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1. Katrin Axel-Tober and Patrick Grosz. Even strong evaluatives can occur under negation.
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Harves and Kayne (2012) argue that only those languages that have a transitive verb of possession also have a transitive ‘need’, which takes a nominative subject and an accusative direct object (with no preposition). Based on the distribution of transitive ‘have’ and ‘need’, they distinguish three types of languages: (i) Be-languages that lack possessive ‘have’ and transitive ‘need’, such as Russian, Hindi and Hungarian, (ii) Have-languages with transitive ‘need’, such as English, Icelandic and Basque, and (iii) Have-languages without transitive ‘need’, such as French, Latin and Farsi.

The present snippet aims to provide data showing that Farsi is a Have-language that allows transitive as well as non-transitive ‘need’ with different syntactic properties. It is also shown that Farsi uses ‘be’ to express predicative possession in idiomatic expressions.

Firstly, as can be seen in (1), ketab ‘book’ can appear as the accusative direct object of ṭehtiaj daštæn ‘to need’ (as in (1a)) or as the object of the preposition be ‘to’ (as in (1b)).

(1) a. ʔin ketab-o ṭehtiaj dar-æm (transitive ‘need’)  
    this book-OM need have-1SG  
    ‘I need this book.’
   b. be ʔin ketab ṭehtiaj dar-æm (non-transitive ‘need’)  
    to this book need have-1SG  
    ‘I need this book.’

Interestingly, however, when ketab ‘book’ appears between the preverb ṭehtiaj ‘need’ and the light verb daštæn ‘to have’, it must necessarily be the object of the preposition be ‘to’. This is illustrated in (2a-b).

(2) a. ṭehtiaj be ʔin ketab dar-æm (non-transitive ‘need’)  
    need to this book have-1SG  
    ‘I need this book.’
   b. * ṭehtiaj ʔin ketab-o dar-æm (transitive ‘need’)  
    need this book-OM have-1SG

As can be seen in (3)-(4), this seems to be a standard behavior for objects of Persian complex predicates that can appear in transitive or non-transitive form.

(3) a. be ʔin ketab daşt zæd-æm (non-transitive)  
    to this book hand hit.PST-1SG  
    ‘I touched this book.’
   b. daşt be ʔin ketab zæd-æm  
    hand to this book hit.PST-1SG
(4) a. ʔin ketab-o dæst zæd-æm (transitive)
   this book-OM hand hit.PST-1SG
b. * dæst ʔin ketab-o zæd-æm
    hand this book-OM hit.PST-1SG
‘I touched the book.’

The only case where the accusative direct object can appear between the preverb and the light verb is the case of clitic pronouns, as in (5a). The clitic pronoun -eš ‘it’ can also be the object of the preposition be ‘to’, as in (5b).

(5) a. ʔehtiaj-eš dar-æm (transitive ‘need’)
   need-it have-1SG
b. beh-eš ʔehtiaj dar-æm (non-transitive ‘need’)
   to-it need have-1SG
   ‘I need it.’

Secondly, Farsi uses another complex predicate, lazem daštæn, to express transitive ‘need’. This is shown in (6).

(6) a. ʔin ketab-o lazem dar-æm (transitive ‘need’)
   this book-OM necessary have-1SG
   ‘I need this book.’

Thus, Farsi is a Have-language with both transitive and non-transitive ‘need’.

In addition, as Farsi is a Have-language, we do not expect that it uses ‘be’ to express possession. Yet, there are fixed expressions with idiomatic reading in this language where possession is expressed by budæn ‘to be’. This can be seen in (7). Note that, similar to Be-languages, the case on the possessees nun ‘bread’ and ʔab ‘water’ is nominative.

(7) nun-et næ-bud ʔab-et næ-bud
    bread.NOM-you.GEN NEG-be.PST.3SG water.NOM-you.GEN NEG-be.PST.3SG
    lit. ‘You didn’t have bread? You didn’t have water?’
    idiomatic ‘You had everything you needed, so why did you do x?’ (x determined in context)

    The nouns nun ‘bread’ and ʔab ‘water’ may occasionally be replaced with other nouns such as xune ‘house’, pul ‘money’, etc. However, these substitutions do not change the idiomatic interpretation.

Reference