

An explicit classification of non-epistemic senses of *tavanestan*, *shodan* and *bayestan* based on Depraetere's semantic- pragmatic model¹

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Abstract

In this paper we first briefly investigated some Persian scholars' classifications of non-epistemic (or root) senses of central Persian modal auxiliaries *tavanestan*, *shodan*, and *bayestan*, which roughly correspond to English *can/may/might*, *can/may/might*, and *must/should*, respectively. The findings showed that most of them, which mainly follow Palmer's semantic-syntactic framework, have not proposed any explicit and operationalizable criteria for analysis and classification of various senses of these polyfunctional modals and have mainly identified and described their various senses through

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researcher-made examples (e.g. Akhlaghi, 2006; Taleghani, 2008). Their approach was found to be mainly semantic-syntactic like that of Palmer and his followers. Even, the studies which are done beyond Palmer's framework and have integrated pragmatics into their approach have not offered any explicit criteria for the classification of Persian modals (Rahimian, 2008; Rahimian and Amouzadeh, 2012; Amouzadeh and Rezaee, 2009), although their works have shed considerable light on the various senses that these modals can convey. Being aware of the limitations of the previous works, we introduced Depraetere's (2014) semantic-pragmatic model which is composed of three distinct layers (two semantic and one pragmatic) and classified the non-epistemic senses of Persian modals accordingly. Her two obligatory semantic layers are context-dependent and context-independent layers, while pragmatic layer is optional and mainly appears in the conventionalized uses of the modal auxiliary verbs in colloquial language. The context-independent meaning is either *possibility* or *necessity*. The context-dependent meaning, on the other hand, is determined by three parameters (i.e., *scope of modality*, *source of modality*, and *potential barrier*). It is through these parameters that one can explicitly determine the context-dependent meaning of a modal auxiliary. Depraetere tries to reconcile semantics and pragmatics in an integrated framework to account for various senses of modals. She offers explicit criteria and puts an end to the different opinions regarding non-epistemic senses of modal auxiliaries. Upon application, Depraetere's model proved to be very efficient for a more systematic and

intersubjective classification of non-epistemic senses of Persian modals. In our analysis of some examples taken from Persian websites, we found that *bayestan* can express narrow-scope internal necessity, wide-scope internal necessity and wide-scope external necessity, like English *must*. Like English auxiliaries *can*, *may* and *might*, the auxiliary *tavanestan* can express five senses in Persian, that is, *ability* (narrow-scope, internal, and [- potential barrier] possibility), *permission* (narrow-scope external, and [+ potential barrier] possibility), *opportunity* (narrow scope, external, and [- potential barrier] possibility), *situation permissibility* (wide-scope, external and [+ potential barrier] possibility) and *situation possibility* (wide-scope, external, and [- potential barrier] possibility). *Shodan* which is typically employed in colloquial Persian can only express *permission*, and *situation permissibility* and does not have the capacity to express *ability* and *opportunity* senses. Due to the unclear status of *khah*, like English *will*, its investigation needs an individual investigation.

Key terms: Non-epistemic modality, Context-dependent meaning, Context-independent meaning, Pragmatic layer