitive and intransitive

Clauses. Such verbs are referred to as dual-transitive:

(8) *livân Šekast-ø*

Glass break.ps-3sg

The glass broke

(9) *puyâ livân râ Šekast-ø*

Puya glass comp break.ps-3sg

Puya broke the glass

Some verbs appear in patterns which contain just a direct object, while others appear in patterns with a direct object and an indirect one. They are called monotransitives and ditransitives respectively:

S DO P

(10) *u /name/ ra/xand-o*

S /he letter /comp/read.ps-3sg

S/He read the letter

S/ DO / lo / P

(11) *man/ sib râ / be hasan/ dâd-am*

I/ apple comp/ to Hasan/ give.ps-1sg

I gave the apple to Hasan

Some verbs appear in both mono-transitive and di-transitive clauses:

(12) *nimâ/ haqiqat /râ/ goft-ø*

Nima /truth /comp /say.ps-3sg

Nima told the truth

(13) *nimâ/ haqiqat/ râ/be /man/ goft-ø*

Nima/truth/ comp /to/ I /say.ps-3sg

Nima told me the truth

#### 4. Complex-intransitive and complex-transitive

There are intransitive verbs which take a predicative complement, though such complements are more like predicators than ordinary complements; In (14), for example, *bâhuŠ* 'sharp' is related to the subject, *Hamid*. Similarly, we have transitive verbs that take a predicative complement which assigns a feature to the direct object of the clause. Such verbs and clauses are referred to as

Use PCs for complex-intransitives and PCo for complex-transitive.

S PCs P

(14) *hamid bâhuŠ ast-ø*

Hamid sharp be.ps.3sg

Hamid is sharp

S DO PCo P

(15) *mehdi hamid râ bâhuŠ pendâŠt-ø*

Mehdi Hamid camp sharp consider.ps-3sg

Mehdi considered in both of the above, the PC is related to *Hamid*, though the latter is S in (14), and O in (15). So PCs and PCo indicate that the PC is subject-oriented in (14), and object-oriented in (15).

Obliques can also be used as predicative complements:

(16) *man to râ be onvân-e modir bargozid-am*

i. you camp as-link manager elect.ps.1sg

ii. elected you as the manager

#### 5. Canonical structures

What has been discussed up to this point can be summarized as follows:

(17) ORDINARY COMPLEX

Intransitive *Man david-am* *mâ qâzi hast-im*  
 Monotransitive *ânhâ ketâb râ xând-and* *mân u râ 8 karim minim-am*

The functional structures of the above Persian clauses are as follows:

(18) ORDINARY COMPLEX  
 Intransitive S P S 7PC<sup>s</sup> P

Monotransitive            S   O   P                    S   O   PC<sup>o</sup>   P

One can compare the above structures to the English canonical structures, quoted from Huddleston and Pullum (2002:218):

(19)	ORDINARY	COMPLEX
Intransitive	S   P	S   P   PC <sup>s</sup>
Monotransitive	S   P   O	S   P   O   PC <sup>o</sup>
Ditransitive	S   P   O   O	S   P   O   PC <sup>o</sup>

As far as intransitive and monotransitive structures are concerned, both Languages contain the same elements, though they are not of the same order.

While, in English, the predicator fills the second position in the clause, that in Persian is the final element of the clause. Unlike English, Persian does not contain a intransitive structure. This is because in Persian verbs like *dâd-an* 'give' are obligatorily take an NP and a PP (non-core complement). According to our theoretical framework, a PP cannot function as an object.

## 6. Valency

The above classification is based on the objects and Predicative complements. Yet, as Huddleston and Pullum (2002:218-9) note, we can have another

Classification based on the number of complements which seems more general.

They refer to this as valency. According to this classification, a verb is monovalent if it takes just one complement. In the following, we present an outline of

the two classifications:

(20)	Transitivity	Valency
(i) <i>mehdi xâbid-ø</i>	intransitive	monovalent
(ii) <i>in be pâsox to bastegi dâr-ad</i>	intransitive	bivalent
(iii) <i>ali dâvar Šod-ø</i>	intransitive(complex)	bivalent
(iv) <i>man nâneh râ xând-am</i>	monotransitive	bivalent
(v) <i>ma ketab ra baray-e to xarid-im</i>	monotransitive	trivalent
(vi) <i>rezâ bačče râ ali nâmid-ø</i>	monotransitive	trivalent

The above forms are translated as follows:

- (21 )
- (i) Mehdi slept
  - (ii) It depends on your response
  - (iii) Ali became a referee
  - (iv) I read the letter
  - (v) We bought the book for you
  - (vi) Reza named the child Ali

## 7. Complements VS Adjuncts

Huddleston and Pullum (2002:219) propose five factors which are applicable in distinguishing complements from adjuncts: (a) licensing, (b) obligatoriness, (c) anaphora, (d) category and (e) Prepositional phrases.

(a) Licensing

Traditionally, the verb is regarded as the decisive element of the clause. This is mainly because it is the verb which determines the permissible complements:

- (22)
- i *rezâ            xâne   râ            sâxt-ø*

Reza house comp build.ps-3sg Reza built the house  
 Reza built the house  
 But not:

(23)

i \*reza xane ra rasid-e

Reza house comp reach.ps-3sg

ii

man u ra sekiba mi-pendar-am

I s/he comp patient impfv-consider.nps-1 sg

I consider him/her patient

But not:

ii

\*man u ra sekiba mi-bar-am

I s/he comp patient impfv-take.nps-1sg

In (22i), the verb *saxt* licenses a direct object (*xane ra*), but in (22ii), *rasid* does not, though the English verb

*reach* does. Again, in (23i), *mi-pendar-am* permits

A direct object + PCo, but in (23ii) *mi-bar-am* does not. However, adjuncts such

As *emruz* (today), *zir-e miz* (under the table), etc. are used with different types

Of verb.

**Subcategorization** is the term used to reflect the dependence between

Complements and the verbs used with them. Accordingly, we classify verbs

Such as *raft-an* (to go) and *xord-an* (to eat) as intransitive and mono-transitive respectively. Some verbs may

take different complementation patterns. A verb

Like *seda kard-an* (call) can be used in two patterns: in SOP as well as in S O

PC P:

(24) i

man pesar ra seda mi-kon-am

I boy comp calling impfv-do.nps-1sg

I call the boy

ii

man pesar ra ali seda mi-kon-am

I boy comp Ali call impfv-do.nps-1sg

I call the boy Ali

Indeed, in Persian we have verbs that are used in four different patterns: in mono-transitive pattern, complex-

transitive, di-transitive and in a pattern without

any label: a PP + a clause as complements

(25) i

Man an ketab ra mi-xah-am

I that book comp impfv-want.nps-1sg

I want that book

[mono-transitive]

ii

man an qatel ra zende mi-xah-am [complex.transitive]

I that murderer camp alive impfv-want.nps-1sg

I want that murderer alive

iii

*man in xane ra baray-e to mi-xah-am* [di-transitive]

I this house camp for-link you impfv-want.nps-1 sg

I would like you to have this house

*man az payam mi-xah-am ke ketab ra be-bar-ad*

I from Payam ask.nps-1sg that book camp nin-take.nps-3sg

I ask Payam to take the book

iv

Two significant points need to be discussed in the context of forms like (iv): the choice of preposition and the

choice of subordinate clause:

Choice of preposition

It is the verb which determines which preposition is permitted to be used with it. In the following pair, for

example, the verb *goft-fJ* takes the preposition *be* but

not *dar*:

(26) *hasan MatJab ra be reza goft-fJ*

Hasan matter camp to Reza say.ps-3sg Hasan told Reza the matter

But not:

(27) \**hasan MatJab ra*

Hasan matter camp

*da, reza goft-fJ* in Reza say.ps-3sg

#### D) Choice of subordinate clause-

##### Example 17

- In any complex sentence, the verb of the main clause determines the type of the subordinate clause: declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamative, finite, nonfinite, etc:

(17.a) *farid porsid ke/ hasan/ ce goft-ø*

Farid ask.ps-3sg that /Hasan/what say.ps-3sg

Farid asked what Hasan said

- But not
- 17.b) \**farid porsid-ø/ ke hasan /bo-ro-ø /xane!*
- Farid ask.ps-3sg" that Hasan nin-go.nps-2sg home
- \*Farid asked 'that Hasan go home!
- 

##### E) Obligator ness-Example 18

- In Persian, as in English, complements are sometimes obligatory, whereas adjuncts are always optional. The complement in (18.a) is obligatory because its
- absence will result in ungrammaticality of the clause, as in (18.b):

18.a)

• *hamid ketab ra avard-ø*

Hamid book comp bring.ps-3sg Hamid brought the book

[obligatory complement]

- But not:
- 18.b)
- \* *hamid/aVard-ø /*
- Hamid bring.ps-3sg
- \*Hamid brought

## Conclusion

- ✓ This piece of research reveals significant similarities as well as differences between Persian and English. In both languages the basic functions of the clause are complements, adjuncts and the predicator.

- ✓ While English has five canonical structures, Persian has only four of them. In both languages, in canonical structures the subject is the first element of the clause.
- ✓ However, the order of the other elements in the two languages is different. In canonical structures in Persian, the predicator is always the final element of the clause, while in English it always fills the second position.
- ✓ The order of the elements in the two languages is shown in the following table
- ✓ Unlike English, Persian is among pro-drop languages, so in non-canonical structures the subject is omissible.
- ✓ Moreover, Persian, unlike English, is so flexible in terms of word order of the clause. Unlike English where the indirect object may or may not be preceded by a preposition, depending on its position relative to the verb, in Persian the indirect object is always preceded by a preposition
- ✓ As far as valency is concerned, both languages reveal the same behavior.
- ✓ Intransitive clauses are either monovalent or bivalent. Mono-transitive clauses are either bivalent or trivalent. English di-transitive clauses are always trivalent.
- ✓ In both languages complements are distinguished by a number of factors: licensing, obligatoriness, category and prepositional phrase.
- ✓ All these factors are successfully applicable in distinguishing complements from adjuncts

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