

On the semantics and syntax of Persian ‘become’

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In the previous literature, Persian *šodæn* ‘to become’ has been considered to introduce telicity. For example, *bidar šod* ‘(lit.) awake become’ makes a typical inchoative predicate, and it is not compatible with duration-denoting *for x time* adverbials, as in (1).

- (1) *kimea ye saʔæte/*bæraye ye saʔæt bidar šod* (Folli et al. 2005)
 Kimea one hour / for one hour awake become-PST.3SG
 ‘Kimea became awake within an hour.’

The present study investigates the aspectual properties and the syntactic nature of *šodæn*. The two objectives of the paper are: (i) To show that *šodæn* is **not** inherently telic (contra Karimi-Doostan 1997; Folli et al. 2005; Taleghani 2008; cf. Megerdooian 2009) and that it is resultativity that gives rise to telicity in Persian complex predicates (CPrs) with *šodæn*. The property of resultativity is brought about by the preverb (Ramchand 2001, 2008), and (ii) To argue, based on the so-called passive form of Persian CPrs, that Voice and (little) *v* are two distinct projections (Harley 2013a, 2013b).

➤ To meet the first objective, two main arguments are provided. First, as can be seen in (2), when the participle form of a transitive motion verb (e.g. *kešidæn* ‘to pull’) is the preverb, the sentence will be atelic (and hence compatible with *for x time* expressions) even though the internal argument *ʔan čæmedan* ‘that suitcase’ is quantized (Beavers 2011a, 2012).

- (2) *ʔan čæmedan noh dæqiqe ruye zæmin kešide šod* (atelic)
 that suitcase nine minute on ground pull-PP become-PST.3SG
 ‘That suitcase was pulled on the ground for nine minutes.’

Second, when the preverb is a gradual change-of-state predicate (like gradable adjectives), the sentence will be ambiguous for telicity and thus compatible with an expression of duration, as in (3). Only when a specific result is obtained (contextually or via a result phrase), will the sentence become telic (Ramchand 2008; Beavers 2011b).

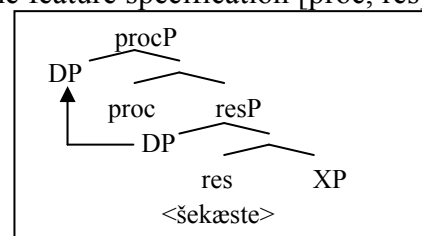
- (3) *ʔab bæraye čænd dæqiqe særd o særd-tær šod* (atelic)
 water for some minute cool and cool-COMP become-PST.3SG
 ‘The water became cool and cooler for some minutes.’

Moreover, both events described in (2) and (3) are homogeneous, that is, the subevents can be uttered by the same predicate expressing the whole event. Inherently telic predicates do not have this property. Thus, telicity is not encoded in the lexical denotation of *šodæn* ‘to become’ and hence the construction including it is not necessarily telic.

Regardless of the cause subevent and the INITIATOR theta-role, the preverbs in *šodæn* constructions, which are in the *vP* domain, are classified in two groups:

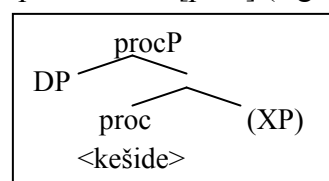
(a) Process-Result structure: Preverbs whose roots have the feature specification [proc, res] (e.g. *šekæste* ‘broken’), as in (4). This construction provides telicity.

- (4) *goldan šekæste šod* (telic)
 vase break-PP become-PST.3SG
 ‘The vase was broken.’



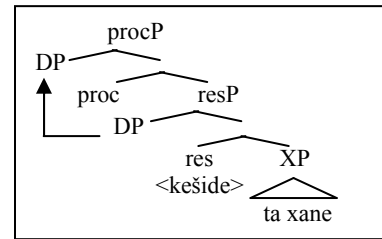
(b) Process structure: Preverbs whose roots have the feature specification [proc] (e.g. *kešide* ‘pulled’), as shown in (5). This construction makes the predicate atelic.

- (5) *čæmedan ruye zæmin kešide šod* (atelic)
 suitcase on ground pull-PP become-PST.3SG
 ‘The suitcase was pulled on the ground.’



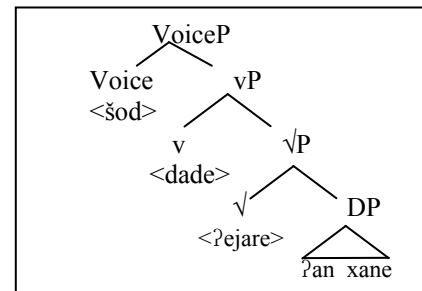
The *Process* structure may then be systematically augmented to form a *Process-Result* structure by adding prepositional resultatives, for instance, as shown in (6).

- (6) čæmedan **ta xane** ruye zæmin kešide šod (telic)
 suitcase to house on ground pull-PP become-PST.3SG
 ‘The suitcase was pulled on the ground into the house.’



➤ To meet the second objective, our argument comes from the so-called passive form of some Persian CPRs, such as *ʔejare dadæn* ‘to rent’. These are problematic constructions for Karimi-Doostan’s (1997) and Karimi’s (2005) accounts of Persian CPRs since they consider *šodæn* ‘to become’ as a light verb merged as the little v head. In (7), however, the v head is occupied by another light verb, *dadæn* ‘to give’ (see also Samvelian 2012; Samvelian & Faghiri 2014: fn. 6). If we follow Harley’s system that separates Voice from v, it provides enough space for both verbal elements, as illustrated here.

- (7) ʔan xane ʔejare dade šod
 that house rent give-PP become-PST.3SG
 ‘That house was shown to us.’



Interestingly, if we consider *šodæn* as the Voice head and preserve little v to be responsible for causal relations, this provides an account for the grammaticality pattern in (8a-b). In (8a), the light verb *zædæn* ‘to hit’ establishes the causal relation and hence the sentence is compatible with the adverb *ʔæmdæn* ‘intentionally’. Note that the non-active Voice head *šodæn* itself disallows the occurrence of an external argument. Thus it is safe to say that the compatibility of ‘intentionally’ in (8a) results from the light verb *zædæn*, not from *šodæn*. In (8b), on the other hand, the light verb *gereftæn* ‘to get’ does not introduce external causation and thus the sentence is ungrammatical with the intentional adverb.

- (8) a. ʔan xane ʔæmdæn ʔataš zæde šod
 that house intentionally fire hit-PP become-PST.3SG
 lit. ‘That house was fired intentionally.’
 b. ʔan xane (*ʔæmdæn) ʔataš gereft
 that house intentionally fire get-PST.3SG

Harley (2013a) points out that VoiceP makes no lexical-semantic contribution and is only an external-argument introducing functional projection. Our syntactic account of *šodæn* as the non-active Voice head is along the lines of her analysis, and correctly predicts that the existence of *šodæn* does **not** determine the (a)telicity of the whole predicate.

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