

6 **The States of the Complements of the Verb (*aḥwāl-i mutaʿalliqāt-i fiʿl*)**

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6.1 **Verb, Agent, Patient**

Having explored nominal and verbal predicates, the science of meanings completes the discussion by considering two semantic elements whose existence depends on the verbal predicate (*fiʿl*): the agent (*fāʿil*) and the patient (*mafʿūl*). In the science of meanings, the two as a whole are called *mutaʿalliqāt-i fiʿl*, or *mutaʿallaqāt-i fiʿl* ‘complements of the verb, verb annexes, elements related to the verb’. The various operations concerning them are considered in a section called *aḥwāl-i mutaʿalliqāt-i fiʿl* ‘the states of the complements of the verb’ which covers topics related to what linguistics would call valency.

In terms of semantics, the agent is the one who performs the action expressed by the verb and the patient is the one who undergoes the action. In most cases, the agent occupies the syntactic subject position, while the patient is syntactically the object. But semantic and syntactic properties do not always match, and the distinction between *fāʿil* and *mafʿūl* operates regardless of syntactic position and grammatical function as will be shown.

6.2 Ellipsis of the Patient (*ḥaḍf-i maf'ūl*)

The standard form of the utterance requires mentioning the patient (*ḍikr-i maf'ūl*) whenever it is governed by a transitive verb. Deviations from the basic structure are allowed provided they align with specific purposes and contexts. A first distinction to be considered is whether identifying the patient is relevant or not for a proper understanding of the utterance. If it is irrelevant, the patient should not occur. If it is relevant, it may occur or not. The ellipsis of the patient (*ḥaḍf-i maf'ūl*) is possible upon the same conditions that generally allow the omission of any part of speech. In the following paragraphs, a description of the different stylistic techniques connected with the absence of an overtly mentioned patient is given.

One of the main benefits of ellipsis is that it allows the use of fewer words. Concision (*iḥtiṣār*, or *iḡāz* 'brevity'), as a technique, is favourably encouraged. The speaker may drop a patient because it has been mentioned before, or because its referent is clear from the context. In the following line, the patient is omitted for the sake of brevity. The words *banda im* '(we) are (your) servants' help to establish that *mā rā* 'us' is the omitted patient of the verbs *nawāzī* '(you) caress' and *kuṣī* '(you) kill':

*gar nawāzī w-ar kuṣī farmān tu-rā-st
banda im inak sar u tiḡ u kafan¹*

Whether you caress or kill [us], the command is yours.

We are [your] servants. Here are the head, the sword, and the shroud!

In the manuals, many examples of this kind have the verb *āmūḥtan* 'to learn'. Although this verb can be either transitive ('to learn [something]') or intransitive ('to engage in learning'), the manuals of the science of meanings consider it to be primarily transitive. Therefore, it should have a patient, either expressed or omitted. Kazzāzī then suggests that the patient of the verb *biyāmūz* 'learn!' in the following line should be *dāniš* 'knowledge, science, wisdom':

*biyāmūz agar pārsā būd ḥwāhī
makun dīw rā ḡān-i ḥwiš āṣiyāna²*

Learn if you desire a pious existence.

Do not make your soul a nest for the devil.

1 Quoted in Riḍānizād 1988, 251. Sa'dī 1939, 245, 444t, [v. 7].

2 Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 177. Nāṣir-i Ḥusraw 1928, 382, v. 3.

Manuals call *bayān ba'd az ibhām* or *tawḍīḥ pas az ibhām* 'elucidation after ambiguity' the technique of omitting parts of the discourse and later clarifying what was missing. As a way of capturing the addressee's attention, this technique includes situations where the patient is left out and later clarified. One example is:

az 'Alī āmūz iḥlāṣ-i 'amal
*šīr-i ḥaq rā dān munazzah az dağal*³

Learn from 'Alī...sincerity in one's deeds.
Know that the Lion of God is purified of hypocrisy!

The patient of the verb *āmūz* 'learn!', that is *iḥlāṣ-i 'amal* 'sincerity in one's deeds', appears in an unexpected position, after the verb. As a result, the identification of the patient is a little uncertain at the beginning and is clarified at a later stage.

In a general statement, the patient of a primarily transitive verb may undergo an ellipsis. This happens to highlight that any object would fit. This technique is referred to as *ta'mīm-i maf'ūl* 'generalisation of the patient'. In the line below, the verb *ğam' nakardand* '(they) did not accumulate' applies in general to any material possession. Thus, as anything would fit in the patient position, the ellipsis of the patient does not affect the efficiency of the utterance:

ānkas az duzd bitarsad ki matā'-ī dārad
*'ārifān ğam' nakardand parišānī nīst*⁴

Only he who possesses a fortune fears the thief.
The wise men did not accumulate. [So] no worries.

Also, the rules of courtesy (*ri'āyat-i adab*) may justify sentence reformulation. In *ğustīm u kas nabūd tu rā hamtā*⁵ 'We sought, but there was no equal to you', the patient of the verb *ğustīm* 'we sought' is omitted. The contextual evidence suggests it was supposed to be the word *hamtā* 'an equal, someone like (you)'. Confessing to a beloved person that you have sought 'someone like him' may be very rude. Although the omitted element *hamtā* is later clarified, thus somehow resembling an instance of elucidation after ambiguity, the two circumstances differ in purpose. The ellipsis of the patient in this case is necessary so as not to be insensitive or offensive.

³ Quoted in Riḍāniżād 1988, 255. Mawlawī [Rūmī] 1996, 1: 164, *daftar* 1, v. 3727.

⁴ Quoted in Riḍāniżād 1988, 250. Sa'dī 1941, 11.

⁵ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 178.

Wherever the patient is irrelevant, its absence requires no pre-conditions. If the patient is not the point, the speaker should not add one even if the verb is primarily transitive. In this way, the absence of the patient maximises the focus on the action of the verb, as happens in the following line where the poet does not mention the patient of the otherwise transitive verbs *dād* 'gave' and *biḥward* 'took':

nīkbaht ān kas-i ki dād u biḥward
*šūrbaht ānki ū naḥwurd u nadād*⁶

Fortunate is he who has given and taken.

Unfortunate is he who has not taken nor given.

This case stands apart from ellipsis proper and foreshadows the use of a transitive verb in an intransitive way. Since the primary intention behind such a technique is to emphasise the action, it slightly differs from the general statements valid for many patients which were called *ta'mīm-i maf'ūl*.

6.3 Ellipsis of the Agent (*ḥaḍf-i fā'il*)

Every time the logical agent of the verbal predicate does not appear in the utterance, the Persian manuals describe that situation as a case of *ḥaḍf-i fā'il* 'ellipsis/absence of the agent'. Several cases are subsumed under this heading. In some cases, it is impossible to identify the agent while in others the agent's name is simply not mentioned. According to the science of meanings, an important difference is whether the omitted agent is *ma'lūm* 'known' or *maḡhūl* 'unknown'. A 'known' agent exists and can be indicated. An 'unknown' agent, on the other hand, is unnamed or cannot be specified.

The dichotomy between *ma'lūm* and *maḡhūl* has a long history in traditional grammar vocabulary. In a very general way, the two categories may resemble active and passive diathesis, although some differences apply. The idea of *maḡhūl* 'unknown' mainly covers the use of two different verbal forms in Persian. One is the so-called passive in the form of the past participle + auxiliary verb *šudan* 'to become' (e.g. *kušta šud*, literally '(he/she/it) became killed', thus '(he/she/it) was killed'), which often, though not always, conceals the agent's identity. The other is the agentless third-person plural transitive verb (e.g. *mīgūyand*, literally '(they) say', with the sense of 'it is said'). The latter takes an active form but has a passive meaning. In addition, the manuals of the science of meanings also give examples of compound

⁶ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 176. Rūdakī 1994, 74, v. 106.

verbs in which the verb *šudan* or *gaštan* 'to become' is combined with an adjective and the agent is unknown (e.g. *tuhī šud* '(it) became empty', thus '(it) was emptied'). In this sense, active and passive only imperfectly approximate Persian terminology of *ma'lūm* and *maǧhūl* and will be used henceforth in the broadest sense.

An unknown agent may be a specific person or thing whose identity the speaker ignores or deliberately conceals. In the passive statement *Bahrām kušta šud* 'Bahrām was killed',⁷ the killer is undoubtedly a specific person. The speaker, however, cannot identify the murderer and recurs to the ellipsis of the agent. The manuals also consider in the same category examples of utterances in which God, whose name is somehow self-evident, is the agent but not the subject of the sentence. In the following example, the transitive verb *mībaḥšand* (literally 'they bestow') '(it) is bestowed' appears in the agentless third-person plural. The action of 'bestowing the Palace of Paradise' belongs to God only. Consequently, there is no need to mention the agent further:

qaṣr-i firdaws ba pādāš-i 'amal mībaḥšand
*mā ki rind-īm u gadā dayr-i muǧān mā rā bas*⁸

The Palace of Paradise is bestowed as a reward for works;
For us, who are reprobates and beggars, the Temple of the Magi-an is enough.

On the other hand, an unknown agent could also be generic. In the following line, the agent of the verbs *šud tuhī* '(it) was emptied, (it) got empty' and *pur gardad* '(may it) become full' is not a specific individual. The action fits any generic agent able to empty or fill the cup:

gar māl namānd sar bimānād ba ġāy
*paymāna ču šud tuhī digar pur gardad*⁹

If wealth cannot endure, let the head at least endure.
If the cup was emptied, may it become full again.

Examples of third-person plurals to express a generic agent are, for instance, *mīdihand*, literally '(they) serve', and hence 'is served', and *tawāngar mīkunand*, literally '(they) fortify' and hence 'are fortified', in:

⁷ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 180.

⁸ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 181. Ḥāfiẓ 1983, 540, *ǧazal* 262, v. 3. Avery 2007, 331.

⁹ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 182. Ḥayyām 1959, 2: 81, *rubā'ī* 281, NF 9 (F 61).

*ay gadā-yi ḥānaqah bar ḡah ki dar dayr-i muḡān
mādihand āb-ī u dilhā rā tawāngar mīkunand¹⁰*

O beggar of the sufi lodge, leap up! For in the convent of the Magi,
A Water is served and hearts are fortified.

When the agent of an action is known, there are few issues with ellipsis. The agent of an active verb is generally the subject of the clause. As such, the ellipsis of the agent is a subcategory of the ellipsis of the predicand. In this case, the ellipsis works in the same way as we have seen earlier in this outline: mentioning the agent is inappropriate to the utterance if the occurrence repeats a piece of known information unless there is a specific reason to do so.

6.4 Preposing the Patient (*taqdīm-i maf'ūl*)

In Persian, the direct object generally precedes the verb. Since Persian and Arabic word orders are radically different, preposing the patient to the verb (*taqdīm-i maf'ūl bar fi'l*) is standard in Persian while marked in Arabic. Consequently, Persian authors are bound to rethink the section on preposing the patient to the verb in order to distance themselves from the model given by the Arabic science of meanings. Some of them¹¹ avoid it altogether. Others¹² keep this section in their manuals but mainly provide examples of a patient occurring at the beginning of the sentence, often before the agent is mentioned.

Preposing the patient may achieve at least two kinds of effects: *ihimām* 'importance, focus' or *taḥṣīṣ* 'particularisation, specialisation'. I will provide an example of each. In the following line, placing the patient at the beginning of the utterance allows for focusing on the object. The utterances open with the patients *ḥirqa-yi zuhd-i ma-rā* 'my ascetic's cloak' and *ḥāna-yi 'aql-i ma-rā* 'the abode of my reason':

*ḥirqa-yi zuhd-i ma-rā āb-i ḥarābāt biburd
ḥāna-yi 'aql-i ma-rā ātaš-i ḥumḥāna bisūht¹³*

My ascetic's cloak, the 'water' of the tavern stole [it].
The abode of my reason, the fire of the wine vault burnt [it].

¹⁰ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 182. Ḥāfiẓ 1983, 404, *ḡazal* 194, v. 8.

¹¹ Āq-Iwlī n.d.; Humāyī 1991; Šamīsā 1994.

¹² Raḡā'ī 1961, 118-19; Zāhidī 1967, 127-8; Āhanī 1978, 81-2; Riḡānizād 1988, 255-67.

¹³ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 178. Ḥāfiẓ 1983, 52, *ḡazal* 18, v. 6. Adapted from Avery 2007, 45.

In other cases, the anteposition of the patient creates an exclusive link between the verb and the direct object. That the verb can have any other patient is then excluded. An example of this type of particularisation occurs in *čašma-yi čašm-i ma-rā* 'the fountain of my eye', the direct object of the verb *dar yāb* 'seek out' in:

*čašma-yi čašm-i ma-rā ay gul-i ḥandān dar yāb
ki ba ummīd-i tu ḥwaš āb-i rawān-ī dārad*¹⁴

Seek out, O laughing rose, the fountain of my eye [and nothing else];
In hope of you, it has a full flowing stream.

The notion of *taḥṣīṣ* has been introduced at two points of our outline as the result of two distinct operations: adding an attribute (*waṣf*) (see § 4.6) and preposing the patient. In addition, more devices have a central role in producing particularisation. The next chapter will specifically discuss the means of restricting the scope of the utterance.

¹⁴ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 180. Ḥāfiẓ 1983, 258, *ġazal* 121, v. 3. Adapted from Avery 2007, 167.

