

## The Persian Verb 'bayæd': Reconciliation with the Extended Projection Principle?

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### The subject and the Extended Projection Principle

With reference to the Platonic account for the *subject* as one of the two main constituents of a clause, *it* has been an interesting phenomenon for linguists and scholars across languages throughout centuries. Modern linguistics, revolutionized by Chomsky in the mid twentieth century, has been trying to develop a model of Universal Grammar which captures the features of the natural language in spite of the ostensible variation among languages. In formalist approaches to linguistics, the subject has been considered as an indispensable element of a sentence, whose presence is obligatory, nonetheless. Although this concept has been lately a preoccupation in generative linguistics; it has defeated all attempts for a valid definition cross-linguistically (Svenonius 2002).

Concerning the importance given to the presence of the subject in a clause, Chomsky (1981) in his Projection Principle maintains that direct and indirect  $\Theta$ -marking are properties of lexical items determined by the lexicon, and requires that these properties be observed throughout the syntactic derivation. He further links the Projection Principle to the requirement that all clauses have subjects and originally formulates the term Extended Projection Principle (Chomsky 1982).

Although many linguists have designated properties for the subjects, Mohr (2005) maintains that "Subjects are not easily definable in any framework because subjecthood comprises several diverse properties". Falk (2006 p. 16) has enumerated universal properties for the subject invincible for all languages:

- Obligatory element
- Agent argument in the active voice
- Most likely covert/empty argument
- The addressee of an imperative
- Anaphoric prominence
- Controlled argument (PRO) (in some languages)

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- Shared argument in coordinated clauses
- Raising
- Extraction properties
- “External” structural position
- Definiteness or wide scope

First and the most important of all is that subject is an obligatory element. Since subject is one of the two main constituents of a sentence, it has to be present in every sentence/clause to satisfy well-formed condition of that sentence. Consequently, subject has to be realized in whatever form it can be. It has to be taken seriously that although all sentences have subjects, not all sentences decode their subjects in the same way. Thus, as Woolfords (2008) states “... a language may be said to have Differential Subject Marking (DSM) if some subjects have a different Case, agree differently, or occur in a different position than others.” DSM phenomenon can per se be realized in different ways. de Hoop and de Swart (2008) have introduced DSM as follows:

First of all, languages differ in which conditions govern DSM. Some languages differentiate their subjects on the basis of the form, such as being a pronoun or not, others on the basis of semantic features such as being a real agent (volitional, in control) or not, and still others distinguish their subjects on the basis of clausal features such as tense/aspect/mood or the main/dependent clause distinction. Secondly, DSM comes in different formal guises: case marking, agreement, inverse systems, [and] voice alternations.

### **‘bayad’ Constructions in Persian**

According to Khanlari (1983) the Persian verb ‘bayestæn’, in different derived forms, meaning *to have to*, *to be better to*, and *to be necessary to*, is used to show either the requirement of something for someone or the necessity for the occurrence of another verb. The first usage, however, is no longer used modern Persian.

to ra kolah bayæd  
you *D.O. marker* hat must

to bayæd rast begi  
you must truth say.2SG.pres



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This verb is referred to as a modal verb (like Akhlaghi 2007 among others). As a modal verb, however, 'bayad' can illustrate different classes of modal statements, that is, deontic modality and epistemic modality.

Regarding the epistemic and deontic modality (the former expressing the speaker's opinion about a statement and the latter connoting the speaker's degree of requirement of the proposition), I would like to be consistent with Zagana (2008) who has distinguished between speaker-oriented versus subject-oriented properties of modals. Nonetheless, "the term *subject orientation* suggests that the modal is predicated of the subject" (Zagana 2008), whereas modals with speaker-oriented properties "...qualifies the speaker's subjective attitude toward the factuality of the proposition" (ibid.).

It is essential to add that modal verbs are (following Trusk 1993) specialized lexical items to show mood, that is, degree of a proposition, or as Kroger (2005) has put, "... grammatical reflection of the speaker's purpose". Many authors have used the terms mood and modality interchangeably, but Palmer (1979) has distinguished mood as a grammatical category and modality as a semantic entity. In a more recent sense, however, he (1999) has regarded mood as a way in which modality may be expressed and modal verbs as another.

### **Controversies against the Extended Projection Principle**

Lasnik (2001) maintains that "the EPP has been a pervasive mystery since it was first formulated by Chomsky". But the EPP has been challenged since there seems to be languages which exhibit recalcitrant behaviors towards it. McCloskey (2001) has doubted the existence of the EPP in Irish. Bayer (2004), according to some data from German, assumes that "...that the EPP does not hold universally". Furthermore, Appleton (2008) has talked of the incongruity Icelandic has with the EPP.

From long ago, 'bayæd' in certain constructions has been considered an impersonal verb to form impersonal constructions which lack subjects (Bateni 1969, Khanlari 1983, Lazard 1992, Meshkatodini 2001), because, as all these authors agree, subject is not mentioned in those constructions.

By resorting to data from Persian in such a construction like '*bayæd ræft*', Lotfi (2001) has also seriously questioned the universality of the EPP in such a construction affirming that "... the sentence is neutral with regard to the subject". He further inveighs against the EPP and states that "Chomsky's reliance on the EPP features may turn to be an unfortunate

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move as the EPP seems not to be as universal a requirement as it appears.”

Persian is said to be a pro-drop language in which inflection of the verb for person and number permits a clause to have no phonetically overt subject:

raftam

pro go.1SG.past

In a sentence like “bayæd ræft” “ræft” is not inflected and whatever subject either specific or arbitrary reference is inserted in the subject position, the sentence runs into ungrammaticality.

\* mæn bayæd ræft.

\* to bayæd ræft.

\* hærkæs bayæd ræft.

Undoubtedly, ‘bayæd’ in a construction like ‘bayæd ræft’ is a modal verb and like most modal verbs in other languages requires the verb to follow appear in infinitival forms. Persian allows a certain kind of infinitive to follow a modal verb which is called curtailed infinitive, which I believe is very similar to bare infinitive in English. Moreover, according to Stowell’s classification of modal verbs (Stowell 1983), one can argue that ‘bayæd’ in curtailed infinitive constructions is a true modal verb.

### **Reconciliation of ‘bayæd’ with the Extended Projection Principle**

According to what discussed earlier about the nature of ‘bayæd’ in Persian, let us examine some examples:

bayæd berævæd → deontic modality and subject oriented

bayæd asheq shod o ræft → epistemic modality and speaker oriented

In line with Palmer (1999) stating that mood is a way in which modality may be expressed and modal verbs as another, and Palmer (2001) who regards mood a subcategory of a wider more general area called modality, and by the help of Zagana’s (2008) distinction between speaker-oriented and subject-oriented properties of modals, I would like to assert that *hortative mood* is conceivable with ‘bayæd’ in a seemingly subjectless construction. This mood is used for “softened commands or exhortation” (Kroeger 2005) which is an invitation involving the speaker

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and the addressee and possibly an outside person (Xrakovskij 2001, Timberlake 2007). Thus, leaving out agreement factor at this stage, "bayæd ræft" can be interpreted as "Let us go" and "One must go" and either "We must go".

Karimi (2008) considers 'bayæd' as a control verb: a verb which takes a following VP complement whose subject is PRO. Like the English example below:

He wants to go.

He wants PRO to go.

As long as English is non-pro-drop language this sentence would be ungrammatical if the subject is omitted:

\*wants to go.

\*wants PRO to go.

On the contrary, Persian is a pro-drop language which allows the subject to be omitted. In "bayæd ræft" PRO precedes "ræft" to accord to Karimi's assertion. Nevertheless, there is still one argument position empty:

bayæd ræft.

↓

bayæd PRO ræft.

↓

*e* bayæd PRO ræft

I count on another property of the subjected mentioned by Falk (2006), that is, the most likely covert/empty argument to conclude that this *e* is the subject. This *e* cannot be pro because according to Rizzi (1986) who considers person marking unnecessary to license non-referential null subjects but number marking necessary, 'bayæd' lacks number agreement.

Up to my best knowledge, I conclude that in 'bayæd ræft' PRO is the subject of 'bayæd' because it is not marked for tense; so according to Chomsky and Lasnik (1993) suggesting that PRO has null case, and therefore, can only appear in infinitive clauses where the verb lacks Tense, and thus has no Nominative Case, the best candidate as the subject cannot be anything else but PRO. Thus, in 'bayæd ræft' as a hortative construction two categories of arguments, I believe, arbitrary reference '*hærkæs*' (one or everyone) and specific reference '*mæn*' (I) or



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'*ma*' (we), can occupy the subject position due to Differential Subject Marking.

As a final point however I would like appreciate Lotfi's (2001) solicitous translation for '*bayæd ræft*', i.e., '*To go is a must*' on which I rely to assure that PRO is the subject in such a construction, which very much like such constructions in English like *To err is human*.

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