

Word Classes in Persian

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In this paper, we try to show that although most of the listed words in Persian fall under the universally known lexical categories such as N, V, Adj., Adv., and P, there are a considerable number of listed words in the language which do not fall under these categories and the lack of specific lexical category in these words affects their syntactic and morphological roles in the grammar. Persian has only about 100 simple verbs and most of its Complex Predicates (CPs) contain a light verb (LV) and a predicative element in which the verbal elements lack argument structure and the non-verbal (NVs) elements seem to be responsible for the thematic force of the clauses (Vahedi-Langroudi (1996); Karimi-Doostan (2005); among others). The lexical category of NV elements in the CPs seems rather interesting. Some of the NVs are adverbs, adjectives, prepositions or nouns but some of them seem to lack specific lexical category and will be called Verbal Nouns (VNs) in this work. The adverbs and adjectives can be used in superlative and comparative forms and they can be modified by intensifier adverbs like ‘very’. The nouns can be pluralized and selected by D, demonstrative adjectives and prepositions and they can function as subject and object. However, VNs do not have any of the properties of adverbs, adjectives and nouns referred to here. VNs are different from prepositions and simple verbs too. Prepositions can directly select DPs, but VNs cannot. Simple verbs may co-occur with verbal inflectional items, but VNs may not.

The Ezafe particle $-(y/?)$ e appears between a noun and its complements, between a noun and a possessor, between a noun and a modifier, and between an adjective/adverb and its complements. The constructs linked by the Ezafe particle are known as ‘Ezafe constructions’. VNs fall into two groups with respect to Ezafe. Some of them like those in (1) may appear in Ezafe construction (3) but others like those in (2) may not appear in Ezafe constructions (4).

1. VN + LV

<i>hefz</i> kardan	(memorizing to do)	“to memorize”
<i>?exraaj</i> kardan	(firing to do)	“to fire (some one)”
<i>madad</i> daadan	(help to give)	“to help”
<i>?anjaam</i> daadan	(performing to do)	“to perform”
<i>?edaame</i> daadan	(continuing to give)	
<i>taqlil</i> daadan	(reduction to give)	“to reduce”
<i>?isaar</i> kardan	(devotion to do)	“to devote”
<i>tahye</i> kardan	(providing to do)	“to provide”
<i>bayaan</i> kardan	(expressing to do)	“to express”

2. VN + LV

<i>faraamush</i> kardan	(forgetting to do)	“to forget”
<i>mahsub</i> kardan	(taking into account to do)	“to take into account”
<i>haali</i> kardan	(understood to do)	“to cause to understand”
<i>moraxas</i> kardan	(releasing to do)	“to let to leave, to release”
<i>vaadaar</i> kardan	(persuading to do)	“to persuade”
<i>kansel</i> kardan	(cancel to do)	“to cancel”
<i>gom</i> kardan	(loosing to do)	“to loose”

- 3) ?*anja:m-e* *ka:r* tavasot-e Ali
 performing-Ezafe work by-Ezafe Ali
 “performing the work by Ali”
 4) * *faraamush-e* ketaab tavasote Ali
 forgetting-Ez book by Ali
 “forgetting the book by Ali”

So, as far as Ezafe is concerned the VNs in (1) behave like nouns, adjective, and adverbs, while those in (2) do not. Regardless of this difference, all VNs are independent and listed words (lexemes) that can be separated from LVs by the Negation Particle, the imperfective morpheme mi as in (5), modals and auxiliaries such as ba:yad ‘should, must’, future auxiliary xa:stan ‘will’ and progressive auxiliary da:štan ‘to have’, as well as clitic pronouns like -eš ‘it’ as in (6b-d).

- (5) a. Ali *gerye* **ne-mi**-konad.
 Ali cry Neg. Impf-DO
 ‘Ali does not cry.’
 (6) a. Ali *gerye* **da:rad mi**- konad.
 Ali cry Prog.Aux. Impf-DO
 ‘Ali is crying.’
 b. *be ra:dyo guš* **xa:had** kard.
 to radio ear Fu.Aux. DO
 ‘(He) will listen to radio.’
 c. *guš-eš* **ba:yad mi**-kardi.
 ear-it should Impf.-DO-Past did
 ‘You should have listened to it.’

Contra the view that nominalization is the spell out of a category neutral root projection in a DP context (Marantz, 1997; Harley and Noyer, 1998; and consequent works), we show that, as in Marantz 2000, VNs as category neutral words can be the input to nominalization and other morphological rules, as well as syntactic rules when they are categorized as n, a, or v. Also, based on the data in (1-2), we show that a nominalized structure contains a VP (Abney, 1987; Fu, et al, 2001; Bodomo, 2004) not a vP (Alexiadou, 2001). We also demonstrate that VNs cannot function as subjects, objects or verbs predicating clauses due to the fact that they lack specific lexical category. In addition, contra Croft (2000) we show that words, not constructions, are primitive elements.

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