

From Need to Necessity: Bajæd in Modern West Iranian Languages

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Abstract

This article aims to study the modal elements equal to *bajæd* in Persian, meaning ‘must, should, and have to’ in some West Iranian languages, including Balochi, Gerashi, Gilaki, Hawrami, Kahangi, Kurdish, Lori, Persian, Semnani, Tati and Vafsi. It also presents the semantic map of these expressions beside a categorization of these languages based on a modal element. The investigations have indicated that some of these languages (Balochi, Bamposht dialect and Hawrami, Hawraman Takht dialect) use adverbial modals to express these notions, while as least in one case (i.e. Kahangi), there are two distinctive auxiliaries which signify ‘must, have to, and should’. Moreover, classification of these languages, according to a semantic feature, ends in a continuum on which languages are laid next to each other, where some of them are closer to some languages and further from the others; this is against the traditional categorizations which are mostly based on morpho-syntactic features, in which a language is whether a member of a group or not. Moreover, all the targeted elements, (except one of the modals in Kahangi, i.e. *gade*) besides deontic (necessity and possibility) and epistemic modality (possibility type), express participant-inherent need, participant-imposed necessity and situational necessity, as types of dynamic modality.

Keywords: modality, typology, semantic map, West Iranian languages

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1. Introduction

In the languages of the world, words (mostly auxiliaries) meaning 'must' are primarily used to convey deontic modality. Modality is usually defined as those semantic modifications that the speaker uses to talk about his thoughts and beliefs about a state of affairs or SoA (Nuyts 2005, Butler 2013). In Iranian languages *bajad* (and its equivalents) meaning 'MUST', is the main language element to indicate necessity and possibility.

This paper studies 11 Iranian languages choosing from Rezaei Baghbidi's classification (2009): Balochi (Bamposht), Gerashi, Gilaki (shaft), Hawrami (Hawraman takht), Lori (Balagariveh), Kahangi, Kurdish (Sorani), Persian, Semnani, Tati (Takistan), and Vafsi. It discovers the modal elements meaning 'MUST' and specifies their modal domain. The article seeks to provide a semantic map, following Van der Auwera and Plungian (1998), using one modal notion, i.e. 'MUST'. Ultimately, based on this semantic feature, it presents a language categorization to verify how this categorization varies with current classifications which have syntactic considerations.

2. Literature Review

Among many studies on modality, Akhlaghi (2007), Taleghani (2008), and Rezaei (2009) study modality in Persian. Following Palmer (2001) they conclude that modal auxiliary *bajad* expresses deontic, dynamic and epistemic modality.

In case of other Iranian languages, Moradi (2012) studies modality in Sorani Kurdish from a semantic and syntactic perspective and Naghzguye Kohan and Naghshbandi (2016) investigate modality in Pavehi dialect of Hawrami.

3. Methodology

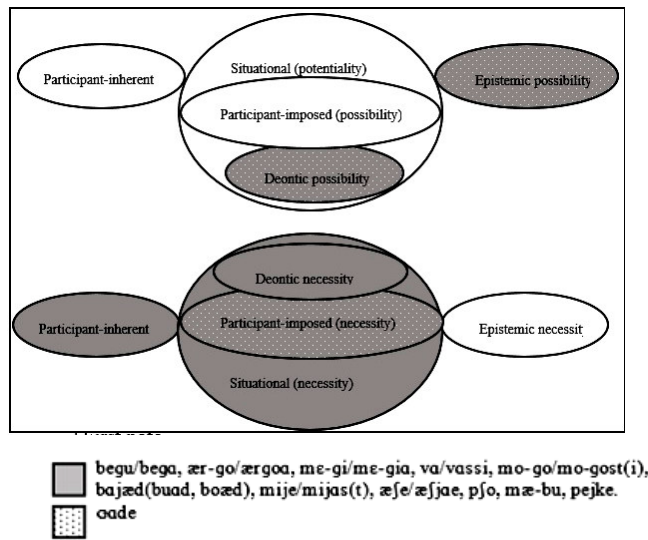
This study applies a questionnaire including 200 situations and 82 sentences

to collect the data. The questionnaire was conducted in the interviews and the informants were asked to use modal elements to complete the situations and translate the 82 sentences in their own languages. The data has been transcribed in IPA, checked with the speakers, glossed with Leipzig glossing rules, and analyzed.

4. Results

Our study shows that the expressions meaning 'MUST' in the languages of our concern, convey those domain of modality which following Nuyts (2005, 2006, and 2016) can be summarized as in Figure 1. This figure is the semantic map suggested by Van der Auwera and Plungian (1998). Their terminology has been converted to Nuyts:

Figure 1: Semantic map of 'MUST' in Modern West Iranian Languages



The article is also an effort to categorize these languages based on a semantic feature, namely modality. Applying the typological notions of continuum and number, we may not be able to present a clear-cut category, but we can provide a continuum in which some languages are closer to the others comparing with the rests. Figure 2 is the result of such a try:

	Kahangi	Tati	Semnani	Persian	Kurdish	Gilaki	Gerashi	Lori	Hawrami	Balochi
Modal auxiliaries (Meaning MUST)	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Modal adverbs (Meaning MUST)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

5. Discussion

The first issue to discuss here is to discover the modal elements which are used to express those semantic notions meaning 'MUST'. Our investigation shows these elements are mainly auxiliaries; however, in two of languages of our concern, i.e. Hawrami and Balochi, these are the adverbs which indicate necessity and possibility. These elements are as follows: pejke (Balochi), baæd (Gerashi), va/vas(t)i (Gilaki), pfo (Hawrami), cade and be-gu/be-ga (Kahangi), æfe/æfjæ (Kurdish), boæd/mije/mijast (Lori), bajæd (Persian), mæ-gi/mæ-gija (Semnani), mo-go/mo-gosti (Tati), ær-go/ær-goæ (Vafsi).

To illustrate the type of modality these elements express, we apply Nuyts' (2005, 2006, and 2016) classification in the category of modality. In this sense, these modal expressions are used to talk about a) absolute moral necessity and desirability (as subcategories of deontic), b) epistemic probability, c) participant-inherent, participant-imposed, and situational (as subcategories of dynamic modality). In Kahangi, two modal auxiliaries meaning 'MUST', these roles are divided between these elements, and they don't get close to each other's realm.

6. Conclusion

Our study shows categorizing languages based on a semantic feature does not provide us with an absolute boarder. Rather, we can judge the languages in a continuum that shows how closer or further each language is to the other members. Hither, Hawrami and Balochi, applying modal adverbs, are closer to each other comparing to Kahangi with two auxiliaries for the same purpose.

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