

English Passive and the Function of Shodan in Persian

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Abstract

Although English and Persian share a basic structure in the formation of passive with the help of past participle of the main verb accompanied by “be” in English and “shodan” (i.e. become) in Persian on a syntactic basis, Persian resorts to morphological alternation, too. However, the verb shodan is not merely an auxiliary verb; it can serve as a main verb as well. In fact, Persian passives have various overlapping realizations, bearing the meaning of “possibility” and “going”, too. This study also sought out to investigate whether or not passives differed in written texts. In addition to library resources, the study made use of a comparative text analysis approach to investigate the application of passive structures in the novel *Animal Farm* (Orwell, 1956) and its Persian translation (Akhondi, 2004). The results revealed that the conventional function defined for Persian shodan as an auxiliary verb for passive structure outnumbers the passive verbs used in the original novel. Findings also indicate that passive voice is not limited to one form of shodan and past participle; in fact, transitivity alternation plays a key role, too. In addition, the combination of shodan with nouns or adjectives is twofold: it can produce both active and passive voice structures. This study was targeted at EFL learners and teachers as well as translators who will duly be provided with fundamental awareness when dealing with English and Persian in learning / teaching process and translating from English into Persian and vice versa.

Keywords: active voice, passive voice, Persian, syntax, transitivity alternation

1. Introduction

Voice, on the one hand, refers to the relationship between the participant roles of the noun phrase argument of a verb and on the other hand, the grammatical relations born by those same NPs. Two sentences can convey the same basic meaning but at the same time they may be different in voice. In many languages, the most familiar voice contrast is that between active and passive constructions. Passive can be defined as a construction in which the object of an intrinsically transitive verb appears as its surface subject (Trask, 2008). Consider sentences (1.a-b) below:

1-a) The boy broke the cup.

1-b) The cup was broken by the boy.

Sentences (1-a) and (1-b) are equal in the basic meaning, but why should there be two semantically synonymous constructions? In terms of Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP), there is a pragmatic answer to this question. FSP believes that "the structure of utterances is determined by the use to which they are put and the communicative context in which they occur" (Lyons, 1981, p. 227). Accordingly, though identical in the basic meaning, active and passive sentences are employed in two different situations and cannot be interchangeably used. In other words, they are suitable answers to two different questions. For example, sentence (1-a) above is a suitable answer to “What did the boy break?” and sentence (1-b) above is used to answer the question “What was broken?”

Based on FSP, a sentence can convey two types of knowledge: old (given) information and new information. Old information, also referred to as theme, is that knowledge which the speaker assumes to share with the addressee. The theme is “the starting point of utterance” (Mathesius, 1942, p. 25), or it is “the point of departure for what the speaker is going to say” (Halliday, 1985, p. 36). New information, also referred to as rheme, is what the

speaker states about, or in regard to, the theme. It is "everything else that follows (the theme) in the sentence" (Brown & Yule, 1989, p. 126). In other words, rheme is the information that the speaker assumes not to be inferable by the addressee from the text. The theme is that part of a sentence repeated in both the question and the answer, and the rest of the sentence which appears only in the answer is the rheme. So in the reply, 'The boy broke' is the theme and "the cup" is the rheme.

To Persian grammarians and linguists, passive and active structures have different definitions and points of emphasis. Shariat (2011) and Khanlari (2012) believe that there is a strong association between a passive verb and the direct object. In the sentence, Sagi koshteh shod (i.e. A dog was killed), the passive verb koshteh shod (i.e. was killed) is directly attributed to the direct object, Sagi (i.e. a dog), while in the active form, Shekarchi sagi ra kosht (i.e. A hunter killed a dog) the emphasis is on the logical subject. This paper aims to compare and contrast passive constructions in English and Persian and deal with the concepts hidden in this respect.

2. Background to the Study

The construction of passive seems to be a controversial issue in Persian grammar. A number of previous studies have downplayed the concept of passive in Persian and resorted to terms such as partial verb (Khayampoor, 2010), intransitive construction (Moeen, 2011), and compound verb (Vahedi-Langroodi, 2010). There are also some that not only admit that passive exists in Persian, but they have also defined classifications for passive construction (Bateni, 2010; Lambton, 1984; Dabirmoghaddam, 1985; Tayyeb, 2001; Pakravan, 2002).

Khayampoor (2010) rejects the presence of passive in Persian saying that the verb shodan (i.e. become) which is used in a passive construction is, in fact, a partial verb which is accompanied by an adjective. However, it should be mentioned that passive is not merely an inflectional case, but it is a syntactic one, too, which is realized by the absence of a component. In some languages, the morpho-syntactic construction of passive is inflectionally realized in the verb, while in some others it is not (Keenan, 2009).

Among those who maintain that Persian does have passive voice, there are otherwise various beliefs. Some have confined passive to a structure consisting of the past participle of the main verb accompanied by the auxiliary verb shodan (Dabirmoghaddam, 1985; Meshkattoldini, 2005). Others hold that passive is a construction in which there is no subject, but an object and a third person plural verb form (Bateni, 2010; Vahidian-Kamyar, 2008; Tayyeb, 2001; Pakravan, 2002). Following Dabirmoghaddam (2011), some linguists such as Jabbari (2014), Sahraayi and Kazeminahad (2006) believed that besides passive voice there is another type of passive called middle voice in which the delexical (or light or support) verb changes and a passive verb is formed. This format of passive voice is constructed by the replacement of one delexical verb with another verb to make a passive verb. For example, the verb daadan (i.e. give) as in Shekast daadan (i.e. defeat) can be replaced by the verb xordan (i.e. eat) as in Shekast xordan (i.e. be defeated). These are delexical verbs that bear merely a function to convert a transitive verb to an intransitive one and so produce a new verb collocation. In contrast to the latter ideas, Rasekhmehand (2007) following Haspelmath (2011) postulated that there is no middle voice in Persian, but such verbs are antiaccusative. Similarly, Rezai (2010) maintains that there is no middle voice in Persian, but it is part of a more general process called transitivity alternation.

In their comparative study of the translation equivalents between *Animal Farm*, by Orwell (1956), and its three translated versions in Persian, Abbasi, and Arjenan (2014) found that all the three translators most frequently transferred the passive meaning by use of the unaccusative verb and unergative verbs and the phrase structures were used as the second and third highest form, respectively.

Working on lexical bundles, Jalali, Eslami Rasekh and Tavangar (2008, p. 458) found that among the clausal bundles, those made of passive verbs plus prepositional fragments (e.g. *used in this study*, *were found across the*, *is based on the*) are used more than those beginning with anticipatory-*it* or *to be* verbs.

And finally, Ferreira (2008) examined whether the thematic structure of verbs would affect speakers' decision to construct an active or a passive sentence. He found that with a normal agent-theme verb such as 'ordered', speakers should generally produce active sentences, because the active structure places the agent in the slot of the subject and the theme in the position of the object. In contrast, with a theme-experiencer verb such as 'worried', subjects should have some tendency to produce passive sentences because the passive places the role higher on the thematic hierarchy (experiencer) in the subject position. He also found that the animacy variable affected the percentage of passive responses, but only when the verb was theme-experiencer, not when the verb was normal. This finding could be attributed to a general floor effect for passives with normal verbs. Nevertheless, the result is somewhat surprising, because sentences with inanimate subjects are less common than sentences with animate subjects.

Many syntacticians draw a distinction between two types of passives: lexical and adjectival (Levin & Rappaport, 2012; Wasow, 1977). An example of a lexical passive is *The girl was seen by the boy*, but an example of an adjectival passive is *The girl was annoyed by the boy*. The first uses a normal verb i.e. agent-theme and the second a theme-experiencer verb. Although not all adjectival passives employ theme-experiencer verbs, most passives with theme-experiencer verbs are adjectival passives. (The only exceptions are cases in which the theme-experiencer verb is used agentively to indicate an event, as in *The man was deliberately frightened by the woman*.) Thus, speakers have a preference to produce adjectival passives over lexical passives. The two types of passives differ in their semantic properties; that is, adjectival passives tend to describe states and lexical passives tend to describe events.

Accordingly, this research was designed to address the issue of passive voice in English and Persian on a comparative basis and examine how and to what extent passives are employed.

3. Methodology

Having done a review on the construct and application of passive voice in English and Persian, the authors attempted to see how and to what extent passive voice was actually used in English and Persian. To do so, an English novel, *Animal Farm* (George Orwell, 1945), and its Persian translation, *Qaleye Heivaanaat* (Akhondi, 2004), were selected for text analysis. Then source data were fed into Antconc concordancing tool Version 3.4. to check the usage and frequency of passive voice construct in both works.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 What Is Passive?

Pakravan (2002) says that passive basically refers to the structure in which the role of the subject, or agent, is demoted to the second level in comparison to that of the object, goal or action of the sentence. This demotion is different from language to language. For example, in English, since it is possible to preserve the subject, on the one hand, and because of the fixed specific syntactic word order on the other, the subject can give away its place to the object and reappear at the end of the sentence after preposition “by.” Thus, it can be concluded that English passive represents two different realizations: demotion of the logical subject (Example 2-a) and its movement (Example 2-b):

2. Tom wrote a letter

2-a) A letter was written.

2-b) A letter was written by Tom.

Unlike English, Persian does not usually re-introduce the agent in its “true” passive structure. In fact, what is called active and passive in English actually signifies the involvement or non-involvement of the agent in the performance of the verb (Windfur, 2000), while in Persian as the Persian grammar terminology indicates MALOOM (i.e. known) and MAJHOOL (i.e. unknown) the actual reference is the presence or absence of the agent. This is why in the Persian “true” passive voice, the agent cannot be re-introduced. In the following, different forms of passive are introduced and in all of them the agent is unknown. Before different structures are described, it should be mentioned that in Persian there are about 300 simple verbs. These verbs are made up of a single word and the remaining part of Persian verb lexicon contains some thousands of verb collocations which are composed of noun/adjective /preposition and a delexical verb (Abdollahi-Guilani, Subakir, Tan, & Aghaei, 2012). So to convert a transitive active verb to a passive verb, the procedures mentioned below are followed:

a) If the verb is simple, it is changed to past participle and the verb shodan (i.e. be / become) is conjugated:

Ketab xandeh shod

Book read became / was

‘The book was read.’

b) A transitive verb can be used in the third person plural form without mentioning any third person subject:

Ali ra be xaneh bordand

Ali object-marker to house took+ third person

‘[They] took Ali home.’

c) Impersonal verbs: Some partial verbs such as “mitavan” (i.e. can be), and “mishavad” (i.e. it is possible) can be used to convey the sense of passive:

In ra mitavan anjaamdaad

This obj. marker can do

‘This can be done.’

d) In ambitransitive verbs, which can be used as both transitive and intransitive verbs, there is no need to inflect the verb (Jahnpanah-Tehrani, 2015). Thus, sentences (3a-b) are active sentences. While in (3-a) the noun “qaza” (i.e. food) is the logical object, in (3-b) it is both the logical object and the logical subject. Although (3-b) has no trace of conventional passive voice, the ultimate result indicates that something has happened to “qaza” without any apparent agent. This kind of passive can be referred to as causative alternation:

3-a)

Man qaza ra poxtam

I food obj. marker cooked

‘I cooked the food.’

3-b)

Qaza poxt

food cooked

‘The food cooked.’

e) Some verbs do not inflect for passive; in fact, a new verb which is intransitive replaces the delexical verb. This process is called transitivity alternation (Rezai, 2010). For example, the simple verb of “endaxtan” (i.e. drop) is replaced by “oftadan” (i.e. fall) and if the verb is a collocational one, the delexical verb (boldface in the examples below) changes as follows. Transitive and intransitive verbs are represented by (tv) and (iv):

- 1) “gool **zadan**” (i.e. deceive) changes to “gool **xordan**” (i.e. be deceived).
- 2) “Shekast **daadan**” (i.e. defeat) changes to “shekast **xordan**” (i.e. be defeated).
- 3) “Amaadeh **kardan**” (i.e. prepare) changes to “amaadeh **shodan**” (i.e. be prepared)
- 4) “Aasib **resaandan**” (i.e. hurt) changes to “aasib **didan**” (i.e. be hurt)
- 5) “Joosh **avardan**” (i.e. boil (tv)) changes to “Joosh **amadan**” (i.e. boil (iv))
- 6) “Taghir **daadan**” (i.e. change (tv)) changes to “taghir **kardan** (i.e. change (iv))

4.2 Meanings / Functions of Shodan

The verb shodan, can be defined in terms of different functions / meanings that it carries:

1. In old Persian, the verb shodan meant “go:

Oo be xaneh shod

he to house became

‘He went home.’

Although this meaning of shodan is obsolete, there is now a collocation, namely “Amad o shod” (i.e. come and go) which is still widely used.

2. Shodan can represent possibility where it can be used in third person singular subject-less verb form followed by a sentence:

Mishavad oo ra did

Possible is him object-marker saw

‘It is possible to see him.’

3. To show respect and politeness and to represent formality, passive can be a good choice (Nodoushan, 2008):

A: Qaza meil darid?

food desire have

‘Would you like some food?’

B: Saraf shodeh ast

eaten become is

‘(It) has been eaten.’

4. Shodan can also be used to emphasize the object. (Nodoushan, 2008):

Faghat do maghaleh pazirofteh shod
 only two articles accepted became
 ‘Only two articles were accepted.’

5. Shodan can be employed to highlight the verb:

A: Nameh ra neveshti?
 letter obj. Marker wrote + second person pronoun
 ‘Did you write the letter?’

B: Baleh neveshte shod
 Yes, written became
 ‘Yes, it was written.’

6. The verb shodan can mean “happen” when its subject is “What”

Che shod?
 What became
 ‘What happened?’

4.3 Collocations of Shodan

The verb shodan can appear in different collocational patterns:

1. “Shodan” can be used as an auxiliary verb accompanied by past participle of the main verb to signify a passive structure:

Dar basteh shod
 Door closed became
 ‘The door was closed.’

2. Shodan can go with an adjective to present both a state verb and a dynamic verb. In this case, there is no actual sense of passivization:

a) State verb:
 Hava sard shod
 Weather cold became
 ‘The weather became cold.’

b) Dynamic verb:
 Oo boland shod.

He high became
 ‘He got up.’

3. Shodan can go with nouns to make a transitive verb. In this construct, there is no sense of passive voice:

Baad moheb xesarat-e ziadi shod
 Wind cause damage much became
 ‘The wind caused much damage.’

It should be noted that although the verb shodan may serve as an auxiliary verb to help convert a simple verb to a passive one, and in addition to its role as a delexical verb to act as a substitute verb for passive formats, it is used in many transitive collocational verbs without having a corresponding intransitive or passive counterpart. For example, the verb *Moheb shodan* (i.e. cause) is a case in point. It is a transitive verb, but cannot be used in passive structure. Furthermore, a great number of transitive-shodan constructs do not have causative transitive counterparts. For instance, the collocational verb *shamel shodan* (i.e. include; have) is a transitive verb, but it is neither causative nor passivizable.

In addition to shodan as a common auxiliary verb in Persian passive, there are some delexical verbs which, when accompanied by certain nouns or adjectives, can convey the sense of passive. These verbs tentatively termed as

substitute auxiliary verbs include such verbs as *xordan* (i.e. eat), *didan* (i.e. see), and *gashtan* (i.e. turn). Table (1) gives a short list of substitute auxiliary verbs used in passive construction. Contrary to the common use of *shodan* as an auxiliary verb, such verbs do not formally convert an active verb to a passive one in the sense of passivization. In fact, they are the result of transitivity alternations in which a delexical verb gives its place to another delexical verb to produce a verb resonating unaccusative verb.

Table 1. Substitute auxiliary verbs used in passive

Active verb	Corresponding antipassive verbs
Choob zadan (i.e. beat)	Choob xordan (i.e. be beaten)
Sadameh zadan / resaandan (i.e. harm [tv])	Sadameh diddan (i.e. harm [iv])
Sard kardan	Sard shodan
Shekast daadan (defeat)	Shekast xordan (be defeated)
Nejat daadan (rescue)	Nejat yaftan (be rescued)
Taghir daadan (i.e. change [tv])	Taghir kardan / yaftan (i.e. change [iv])
Joosh avardan (i.e. boil [tv])	Joosh amadan (i.e. boil [iv])

Based on the verb type, Persian has different ways to make a passive structure:

1. To convert a transitive simple verb to a passive form, it is just enough to use the auxiliary verb *shodan* (i.e. become), and the past participle of the verb.

Active:

Man lebas ra shostam

I clothes obj. marker washed

‘I washed the clothes.’

Passive:

Lebas shosteh shod.

clothes washed became

‘The clothes were washed.’

2. There are thousands of Persian verbs that are collocationally made, and so their passive counterparts are differently constructed. In this case, there is no need for the past participle of the main verb as is common in the English language, but it is a case of morphological alternation. That is to say, the delexical verb has to be replaced by another delexical verb (as shown in Table (1) above). Thus, passive collocational verbs can be produced in different ways:

a) Kardan (i.e. do/ make) changes to **shodan** (i.e. become). In this collocational pattern, the pre-verb is an adjective

Sard kardan (make cold) vs. sard shodan (become cold).

b) zadan (i.e. hit) changes to **xordan** (i.e. eat). In this collocational pattern, the pre-verb is a noun.

Zarbeh zadan (i.e. hit) vs. zarbeh xordan (i.e. be hit)

c) daadan (i.e. give) changes to **xordan** (i.e. eat). In this collocational pattern, the pre-verb is a noun.

Shekast daadan (defeat) vs. Shekast xordan (i.e. be defeated)

d) daadan (i.e. give) changes to **yaftan** (i.e. find). In this collocational pattern, the pre-verb is a noun.

Nejat daadan (i.e. rescue) vs. nejat yaftan (i.e. be rescued)

3. Some verbs are ambitransitive; that is, they are both transitive and intransitive, so the passive format can be constructed by removing the logical subject of the active sentence and placing the logical object in front of the verb to function both as the formal subject and the logical object. For example, the verb *grow* is an ambitransitive verb:

4-a) The farmer grows plants.

4-b) Plants grow.

In Persian, the verb *rixtan* (i.e. pour/ spill) is an instance of ambitransitive verb to produce a causative alternation:

5-a) Active:

Man aab ra rixtam

I water obj. marker poured

'I poured the water.'

5-b) causative alternation:

Aab rixt

water spilled

'Water spilled.'

However, there is a true passive construct for "rixtan" which indicates the action was done by an external force and not on its own.

Aab rixteh shod

water pour became

'Water was poured.'

4. The fourth way to construct a passive is by means of the conjugation of the verb in third person plural without mentioning the subject. In this case, an enclitic is added to the end of the verb to show plurality of the verb. An enclitic is a type of clitic (i.e. bound morpheme) that is attached to the end of the word to denote number and subject pronoun (Kalbassi, 2013).

Dozadha ra gereftand

Thieves obj. marker caught+past plural enclitic

'The thieves were caught. Or [They] caught the thieves.'

4.4 Passive Preference and Agent Postposition

The linguistic principle of the least effort (Zipf, 1949, p. 318) asserts that "speakers do not exert themselves more than is necessary for successful communication." This principle indicates that other things being equal, the simpler and shorter a linguistic form, the more frequently human beings tend to use it (Crystal, 2002, p. 87). It is said that an active sentence could be a better choice than its passive corresponding sentence, because active sentences are often more concise than passive voice. Expressing the same idea in passive voice requires more words by 30% to 40%:

The fighter punched Ali and dodged the uppercut. (Active voice: 8 words)

Ali was punched by the fighter and then an uppercut was dodged by him. (Passive voice: 14 words)

The same calculations can be applied to Persian active and passive sentences:

6-a) Active:

Man ye xaneh xaridam

I a house bought

'I bought a house.'

6-b) Passive:

Ye xaneh tavasot-e man xarideh shod.

a house by me bought became

'A house was bought by me.'

As can be seen, the active sentence consists of 4 words while its passive counterpart has 6 words, indicating an increase by 85%.

In spite of the fact that active voice is stylistically preferable especially as a sign of effective writing (Strunk &

White, 2001; Williams, 2004), many writers encounter circumstances in which a passive sentence seems more appropriate than an active one. Furthermore, although passives are less common than actives in English (Hopper & Thomson, 2012; Svartvik, 1966), they do occur in both oral and written discourses and are found frequently in expository discourse (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1972). Based on Slobin's findings (2000) passives are harder to comprehend than actives but only when the passives are reversible rather than irreversible passives. Reversible passives are those with arguments matched on animacy (typically animate), but the irreversible passives are passives with arguments differing in animacy.

Likewise, in Persian, there is a stronger preference for active than passive structure (Lambton, 1983). In common speech, it is usually preferred to use an active clause (example 7-a) rather than the passive (example 7-b) in order to simultaneously topicalize or express the old information/topic (patient), and to focus on the new information (the agent by-phrase) by placing the object marker 'Ra' to a position before the subject of the active clause (Vahedi.-Langroodi, 2000):

7-a) Active

Ali toop ra aavord.

Ali ball obj-marker brought

'Ali brought the ball.'

7-b) Active with an agent

Toop ra Ali aavord

Ball obj-marker Ali brought

'Ali brought the ball.'

One more reason for the preference of the passive to active voice can be found in the formality of the register. One of the features of a formal / academic text is the use of passive voice in which the writers try to avoid including themselves in the message being conveyed (Sheikha & Inkpen, 2012). In some cases, the writer has to make use of passive structure to conform to the principles of end-focus and end weight.

Following the old-new information continuum, old information usually precedes new information, because the new information is in focus; that is to say, the writer prefers to place the most important part of the message at the end of the sentence. Thus, in the first sentence below the focus is on "Tom", while in the second sentence the emphasis is on "book":

8)

a) I gave a book to Tom.

b) I gave Tom a book.

To conform to the principle of end-focus, a writer may sometimes make use of passive structure as in the example below in which "**the Statue of Liberty**" is both the new information and in focus. So to finish this sentence, a passive structure can be applied to choose alternative (9-b), because it starts with old information and ends with the new and focused information:

9)

One of the most famous monuments of the 19th century was **the Statue of Liberty**.

9-a) **Auguste Bartholdi** designed it.

9-b) **It** was designed by Auguste Bartholdi.

Related to sentence cohesion, a writer often has to follow another principle called the principle of end-weight stating that long and "heavy" elements are usually placed at the end of a sentence, and the subject is kept as short as possible. The following sentence, for example, can be best finished by the passive structure of choice (10-b), because it begins with old information and ends with heavy information which is at the same time new information:

10)

During the summer months the inn is very busy.

10-a) Hundreds of people who cross the road in cars visit it.

10-b) It is visited by hundreds of people who cross the road in cars.

4.5 By-agent Passive Structure

What is in common among all the studies on passive voice is that this structure is derived from an active one (Chomsky, 1957). In the earlier version of transformational grammar, there was a transformational rule for every single construction. As for the passive structure, there is a rule which moves the object to the position of the subject and the demoted subject then follows a preposition; that is, “by.” Langacker (1982), however, believes that passive is not derived from active, adding that all of the components of the passive are meaningful and are purposefully involved in making the structure of the passive, emphasizing that the object appearing after the preposition “by” is only the object of this preposition rather than being a demoted subject. To recapitulate, in English, it is possible to reflect the agent of the passive verb by placing it after the preposition “by”:

11-a) The children broke the window.

11-b) The window was broken by the children.

Although it is believed that Persian passive sentences cannot have the agent reappear, there are classical cases where the logical agent is mentioned in the passive sentence (Moeen, 2011). Probably influenced by foreign texts and translation, there are some traces of such an application. Although the inclusion of the agent is not common in true passive in Persian, there is another type of agent inclusion. In the transitivity alternation, it is possible to insert a different preposition such as “az” (i.e. from):

12-a) Active:

Onha man ra gool zadand.

They me obj.marker deceit hit

‘They deceived me.’

12-b) Passive:

Man gool xordam.

Me deceit ate

‘I was deceived.’

12-c) Passive with agent:

Man az onha gool xordam.

Me from they deceit ate

‘I was deceived by them.’

Sentence (12-a) shows an active sentence, and sentence (12-b) indicates that the delexical verb has been replaced by another verb to make an antipassive construct. And this latter sentence reappears in (12-c) with an agent inserted not after the conventional “by” (in Persian “tavasote” or “bevasileye”) but after another preposition “from” (in Persian “az”).

4.6 Text Analysis

In addition to the theoretical differences of passive voice in English and Persian, this paper attempted to see how and to what extent passive voice was actually used in English and Persian. To do so, an English novel, *Animal Farm* (George Orwell, 1945), and its Persian translation, *Qaleye Heivaanaat* (Akhondi, 2004), were selected for comparison. Then source data were fed into Antconc concordancing tool Version 3.4. to check the usage and frequency of passive voice construct in both works. Figure (1) shows the constructs and frequency of passive voice in *Animal Farm*.

As Figure 1 shows, passive voice was used 353 times in the whole novel of *Animal Farm*. This construct has realized itself in various formats. As the figure indicates construct “was + P.P.” enjoys the highest frequency (183 times), followed by “have been / had been + P.P.” (i.e. present and past perfect tenses) with a frequency rate of 105. The third rank of passive voice construct belongs to “were + P.P” format with a rate of 93 times. In addition to these constructs, passive voice had other realizations in which modal auxiliary verbs played a key role. The application of modals amounted to 38 times. The realization of passive voice, however, was not limited to those mentioned above. The rest of the passive voice construct was equally distributed among other constructs such as continuous aspects and causative structures.

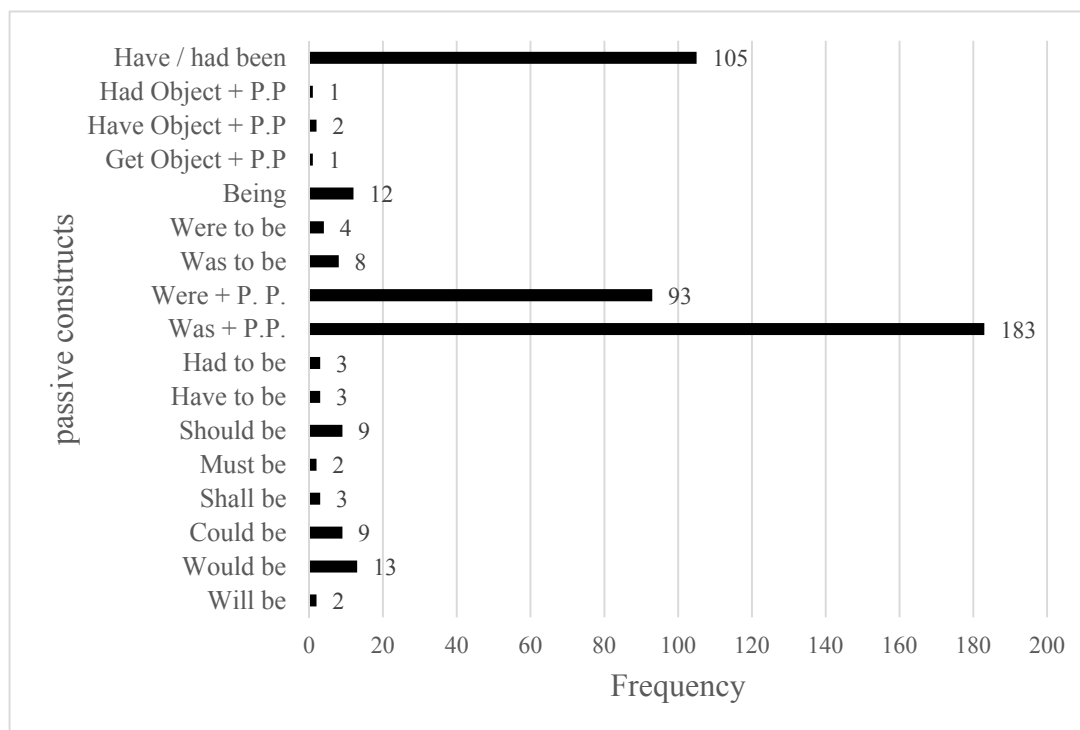


Figure 1. Passive voice constructs in Animal Farm

In the analysis of passive construction, those structures which seemed to lack in any dynamic activity were excluded from the list. Examples of such non-dynamic structures are the following:

The windmill was bound to fall down.

It was more suited to the dignity of ...

It was almost half built now.

He was gone.

They were so delighted with the song that

Since no actual activity happened to the logical object in the above sample sentences, and they were only a combination of a linking verb with a participial adjective, they were not included in the analysis of passive construct.

Meanwhile, it was found that just one auxiliary verb was used with several past participles as in “*They were gored, kicked, bitten, and trampled on*”. In cases like this, only one score was given to the total number of passive structure. In addition, the reduced passive clauses were not included in the computation.

One of the other structures in which passive was used was made up of the verb become and the past participle of the main verb. Among the 12 instances of become and became, only in two cases did a past participle follow the verb and in the other instances, there was an adjective only.

The verb grow and its different verb forms were used 12 times throughout the text and in all of them there was an adjective following it. In Persian all the uses of become and grow were translated into “shodan”, which sounded like a passive voice structure.

The analysis of the Persian translation of *Animal Farm* indicated a comparatively different view of passive voice. Figure 2 illustrates the combination of shodan as used in the translation:

Figure 2 shows different combinations of shodan. The computation of the application of shodan in the translated version of *Animal Farm* indicates that the verb shodan was employed 473 times in total. However, this number does not solely account for the structure of passive. If ‘true’ Persian passive is made up of the auxiliary verb shodan and past participle of the main verb, according to the figure, shodan has only a share of 84 times.

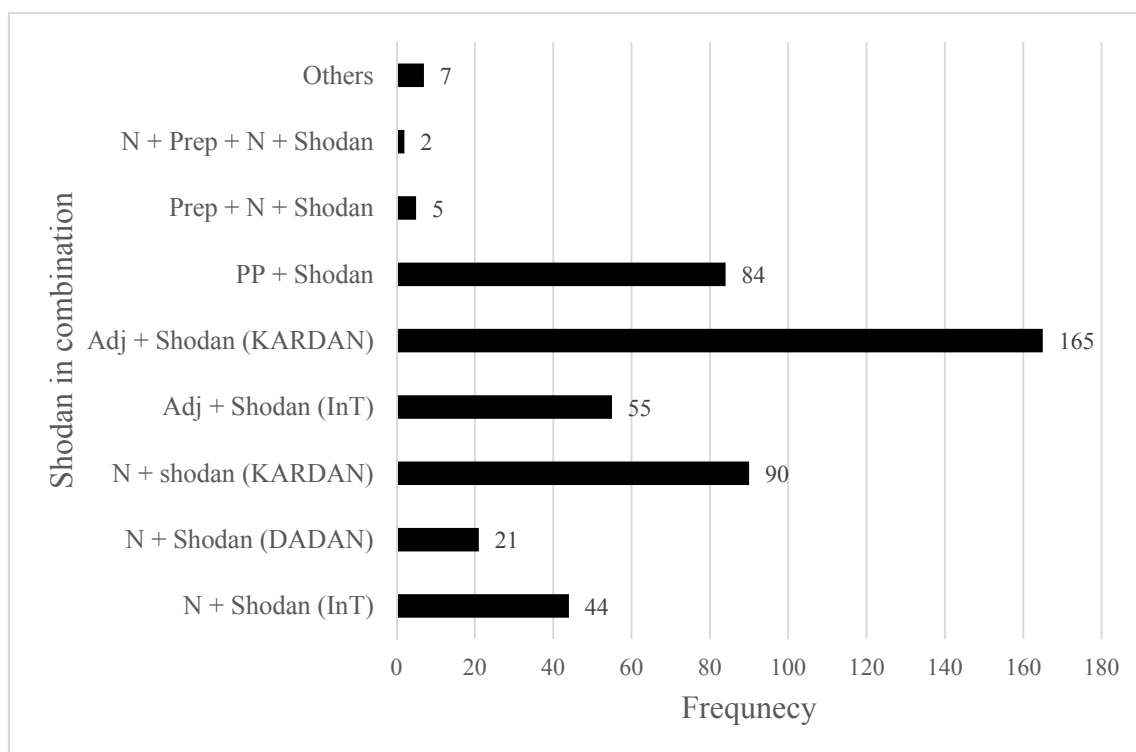


Figure 2. Combinations of Shodan in Persian Translation of Animal Farm

The second category in which shodan appears is in combinations where Noun + shodan makes a contribution of 155 instances. This combination is in three formats:

- A noun accompanies shodan; this construct does not make a passive verb, but a construct that gives an intransitive verb. This format has a contribution of about 9% of the total use of shodan in the Persian translation.
- The second format falls in a category in which the active verb has the delexical verb daadan 'give' which is converted to shodan in the passive structure: erayeh daadan 'offer' and erayeh shodan 'be offered'. There are 21 instances of this use of shodan in the translation.
- The third format shows a group whose active form has a delexical verb of kardan as in ejra kardan 'perform' but in the passive construct, the verb kardan is replaced by shodan: ejra shodan 'be performed'. The computation shows that in the Persian translation, this format has a share of about 19% of the total use of shodan.

Another category in which shodan appeared was in combination with adjectives. As Figure 2 shows, in 220 cases, there was an adjective with shodan, but only in 165 instances did it make a passive structure which is, in fact, made up of a replacement of delexical verb kardan with shodan as in por kardan 'to fill' versus por shodan 'be filled', and the rest of adjective and shodan combinations (55 instances) makes an intransitive verb.

Two more groups of verbs in which shodan was used was comprised of a preposition, a noun and shodan (as in bar pa shodan 'be erected') and a noun, a preposition, a noun and shodan (as in dast be kar shodan 'start working'). There were not many instances of these structures (only 7); however, there were only three cases of passive in these formats.

The last group which included 7 instances with the combination of shodan in them was a collection of miscellaneous formats. These formats are not very productive, though:

- In two cases, the verb shodan was used in the sense of "go": Onha amad o shod kardand 'They came and went;
- When used with the interrogative word 'what', the verb shodan meant 'happen'. This occurred two times in the translation.
- One use of shodan was in the sense of possibility: Hichkodam ra nemishod did. 'It was not possible to see any of them.'

d) The final trace of shodan can be found in two verbs:

1)

chizi nassibeshan shod.
 something possession + their became
 ‘They got something.’

In this sentence, the word nassib ‘possession’ is encliticized by shan ‘their’, accompanied by the verb shodan, ultimately producing a transitive verb, but it does not make a passive verb form.

2)

chizi dastgireshan nashod
 something catch + their not became
 ‘They didn’t get anything [They understood nothing.]’

Like the previous example, this is not a passive verb, either.

The last observation on the use of passive in the translation of *Animal Farm* was that there were three cases of impersonal verbs in which there was a sense of passive in the sentence, but it looked like an active one without a formal subject; in fact, it is a verb which is conjugated in third person plural.

Adamha lagad mixordand

people leg ate
 ‘People were crushed under feet.’

In the comparative analysis on the insertion of agents in passive voice sentences in *Animal Farm* and their counterparts in the Persian translation, it was found that in *Animal Farm* there was a frequency of 22 for “by-agent” phrases whether with animate agents (as in “...*which was guarded at the door by fierce looking dogs.*”) or with inanimate agents (as in “*In the winter they were troubled by the cold.*”).

In the Persian translation, however, the criteria were not very straightforward, because the translated counterparts of “by” can be at least two words, Bevasileye and Tavasote. The Persian equivalents used for an agent in passive is not limited to the counterparts of “by”, and other prepositions were accountable, too. The findings indicate that only four times passives were used with agents included after the preposition Bevasileye (the Persian equivalent of “by”), once with “Baa” meaning ‘with’; once with “az tarighe, meaning “through” and in other cases, the sentences were converted to active. In (a) sentences below, the original example is given and in (b) sentences, an English translation of the Persian translation of the original text is provided. The highlighted parts show the difference:

14)

- (a) They did not know when the Rebellion **predicted by** Major would take place
 (b) They did not know when **the Rebellion that Major had predicted** would take place

15)

- (a) The stupidest questions of all **were asked by Mollie**, the white mare.
 (b) The stupidest questions of all **Mollie, the white mare, asked.**

16)

- (a) The animals were **dismayed by this announcement.**
 (b) The animals **felt lost on** this announcement.

In some cases, the passive verb changed into a possessive nominal group:

17)

- (a) The pigs had an even harder struggle to counteract the lies **put about by Moses**, the tame raven.
 (b) The pigs had an even harder struggle to counteract the **lies of Moses**, the tame raven.

In another occasion, the by-phrase was translated into an adverb:

18)

- (a) Milk and apples (this has been proved **by Science**, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the

well-being of a pig.

(b) Milk and apples (this has been proved *scientifically*, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig.

In some cases, (19-b and 20-b), the unaccusative form of passive was used in place of the original passive and so the preposition changed, mostly to “az” meaning “from”:

19)

(a) Nevertheless, they were both thoroughly *frightened by the rebellion* on Animal Farm.

(b) Nevertheless, they were both thoroughly *afraid of the rebellion* on Animal Farm.

20)

(a) Their decisions had to be ratified *by* a majority vote.

(b) Their decisions had to be ratified *with* a majority vote

5. Conclusion

This study attempted to conduct a comparative investigation into the formation and functions of passive voice in English and Persian, focusing on the employment of Persian auxiliary verb shodan. The findings indicate that there is a controversy over the existence of passive voice in Persian. Furthermore, it is found that Persian employs a variety of formats to make passive sentences. However, there is some overlapping between Persian passive and active voices in certain aspects. Generally speaking, Persian does not make a great use of passive structure and the main preference is for active voice. Nevertheless, some of these active structures do not definitely indicate on which end of the continuum it should rest, because the verb shodan which is a very common verb used in passives can frequently be seen in combinations with nouns and adjectives, and it is only possible in the sentence to decide on its function. The main thrust of our argument is that passive voice in English and Persian does not seem to follow an identical route and this asymmetry may give rise to complications in finding appropriate counterparts from language to language. The comparative analysis in the employment of passive structures in *Animal Farm* and its Persian translation *Qaleye Heivaanaat* indicates, despite the apparent abundance of passive constructs in the Persian translated version, there are very few sentences in conventional passive voice.

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