
Contact-induced change and structural variation in the passive constructions of Nayini

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This study investigates the structural variation in the passive constructions of Nayini (Central Iranian language). The data include interviews with 30 native speakers by means of picture story-telling and film re-narration. Among the total tokens, 94 instances of passive construction were identified, which reveal three patterns of passive formation: a) the passive marker *-š*, preceded by the verbal root (and causative marker *-en* for some verbs) and followed by tense-agreement morphology (79.8%, see example [1a]); b) a devoted passive root *ker-* ‘do’, followed by the passive marker *-š* and tense-agreement morphology (11.7%, see example [1b]); and 1c) the past participle plus the inflected auxiliaries *gert-* or *bo*, both ‘become’ (8.5%, see example [1c]).

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| (1a) <i>u-von-š-ay</i>
PFV-cut-PASS-PST.3SG
‘It was cut.’ | (1b) <i>pak e-ker-š-æ</i>
clean IPFV-do.PASS-PASS-3SG
‘It is cleaned.’ |
| (1c) <i>bor-id-æ gert-ay</i>
<i>cut-PST-PTCP become-PST[3SG]</i>
‘It was cut.’ | |

Pattern (1a) employs a suffix-like marker (*-š*), whose category is to be further investigated. Pattern (1b), employing the same marker, is doubly-marked for passive by its verbal root as well, and it is lexically restricted: the opposition of present/past/passive is only observed in *kir/ka/ker* ‘do’ (as opposed to other roots maintaining a present/past opposition). Finally, pattern (1c) is a contact phenomenon with a lexical-functional asymmetry. The past participles, as the lexical part of the construction, are borrowed as adjectives from Persian, the only other language spoken in the region. The borrowed root *bor-* in (1c) is opposed to the native root *von-* in (1a). However, the functional part of the construction, i.e. auxiliary, is not borrowed. Rather, the native change-of-state verbs *gert-* or *bo* are employed, which are conceptually the equivalents of Persian passive auxiliary *šod*. On the contrary, the patterns (1a) and (1b) are contact-resistant, not replicating any lexical or functional element of Persian. Firstly, the verbal roots in (1a) and (1b) differ from Persian roots, and secondly, the morpho-syntactic characteristics of *-š* are not observed in Persian, neither as a suffix, nor as an auxiliary.

References: • Borjjan, H. (2009). Median succumbs to Persian after three millennia of coexistence: Language shift in the Central Iranian Plateau. *Journal of Persianate Societies* 2(1), 62–87. • Dabir-Moghaddam, M. (2013). *Radešenāsi-ye zabānhā-ye Irāni*. Tehran: Samt.