

## The Passivization of Intransitive Verbs in Persian Language

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### Abstract

Keenan and Dyer (2007: 329) introduce the two types of passive constructions; basic passives and non-basic passives. In basic passives, no agent phrase is present and the main verb in its non-passive form is transitive. In these types of passives, the main verb expresses an action, having agent subjects and patient objects in its non-passive form (transitive form). Any deviation from the basic passive constructions leads to non-basic passives. Although in the basic passives, the main verb in its non-passive form is transitive, typological studies of passive construction show that some languages permit passives on intransitives. Keenan and Dryer (2007) introduce the term “impersonal passive” with 6 subtitles. They call the intransitive passive constructions as a kind of impersonal passive and classify the passivization of intransitives into two groups. The first one uses the syntactic and morphological pattern of basic passives to derive non-basic passives from intransitive verbs. The second one utilizes the same passive morphology on intransitives and the agent phrases in the same way as in the basic passives.

In the Persian language, there is a rich literature on passives. Accordingly, some linguists do not agree on existence of passive construction in Persian. Those who disagree on the existence of passives called this so-called passive construction inchoative. In contrast, many linguists admit this idea and consider different aspects of passive construction in different approaches. Despite this rich literature on passive construction in Persian, no research has been conducted on the passivization of intransitives.

This study which is both theory-based and corpus-based addresses the passivization of intransitives in the Persian language. The two corpora, including Persian Syntactic Dependency Treebank (Rasooli et al., 2013) and Hamshahri corpus (AleAhmad et al., 2009) provide the data required (passive verbs) for the research. For this purpose, different conjugations of the passive voice auxiliary verb ‘šodan’ are searched and then, among the different passive verbs, intransitive passives are listed. In the next step, in order to examine how these verbs are presented in the natural language data, the websites have been searched for the

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passive and active forms of these intransitive verbs. The results emerged from the frequency count and descriptive statistics showed that in Persian the language, some unaccusative and unergative intransitives can be passivized based on common passivization pattern in this language. The passives on unaccusative intransitives accept the subject of active form after being passivized in the subject position, whereas those from unergative intransitives maybe accept or do not accept, that is in the second form of intransitive passivization the subject is deleted or demoted in an optional oblique phrase. This corpus-based study therefore classifies passives on intransitive verbs into three groups. These three possibilities are determined by the type of intransitives and the subject's behavior. If the subject of active intransitive is agent, the verb is unergative intransitive. The subject of active unergative intransitive can be demoted by eliminating from the sentence or by demoting to the status of an oblique NP after passivization. Based on the subject's behavior of unergative verb in passivization, these verbs can be divided into two groups; unergative passive type 1 and unergative passive type 2. If the subject of the intransitive verb is the patient, the verb is unaccusative intransitive. After passivization, the subject of passive and active forms of these verbs are identical in the subject position.

Some unergative passive type 1 in the Persian language are as follows 'zaberuizi cardan', 'zaberudai cardan', 'casifcari cardan', 'xarabecari cardan', 'rezdeham cardan', 'zetesab cardan'. Some unergative passive type 2 in Persian language are 'hamhame cardan', 'saxtosaz cardan', 'xanesazi cardan', 'fahracazi cardan', 'camforufi cardan', 'Gijamat cardan', 'Ganunfecani cardan', 'cefavazi cardan', 'zenGelab cardan', 'tamaddonsazi cardan', 'sijahcari cardan'. Some accusative passive in Persian language are as follows 'palasidan' 'pazmoidan' 'rujidan' 'jecaftan' 'jecoftan' 'fot cardan' 'zabse cardan' 'iosub cardan' 'taraf xordan'.

Accordingly, the results of this corpus-based study revealed that the Persian language allows passivization of intransitives like some other languages (Dutch, German, Latin, Classical Greek, North Russian dialects, Shona (Bantu), Turkish, and Taramahua (Uto-Aztecan)). In addition to this central result, according to the findings, we could also explain why the subjects of some intransitive verbs remain in the subject position after passivization but the subjects of the other one demote in oblique position or deleted from the sentence. For this reason, the intransitive verbs can be divided into two groups; unergative and unaccusative intransitives where the subject of the first one is the agent and the subject of the other one is the patient. After passivization, the patient subject of the intransitive active verb remains in the subject position but the agent subject of the intransitive active verb demotes through deleting or appearing in the form of an oblique phrase.

**Keywords:** Passive construction, Impersonal passive, Unaccusative verb, Unergative verb, Persian language