The quality of negation structure in Old Persian and Modern Persian

Suzan matinfard

Abstract

The speakers of every language, in daily speaking, use different styles for exchanging different information. Investigation of the structure of negation has revealed the significance of syntax and the contexts within which they exist. In this paper I investigate the quality of negation structure in Old Persian and Modern Persian. Study of Persian shows that to make negative words and sentences there are more than one negative word and prefix for the use of Persian speakers. I shall attempt to articulate different kinds of negative sentences in these two areas of Persian, and also show whether there is any similarity or differences between the use of this structure in revolution of language or not. To do this I examined 20 negative sentences, 10 of Old Persian and 10 of the Modern Persian sentences (that are randomly have chosen from inscriptions and Tarix Beyhaqi andTarixe Sargozashte Masudy).we have had two negative words in Old Persian , but in Modern Persian we have three negative prefixes to make a sentence with negative meaning. By studying negative sentences of these texts this paper shows that there are not big differences between the structure of negation in Old Persian and that of Modern Persian.
Key words: Negation, Old Persian, Modern Persian.

Introduction

 The history of Iranian languages is of three periods: (Oranskij 1977)
1-old Persian   2-middle Persian   3-modern Persian
Old Persian was the language of a group of Iranians who, in the Achaemenid period settled in the area of modern Fars. The extent Old Persian texts all date back to the 6th to the 4th centuries. They are written in a cuneiform script, invented under Darius for the purpose of recording his deeds. Middle Persian (or Pahlavi) is mainly known from the official inscriptions of the Sasanian period and the literature of the Zoroostrians. Old Persian and middle Persian are the ancestors of the Modern Persian (Skjaervo 2002).
Persian language, whose native names are Farsi, Parsi, Dari or Parsi-ye-Dari (Dari Persian), is the Indo-European language. It is spoken in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Persian is written in the Arabic script, which is read from right to left.

In historical linguistics, we choose two parts in the history of revolution of one language and analyse them separately. Then we speak about the differences among them (Arlotto 1981)

The focus of this paper is on the differences of the model of negation in Old Persian and Modern Persian. The first part is about the negative structure of Old Persian. The number of sentences in the inscriptions was about 30, but because of the limitation, only 10 sentences were selected. The second part is about the structure of Modern Persian, Which contains 5 sentences of Tarix Beyhaqi and 5 ones from Tarixe Sargozashte Masudy.

Negation and Old Persian

The negative words in Old Persian are 'naiy' and 'ma'. The negative word is usually immediately in front of the verb (Skjaervo 2002). In addition there are times that some words can come between the negative word and the verb. In fact it is two kinds whether ultimate or penultimate .The former is when there is no gap between negation and the verb, and the latter is when we have something in between. As the form of these two negative words shows they do not attach to the verb. Note that when final -iy or –aiy are followed by an enclitic pronoun or particle, the final letter is not written, thus <na-i-ya> naiy 'not' becomes <na-i-> nai- in nai-patiy 'nor' (Skjaervo 2002).

In the following examples we have NEG particle immediately before 'to be' verb:

1) baga aniya naiy astiy.
   God other not 3rd sing.
   There is no other god.
2) Tayaiy paruva xsayaѲiya yata aha avaisam   ava   naiy
   who   previous king   while they where   so much   not
   astiy kartam yaѲa mana.
   Have done   as   I.
   The previous kings while they where (kings) have not done as much as I.

In 3, 4 and 5 NEG is before the main verb:

3) Man naiy varnavataiy.
    I   not believe.
   I don't believe.
   (DNb21-24)
4) Avam karam tayam madam jata   haya mana naiy gaubataiy.
   That army which   Median crush which mine not call.
   Crush that army, which is madian which does not call itself mine.
   (DB 2, 18-30)
5) Haya tauviya tayam skauѲim naiy jatiy   naiy vimardatiy.

Who   stronger that   weak   not crush not destroy.
He who is stronger does not crushes the weak one nor wipes him out.
(DSc 39-41)

One analysis which has been proposed in work dates back to Pollock (1989) is that, 'not' is contained within a separate NEGP/ Negative phrase projection, and that it serves as the specifier of NEGP (and hence is positioned in spec –NEGP) (Radford 2004).

An analysis of a sentence like 3 is to suppose that naiy originates as the specifier of NEGP and the verb varnavataiy originates in the head V position of VP and from there moves to the head NEG position of NEGP :

A1. [$_{CP}$[$_{C}$ø][$_{TP}$man[$_{T}$Tns][$_{NEGP}$ naiy[$_{NEG}$ ø][$_{VP}$[$_{V}$ varnavataiy]]]]].

A2. [$_{CP}$[$_{C}$ø][$_{TP}$man[$_{T}$Tns][$_{NEGP}$ naiy[$_{NEG}$ varnavataiy][$_{VP}$[$_{V}$ ~~varnavataiy~~]]]]].

Then from there the whole NEGP attaches to a present tense in T, as shown in C:

A3. [$_{CP}$[$_{C}$ø][$_{TP}$man[$_{T}$ naiy varnavataiy][$_{NEGP}$ naiy[$_{NEG}$ ~~varnavataiy~~][$_{VP}$[$_{V}$ ~~varnavataiy~~]]]]].

Tree diagram: 'NEG' particle movement
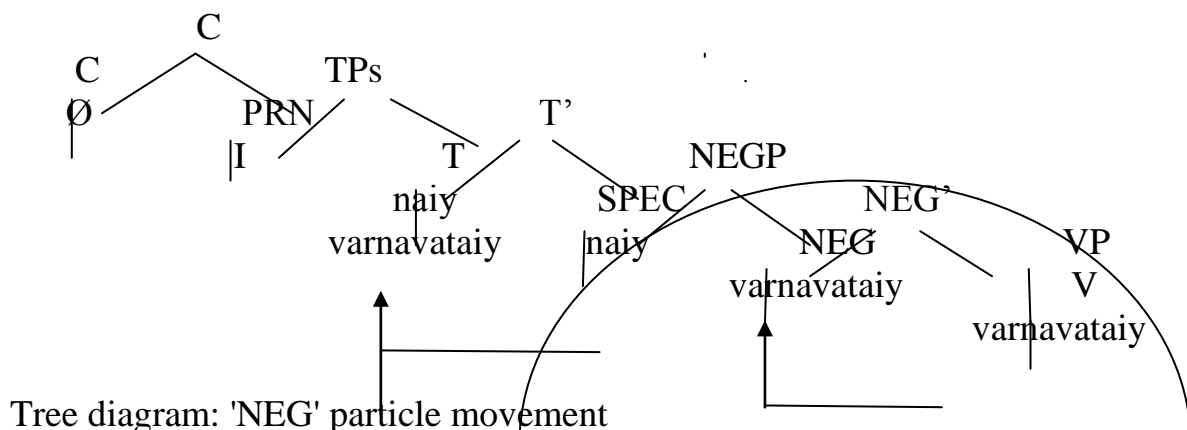
This would mean that head movement applies in a successive –cyclic (two-step) fashion (Radford 2004). Each of the two head movement operation in the tree diagram _movement of varnavaiy from V to NEG and then from NEG to T_ is local in the sense that it satisfies the Head Movement Constraint, since in each case movement is from one head position into next highest head position in the structure.

In 5 we have two NEG that we translate them as 'not … nor'.

Negative words also can come in front of noun and adjective. Consider following examples:

6) Naiy aha martiya naiy parsa   naiy mada.
   Not   man   not Persian not median.

There was no man either Persian or median.
(DB1.48-49, 53)

7) Ima hasiyam naiy duruxtam .
This true   not false.
This is true not false.
(DB4, 44-45)

As the examples show, parsa and mada in the first one and duruxtam in the second one are noun. And the verb is omitted in both of them.

As we said previously, we also have the word 'ma' in Old Persian to show negation. In sentence number 8, ma is in front of the auxiliary and in 9 it is before the main verb:

8) Auramazdata[i]y jata   biya   utataiy   tauma ma biya.
Ahuramazda   strike may and-you family not may.
May Ahuramazda strike you and may you have no family.
(DB4.56-59)

9) Patiyazbayam daiva ma yadiyaisa .
Proclaim I   daiva not worship.
I proclaim, the daivas should not be worshipped.
(XPh38-39)

In the last example of this part naiy is in front of avada'there':

10) haya madaisuva maϴista aha hauv adakaiy naiy avada aha.
Who Mede   greatest   one then   not there
The one who was greatest among the Medes was not there then.

Negation and Modern Persian

The previous part was about the structure of negative sentences in Old Persian. In this part I describe this structure in modern Persian, to clarify the point I example the sentences that are chosen randomly from Tarixe Beyhaqi and Tarixe sargozashte Masudy.
The most important adjectival prefix is the negative prefix. The negative words are 'na' or 'ne' (the difference is just for the sake of easier pronunciation) and 'ma' that attach to the verb. In fact the negative is formed by adding the prefix ne or na- to the positive, e.g. nabudam (I was not), nemibasham (I am not).
These days the form 'ma' is just used in special wittings and not speaking.
In the following examples NEG becomes in front of the 'to be' and changes the shape of the verb. (Not+ ast = nist)

1) dar qamnak budan bas fayede nist.

   In sadness being many benefit not 3sing.

   There is not benefit in sadness.

   (Beyhaqi)

2) lazem be sharh nist.

   Necessary to describe not 3sing.

   It is not necessary to describe.

   (Masudy)

Also we can have it before the main verb. Consider the following examples:

3) bordeyim na baxteyim.
   Win ^{3rdplur} not fail $^{3rd\ plur}$.
   We have win, not have fail.
   (Masudy)
   In 3, NEG did not attach to the verb. (May be this is for scope)

4) ruzy gozasht ke kasy manande an yad nadasht.

   Day go $_{past}$ that any body like that remember not.

   Day went that nobody remember like that.

   (Beyhaqi)

5) kashky hend ra fath nemikardam.

   Hope India that open not 1^{sing}.

   I hope I didn't open India.

   (masudy)

 In 4 and 5 NEG is between the two parts of the verb 'yad dashtan',' fath kardan' which means whenever our verb consists of two parts (like;faramush kardan, safar raftan ,entexab kardan… .) we do not use NEG in front of the verb (*nafaramush kardan) but between the two parts.

As we see the form of the NEG in 4 is 'na' and in 5 is 'ne'.

6) va na shokaty dar tayefeye afshar baqi xahad mand.

   And not power in tribe Afshar remain ^{future}.

And there will not remain power in the Afshar's tribe.

(Masudy)

In this example, we have some words between the NEG and the verb which means it is not necessary for NEG to be immediately before verb.

In following we have NEG before auxiliary:

7) qoshune ma ba   asakere Rus   nemitavanand bejangand.

    Army   our with soldiers Russian   not can   fight.

    Our army can't fight with Russian's soldiers.

8) ke shaxs   nabayad   dar hich maqam   mayuse   serf bashad.

  That Person not should in   no   position disappointed completely.

  That people shouldn't be completely disappointed in each position. (Masudy)

As we said at the beginning of this part, in addition to 'na' we also have the form 'ma'. Like 9:

9) mara faramush makonid.

  Me   forget   not 3$_{rd\ plu}$.

  Don't forget me.

(Beyhaqi)

This example shows that 'ma' is used in imperative sentences .We can mention an important difference between 'na' and 'ma', that 'ma' is always used in an imperative form while 'na' can be used both as negation and imperative.

Conclusion

The examples show that the negative structure in Persian have not changed ,the only difference is that of the form of the words, naiy in old Persian and na in modern Persian (we have the form ne in middle Persian uδ paβaγ –ray ec farzand I namburδar ne buδ. 'Babak had not any famous child'.) This shows that naiy is changed to na during the revolution of the Iranian languages. But the ma form has not changed (Kent 1961).
We saw that in both periods NEG comes in front of the verb and also sometimes we can have something between NEG and the verb. Also it used with main verb and auxiliary. These days, we also can use NEG before the pronoun like here and there (like: na inja na ounja) and we had such example in old Persian.
We do not know why Persian has passed its revolution as soon as possible while we see differences between old English and modern English in models of negation. This does not mean that Persian is superior to English. We just can say that Persian is like a snake that molt sooner, this is like the process of inflection of verbs, Persian inflects verbs for number and person but in English

we do this just for third person singular, this shows that in this respect English has passed the revolution sooner.

References

Arlotto,A. (1981).Introduction to historical linguistics.2nd ed. New York, University press of America. trans, Yahya Modaresy(1383)Tehran,pajuheshgahe olume ensani va motaleate farhangy.

Johnson, E.L. (2009). Historical Grammar of the Ancient Persian Language.

Kent, R.G. (1961). Old Persian: grammar, texts, lexicon. American Oriental Society.

Lambton, A.K.S. (2003). Persian Grammar. Cambridge University Press.

Mace, J. (2003). Persian Grammar. Routledge Curzon, USA and Canada.

Oranskji .I.M. (1977).Les langues iraniennes.traduit par Joyce Blau. Paris Librairie C,Klinksieck.trans,Ali Ashrafe Sadeqi(1378)Tehran ,Soxan.

Radford, A. (2004). English Syntax: an Introduction. UK, University Press of Cambridge.

Skjaervo.O.P. (2002).An Introduction to Old Persian. http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~iranian/OldPersian/index.html

-----,-----. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_language