

FUTURE TENSE SYSTEMS IN ENGLISH AND PERSIAN: A RESEARCH IN APPLIED CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS

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1. Introduction

For some linguists and grammarians, the first problem with the future tense is to decide whether such a thing exists in English at all, and if it does, what it is exactly. The reason for raising this query is twofold. First, they find the future with *will* to be frequently coloured by an element of *volition*, and the future with *shall* to be coloured by an element of *obligation*. Secondly, they note that English has not developed one single means of denoting future, instead there are a variety of means, none of which could be termed future tense in the way that *writes* is termed present and *wrote* preterite. Quirk, for example, states that there is no obvious future tense in English corresponding to time/tense relation for present and past, instead there are several possibilities for denoting future (Quirk 1973: 47). In another context he continues: futurity, modality, and aspect are closely interrelated, and this is reflected in the fact that future time is rendered by means of modal auxiliaries, by semi-auxiliaries, or by the simple present or present progressive forms (Quirk 1987: 213). As far as this study is concerned, I will contrast the grammatical devices that express the future in English with their correspondents in Persian. These devices include the following constructions:

1. Will/shall + infinitive (also called simple future)
2. Will/shall + be + pres. participle (also called future progressive)
3. Will/shall + have + past participle (also called future perfect)
4. Will/shall + have + been + pres. participle (also called future perfect progressive)
5. Be going to + infinitive
6. Be + to + infinitive
7. Be + about to + infinitive
8. Verb + infinitive
9. Modals with future reference

- 10. Simple present with future reference
- 11. Present progressive with future reference

2. Will/shall + infinitive (also called: simple future)

To begin our analysis about the contrastive study of simple future in English and Persian, Table 1 (see next page) will provide background information concerning the verb paradigm of Persian and may serve as a frame of reference for the topics under discussion throughout the present article.

The starting point of the table indicates that there are two infinitives in Persian, a regular or full-form infinitive which may be called an infinitive with *-æn* (col. 1A) and a short infinitive (col. 1B) or an infinitive without *-æn* (Lambton 1971: 15, Boyle 1966: 37, Rastorgueva 1964: 44). A full-form infinitive is made of the *past stem* (col. 2B) plus the ending *-æn*. A short-form infinitive has no suffix in *-æn* as its ending is identical in form with the past stem (col. 2B) and the 3rd person singular of the past form (col. 4).

There are two stems for each verb: the present stem (col. 2A) and the past stem (col. 2B). The past stem is obtained simply by striking off the final infinitive marker *-æn* in all classes of verbs. In this way, the past stem of *xordæn* 'to eat' is *xord*, *didæn* 'to see' is *did*, *šenidæn* 'to hear' is *šenid*, *oftadæn* 'to fall' is *oftad*, *ræftæn* 'to go' is *ræft*, and *goftæn* 'to tell' is *goft*.

Persian verbs can be considered highly regular as far as the past stems are concerned. However, their irregularity consists of variations among the present stems. The reason is that the rules for obtaining the present stem vary according to the class of verbs (Moynes 1970: 11; Boyle 1966: 30). For instance, a good number of Persian verbs fall within the pattern shown in Table 2.

Table 2. A Pattern of Present stem formation in Persian. Rule 1.

INFINITIVE	PAST STEM	PRESENT STEM
<i>xordæn</i> 'to eat'	<i>xord</i>	<i>xor-</i>
<i>pærværdæn</i> 'to nourish'	<i>pærværd</i>	<i>pærvær-</i>

In many cases, the variance in the present stem is governed by certain morpho-phonemic conditioning factors. For example, one may argue that if the present stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped. Examples are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Present stems formed from stems ending in a vowel. Rule 2.

INFINITIVE	PAST STEM	PRESENT STEM
<i>ræsidæn</i> 'to arrive'	<i>ræsid</i>	<i>ræs-</i>
<i>oftadæn</i> 'to fall'	<i>oftad</i>	<i>oft-</i>

One may also assert that in forming certain present stems, a final *-f* is often voiced and the resulting *-v* assimilates with the previous vowel to produce a diphthong or a glide like in Table 4.

Table 1. The verb paradigm in Persian.

1		2		3	4	5	6
Infinitive		Verb Stem		Present Inflectional Endings	Past Inflectional Endings	Verb Present Participle	Verb Past Participle
1A	1B	2A	2B	Present Stem	Past Stem	Present Stem	Past Stem +e
Full-infinitive	Short-infinitive	Present Stem	Past Stem				
<i>xast-æn</i> 'to want', 'to wish'	<i>xast</i>	<i>xah</i>	<i>xast</i>	-æm -i -æd -im -id -ænd	-æm -i -æd -im -id -ænd	1) <i>xah-an</i> 2) <i>xah-ænde</i>	Example: <i>xast-e</i>
				Examples: <i>xah-æm</i> <i>xah-i</i> <i>xah-æd</i> <i>xah-im</i> <i>xah-id</i> <i>xah-ænd</i>	Examples: <i>xast-æm</i> <i>xast-i</i> <i>xast</i> <i>xast-im</i> <i>xast-id</i> <i>xast-ænd</i>		

¹ It is also called the contracted infinitive (Moynes 1970: 15) or truncated infinitive (Rastorgueva 1964: 37).

Table 4. Present stems formed from stems ending in *-f*. Rule 3.

INFINITIVE	PAST STEM	PRESENT STEM
<i>ræftæn</i> 'to go'	<i>ræft</i>	<i>ro-</i>
<i>goftæn</i> 'to tell'	<i>goft</i>	<i>goo-</i>

Thus we may list past stems and derive their present stems in this manner and classify the remaining verbs which deviate from the course of action of these rules under the category of irregular verbs, such as:

Table 5. Irregular present stems.

INFINITIVE	PAST STEM	PRESENT STEM
<i>didæn</i> 'to see'	<i>did</i>	<i>bin-</i>
<i>šekæstæn</i> 'to break'	<i>šekæst</i>	<i>šekæn-</i>

However, as indicated by Moyne (1970: 13):

... any attempt to discover a set of ordered rules to derive all the deviating present stems from the past or the infinitive, or vice versa, would be futile. Historically, the present and past stems of New Persian verbs developed from different sources. The present stem developed from the Old Iranian stem of the present tense, while the past stem developed from the old past participle (cf. Morgenstierne 1958: 163). The present system in Old Iranian was very rich and the present stems depended on verbal classes. In Avestan, more than thirty verbal categories have been determined; hence, more than thirty types of verbal stems are affirmed for the present tense. Similarly, about 15 present stems are attested for Old Persian.

What we learn from this analysis is that, in Persian, verb stems have a double semantic load. Firstly, they are the bearers of the basic meaning of the word, and secondly, they indicate the time of action (Rastorgueva 1964: 33-34). In this regard, the past stem represents an action already completed (i.e., past) while the present stem yields the forms of an action not yet completed (i.e., present or future). Since both past and present stems are bound forms, they are not registered in any dictionary. Having established the verb paradigm of Persian for the basic needs of this paper, we now turn to the explanation of contrastive study of simple future tense in the two languages.

What is generally called the formal pattern of future simple in English is a verb phrase composed of the auxiliary *will* (sometimes *shall* in first person singular) plus the verb stem, e.g., *I will (shall) go to Shiraz tomorrow*.

In Persian, the simple future is formed by conjugating the present stem *xah* (col. 2A) of the auxiliary *xastæn* 'to want', 'to wish' (col. 1A) using the present inflectional endings (col. 3) and adding the outcome to the short infinitive (col. 1B) of the base verb. The latter has the same form as the past stem (col. 2 B) and the third person singular preterit (col. 4).

In English we may establish two primary categories of simple future, i.e. predictive future, and impositional future (Sharwood Smith 1975: 95).

The predictive category relates to what has often been called the pure or colourless future. All future sentences are predictive to some degree but this type of future is the least coloured by any additional present information, i.e. aside from predictiveness. The utterance:

(1a) I will study tonight.

delivered in unmarked intonation gives a slightly different attitude on the part of the speaker in the English language. There is less assertion of belief, inclination, insistence, promise, willingness or expectation, and a rather more quiet statement of fact about the future.

The simple present in Persian patterning *xah* + present inflectional endings + short infinitive (see above), is labelled the formal pattern of future tense and statistical surveys of written sources may suggest that it is the most frequent and relatively closest approximation to English pure or colourless future in expressing predicted or expected actions.

In the majority of cases, in a Persian sentence like:

(1b) *mæn emšæb motale'e xaham kærd.*
'I'll study tonight.'

talking about futurity is talking about the solid fact of prediction having the least color of assertion of belief, promise, willingness or expectation, whatsoever. It is this very fact of meaning of future device in Persian that makes it a very difficult task to define a generally valid difference in meaning between (1a) and (1b). In fact there is no difference in meaning at all.

Probably the most important conclusion drawn so far is that the formal pattern of future in Persian corresponds precisely to the simple predictive future in English and it is no coincidence, therefore, that the English predictive future category may bring about the least learning problems to the native speakers of Persian as the semantic schemata of the two languages are based upon the basic meanings of forms available in each language discourse.

In the impositional future – a category that would go together with the modal meanings – the speaker imposes a future state or event in the form of *will* and *shall* indicating modal colouring blended with the futurity. The imposition can be decision, intention, preparation, or an obvious symptom of what the future will bring. Examples are:

(2a) We **won't stay** longer than two hours.
(2b) *ma biš æz dou saæt moætæl næxahim šod.*
Same as (2a) minus imposition of modality.

- (3a) You'll **deliver** this package to the bookstore.
 (3b) tou in bæstehara be ketabforooši **xahi dad**.
 Same as (3a) minus imposition of modality.
- (4a) I'll **give** you a check next week.
 (4b) mæn cheke tou-ra hæfteye ayændeh **xahæm dad**.
 Same as (4a) minus imposition of modality.
- (5a) A committee **shall be appointed** to study the matter further.
 (5b) comite'ei **entexab xahæd šod** ke mozoo-ra bištær bærræsi konæd.
 Same as (5a) minus imposition of modality.

Taking the English examples first, the imposition of modality in the statement (2a) is intention, in (3a) is instruction, in (4a) is promise, and in (5a) is decision.

The Persian correspondents identified in (2b), (3b), (4b), and (5b) are reduced to simple predictive future and confined mainly to sole future reference in restricted sense where prediction and futurity are more emphasized than what is usually understood by modality, e.g. intention, instruction, promise, decision.

It appears that the impositional aspect of *will* and *shall* is apt to represent quite a complicated set of modally-oriented attitudes about the future tense to the native speakers of Persian. In fact, it is not the English predictive aspect of simple future that Persian speakers fail to grasp. As we have seen from the examples above, with the future markers of *will* and *shall*, particular attitudinal orientations are incorporated. Since these modally-coloured attitudes do not exist in Persian, it is, therefore, the impositional orientations about the futurity and modality that many native speakers of Persian fail to master, and this failure produces a general clumsiness if not outright errors in selecting and employing a communicatively appropriate future form.

3. Will/shall + be + pres. participle (also called future progressive)

To contrast the future progressive forms of the two languages, let us make observations on the basis of examples illustrated below:

- (6a) The plane **will be flying** at 30,000 feet.
 (6b) Hævapeima dær ertefa-e 30,000 pæi **pærvaz xahæd kærd**.
 'The plane **will fly** at 30,000 feet.'
- (7a) The doctor **will be operating** for another hour.
 (7b) doctor ta yek saæt-e digær **mašqule æmæl (kærdæn) xahæd bud**.
 'Doctor **will be involved in operation** for another hour.'
- (8a) I'll **be working** at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.
 (8b) mæn sa'æt-e noh-e sobh-e færda dær **hal-e kar kærdæn xahæm bud**.
 'I'll **be engaged in working** at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.'

As shown in the examples above, English and Persian do not agree in grammatical structure in the case of future progressive tense. The English form is a verb

phrase composed of the auxiliaries *will* (sometimes *shall* used with the first person singular) and *be* followed by the present participle (*-ing* form) of the principal verb. See examples (6a), (7a), and (8a).

The future progressive in Persian is considerably different from that of the English pattern, at least in the surface structure. To express this form in Persian, the speaker is aware of two possible renderings:

- He may use the simple future form discussed comprehensively above and exemplified in example (6b), or
- employ the terms of *mæšqul-e* 'be involved in' or *dær hal-e* 'be engaged in' followed by the full infinitive of the main verb and added to the relative conjugational form of future of *budæn* 'to be' (i.e., *xahæm bud*, *xahi bud*, *xahæd bud*, *xahim bud*, *xahid bud*, *xahænd bud*). These phenomena are illustrated in examples (7b) and (8b) respectively.

The Persian devices sometimes are used interchangeably as in the following examples:

- (9a) I'll **be writing**.
 (9b) mæn **mašqul-e neveštæn xahæm bud**.
 'I'll **be engaged in writing**.'
 (9c) mæn **dær hal'e neveštæn xahæm bud**.
 'I'll **be involved in writing**.'
 (9d) mæn **xahæm nevešt**.
 'I'll **write**.'

The English future progressive, besides denoting an action in progress which may have no time reference (6a) or have a definite time reference in future (7a) may also indicate a special meaning, signalled as a rule, by an adverbial, e.g.:

- (10a) I'll **be seeing** you soon (meaning I expect to meet you again).
 (10b)omidvaræm **baz-hæm bebinæm**.
 'I hope **to see you again**.'

It seems to be the case that in English the forms of *will be seeing* (10a) and *will be hearing* (11a) carry not only the emphasis on futurity but also an idea of expectation or preplannedness, e.g.:

- (11a) You **will be hearing from us** soon (meaning you will get communication from us soon).
 (11b) bezoodi **be šoma xabær xahim dad**.
 'We'll **let you know soon**.'

These structures are quite strange to Persian speakers.

The further variations of future progressive may call for no more extended comments as the features of modals *will/shall* discussed in Section 1, in most cases, it

may also hold true for *-ing* forms if used for future reference. This analysis can be consequently summarised by saying that the future progressive systems in the two languages are quite different. As a matter of fact Persian has no one formal and stable pattern that could be called a future progressive tense. What we saw in the examples shown are a number of translation equivalents none of which could be marked as the formal pattern of future progressive. Thus, the English tense under discussion is difficult to relate to any specific form in Persian in such a way that the relation would function on one to one basis. Attention should be paid specially to meaning when the English form denotes a specific future time, as this usage in a good number of cases has no obvious connection with the duration to which progressive tenses are usually related in teaching schemes.

4. Will/shall + have + past participle (also called future perfect or before future)

The English future perfect has a precisely definable temporal meaning. It denotes an action that will occur or will be completed before another action or a certain time in future, e.g.:

(12a) I **will have finished** my examination until Friday.

(12b) mæn ta jom-eh emtæha-natæm ra **tæmam xahæm kærd.**

'I **will finish** my examinations until Friday.'

As shown in (12b) the temporal meaning of English future perfect is rendered in simple future tense in Persian. This is a structure with high frequency of occurrence, at least in written language.

Besides this established way of expressing the future perfect, there is another device which is often overlooked in Persian grammar books. As revealed by Mirhasani (1989: 333), this device corresponds to the present perfect and is formed in the same manner except that it has a future time expression. Exemplifying the English statement (12a) by using this device, we receive:

(13) mæn ta jom-eh emtæhanatæm ra **tæmam kærdehæm.**

'*I **have finished** my examinations until Friday.'

This Persian verb form is mainly used in colloquial speech and gives special emphasis to the completion of a certain action that will be completed by a certain future moment, possibly before another future event.

Attention should be paid specially to the construction of present perfect in (13). Note that in Persian, the present perfect is formed by using the past participle of the main verb (Table 1) accompanied by the personal enclitics² including *æm*, *i*, *æst*, *im*, *id*, *ænd*. Examples are:

² Moyne (1970: 40) calls these endings "copula enclitics" and Mace (1962: 162) identifies them as the "short forms" of *budæn* 'to be'. These forms are distinct from the "long forms" of *budæn* (i.e., *hæstæm*, *hæsti*, *hæst*, *hæstim*, *hæstid*, *hæstand*) and are written not as suffixes as were identified in verb paradigm, but detached, i.e., with their own *ælef*.

nevešt-e æm	:	I have written.
nevešt-e i	:	You have written.
nevešt-e æst	:	He has written.
nevešt-e im	:	We have written.
nevešt-e id	:	You have written.
nevešte-ænd	:	They have written.

In conclusion of this section I claim that English future perfect can be expressed by two tenses in Persian, i.e., simple future (12b) and present perfect (13).

Taking the first case into consideration, it may result in a comparatively inappropriate and non-colloquial sentence like the following:

(14a) The race **will have started** before we even leave home.

(14b) mosabeq-eh qæbl æz inke-h ma hættæ æz mænzel xarej šævim šoru **xahæd šod.**

'The race **will start** before we even leave home.'

The second phenomenon will lead to the following outright error:

(15) mosabeq-eh qæbl æz inke-h ma hættæ æz mænzel xarej šævim šoru **šode-h æst.**

'*The race **has started** before we even leave home.'

Pedagogically speaking, this analysis may have value for the teachers and the advanced sophisticated students. In actual teaching, this English complex form with a temporal meaning requires considerable effort in explanation and internalisation.

5. Will/shall + have + been + pres. participle (also called future perfect progressive)

To emphasise that an action will have been taking place up to the time of another action in the future, the pattern of future perfect progressive is used. This form of future tense does not occur very often in English and does not exist in Persian at all. To express the translation equivalents of English future perfect progressive, the same facts indicated in the case of simple future perfect (see section 3) still remain true. The following sentences may illustrate the transfer pitfalls of this tense:

(16a) He **will be having** trouble with his behaviour all his life.

(16b) u tæmam-e omr ba ræftar-e xod moškel **xahæd dašt.**

'He **will have** trouble with his behaviour all his life.'

(17a) By the time you arrive tonight, I **will have been studying** for two hours.

(17b) ta væqti šoma emšæb beræsi dou saæt **motale-e kærd-e æm.**

'*By the time you arrive tonight I **have studied** for two hours.'

As appears from the examples illustrated above, we are having a grammatically correct but comparatively inappropriate statement in (16b) and an outright transfer error in (17b).

Taking into account the fact that this is a structure with a low frequency of occurrence, at least in written English, it implies that the inclusion of future perfect is not essential in elementary courses. On the other hand, advanced students of English have little opportunity to reinforce its use, precisely, because of its infrequency in texts, and, therefore, adequate care should be paid to the proper explanation and internalisation of this structure.

6. Be going to + infinitive

Another construction frequently used in English to express futurity, specially in informal speech, is *be going to* followed by the infinitive form of the verb, e.g., *he is going to visit me tomorrow*. This pattern of English has no word-to-word translation equivalent in Persian. It can be simply translated into simple future. e.g.:

- (18a) It **is going to rain** tonight.
 (18b) emšæb baran **xahæd barid**
 'It **will rain** tonight.'

Frequently in colloquial language, the forms of the expression *tæsmim daštæn* 'be intended to' (i.e. *tæsmim daræm*, *tæsmim dari*, *tæsmim daræd*, etc.) are used to accompany the present subjunctive³ forms of the main verb to produce the translation equivalents required, e.g.:

- (19a) I **am going to end up** this chapter soon.
 (19b) **tæsmim daræm** in fæsl ra zud **tæmam bekonæm**.
 'I **am intended to end up** this chapter soon.'

Sometimes both approaches can be used interchangeably:

- (20a) Ali **is going to see** me next week.
 (20b) Ali hæfteye ayænde mæra **xahæd did**.
 'Ali **will see** me next week.'
 (20c) Ali **tæsmim daræd** hæfteye ayænde mæra **bebinæd**.
 'Ali **is intended** to see me next week.'

³ The present subjunctive is formed by the preverb *be-* attached to the present stem, e.g. *bexanæm*, *bexani*, *bexanæd*, *bexanim*, *bexanid*, *bexanænd*. The present subjunctive can be governed by another verb to form the equivalent of the English infinitive structure: *mixahæm berævæm* 'I want to go', *mixahi berævi* 'You want to go', *mixahæd berævæd* 'He wants to go', etc. The perfect subjunctive can be formed with the subjunctive of the verb *budæn* 'to be' conjugated with the past participle of the main verb. The subjunctive of *budæn* does not take the preverb *be-* in modern Persian: *ræfte bašæm*, *ræfte baši*, *ræfte bašæd*, etc. Example: *bayæd ræfte bašæd* 'He should have gone/he must have gone' (see Moyne 1970: 15-17).

Although, as we see, the translation equivalents of English *be going to*, cover its meaning in Persian, these equivalents, whether used as simple future (18b) corresponding to *will/shall* form or expressed with the *tæsmim daštæn* expression (19b) or both (20b and 20c), may deviate from the underlying English pattern in that there is a subtle intentional colouring in the *be going to* future if compared to *will/shall* patterns. As indicated by Wiese (1984: 23), the utterance *I will study tonight* delivered in unmarked intonation gives slightly different attitude on the part of the speaker. Somehow, there is less assertion of belief, intention, or expectation, and a rather more quiet statement of fact about the future. This means that the communicative situations that demand more assertion on the part of the speaker will tend to use the *be going to* future rather than the *will* future. It also means that *be going to* says: 'I'm putting my beliefs about the future out in the open'. The *will* future seems to be more about stating the same information, rather than presenting assertion of beliefs.

The preceding analysis can be summarised by saying that while *be going to* is widely used and widely applicable in conversational English, there are restrictions on its use and on the extent to which it is replacing the future formed by *will*. This implies that the native speakers of Persian have little awareness of these variations and adequate care should be paid to proper explanation and internalization of these within the English framework.

7. Be to + infinitive

In English, this pattern is a quasi-auxiliary construction and is used to express future action, usually with the connotations of plan, appointment, obligation.

If it refers to plan or appointment, then in Persian, the present form of *qærar budæn* 'be supposed to' i.e. *qærar æst*: 'it is supposed to' will go with the present subjunctive forms of the main verb as indicated below:

- (21a) Their daughter **is to be married** soon. (plan/arrangement)
 (21b) doxtære anha **qærar æst bezudi ezdevaj bekonæd**.
 'Their daughter **is supposed to marry** soon.'
 (22a) Ali **is to come** tomorrow. (appointment)
 (22b) Ali **qærar æst færda biayæd**.
 'Ali **is supposed to come** tomorrow.'

If the pattern conveys the connotations of the obligation or necessity, then the Persian form will be the same as one used for *must* or *ought to* (i.e. *bayæd*). For example:

- (23a) You **are to be back** by noon. (obligation)
 (23b) tou **bayæd ta zohr bærgærdi**.
 'You **must come back** by noon.'

(24a) We are to see the doctor soon. (necessity)

(24b) ma bayæd doctor ra zud bebinim.

'We ought to see the doctor soon.'

8. Be about to + infinitive

This pattern is another quasi-auxiliary construction in English that expresses future action, usually with the connotation of very soon. This structure is sometimes translated into Persian by using the *dær šorof-e* 'ready to, prepared to' which is more appropriate for written than spoken language. If this term is applied, then the infinitive of the main verb along with the conjugational forms of *budæn* 'to be' (i.e., *hæstæm*, *hæsti*, *hæst*, etc.) are to be used. See the following example:

(25a) We are about to make the contract.

(25b) ma dær šorof-e bæstæne qærardad hæstim.

'We are ready (prepared) to make the contract.'

If the term *dær šorof-e* is not applicable for the context, then a few random equivalents are usually employed. These equivalents are generally used in spoken rather than written language. For example:

(26a) The taxi is here and we are about to leave.

(26b) taksi amædeh æst væ ma mixahim berævim.

'The taxi is here and we want to leave.'

(27a) I am about to end up my work.

(27b) (mæn) næzdike (næzdik æst 'to be soon') karæm ra tæmam (be) konæm.

'I am soon to end up my work.'

In example (26b), the appropriate form of *xastæn* 'to want' with the proper form of present subjunctive of the main verb (i.e.: *mixahim berævim*) corresponds to the English pattern. In example (27b), the expression: *næzdik æst*⁴ 'soon to' is employed to link the proposition to the subjunctive form of the verb concerned.

Sometimes all three devices are used interchangeably and sometimes not. For example:

(28a) The plane is about to fly.

(28b) hævapeima mixad (mixahæd) pærvaz kone (bekonæd).

'The plane wants to fly.'

(28c) hævapeima næzdike (næzdik æst) pærvaz kone (bekonæd).

'The plane is soon to fly.'

(28d) hævapeima dær šorof-e pærvaz-e (dær šorof-e pærvaz kærðæn æst).

'The plane is ready (prepared) to fly.'

⁴ This is the simple present form. Its past is *næzdik bud*.

(29a) I am about to sneeze.

(29b) mixahæm ætse konæm.

'I want to sneeze.'

But not:

(29c) *mæn dær šorof-e ætse kærðæn hæstæm.

'*I am ready (prepared) to sneeze.'

and again not:

(29d) *næzdik æst ætse konæm.

'*I am soon to sneeze.'

We can conclude the contrastive analysis of *be about to + infinitive* simply by taking note of the fact that the absence of this form in Persian is responsible for a good number of transfer problems for the native speakers of this language. The learners are likely to use their native patterns in the production of English form and this misinterpretation makes them unable to use the proper semantic forms in appropriate contexts.

9. Verb + infinitive

There is a group of verbs in English which when followed by *to*-infinitive, can refer to future time, e.g. *I expect to see you again*.

In Persian, the present subjunctive is used with semantically compatible verbs to form the equivalents of verb + infinitive structure, e.g. *mixahæm bexæræm* 'I want to buy', *dust daræd berævæd* 'she likes to go'. A contextual example is:

(30a) I intend to buy an apartment next year.

(30b) mæn tæsmim daræm sale ayænde yek apartman bexæræm.

There are restrictions on the type of verb most commonly used in present with future reference. In this regard, verbs can be classified into three categories as the following:

1. Verbs patterning with I expect-to-see forms, such as: 1) agree: *movafeqæt kærðæn*, 2) determine: *tæsmim gereftæn*, 3) hope: *omidvar budæn*, 4) intend: *qæsd daštæn*, 5) offer: *pišnehad kærðæn*, 6) prefer: *tærjih dadæn*, 7) promise: *vædeh dadæn*, 8) propose: *pišnehad kærðæn*, 9) refuse: *ræd kærðæn*, and so forth.
2. Verbs patterning with I expect-you-to-see forms including: 1) allow: *ejazeh dadæn*, 2) command: *færman dadæn*, 3) encourage: *tæšviq kærðæn*, 4) invite: *dævæt kærðæn*, 5) order: *dæstoor dadæn*, 6) recommend: *tosiye kærðæn*, 7) request: *dærxast kærðæn*, 8) tell: *goftæn*, and so forth.

3. Verbs patterning with I **suggest-buying** or I **suggest-your-buying** forms, for instance: 1) insist on: *esrar kærðæn*, 2) object to: *eteraz kærðæn*, 3) recommend: *tosiyæ kærðæn*, etc.

The foregoing is only a sketch of verbs, which, when, followed by *to*-infinitive or *-ing* forms, can refer to future. These verbs are of high frequency of occurrence and raise problems for the native speakers of Persian.

The problem regarding these verbs occur frequently, when Persian speakers attempt to add a subordinate clause with a future verb to the main verb, that as a rule needs to be followed by an infinitive or an *-ing* form. For instance, **I expect that I shall see you soon*, used instead of *I expect to see you soon*. A more serious mistake may crop up when the learner generalizes this pattern and uses infinitive after verbs requiring the *-ing* form, for example, **I suggest to buy a new car*, used instead of *I suggest buying a new car*.

10. Modals with future reference

One of the characteristics of modal auxiliaries, besides *will* and *shall*, is that they may refer to future. For example:

(31a) I **can't come** tomorrow.

(31b) mæn **nemitævanæm** færda **biayæm**.
Same as (31a).

(32a) You **may pass** your exam.

(32b) šoma **momken æst** dær emtæhan **qæbul bešævid**.
Same as (32a).

(33a) She **must see** her doctor.

(33b) u bayæd doctore xod ra **bebinæd**.
Same as (33a).

It appears that there is structural correspondence between the English modals and their translation equivalents. In Persian, the translation equivalents of the English modals seem to have no divergence as far as the future reference is concerned. In view of this similarity, the modals with future expression appear to be internalised without a conscious effort as if taken for granted. Yet, it might be pertinent to point out that it is difficult to separate modality from future reference particularly with regard to *may*, *must*, and *can*. In simple terms, modals do not always refer to future. For instance, *Reza may be ill* may refer to the present or the future.

11. Simple present with future reference

Quirk (1987: 215) asserts that the simple present is, after the *will* and *shall* construction, the next most common means of referring to future action in English. At the same time, Mace (1962: 186) indicates that the future tense in Persian is only or

almost only used in formal speech and in writing. In conversation we normally use the present tense for future time, unless there is a risk of ambiguity.

These two dictums imply that the simple present can be applied for future reference in both English and Persian. However, such a generalisation requires a few specifications as shown below.

Firstly, both English and Persian simple present with future reference call for either an adverb of time or other means of time specification like *tomorrow* : *færda*; *next week* : *hæfteye ayænde*; *soon* : *bezudi*, and so on. For example:

(34a) My brother **leaves** for Shiraz **tomorrow**.

(34b) bærædæræm **færda** be širaz **mirævæd**.
Same as (34a).

Secondly, in both languages, the simple present is usually limited to verbs of motion, such as *to come* : *amædæn*; *to go* : *ræftæn*; *to arrive* : *residæn*; *to start* : *šoru kærðæn*; *to leave* : *tærk kærðæn*; and so forth. In other words, not all verbs may express future reference by the present simple. Such a restriction applies to verbs including:

- a) *hear* : *šenidæn*; *see* : *didæn*; *feel* : *hes(s)kærðæn*; *taste* : *češidæn*; *smell* : *bueidæn*, and so on (all denoting sensations);
- b) *believe* : *bavær kærðæn*; *hope* : *omidvar budæn*; *think* : *fekr kærðæn*; *imagine* : *tæsævor kærðæn*, and so forth (all denoting mental activities);
- c) *depend* : *bæstegi daštæn*; *consist* : *šamel budæn*; *belong* : *tææloq daštæn*; *contain* : *dærbær gereftæn*, etc. (all denoting a state and not an activity).

To exemplify how the restrictions on the type of the verb operate similarly in both languages, we may contrast a few ungrammatical English sentences with their translation equivalents in Persian:

(35a) **I owe him fifty dollars tomorrow*.

(35b) **mæn færda pænjah dolar be u bedehkaræm*.
Same as (35a).

(36a) **We love each other soon*.

(36b) **ma hæmdigær ra bezudi dust darim*.
Same as (36a).

(37a) **He seems very tired next week*.

(37b) **u hæfteye ayænde xæili xæste benæzær miræsæd*.
Same as (37a).

The English verbs listed from (a) to (c) and exemplified in (35a) through (37a) do not allow us to plan or predict with certainty which is one of the vital characteristics of the present tense simple used to denote a future event.

Coming now to the Persian verbs of the same category we see that the latter are basically similar to their English correspondents with regard to their future reference in present tense form.

Note that verbs in examples (35b), (36b), and (37b) which are the nearest semantic equivalents of English verbs in (35a), (36a), and (37a), cannot refer to future with present tense forms. In addition, the semantic equivalents of English verbs quoted from (a) to (c) would hardly be used in Persian simple present to refer to futurity. If such a similarity does exist on a wider scale – which is yet to be confirmed by further research – it would be helpful in teaching and, perhaps, in explaining pedagogically why there is little difficulty for the speaker of Persian in the use of English present tense simple with future reference.

12. Present progressive with future reference

The same similarities and restrictions demonstrated in the use of simple present expressing future reference still hold true with present progressive if used within the future time sphere. As far as similarity is concerned, in both English and Persian, the present progressive can refer to future time if the realization of the event is plan, arrangement, or program. For example:

(38a) Parviz **is leaving** for Tabriz tomorrow.

(38b) pærviz færdæ be tæbriz **mirævæd**.

Same as (38a).

(39a) The plane **is taking off** at ten o'clock tonight.

(39b) hævapeima saæte dæhe emšæb **pærvaz mikonæd**.

Same as (39a).

As for restrictions, the same verbs in English and their equivalents in Persian denoting a state, sensation, or mental activity (see section 11) are not used in Present Progressive with future reference. The most distinctive verbs in this relation are: *belong, depend, contain, own, consist, feel, smell, see, taste, hear, believe, imagine, hope, think*, and so on.

In contrast to the cases discussed, a significant point worth mentioning is that the present progressive with future reference may not necessarily require an adverb of future time if the context shows the futurity with reference to the situation or condition in both English and Persian. Thus a context like:

(40a) I have told my boss that I **am retiring**.

(40b) mæn be ræeisæm gofte-æm ke **baznešæste mišævæm**.

Same as (40a).

leaves no doubt that the present progressive, even without future time adverb, refers to future time in both languages.

13. Conclusion

A contrastive paper needs to end up with a definition of its scope and objectives. This paper has had its scope in the area of language pedagogy and cognitive views of language teaching and its aim has been oriented toward the provision of contrastive pedagogical grammar.

A pedagogical grammar may not simply send the learner off on some complicated detective work to see how an apparently impoverished language system enables the speaker to refer to, e.g. future tense, in target linguistic situation. The pedagogical grammar should have already done the detective work for him. It should provide him with the answer to the question: how does one refer to the future in English, and, if it is to be a contrastive grammar, it should make explicit the relationship between English and the native language in their handling of the same problem.

This study has attempted to contrast the future devices of English with their correspondents or translation equivalents in Persian within the framework of pedagogical linguistics aiming at providing a foundation to the production of contrastive pedagogical grammar. Much work remains to be done for the benefit of language teacher and language learner and the present investigation is provided as a forerunner rather than the end product.

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