

Object in German and Persian: A Short Study

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***Abstract---** Object in German has different types and this misleads the students. Verbs in German have the feature of “capacity” and determine the type of object in the sentence. In present essay, we have sought to compare object in Persian and German and study their differences and similarities.*

***Keywords---** Object, German and Persian, Differences, Similarities, Verb, Rektion.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Object in Persian is very different as compared to German. Many students are faced with doubts when they are using object in German [1]. In the first part of this essay we seek to study the problems of the students who learn German as a foreign language (Fremdsprache) in A2 level. Moreover, we have sought to study object in German and Persian.

Object in Persian:

In Persian, many definitions have been offered for object by the grammarians and linguists. For example, according to the definition suggested by Anwari [2], object is a noun or word on which an action is done and completes the meaning of sentence. For example, „soup“ in the sentence „mother gave soup to the baby“ or „ball“ in the following sentence: father bought the ball for his son. The aforementioned sentences are meaningless without the words „soup“ and „ball“ and they would not be telling. „Soup“ and „ball“ in above sentences play the accusative role. Accusative role refers to the task that is undertaken by the word in a sentence and in relation to a verb and other words. That if the existence of object in a sentence is necessary or not is something the verb of the sentence determines it. In fact, the existence of verb in Persian is not necessary in all sentences. From this perspective, verbs in Modern Persian are divided into two groups: intransitive verbs and transitive verbs. In the following example, i.e. “father went to room”, the verb “go” is used and there is no need for any object and the sentence is complete without an object. This type of verbs is called “intransitive”. But in the sentence “father read newspaper”, if we separate the word “newspaper” from the sentence, the sentence will be defected and the audience would ask: what did he read? To complete the sentence, we need to add an object. This group of verbs that need an object for their completion are called transitive verbs. Such verbs as eating, buying, seeing, getting, hearing, giving, cooking, drinking and reading need an object for their completion. One can find the object in a sentence via the following method. If a verb is used along with the phrase “what?” or “whom?”, the logical answer would be the object in the sentence. “Mom sewed the clothes”; “What did the mother sew?” Answer: the clothes. The phrase “the clothes” is the object of the sentence”. According to the works of traditional grammarians, object in Persian is divided into two groups: indirect object and direct object. [3] But modern grammarians do not accept this classification. What is now called “object” today, is indeed the direct object which is specified by the accusative sign. [4] This accusative sign in Persian, i.e. “*Raa*”, refers to object and should be immediately used after object and its relevant components.

But what was called indirect object in grammar books in past, is today known as “complement”. “Complement” or

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“complement of verb” is a noun or a word that joins the sentence along with a preposition and adds an explanation to the concept of verb. For example, “bicycle”, “school” and “home” are complements in the following sentence: teacher goes home from school by bicycle. In Persian, complement is different from object from the perspective of several dimensions:

- A) Object is specially for the transitive verbs but every verb either transitive or intransitive would have a complement. For example, “student goes home from university” (intransitive verb) does not need any object but the sentence has two complements. But in the following example, “student takes his bag home from university” (transitive verb), “his bag” is an object along with the accusative sign and two complements in the sentence.
- B) The other difference of verb and complement is that transitive verb for completing its means needs an object and without it the meaning of the sentence is incomplete. But the verb be it intransitive or transitive, does not need any complement for completing the meaning. The complement adds an extra meaning to the sentence. This extra meaning is sometimes the occurrence of the verb, sometime a place, some other times an intention and end, and sometimes a tool and sometimes a quality. [5] It is often argued that the existence of a complement only adds one extra meaning to the sentence. But the sentence “car belongs to me” without “to me” that according to existing definitions should be considered a complement of the complex verb of “belonging”, but from the perspective of the role that they play in the sentence, they are different from each other. In the first sentence, the meaning of the verb “going” without “home” is complete but in the second sentence, the meaning of the verb “giving” is not complete without “to the boy”. In other words, an action that is expressed by the verb “giving” – as it is noted in description of the transitive verbs – transits from the subject to the object, but this is not the case with “home”. Then, in Persian, the role of some complements is like the role of object.

Object in German:

The definition of object in German and Persian are similar. The action that is expressed by the verb is exercised on the object. Object in German is of four types: Akkusativobjekt, Dativobjekt, Genitivobjekt, Präpositionalobjekt. In most cases, it is the verb that decides which type of object should appear in the sentence. This is the same discussion in German that is known as Rektion. It is not an easy task to recognize that a verb needs which type of object. In many cases, the students have just one solution, i.e. memorizing the verbs. The verbs that need an „Akkusativ“, are called „transitiv“ while those verbs the meaning of which is complete without an „Akkusativ“ are called „intransitiv“. It is needless to say that nouns in German have an „Artikel“. „Artikle“ of a noun changes in accusative mode. For example,

Ich esse den Kuchen.

In aforementioned example, *den Kuchen* is the Akkusativ and its Artikle has changed. When a noun changes from Nominativ into Akkusativ (in each one of the four Akkusativ), what shows that change, in most cases is the Artikle of the noun or a pronoun that is in the place of the Artikle. Accordingly, grammatical state of the nouns that in a sentence are placed as the Akkusativ, Dativ or Genitiv objects, is the Genitiv, Dativ and Akkusativ. These cases show the role of a noun in the sentence. Moreover, Nominativ mode that is Präpositionalobjekt is either Akkusativ or Dativ.

Der Arzt untersucht den Patienten. Akkusativobjekt

Der Sohn dankt dem Vater. Dativobjekt

Die Frau bedarf meiner Hilfe. (Genitivobjekt)

Die Schüler freuen sich auf die Ferien. (auf + Akkusativ)

Grammatical mode of Akkusativ or its relevant pronoun is directly determined by the verb of a sentence. In the following example, the verb „geben“ (giving) determines „der Tochter“ should be placed in Dativ mode and „seine Bilder“ should be set in Akkusativ Kauses .

Der Vater gibt der Tochter seine Bilder.

Dativobjekt: *der Tochter*

Akkusativobjekt: *seine Bilder*

It is noteworthy that in addition to the verbs, adjectives and prepositions also determine the in some cases the Nominativ to which they are dependent. For example, adjectives which are related to the verb of a sentence and in fact represent part of it and usually emerge along with such verbs as sein, which are better known as Kopulaverbern, give rise to the object in a sentence. The role of these adjectives in a sentence is recognized as Prädikat. [6] Some German grammarians classify this object depending on its grammatical case or emergence of a preposition beside it in four groups of object: Akkusativ, Dativ, Genetiv, Präpositionalobjekt and refer to it as Objekt zum Verb. But some others do not include it among the four groups due to the fact that not upon the order of a verb rather upon the order of an attribute emerge in the sentence and refer to it as Objekt zum Prädikativ. Such objects just like the first type of objects can emerge in Akkusativ, Dativ, Genetiv, and Präpositionalobjekt cases. For example, in the following sentence:

Sie ist ihrer Schwester ähnlich.

The adjective „ähnlich“ is related to the verb of the sentence and as it was noted, it is considered to be a Prädikativ and ihrer Schwester that is present in the sentence due to „ähnlich“ not due to the verb sein is considered as a Objekt zum Prädikativ [7].

Akkusativ object is more popular as compared to other types of objects and most of German verbs are associated with this type of object [8]. Through the change of Artikle of noun from the Nominativ into Akkusativ, one can identify the Akkusativ. By means of such questions as „Was?“ for things and „Wen?“ for the individuals, we can find the Akkusativ object in the sentence. Most of German verbs that have Präfix and Untrennbares Verb, e.g. be-, ver- and zer-, are associated with an Akkusativ object.

In Dativ object, the Artikle shows the change from the Nominativ case into the Dativ case. The **cahniges** that happen in Artikle of a noun, contrary to the Akkusativ case in singular nouns, including Maskulin, Feminin, and Neutral, and also Plural can be identified well. By the assistance of the question word „wem?“ one can identify the Dativobject. Those verbs that are associated with the Dativ object in most cases express an individual relationship, e.g.

Mein Neffe fehlt mir.

Du kannst uns glauben.

Der Mann vertraut seiner Frau.

Today in German, those verbs that need a Genetiv object are rarely used and from the perspective of linguistic perspective are generally considered to be among the clear verbs. Thus, in German educational books, one can rarely find any trace of them. In these cases, a noun in Genetiv case appears in the form of a Genetiv object. Emergence of changes in the Artikle of a noun that has emerged in this role helps us to identify it. The use of question word, „wessen?“ helps us to detect the Genetiv object. Today in German, there is a general tendency towards the replacement of Genetiv object with Präpositionalobjekt.

Sie erinnert sich gern ihrer Jugend.

Sie erinnert sich gern an ihre Jugend.

In German daily dialogues, conversational equivalents of these verbs are preferred [9]. Many German verbs are associated with a special preposition. An object in Akkusativ and Dativ cases appear after this preposition. Preposition and object together make the prepositional object:

Wir hoffen auf bessere Zeiten.

That what is the particular preposition of every verb or the object that comes after the preposition, or in which grammatical case does it appear (Akkusativ or Dativ), does not have any determinate rule (in such a situation we will never have a Genitiv object). Thus, we have to learn and memorize the special composition of (verb+preposition+Nominativ case).

achten + auf (Akkusativ [10])

Some verbs in German do not need two prepositional objects:

sich beschweren + bei (Dativ) + über (Akkusativ)

sich unterhalten + mit (Dativ) + über (Akkusativ)

In such a case, the prepositional object in Dativ case comes before the prepositional object in Akkusativ case. In some cases, one of the other objects is replaced with a prepositional object:

Er schreibt an seiner Tochter einen Brief. (schreiben + an (Dativ))

Er schreibt seiner Tochter einen Brief. (Dativobjekt)

Among the discussions that seem to be necessary when we turn to the issue of prepositional object, one can refer to the existence of apparent similarity between this object and parts of the sentence which we know under the general title of Adverbialbestimmung insofar as sometimes Adverbialbestimmung from the perspective of the apparent form is like one of the four types of object. This superficial similarity should not lead to the confusion of these two. For example, den ganzen Tag in „Es hat den ganzen Tag geregnet“ though is seemingly a noun in Akkusativ case, it is not in fact an Akkusativ object and is a Temporalbestimmung. The same part in „Das hat mir den ganzen Tag verdorben“ is an Akkusativ object. Thus, the phrase „auf dem Bahnhof“ in „Er wartet auf dem Bahnhof“ in view of its appearance is not different from a preposition rather it is a Lokalbestimmung. On the other hand, the phrase „auf den Freund“ in „Er wartet auf den Freund“ is a prepositional object. Distinguishing these two cases from each other is possible given the following:

- 1- Objects can be replaced with Personalpronomen: *Er las den ganzen Tag. Er las damals.*
- 2- Existing preposition in prepositional objects is dependent on the verb. Insofar as it cannot be changed, while the existing preposition in an Adverbialbestimmung from semantic perspective is related to a noun that comes after that preposition.
- 3- Existing preposition in an Adverbialbestimmung can easily be replaced with another preposition.

Comparison of Akkusativ Object in Persian and German:

Since the „capacity of verbs“ in Persian and German is not necessarily the same, one cannot make a decision for German verbs, referring to the type and condition of the verbs in Persian. As to Akkusativ object and object in Persian, it is argued that „transitive verbs“ in Persian are necessarily the „Transitiv verben“ in German and every verb that is intransitive in Persian is „Intransitiv“ in German. But in fact, there are many intransitive verbs in Persian that are transitive in German and need an Akkusativ object. The contrary of the same is also the case. Some German verbs that need other types of verbs are considered to be transitive in Persian and are associated with explicit object:

Heiraten (transitiv) „to marry“ in German is „intransitive“ in Persian and does not need any object while in German, it needs an Akkusativ object.

Folgen (intransitiv) „to chase“ is transitive in Persian and needs an object while in German it does **nto** need any Akkusativ object.

Gedenken (intransitive) „to commemorate“ is transitive in Persian and needs an object while in German it does not need any Akkusativ object.

Comparison of Dativ Object in Persian and German:

A noun in Dativ case can be regarded as a Dativ object that upon the order of the verb in the sentence appears in Dativ case.

Der Arzt schreibt dem Patienten ein Rezept

Therefore, every noun in Dativ case is not necessarily a Dativ object. Due to the influence of the preposition that comes before that noun, it appears in Dativ case. Thus, combination of (preposition+noun) is a prepositional object, or an Adverbialbestimmung and appears as a Lokalbestimmung. For example,

Ich habe mit dem Mann ein Gespräch geführt. (Präpositionalobjekt)

Der Gast übernachtet bei seiner Gastfamilie. (Lokalbestimmung)

Moreover, sometimes a noun, without being influenced by a preposition, and without being a Dativ object, appears in Dativ case, e.g.

Meiner Mutter schmerzt der Rücken.

Der Hund sieht mir in die Augen.

This type of nouns that contrary to the Dativ object do not have any relationship with the verb of the sentence, and have not appeared in the sentence upon the order of verb, are known as Freier Dativ.

Genetiv Object:

In Persian, Genetiv object only appears in prepositional case or in the form of „the genitive case“ and identification of the Genetiv object is ambiguous for the Persian speaking people. Frequency of the verbs with Genetiv objects in German is low and the discussion of preposition along with Genetiv is also raised. In the following examples, there is Genetiv case, but in none of the following examples, Genetiv appears in the role of an object.

Sie ist die Tochter einer Kollegin.

Eines Tages fuhr er weg.

Trotz des Regens ging sie schwimmen.

Above sentences that appear in German in Genetiv case are used in Persian in a totally different form. Only the first example can be used in Persian in the same way that it is discussed in German. The following examples in Persian bespeak of „attribution“ and only serve as equivalents of Genetiv object in German:

Bride's white clothes

The aunt of father of my friend

Only cabinet of his mother

Prepositional Object:

Frequency of the number of the verbs in German that are associated with a special preposition and this reality that there is no particular rule and law for determination of the preposition that comes along with a verb, are considered to be among the major reasons of the difficulty of this discussion [11]. Making decisions as to Nominativ case that appears after the prepositions (Dativ/ Akkusativ) is not easily possible, for example: denken+an (Akkusativ)

Liegen+an (Dativ)

Geraten+in (Akkusativ)

Sich irren + in (Dativ)

Moreover, sometimes a verb appears with more than one preposition that every preposition appear in Dativ case or Akkusativ case. In this case, a change would happen in its meaning or application. For example, the verb „sich freuen + auf“ alludes to the present and future and if it is used with the preposition „über“, it refers back to the past. „Die Schüler freuen sich auf die Ferien. auf+Akkusativ“ alludes to future while „Meine Eltern freuten sich über meinen Besuch. über+Akkusativ“ refers back to the past.

Thus, leiden with the preposition „an“ means suffering from a disease and with the preposition „unter“ it means „suffering something“.

Sie leidet an Krebs. an+Dativ

Sie leidet unter Schlaflosigkeit. unter+Dativ

It is noteworthy that some verbs that in Persian need an object, in German need a prepositional object.

Sich besinnen + auf (remembering something or someone)

In Persian, „remembering“ is associated with an object but in German it is used along with a preposition. Another example of this case:

verlangen + nach (Dativ)

(wanting someone or something)

In Persian, „wanting“ is used along with an object while in German, this verb is used along with a preposition.

II. CONCLUSION:

In Persian, the measure of the identification of object is the type of verb (Dativ or Akkusativ) and the Akkusativ sign in Persian is the letter „Raa“ [12] that contrary to other prepositions comes after the noun or pronoun and it is called posterior preposition. Identification of object in Persian takes place with the questions „what?“ and „whom?“ respectively for the objects and humans. In German, there are four types of objects that only one case of which, i.e. Akkusativ object, is compatible with the object in Persian and only in limited cases and in many cases it fails to do so. The measure of identification of object in German is answering the question words: i.e. „was?“ and „wen?“ for Akkusativ object.

For Dativ object, finding an answer for the question word „wem?“ and for Genitiv object, finding an appropriate answer for „wessen?“ As to the prepositional object, it is harder than the three aforementioned object, because the combination of verbs and their prepositions should be known so that the relevant prepositional object could be identified.

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