Reflections on Persian Grammar

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Developments in Persian Linguistic Scholarship I

By

A. Soheili

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PROLOGUE

"Even the most imperfect book, if it breaks fresh ground,
may, though itself doomed to oblivion, prepares the way for a better."
—Edward G. Browne

We speak our language unconsciously every day without pondering over its phonological processes, morphological derivations, syntactic complexities, semantic subtleties, and pragmatic considerations. (For the knowledge of one's language, see Chomsky: 1997. Also, see the definition of pragmatism and its usages by Levinson: 1983.) Nevertheless, one individual or a small group of innovative minds begins to speculate about the rules of language, and thus emerges a tradition with a particular "paradigm", as defined by Kuhn (1996), which may continue for generations. Concerning the origin of grammatical study in Greece, Robins (1997) says: "In the classical age of Greek literature and afterwards we can follow the progress of conscious linguistic speculation, as men reflected on the nature and the use of their language." Along the same line of argument, Versteegh (1997) discusses the beginning of grammatical development in the Arabic tradition belonging to a period when the Arab purists were shocked by the errors committed by the neophytes and thus decided to codify the norms of correct linguistic usage.

The development of Persian grammar has passed through several different stages and has changed its main objective and direction in several periods, being heavily influenced by both internal and external situations. In the course of its development it has benefitted from the major contributions of Arab grammarians, on the one hand, and from groups of Iranian linguists who started their analysis within the frameworks of modern linguistic theories, on the other hand, quite independently of internal traditions.

Persian grammar today, similar to other branches of knowledge, is the product of the past. From our perspective, the history of the development of Persian grammar is more than just an annalistic record of the past events and ideas, but a systematic description of the grammatical theories carried out through at least three distinct stages, namely collecting primary and secondary sources, followed by analyzing them in terms of not only the rules of grammar, but also the whole theory of language as adopted by

Persian grammarians. We will attempt to situate these developments in their historical as well as their linguistic contexts. The final stage involves an attempt at presenting the results in an integral manner—the presentation of all aspects of grammar in one total picture and account.

The history and development of Persian grammar from the earliest known documents to its status today constitutes a major subject of inquiry for both Iranian grammarians and historians. However, in a book of this size with limitations of space it is neither possible nor logically feasible to deal with *two thousand and four hundred sources* that Mahyar (1381/2002) has arduously collected on Persian grammar. As a consequence, we have to limit our sources in size and scope and primarily focus on the representative books we have been able to collect for each period, excluding the developments outside the Persian-speaking world.

This book is primarily intended to serve as an introduction for English-speaking scholars making their first acquaintance with the long history of Persian grammatical tradition, the contributions of which have not been recorded in the major histories of linguistics, neither in the West nor in the East (e.g., Robins: 1997; Harris and Taylor: 1997; Bohas, et al.: 1990; Versteegh: 1997). This tradition, an integral part of the Persian intellectual heritage, is of major importance to a wide range of studies, including historical, literary, philosophical, logical, linguistic, and rhetorical. In all these disciplines some of the authors we deal with have made their own significant contributions. Focusing on the relevant contributions in the history of Persian grammar can highlight these aspects which may otherwise be lost in oblivion. In addition, this book will be indispensable to all ardent students of Persian linguistics, literature as well as scholars and teachers in the field of teaching Persian as a foreign language.

The Organization of the Book

Chapter 1 starts off our linguistic explorations with a brief account of the earliest records of Persian linguistic scholarship in the works of a recognized Persian philosopher and a prominent master of prosody whose viewpoints are of quite fundamental importance at this stage of Persian grammatical development. In this respect, their observations constitute the elements of Persian *diachronic* linguistics describing a particular stage of the Persian language at a given time and showing the changes that take place in the language during the passage of years.

Chapter 2 deals with the inceptive period of the development of Persian grammar in which no Persian grammar book *per se* was written or published, but a vast number of scattered and fragmentary pieces of

information as the first records of grammatical speculation was found in the works of lexicographers who included a short description of Persian grammar in the preface to their dictionaries.

Chapter 3 focuses on the formative period of grammatical development, when the first formal grammar books appeared as the first piece of grammatical scholarship. The grammarians of this period borrowed the Arabic model of grammar, together with its terminology, to set up a tripartite grammatical system, comprising the classification of the letters in the alphabet, حروف, *horuf*, (letters) with their pronunciation, perceived as the descriptive framework for Persian phonetics, into those of pure Arabic origin, pure Persian origin, and those shared by both languages, صرف, *sarf*, (morphology) or parts of speech (e.g., noun, verb, and particle), and نحو, *nahv*, (syntax), the definition of a sentence as "an expression of complete thought" and its kinds (e.g., declarative, interrogative, negative, and imperative).

In Chapter 4 we discuss the progressive period in which Persian grammarians, still functioning within the traditional framework, started their own observations, searching for a new framework of grammatical description based on their new ideas and those that had been imported from French and other European languages. Here grammarians recast the analysis of letters into a new articulatory classification consisting of consonants, vowels, and diphthongs. The parts of speech re-emerge as significantly controversial issues and are expanded to incorporate those of *adjective*, *adverb*, *pronoun*, *quantifier*, and *interjection*. More significantly, the notional definitions of word classes are superseded by more precise structural criteria. In the area of syntax, sentence analysis incorporates the classification of complex and compound structures. In this connection, the processes of coordination and subordination, namely, connecting two or more elements of equivalent status vs. a non-symmetric relation between two clauses or more receive a special status.

Chapter 5 provides a review of the contributions of modern grammarians or, more preferably, Persian linguists, who took a radical departure from traditional grammar with its emphasis on prescriptive rules, correctness, priority of the written language, the use of Arabic models, and literary excellence. They started to introduce modern grammars such as structural grammar, transformational-generative grammar, functional grammar, Universal Grammar (UG), stratificational grammar, Case grammar, and tagmemics. The linguists who were teaching at the local universities also encouraged their graduate students to introduce the new approaches in their theses and dissertations. In sum, the leading linguists of this period had their most effective and lasting influence on

grammatical analysis in its entirety in terms of theoretical orientation and methodological procedures. Their most fundamental objective was to bring about a change in the perception and evaluation of existing grammatical models.

Chapter 6 introduces a brief review of Persian discourse study, beginning with a distinction between the utterance and the sentence and followed by an elaborate analysis of discourse markers, theta-roles, focus and topic issues in a discourse, and ultimately the realization of discourse functions by linguistic devices in the structure of Persian. The study of Persian discourse analysis is conducted within the theoretical framework of RRG (Role and Reference Grammar), which integrates pragmatics into its model. The interaction between syntax and pragmatic functions is demonstrated in the analysis of restrictive and nonrestrictive relative clauses in Persian.

Concluding Remarks

These remarks are intended to serve three purposes. (1) To provide a synopsis of highlights in the historical developments of Persian grammar. (2) To offer a final evaluation of the books we have discussed in the preceding chapters. This evaluation involves the theories of grammar the writers have adopted, the criteria of adequacy they have satisfied in their analysis, and, more importantly, the ability of the theories to account satisfactorily for a wide variety of data from Persian. (3) To explore the possibilities of new areas of research in the unchartered territory of Persian grammar.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Whether or not writing dictionaries and books is "drudgery" according to Dr. Johnson as quoted by Cuddon (1982), or textbook writers are "intellectual sponges and spongers" as Levinson (1983) puts it, the brains that have been drained must be fully acknowledged.

I wish to express my thanks and gratitude to colleagues, friends, and acquaintances that have, kindly and graciously, provided me some of the primary and secondary sources for this project. They include: Professor Ovanes Ovanessian, Dr. Majdoddin Keyvani, Dr. Hossein Frahady, Dr. Behrooz 'Azabdaftari, Dr. Parviz Birjandi, Dr. Mohammad Dabirmoghaddam, Dr. Zahra Joharchi, Mr. Hossein Abrishamkar, Mrs. Fariba Haghighi, Mrs. Homeira Bahadorani, the Norastehfars, Mss. Solmaz Sharifi, Mss. Nassim Novin and Mr. Victor Ponomarev.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to those linguists whose works I have frequently consulted for clarifying certain theoretical ideas with respect to the issues under consideration throughout the chapters of the book.

Finally, my thanks to my wife, Effat, and my daughter, Avisha, and my son, Arash, are inexpressible for their patience, support, and encouragement while this book was being written.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INCEPTIVE PERIOD OF PERSIAN GRAMMAR

1.1 Ibn Sina (Avicenna) Abu'Ali Ḥusayn b. Sina: Parts of Speech and Logical Expressions

> "Every single word is a name, an action, or a particle. The name is called *noun* in Arabic, and the syntacticians call the action *verb* and the logicians refer to it as *kalame* or *word*. The meaning of a noun and a verb is complete, but the meaning of a *particle* is never complete. It is necessary to know that an expression is either singular like *Zayd*, *Muhammad*, and *people* and *wise*, or plural such as, *people are wise* or *wise people*."
> (Ibn Sina (Avicenna). *Daneshname 'Ala'i* (An Encyclopedia of Philosophical Knowledge). pp. 33 and 51)

The early records of Persian grammar are cloaked in a shroud of secrecy, and contemporary Persian linguists and grammarians frequently raise a question of detail about who the first Persian grammarian was, and what was the first treatise in which a systematic description of the Persian language appeared. In this chapter we deal with some representative Persian grammarians and their works, to the exclusion of the Persian grammars written by foreign scholars. (For more information on the works of European scholars, see Windfuhr: 1979; for the Persian grammar by a Chinese scholar, see Shari'at: 1360/1981; and for Turkish, Arabic, and scholars from other countries, see Mahyar: 1381/2003. Finally, for the contributions of an Armenian scholar to Persian grammar, see Nalbandian: 1980.)

Farshidvard (1384/2005), a very well-versed grammarian in both diachronic and synchronic developments of Persian grammar, considers Avicenna or Ibn Sina (980-1037), a Persian philosopher, the first Persian grammarian on the grounds that the first achievement of linguistic scholarship in the West also began with the works of ancient Greek philosophers. (For more information on this, see Robins: 1997.) The following passage from Avicenna's prolegomenon to his treatise on logic

in *Daneshname 'Ala'i* (*'Ala'i's Encyclopedia*) translated by Zabeeh (1971) shows his classification of word classes:

> "Every simple expression is a name, a verb, or a preposition. The grammarian calls those expressions verbs which the logician simply calls terms. Both names and terms have a complete meaning. --- Names and terms can be distinguished, Names, such as "man" and "friendship" signify meanings without referring to temporal sequence. But the expressions which grammarians call verbs have both meaning and temporal significance. For example, "struck" means that someone struck in the past."

In a further classification, Avicenna distinguishes universal, individual, and compound expressions. A universal expression applies to many entities such as "man", but an individual expression signifies a single entity, as exemplified by the proper name "Zayd." Some examples of compound expressions are "Human beings are wise" or "the wise people."

Farshidvard considers Avicenna the first grammarian, assuming that logical categories and, particularly, Aristotle's ontological categories and grammatical categories are of the same status. According to Khunsari (1366/1987), these ten categories are: *jauhar*, "substance"; *keif*, "quality"; *kam*, "quantity"; *eza:fe*, "relation"; *aina*, "where"; *mata:*, "when"; *vaz'*, "position"; *melk*, "possession"; *fe'l*, "action"; and *enfe'a:l*, "passion."[1]

Obviously, logicians are concerned with the truth and falsity of expressions, while grammarians are more preoccupied with how these expressions are linguistically formulated in a particular language, and what other possible functions they may perform in addition to distinguishing between truth and falsity. (See the functions proposed by Halliday and those by Jacobson and Searle in Levinson: 1983.) For example, the second compound expression, being incomplete in its subject-predicate relationship, appears as an Ezafe construction in Persian: مردم دانا, *mardom-e da:na:*, "wise people." According to Palmer (1971), an Ezafe construction can be derived from an underlying relative clause. (For more information on Persian relative clauses, see Aghaei: 2015 and Taghvaipour: 2004, among others.) So the underlying relative clause of the above Ezafe construction may be shown as: مردمی که دانا هستند , *mardomi ke dan:a hastand*, "The people who are wise." Therefore, the distinction between deep and surface structure is a recent development in the theory of syntax that will enable us to account for the derivation and interpretation of certain expressions in a particular language. Furthermore, the principles and parameters (P&P) theory developed by Chomsky (1997) is an empirically verifiable approach, which, unlike the metaphysical theory of universals and

accidentals (U&A), postulates a set of principles that are invariable across languages and parameters that vary from one language group to another one. In the literature on UG theory we read about the projection principle, the structure-dependency principle, and the embedding principle. Among the better known parameters, we may mention the pro-drop parameter, the word order parameter, and the head-complement parameter (Chomsky: 1986 & 1997; Radford: 1998; Haegeman: 1998; Cook: 1989; Baker: 2001; Webelhuth: 1992; Ouhalla: 1999 & 1991).

The following sentences from Persian show the embedding principle and the pro-drop parameter, respectively: (Examples from Soheili: 1386/2007)

1- man fekr mikonam [ke ba:ra:n mi'a:yad]
"I think that it is raining."
2- pro az zenda:n a:za:d shod-and
"They were released from prison."

Notice that in (1) the subordinate clause *that it is raining*, introduced by the complementizer *ke* "that", is embedded in the main clause *I think*. In sentence (2), however, the empty pure pronominal *pro* is substituting for the lexical pronoun *they*, and the inflectional/agreement marker *-and* realized on the main verb performs the syntactic function of the implicit subject in this context.

In addition to classifying languages into pro-drop and non-pro-drop groups, a theory of parameters can also resolve many other linguistic puzzles, as Baker (2001) puts it. Among them, he mentions linguistic commensurability in terms of establishing reliable algorithms for transforming or translating one language into another, the paradox of first language acquisition on the basis of setting the parameters of a particular language, the mutability of languages to change over time, and finally independent development of structurally similar languages in different parts of the world. Along the same line of arguments, we can add the paradox of learning a foreign language to the list.

To deal with the above issues lies outside the scope of this book, but the readers who are interested in studying the application of UG to the above areas may consult these sources: UG and first language acquisition (Radford: 1990; Hyams: 1986), UG and second language learning (White: 1989; Cook: 1989; Soheili: 2007), UG and historical developments of languages (Arlotto: 1972), and UG and translation (MOLTO: Multilingual Online Translation).

We would like to end this part of the book with an observation about how a basic word order is employed by Persian and Japanese. If a relatively small number of parameters underlie the large number of the languages in the world, it is not surprising that two culturally and historically unrelated languages employ the same word order, use a similar morpho-phonemic Case-marker on the object noun phrase, and a verb with a zero agreement marker, at least for the third person singular on the past tense in Persian. Consider the examples from Persian and Japanese, respectively:

3- John Maryam-o zad
John Mary+obj hit
"John hit Mary."
4- John+ga Mary-o butta [2]
John+sub Mary+obj hit
"John hit Mary."

In addition to Avicenna's contributions to Persian grammar within the purview of his logical and grammatical systems, another source worth discussing in terms of its grammatical and pedagogical contributions to Persian grammar is the book commonly referred to as *Dastur al-loqat*, written by Abu 'Abdullah b. Ḥusayn b. Ibrahim b. Ahmad Adib Natanzi, a poet and grammarian of the fifth century AH from Natanz, a small town near Esfahan. (d. 497-9/1103-5).

1.2 Adib Natanzi Abu 'Abdallah Ḥusayn b. Ebrahim b. Ahmad: From Theory to Practice

> "There are twenty-six letters in Persian alphabet, out of which eight letters are peculiar to Arabic, and six letters to the Persian language. Finally, there are seven letters that are commonly used by both languages."
> (Adib Natanzi, H. *Dastur al-Loqhat*. p. 668)

The Arabic treatise by Adib Natanzi is divided into three major sections: an introduction, an Arabic-Persian dictionary, and a section devoted to Arabic phonetics, morphology, and syntax. In his dictionary the author records the Arabic entries in alphabetical order, together with their Persian equivalents. According to the editor and annotator of the book, an interesting lexicographical feature of this dictionary is the fact that the author shows the alternative Persian equivalents in terms of their spelling patterns, which is important from a historical viewpoint with respect to the

developments of words in the first period of Dari Persian, from the earliest records up to the seventh century AH. More specifically, the patterns show the interchageability of letters such as, *b-f*, *b-v*, *b-m*, etc. These alternations agree with what Natel Khanlari (1377/1998) says about this period of the history of the Pesian language, when the Persian language is chiefly characterized by a spelling system that is rather inconsistent and idiosyncratic and, to a great extent, closely corresponds to each writer's or scribe's level of literacy as well as local and regional spelling norms. In order to demonstrate what happened during this period, Natel Khanlari has reviewed one hundred and fifty books and treatises from this period and has organized the exchangeable vowels and consonants in alphabetical order. A clear example for the e/i alternation is shown in the words: فرشتگان/ فریشتگان, *fereshtega:n* / *ferishtega:n*, "angles." As a variable spelling system with respect to consonats, we have (ذ/ز), as in: پاییز / پاییذ, *pa:yiz* / *pa:ziz*, "autumn." Despite having adequate corpora of vowel and consonant variants, what is conspicuously missing from both Adib Natanzi's and Natel Khanlari's listing of changes is an explanatory analysis of why those changes occur in terms of their phonetic/phonological features.

Regardless of the geographical or social environments in which the alterations occur, the letters must form a "natural group" in order to undergo certain changes, as we see in / b /, / f /, / m /, and / v /, with a common bilabial feature. But what about / y / and / z / used in the last example in the preceding paragraph? Although / y / is a voiced palatal glide and / z / a voiced alveolar fricative, they share three common phonological features in that they are [+ voice], [+ coronal], and [+ continuant], which allow two seemingly different segments to be used interchangeably. In a more technical sense, the phonological rules apply to the "segments" under consideration and assign their actual phonetic forms that the Persian speakers hear in a particular geographical or social environment. Then, the speakers are able to interpret the "formatives" containing these segments in the surface structure of the sentence, with the help of a set of phonological, syntactic, and semantic rules that they have internalized. These internalized rules must be presented in a structural description of the Persian grammar through a system of explicit rules. (For more information, see Chomsky & Halle: 1968.)

In the last section of the book Adib Natanzi talks about the Persian alphabet and the classification of its letters into pure Persian letters, pure Arabic letters, and those that are commonly used by both languages. While most Persian grammarians consider پ, *pe*; چ, *che*; ژ, *zhe*; and گ, *gaf* the four pure Persian letters that are not used in Arabic, Adib Natanzi has surprisingly added خو and ق as two more pure Persian letters to the list.

The first letter is a fricative consonant with a bilabial feature, / xw /, which originally came from Middle Persian but has lost its bilabial feature in contemporary Persian (xw = x) (Abolghasemi: 1381/2002). The second consonant is a controversial one which has two allophonic varaiations. The allophone / q / is a voiced post-velar stop that occurs initially, in consonantal clusters, and when geminate, as in: غذا, *qaza*: "food." The second allophone is غ, *qayn*, / ɣ /, a voiced post-velar fricative that occurs elsewhere, as in: باغ, *ba: ɣ*, "garden." For some native speakers of Persian these are two different consonantal phonemes, while others may use them interchangeably (Jazayeri & Paper: 1961). These two consonants differ from their Arabic counterparts in terms of voicing and places of articulation. According to Ryding (1986), ق, *qaf*, in Arabic, is a voiceless uvular stop, while غ, *qayn* is a voiced velar fricative. Thus, Adib Natanzi's reference to these consonants as pure Persian letters is based on their phonetic features rather than their orthographic shapes.

In general, the emergence of Adib Natanzi's work in the earlier stages of Persian grammatical developments shows that lexicography and grammar are two conspicuous facets of his pedagogic program in which semantic distinctions of words and a description of morphological elements and syntactic devices are what he presumptuously envisages as his general philosophy of language analysis and language acquisition. (For more information, see *www.Iranica.org*, under Adib Natanzi.)

In this chapter we reviewed two ancient treatises with two markedly different approaches to language and grammar. On the one hand, Avicenna, as a philosopher, expresses what he conceives of Universal Grammar and its general principles in epistemological terms. On the other hand, Adib Natanzi, as a poet and an eminent literary figure, refers to the factual, ontological, language-specific properties (i.e., the corresponding parameters of the principles) according to which, for instance, the system of Arabic grammar works and how its various components (i.e., phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics) are acquired. Furthermore, by virtue of the fact that Adib Natanzi was able to write poetry in both Persian and English, we can plausibly assume that the poetical quality of language underlies his whole philosophy of language and pedagogic grammar. This poetic creativity is epiphenomena and is a manifestation of the "creative aspect of language use" (Chomsky: 2009). The language of poetry is a free and unbounded system that allows poets to express their feelings, imaginations, and ideas—a manifold range of experiences that may transcend ordinary linguistic expression and its formal properties.

Another area in which the "creative aspect of language use" and its associated concepts of freedom and unboundedness play a central role is mystical language, in three distinguishable ways. First, many Persian mystic poets or *sufis*, belonging to various branches such as theosophic, theopathetic, and theurgic (Browne: 1909), use metaphors, similies, aphorisms, imagery, symbolism, etc. to report their transcendental knowledge and theosophic experiences to the "insiders", who share their essential doctrine; and, simultaneously, to conceal them from the "outsiders", who are not the wayfarers of the same path to Ultimate Reality. These Persian mystic poets, very much like Buddist's Chan/Zen practitioners, seem to believe that poetry enjoys a higher status than prose and "not only, a priori, as a possible cause or condition of enlightenment, but also, a posteriri, a legitimate product of the enlightened mind." (For more information about Chan/Zen, as a new form of Buddist practice, see the article from Faure: 1992.) Second, these mystic poets use an enigmatic language to circumvent the paradox of "ineffability." In essence, they believe that "the mystical reality is beyond language" (Natilal: 1992). Third, the great Persian mystic poets maintain that using language symbolically, very much like expressing physical love, is the first stepping-stone towards spiritual realization. As for the illustration of this point, Sajjadi (1392/2013) quotes a great Persian mystic who has distinguished twelve stations that mystics should pass through in order to reach Absolute Love, the ultimate destination of the soul towards its union with God. (For the language of love in Christian and Jewish mysticism, see the article of McGinn: 1992, and for the same topic in Persian mysticism, see Sajjadi: 1392/2013.)

Mowlavi, an eminent thirteenth-century mystic poet, expresses the idea of shared secrets or the esoteric nature of mystic language in the following couplet:

(5)
بهتر آن باشد که سرّ دلبران گفته آید در حدیث دیگران
Behtar a:n ba:shad ke serre delbara:n
Gofte a:yad dar hadise digara:n
Nicholson's translation of the above couplet is as follows:

"Better that the secret of the Friend should be disguised: do thou hearken to it as implied in the contents of the tale."
(For more translations of Mowlavi's poems, see Ovanessian: 1991.)

Another closely related notion to the "creative aspect of language use" may be found in the capacity of language for employing "finite means for

infinite ends", stated by Humboldt and quoted by Chomsky (2009). This defining characteristic of human language is elegantly expressed by Mowlavi in a stich from the first *daftar* of his poems (677/1278):

(6)
حرف ظرف آمد، در او معنی چو آب
"Words are vessels and their meanings like water."

Interestingly enough, words are compared to "vessels" which are finite in their physical configurations and content capacities. By invoking the concept of "water" or "fluidity" for meaning, Mowlavi does not seem to be concerned with the epistemological and ontological implications of the term *per se*, but the term simply refers to the semantic variability of meaning. Many British and American linguists and semanticists have discussed the same phenomenon with reference to "modes of meaning in their context-of-situation" (Firth: 1957), "three different kinds of meaning" (Lyons: 1979), "diversity of meanings" (Levinson: 1983), "various meanings of meaning" (Ogden & Richards: 1989), the "many distinguishable meanings of the noun 'meaning' and the verb 'to mean'" (Lyons: 1981), "different kinds of meaning" (Lyons: 1986), "the inventory of meanings" (Quirk, et al.: 1986), and the "linguistic and non-linguistic factors which affect the interpretation of a sentence" (Crystal: 1992). As far as the sentence meaning is concerned, the semantics of the role of the "deep structure" of the sentence is another controversial issue over how the meaning of the sentence should be accounted for in a syntactic model or a generative semantic model. (See Newmeyer: 1986.)

In sum, what Mowlavi has succinctly expressed in his poem about the use of "finite vessels (forms) for fluid (infinite) meanings" fundamentally corresponds to what Chomsky quotes from Descartes, Humboldt, Cordemoy, Schlegel, and other scholars, who emphasize the specifiable characteristic of form and the unboundedness of meaning.

1.3 Shams Al-Din Muhammad b. Qays Razi: Morphology, Suffixes, and Derivation

> "[Know that] the last letter of a rhyming word is called rawi in case it is an integral part of the word. *Rawi* is etymologically derived from the word *rawa:'* which means a rope by which a load is strongly bound onto the back of a camel."
> (Razi, SH.M. *al-Mo'jam*. p. 204)

Both Homa'i (1377/1998) and Sani' (1371/1992) mention some early books and dictionaries in which the authors have provided prefatory remarks about Persian grammar and, particularly, the morphology of the language. One of the early books belonging to this period is an authoritative work on Persian prosody briefly referred to as *al-Mo'jam* (The Book of the Principles of Persian Prosody) compiled by Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Qays Razi (614/1217).[3] But understanding his most original and significant contributions to a Persian morphology and metrical system necessitates a brief account of the syllable structure in this language.

According to Qolam-'Alizadeh (1374/1995), the syllable structures in Persian appear as in the following table:

Table of Syllable Structure (1-1)

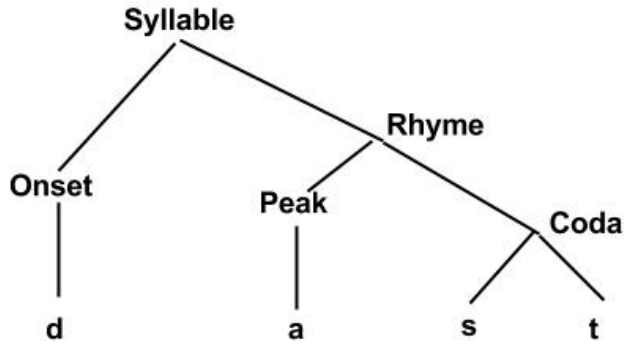
Syllable Structures	Examples	Meaning
CV CVC CVCC	ba: bud dast	with was hand

These syllable structures exhibit certain properties which are worthy of mentioning at this point. First, a word never begins with a vowel in Persian. Even those words that seemingly appear to initiate a vowel are preceded by a *hamze* or *glottal stop* which is, of course, lenient and weak in pronunciation, as in: ابر, *'abr*, "cloud" or است, *'ast*, "is." Some Western scholars, Forbes (1869) among others, identify this *hamze* as a very weak aspirate in the words *herb* and *hour* in English, or the *spiritus lenis* "soft breathing", a diacritic mark in Latin to indicate the absence of the voiceless glottal friction at the beginning of a word. Second, a consonant cluster of no more than two may appear in the medial or final position in a syllable. An example for a medial position would be: بسته, *baste*, "package." Third, a consonant cluster at the beginning of a word may be broken up in one way or another, as in: ستاره, *seta:re*, for "star" and اصطبل, *establ*, for "stable." Lastly, multisyllabic words consist of combinations of the patterns shown, as in: CV-CV in بابا, *ba:b:a*, "daddy" and CV-CV-CVC in مناسب, *mona:seb*, "suitable."[4]

The internal structure of the monosyllabic word *dast* consists of three sub-syllable units. The initial consonant / d / is the coda which precedes

the vowel or the peak / a /. The vowel is the peak segment as an obligatory constituent. The last consonant cluster / st / is the coda that immediately follows the peak. The peak and coda make up the rhyme segment of the syllable. This is the part of the syllable that plays a crucial role in the rhyming patterns in poetry, as in: دست, *dast*, "hand"; هست, *hast*, "is-exists"; and مست, *mast*, "drunk", etc. (For the treatment of syllable structures in English and some other languages, see O'Grady, et al.: 1997 and Giegerich: 1993). The internal syllable structure of the word *dast*, "hand" may be shown schematically as follows:

(7)



With this brief account of syllable structure in Persian, now we will proceed to look at a first attempt at a systematic analysis of a word formation process in Persian, whereby a derivational process called suffixation adds bound morphemes to existing words. Razi intuitively adds two more units to the rhyme segment of a syllable, namely, روی, *ravi*, (rawi in Arabic) and زواید مفرد و مرکب, *zava:yed-e mofrad va morakkab*, (simple and compound redundant elements).[5] Technically, by *ravi* he means the last letter of the coda, as / t / in the word مست, *mast*, "drunk", and by redundant elements those suffixes that are added to the *ravi*, which Razi calls حروف تصریف, *horuf-e tasrif*, "inflectional letters." These added elements may include both derivational and inflectional morphemes and form part of the rhyme segment of the syllable. He presents the suffixes in strict alphabetical order (except for some letters), together with their semantic implications and various functions. But due to limitations of space, we will give one example for each letter. The main objective of this classification was to show the differences between *ravi* as an integral part of the coda, the suffixes, and the strict conditions under which poets can

utilize suffixes for their rhyming patterns. The following table shows these suffixes:

Table of Suffixes (2-1)

No.	Letter	suffix	Example	Meaning-Function	English Glosses
1	a	-a:	da:n+a:	adjective marker	wise
2	b	-a:b	gol+a:b	compound noun	rose water
3	t	-at	asb+at	possessive	your horse
4	ch	-che	ba:gh+che	diminutive	small garden
5	x	-la:x	sang+la:x	place	stony/rocky place
6	d	-mand	honar+mand	possessor	artist
7	z	-az	rav+az [6]	3PAgr	that he/she should go
8	r	-a:r	raft+a:r	abstract noun	behavior
9	z	-ba:z	hoqqe+ba:z	player	juggler
10	s	-dis	toranj+dis	like/resembling	like an orange
11	sh	-vash	mah+vash	like/resembling	moon-like/beautiful
12	k	-ak	mard+ak	diminutive	little man
13	g	-gi	bande+gi	abstract noun	slavery
14	l	-la:mul	mul+la:mul	repetition	repeated delay
15	m	-am	asb+am	possessive	my horse
16	k	-a:n	mard+a:n	plural marker	men
17	v	-u	pesar+u	diminutive	little boy
18	h	-e	xand+e	abstract noun	laughter
19	i	-i	qola:m+i	indefinite marker	a slave

As the above examples indicate, Razi did not distinguish between inflectional and derivational suffixes, and both of them are subsumed under the rubric of inflectional letters. In modern morphology, however,

linguists distinguish two types of morphological markers, namely, inflectional and derivational. As Aronoff (1985) has demonstrated, derivational suffixes are encompassed within inflectional markers, as exemplified by the word *compart+ment+al+ize+d* in English. An analogous example from Persian is the word *ka:r+gar+ha:*, "workers" which exhibits the same order. In this word the base *ka:r-* precedes the agent marker *–gar-*, which in turn occurs within the plural marker *–ha:*. Furthermore, inflectional suffixes do not change the category of the word to which they attach such as the plural suffix *–s* in English, and *–ha:* in Persian. In contrast, derivational suffixes change the category of the word to which they are added such as the suffix *–ment* (government) in English or the suffix *–a:r* in Persian رفتار, *rafta:r*, "behavior." In view of this observation, both suffixes change a verb to a corresponding noun. This morphological change happens as a result of a derivational process in which the suffix, functioning as the head of the complex category, imposes its own properties on the derived word (Ouhalla: 1999).

Regardless of Razi's arbitrary classification of the types of suffixes in Persian, his work represents an attempt at an original and systematic treatment of these morphological phenomena, together with their semantic implications or their major functions, in the spirit of a morpheme-based model in which words are analyzable in terms of their internal morphemes. Admittedly, in most recent books on Persian grammar by Persian and Western scholars (Lambton: 1976; Thasckston: 2009; Mace: 2007; Mashkur: 1349/1970), we will see a similar list of these suffixes, slightly elaborated upon and improved in some minor ways according to the attested data from Modern Persian.[7]

The interactions between morphology and prosody in Razi's descriptive system raise substantial questions. In his analysis of suffixes and their meanings or functions, he postulates a rhyme formation constraint (RFC) which plays a crucial role in the rhyming representation of suffixes. One possible way of formulating this constraint is, as in:

8- Rhyme Formation Constraint

Two similar suffixes in form can participate in a rhyming pattern if they have a different meaning or function. In the light of the above constraint, he gives two examples like آفتاب, *afta:b*, "sunshine" and مهتاب, *mah-ta:b*, "moonlight."[8] He argues that in the former *–ta:b* is part of the complex category, while in the latter it functions as a suffix. Therefore, they seem to be similar in rhyming form but quite different in their functions. In a book on Modern Persian prosody (Vahidiyan Kamyar, et

al.: 1382/2003) the authors present a similar example as evidence of this constraint in the following couplet:[9]

(9)
بگذار تا بگریم چون ابر در **بهاران**
bogza:r ta: begeryam chon abr dar baha:r-a:n
کز سنگ ناله خیزد روز وداع **یاران**
kaz sang na:le xizad ruze veda:'e ya:r-a:n
"Let me cry out like the clouds in spring season
Even stones wail on the day of lovers' departure"

In the above couplet the suffix *–a:n* at the end of the first hemstitch implies time or season, while the rhyming suffix *–a:n* in the second hemstitch signifies a plural marker. Thus, the poet has used a similar suffix with a different meaning or function, satisfying the requirements of the rhyming pattern.

The stipulation that suffixes should have a different meaning or function associated with their rhyming schemes can be understood to imply that formal features (Chomsky: 1997)[10] characterize variations, including a morphoprosodic feature along with those of morphophonological, morphosyntactic, and morphosemantic.

Notes

1- For differences between ontological categories and grammatical categories, see Khunsari (1366/1987).
2- According to Shibatani (1990), the word order in Japanese is SOV.
3- The complete title is *al-Mo'jam fi Ma'a:'ir al- Ash'a:r al-Ajam.*
4- In addition to being weak, *hamze* does not phonologically help to make a minimal pair. In other words, *abr* and *'abr*, "cloud" convey the same meaning.
5- In this book we transcribe Arabic loanwords as they are pronounced in Persian, unless quoted from original Arabic texts.
6- The verb in Modern Persian is *ravad.* Razi uses / z / instead of / d / because the last consonant is preceded by a vowel, according to an old phonological rule in classical Persian.
7- For a complete list of prefixes and suffixes in Persian, see Mashkur (1349/1970).
8- The word *mah-ta:b* consists of the base *mah-* "moon" and the suffix *–ta:b* "shining."
9- The suffix *–a:n* is added to the word *baha:r-a:n* "spring time."
10- Chomsky (1997) argues that, for example, the word *airplane* contains three sets of features: phonological features [it begins with a vowel], semantic features [it is an artifact], and formal features [it is a nominal].

CHAPTER TWO

PERSIAN LEXICOGRAPHERS

2.1 A Word-Based Theory of Grammar

> "In this part we will have a look at some authoritative and comprehensive dictionaries in order to pursue our research in the field of Persian lexicography. Although these dictionaries may have some errors and suffer from technical deficiencies and inadequacies, it would be ungracious of us to undermine their value as the lexical treasures of our language. In addition to recording words, their signification, and usage, these dictionaries incorporate a prefatory description of Persian grammar and orthography, which, to considerable extent, enhances their value and usefulness." ('Amid, H. *'Amid's Dictionary*. p. 11)

A closer look at فرهنگ عمید (*Farhang-e 'Amid*), by Hasan 'Amid (1377/1998), reveals two popular trends in the history of Persian lexicography which have been handed down to modern lexicographers from the earlier pioneers in the field. The first one is to write a description of Persian grammar in the introduction to the dictionary. The second one is to briefly review the history of lexicography and mention the dictionaries that have been compiled either in Iran or in India.[1] 'Amid argues that many lexicographers have an introduction to Persian grammar, but four of them have made greater contributions than others in laying out a general framework within which they could distinguish the basic components of grammar and describe the rules and principles relevant to each of them. In the remaining part of this chapter we will examine these lexicographers' approach to the analysis of Persian grammar as presented in Sani' (1371/1992), together with the impact of lexicography and/or philology on their conception of grammar as a whole. It should be pointed out that these lexicographers give copious examples in poetic citations, which we do not translate into English. We just translate those examples that appear in simple prose so that our readers can understand them as well as the rules they exemplify.

2.2 Farhang-e Jahangiri

The first hugely influential dictionary that we will review here is titled *Farhang-e Jahangiri* (abbreviated hereafter as J-dictionary) by Jamal al-Din Hossein Anju Shirazi. This dictionary went through multiple editions, the last of which was published in (1293/1876) in Lucknow, India. In the introduction to his dictionary, the author divides Persian grammar into several grammatical آئین, *a:'in*, or "principles" in this order: The letters of the alphabet, verb paradigms, interchangeable letters, pronouns, ornamental words, suffixes, prefixes and infixes, plural forms, and irregular verbs.

2.3 Borhan-e Qate'

The second dictionary with an introduction to Persian grammar is *Borhan-e Qate'* (abbreviated hereafter as B-dictionary) by Mohammad Hossein b. Khalaf Tabrizi. It was compiled in 1062/1652 in Hyderabad of the Deccan, India.

What we read in the compendium introduction of this dictionary to Persian grammar is essentially the same grammatical concepts, grammatical categories, and even procedures of grammatical analysis by the author of the first dictionary. The author of *Borhan-e Qate'* attempts to illustrate how words may be differentiated into groups by categories characterized by their paradigmatic relationships. Following these considerations one may plausibly assume that such type of "emulation" was, to a great or lesser degree, part of the heritage not only of lexicographers, but also of poets to pay tribute to their predecessors' works by repeating their basic concepts to possibly maintain an unbroken succession of scholarship.

2.4 Farhang-e Rashidi

The third dictionary with an introduction devoted to Persian grammar is titled *Frahang-e Rashidi* (abbreviated hereafter as R-dictionary) by Abdul al-Rashid b. al-Hossein al-Tatawi. It was published in 1289-92/1872-75 in India.

In addition to the grammatical categories in the previous dictionaries, here the author introduces two new categories, namely reduplication اتباع, *etba:'* and derived vs. primitive or un-derived forms in simple and compound verbs. On the basis of this classification the process of reduplication generates a reduplicative compound in which the second word begins with a different letter, usually *mim*, as in: تار و مار, *ta:r o ma:r*, "routed." In the following chapters we will deal with reduplication,

together with its rules and variations. With respect to derivation, the verb نواختن *nava:xtan*, "to play" is a simple verb which may change to می نوازد *mi-nava:vazd*, "He/she plays." On the contrary, the non-verbal element in a compound form with شدن *shodan*, "to become" or کردن *kardan*, "to do" will remain unchanged, as in: نماز کردن *nama:z kardan*, "to pray." Interpreted differently, in a compound verb it is the light verb that is conjugated, but not the non-verbal element.[2] The compound verbs in Persian involve some more complications than this in terms of morphological structure (i.e., What types of parts of speech are used as internal categories?), combinatorial mode (i.e., Does the process involve compounding, integration, or lexicalization?), semantic interpretation (i.e., Does the resultant compound verb have a literal meaning, a figurative meaning, or both?), and syntactic uniformity (i.e., Do the constituents remain inseparable in a sentence, or may be separated in some contexts?). (For more information on compound verbs, see Barjasteh: 1983; Dabir-Moghaddam: 1376/1998; Shaghaghi: 1386/2008; Karimi: 2005).

2.5 Anjoman Ara-ye Naseri

The last dictionary to review here is titled *Anjoman Ara-ye Naṣeri* (abbreviated hereafter as A-dictionary) by Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat. This dictionary was published in 1295/1878 in Tehran.

Although the author has, to a considerable extent, repeated many of the grammatical categories found in his predecessors' works, there are many new concepts and categories that are worthy of mentioning such as articulatory phonetics, tenses, spatial and temporal adverbs, definition of a sentence and its kinds. As the last category shows, this is the only dictionary that presents a separate part on Persian syntax in which we read about eight kinds of sentences classified according to the structure of their predicate, nominal or verbal, as well as what a sentence may convey such as condition, result, etc.

The descriptive system adopted by the aforementioned lexicographers concentrates on three major components of Persian grammar, that is, the letters of the alphabet, parts of speech, and a sketchy account of syntax. Here syntax is used in its traditional sense, referring to a process whereby words are combined to form sentences.

Regarding the first component, the authors offer a canonical tripartite division of the letters into three distinct sub-groups, namely, the four letters peculiar to Persian گ, ژ, چ, پ *pe*, *che*, *zhe*, *ga:f*; the letters peculiar to Arabic ق, ع, ظ, ط, ض, ص, ح, ث *se*, *he*, *sa:d*, *za:d*, *ta:*, *za:*, *'ayn*, *qa:f*; and the remaining letters common to both languages ی, ه, و, ن, م, ل, ک, ف, غ, ش,

س, ز, ر, ذ, د, خ, ج, ت, ب, ا, *alef*, *be*, *te*, *jim*, *xe*, *da:l*, *za:l*, *re*, *ze*, *sin*, *shin*, *qayn*, *fe*, *ka:f*, *la:m*, *mim*, *nun*, *va:v*, *he*, *ye*. Of course, there is no consensus among Persian grammarians concerning the origin of the letters ق and ث . Bahar (1386/2007) argues that the letter ث was used in Old Persian, as exemplified by the proper names کیو مرث و تهمورث (Kiyumarth, Tahmureth). On the other hand, Mashkur (1349/1970) gives some examples of Turkish loanwords used in Persian such as قورمه , *qorme*, "preserved meat" and قاتق *qa:teq*, "anything eaten with bread", implying that the letter ق may be of Turkish origin. He further adds that ذ is pronounced as ز in Modern Persian, but in early times it was pronounced differently. Platts (1894) confirms this by saying that in early times the letter was pronounced exactly like *th* in the words *with* and *that* in English.[3]

The classification of letters is generally followed by a part on ابدال *ebda:l*, (substitution), a process in which the letter in one word may substitute for one or more than one letter in other words. For instance, *re* changes to *lam*, as in: دیوار *diva:r* and دیوال *diva:l*, "wall"; or *va:v* changes to *be*, as in: نوشته *neveshte* and نبشته *nebeshte*, "writing." Now the two basic questions that arise, then, are: What is the phonetic justification for these changes? What are the texts from which the data have been collected?

The authors do not give the answer to the first question, but they just provide an alphabetical list of the changes which lack a measure of generality. Obviously, we may observe changes in the spelling of words in ancient texts, showing that they have undergone a change in pronunciation. Nevertheless, sounds tend to change in certain patterns according to the features they have in common, may be a point or manner of articulation (Arlotto: 1972). As a way of illustration, let us see the following changes in some of the words discussed by the authors:

Table of Sound Changes (2-3)

Original Sound	New Sound	Examples	Glosses in English
b	v	a:b- ta:v	twist
d	z	adar- azar	fire
g	q	ga:v- qa:v	cow

Now, these changes may be formulated in a rule as follows:

(10) [voiced stop] ⟶ [fricative]

In the above changes we see reflections of a sound pattern or a clearly defined natural class in which a voiced stop becomes a voiced fricative. If we analyze the other changes, we may find patterns in optimal general forms.

Concerning the second question, the author of J-dictionary attributes the changes to "ease of writing and pronunciation." However, other scholars such as Natel Khanlari (1377/1998) and Platts (1894) relate the changes to dialectal variations. Natel Khanlari, who has collected one hundred and fifty-six sources for the first period of the history of the Persian language (from the fourth century to the seventh century), argues that the spelling system during the first period was in a chaotic condition and each writer and scribe used to spell the words according to the system of their own dialects. In his attested data, for instance, *ye* changes, as shown in these pairs: *y*/*j*, *y*/*d*, and *y*/*z*. The words representing these changes are: *yashm*/*jashm*, "a precious stone"; *pa:yiz*/*pa:ziz*, "autumn"; and *azarba:yjan*/*azarba:djan*, "fire-temple." Initially, we may be surprised as to how *ye* changes to three sounds which seem to differ in terms of place and manner of articulation according to the table of Persian consonants, in terms of place of articulation and manner of articulation. According to Qolam-'Alizadeh (1374/1996), / y / is a palatal glide, while / d /, / z /, and / j / have been described as alveolar stop, alveolar fricative, and palato-alveolar affricate, respectively. On the other hand, the analysis of these three consonants in terms of their features (Giegerich: 1992) shows that they share a common feature which is [+ coronal], as opposed to / y / which is [- coronal]. Thus, a binary phonemic contrast like [+ coronal] vs. [- coronal] expresses a sound change fully and economically in terms of sub-atomic particles—phonological features.

The second component of Persian grammar in the lexicographer's descriptive system constitutes morphology, which encompasses parts of speech or انواع کلمه / اقسام, *aqsa:m-e*/*anva:'- e*, *kalame*, (kinds of words), according to the exact terminology they use. These categories include: اسم, *esm*, (noun); فعل, *fe'l*, (verb); حرف, *harf*, (particle); صفت, *sefat*, (adjective); ضمیر, *zamir*, (pronoun); ظرف / قید, *zarf*/*qeyd*, (adverb); صوت, *sowt*, (interjection); کنایه, *kena:ye*, (indefinite pronoun); and عدد, *'adad*, (numeral). Since these categories tend to be rather heterogeneous, they are not clearly defined in these introductory treatises, but the authors enumerate a list of characteristic features, which may be distinguished by morphological forms, semantic properties, or grammatical functions.

They divide substantives into human vs. non-human beings in notional terms, being morphologically marked by adding the plural marker *–a:n* to the former, as in: اسبان, *asb-a:n* "horses", and *–ha*: to the latter, shown in: