MODERN PERSIAN PREDICATES

Koji KAMIOKA

0. INTRODUCTION

As is the case with other daughter-languages of the Indo-European family, the finite verb is essential in the Modern Persian utterance\(^1\); and unlike most of them, it is not only essential a constituent but it alone can make a grammatically perfect sentence\(^2\). This will offer justification to the present treatment the focus of which is on the verbs under the cover title of "Moder Persian Predicates".

1. FINITE VERB FORMATION

Any finite verbs consist of \([\text{stem}]\)-[ending]. Let us start with the description of the stems.

1.1. STEMS

Carleton T. HODGE\(^3\) morphologically classified the verbs into the following broad groups, six in all:

The present paper was to be co-authored by Mr. Shuji MATSUSHITA and me, both on the staff of National Afro-Asian Institute. His absence necessitated a regretful, degrading change in the original plan. I was much profited from criticism and suggestion of the colleagues in the workshop headed by Prof. Yukio ISHIGAKI where the substance of the paper was reported. Naturally, I claim the whole responsibility for whatever is in here; what they may is nothing else than their due lot of my appreciation.

-129-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base 1</th>
<th>Base 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>xor-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>fahm-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>zan-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dah-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td>rav-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ūsekan-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>forūš-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 5</td>
<td>mir-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ẖomar-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 6</td>
<td>bin-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class 1: [Base 1] = [Base 2] 
Class 2: [Base 2] extended
Class 3: [Base 1] extended
Class 4: Consonant alternation
Class 5: Vowel alternation
Class 6: Suppletion

\[
\begin{align*}
(D & \rightarrow \overline{d} / \text{-voiced} \\
& \quad \overline{t} / \text{otherwise})
\end{align*}
\]

The classificatory method of HODGE's is, it seems, the most systematic ever attempted. As he himself admits, however, the vast amount of minor variations must be respectively assigned, as sub-classes, to each group except the first. This allows the traditional way of equation: kardan~kon- 'to do',\(^7\), to still prevail at the pedagogical, mnemonic level.

1.2. CONJUGATIONAL ENDINGS

Here involved are the personal category (: the first, the second, and the third person) and the number category (: singular and plural). There are two series of partly distinct endings for [Base 1] on one hand and for [Base 2] on the other.

---
Endings 1 (= endings for [Base 1] abbreviated as [E 1] hereafter)

Sg. 1. -am
2. -i
3. -ad/-e

Pl. 1. -im
2. -id/-in
3. -and/-an

Endings 2 (= endings for [Base 2], [E 2])

Sg. 1. -am
2. -i
3. -Ø

Pl. 1. -im
2. -id/-in
3. -and/-an

2. STRUCTURE OF THE VERB

Simple verbs (a verb by itself) and compound verbs (a syntagma of non-verbal element + verb which functions as a simple verb) require separate treatment in non-indicative moods where the behavior of the modal particle be is differentiated. Some of examples of the compound verbs are given below;

harakat kard. 'He/She/It moved.'
miz-rā boland kard-am. 'I raised the table.'
zud bar gašt. 'He/She returned quickly/early.'

That harakat kard, boland kard-am, and bar gašt are syntactically functioning as one verbal unit is assured by the facts below:

1. The nominal first element can take no definite object marker -rā (harakat-rā kard, cf. in kār-rā kard. 'He/She did this work.').
2. Adverbials 9) may not cut in between the non-verbal element and the verb (harakat zud kard, cf. zud harakat kard. 'He/She/It moved first/early.').
3. These two elements make one accentual unit harakāt kard, not harakāt kārd.
3. THE VERBAL SYSTEM

3.1. INVENTORY OF THE VERBAL SYSTEM

Besides already mentioned categories of persons and numbers, the Persian verbal system contain three others. Before going into specific observation it may be appropriate to outline what is involved in the conjugation:

MOOD:

Indicative | Imperative
Subjunctive

ASPECT:

Perfective
Neutral
Imperfective
(Progressive)

TENSE:

Past ←— Present
Future

VOICE:

Active | Passive

3.2. CORRELATION OF THE CONJUGATIONAL CATEGORIES

Mutual interlocking of the categories constitutes the totality of the verbal system, verbal derivatives excluded. As a preview here is its synoptic picture as regards mood/tense/aspect categories:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mood</th>
<th>tense</th>
<th>aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDICATIVE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>perfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>imperfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>progressive</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>perfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future</td>
<td>(unmarked)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJUNCTIVE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>perfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>non-perfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPERATIVE</td>
<td></td>
<td>(unmarked)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any of the remaining three categories and their entries (those of person/number/voice) can occur with no reservation in all the slots of the diagram.11)

4. IMPERATIVE

First comes the imperative mood which is provided with no aspectual differentiation and, naturally, no tense distinction. The 2nd sg. takes no ending and the plural form, regular -id/-in of (E 1). Modal be is obligatory in the case of the simple verb, while it is optional in the compound with exceptions of those bar/dar-verbs which never present themselves with it. The negative particle na12) and the modal be are mutually exclusive:
bo-kon. 13) 'Do.'
bo-konid. 'Do (pl.).'
na-kon. 'Don't do.'
tamam \{kon. \over bo-kon.} 'Finish.'
bar gard. 'Return.'
tašrif dašt-e baš-id. 14) 'Please stay.'
(lit. 'Have your honoring.')

Correlative relationship of be and na, and the first element of compound verbs will be best illustrated in a tabular form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Verb</th>
<th>be- { na- }</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compound Verb</td>
<td>bar { dar }</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other than bar/dar</td>
<td>± be- { na- }</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: A dotted line indicates that those entries on either side are combined as one word both phonologically and graphically.)

5. FORMATION OF THE PERFECTIVE ASPECT AND THE COPULA

5.1. FORMATION OF THE PERFECTIVE ASPECT

Other moods than the imperative show aspectual differentiation. The perfective aspect is expressed by the syntagma of the past participle ( = Base 2 - [nominalizer -e]) and the bound form of the copula. The compound formation just described is tantamount to the perfective. Since the copula verb (traditional
budan (~bām-) has special forms for the subjunctive, the perfective aspect is shared both by the indicative and by the subjunctive (see the table of 3.2.).

5.2. FORMATION OF THE COPULA

In the indicative present the copula are realized in two series of forms; one, free forms and the other, bound:

Free Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg. 1.</th>
<th>hastam</th>
<th>Pl. 1.</th>
<th>hastim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>hasti</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>hastid/hastin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>hast</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>hastand/hastan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bound Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg. 1.</th>
<th>-am</th>
<th>Pl. 1.</th>
<th>-im</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>-id/-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>-ast/-e</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>-and/-an</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the perfective, as is above noted, the latter enclitic paradigm ([E 3]) hereafter is used with the modification that in spoken language the 3rd sg. takes a zero ending. The past forms and the subjunctive are regular in formation, the former, [bud-D]-[E 2] and the latter, [bām]-[E 1].

6. SUBJUNCTIVE

What is said with regard to the correlation of na/be/the first element of the compound verb in the section of the imperative holds good in the subjunctive. Examples and a diagram will be given with nc remarks:

6.1. NON-PERFECTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE

bay-ad be-rav-and 'They must go.' (lit. 'It must [that] they go.')

tasmin gereft-am bar gard-am 'I decided to return.' (lit. 'I decided [that] I return.')
ketāb-rā be-u dād-am tā be-xān-e.
'I gave him/her the book so that he/she could read.'

har kas šarāb bo-xo-re seitun miš-e.
'Whoever drinks wine becomes a devil.'

kojā be-rav-am? 'Where shall I go?'

6.2. PERFECTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE

The usage to be understood is those given above grasped in the perfective aspect. Even smaller numbers of illustrations will do. Since the subjectiveness is definitely marked by the copula bāš-, the modal be plays no role. There is, accordingly, no necessity to distinguish two types of verbs:

bāy-ad raft-e bāš-and. 'They must have gone.'
(lit. 'It must [that] they have gone.')

momken-e mord-e bāš-ad. 'He/She may have died.'
(lit. 'It is possible [that] he/she has died.')

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Verb</th>
<th>be-</th>
<th>[Base 1]</th>
<th>[E 1]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIMPLEX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound Verb</td>
<td>bar</td>
<td>+na-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other than bar/dar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPLEX</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Base 2]</td>
<td>[-e]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. INDICATIVE

Aspectual differentiation, as must logically be so, is most variegated in the indicative mood. The past tense has a clear-cut three-stratum system which provides us with a starting block.

-136-
7.1. PAST TENSE

7.1.1. NON-COMPOUND FORMATION

(1) Neutral = ([Base 2] - [E 2])
    diruz bārān ziyād umad. 'It rained much yesterday.'
    umad-am. 'I came.'
    englestan raft-id name-i be man be-nevis-id. 'When you go (lit. 'went') to England write a letter to me.'

(2) Imperfective = ([mi-] - [Base 1] - [E 2])
    Durative marker mi- morphologically characterizes this group:
    diruz bārān ziyād mi-umad. 'It was raining much yesterday.'
    har sāl be-īrān mi-raft-am. 'Every year I used to go to Iran.'
    cī mi-xāst-id? 'What would you want?' (polite expression)

Impossibility or irreality, regardless of the present or the past, is expressed by the imperfective past both in the protasis and the apodosis. What matters is not where it is in the time-axis but whether it is possible/real or not:
    age mi-dunest-am mi-goft-am. 'If I knew/had known, I would say/have said.'

7.1.2. COMPOUND FORMATION

(1) Perfective = ([Base 2] - [-e] - [bu-D] - [E 2])
    vaqti-ke rasid raft-e bud-and. 'When he/she arrived they had gone.'

(2) Progressive = ([ādāS-D] - [E 2] - [Base 2] - [E 2])
    The distinct progressive aspect is realized by
the aid of dār-/dās-D- 'to hold, keep'. The verb
grammatically constitutes the main clause while
the semantically principal finite verb in the
form of the imperfective takes its position in
the immediately following subordinate.22)

dašt-am kār mi-kard-am. 'I kept working.'
(lit. 'I kept [that] I was working.')
dašt bārun mi-umad. 'It kept raining.'
(lit. 'It kept [that] rain was
coming.')

The progressive aspect stands on its own only
in the affirmative. When the negative na is
there, it merges into the imperfective (7.1.1.
above) [: bārun ne-mi-umad.13) 'It was not
raining.']

7.2. PRESENT TENSE

The neutral and the imperfective aspects, which
are distinct in the past tense, is fused in the present.

7.2.1. NON-COMPOUND FORMATION

The present simplex is marked off by the presence
of the durative mi-:

ce kār mi-kon-in? 'What are you doing?'
ketāb mi-xān-am. 'I'm reading/read a book.'
har ruz mir-e edārē. 'He/She goes to office
everyday.'

can sāl dar irān zandegi mi-kon-id?
'How long have you been in Iran?'
(lit. 'How many years do you live...')
farda- mi-y-am 23) tehrūn. 'I will go (lit. 'go') to
Tehran.'

In the examples above both the neutral and the im-per-
fective aspects are recognizable.

-138-
7.2.2. COMPOUND FORMATION

(1) Perfective = ([Base 2]-[-a]-[E 3])

kār-rā tamām kard-e-am. 'I have finished the work.'

(2) Progressive = ([dār-]-[E 1] + [mi-]-[Base 1]-[E 1])

There is a specific expression for the progressive if, exactly as in the past tense, the negative na is not there:

dār-am kār mi-kon-am. 'I have finished the work.'

(lit. 'I keep [that] I am working.')

dār-ad bārun mi-āy-ad. 'It is raining.' (lit. 'It keeps [that] rain is coming.')

[cf. bārun ne-mi-āy-ad. 'It is not raining.']

7.3. FUTURE

In the literary language there is a specific type of future formation which is constructed with the syntagma of the mi-less present form of xāh-/xās-D- 'to want' and the short infinitive. The short infinitive is identical with [Base 2] in shape (:[xāh]-[E 1]-[Base 2]):

sāl-e āyande be-orupā xāh-am raft.

'This coming year I will go to Europe.'

In the spoken language, the present neutral is used all along.

The above will complete our description of the main characteristics of the Persian verbal system. What remains to be treated is the problem of voices, auxiliaries and verbal derivatives.

8. VOICES
There are the active and the passive. The latter is formed with the aid of šav-/šo-D- 'to become' ([Base 2]- [nominalizer -e ]- [finite form of the verb]):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{mi-šav-ad.} & \quad \text{'He/She is killed.'} \\
\text{šod-e} & \quad \text{He/She was killed.'} \\
\text{mi-šod.} & \quad \text{'He/She was being killed.'} \\
\text{xah-ad šod.} & \quad \text{'He/She will be killed.'} \\
\text{be-šav-ad.} & \quad \text{(non-perfective subj.)} \\
\text{šod-e ba-x-ad} & \quad \text{(perfective subj.)}
\end{align*}
\]

When the agent is expressed, active construction is used, never the passive. Consequently, English 'Hosein killed Hasan.' and 'Hasan was killed by Hosein.',' for example, are not distinguished, both of which are in the active hosein hasan-rā košt.

9. AUXILIARIES AND IMPERSONAL VERBS

9.1. AUXILIARY VERBS

Semitically there are several morphs which may be numbered among the auxiliary verbs\(^{24}\); on the structural level, on the other hand, only the future xah- (and that its [Base 1] alone\(^{25}\)) and the passive šav-/šo-D-, both explained above, can be classified under the category.

9.2. IMPERSONAL VERBS

bāy-/bāyes-D- 'must' whose examples are already given in 6.1. and 6.2., for instance, functions not as an auxiliary but as an impersonal verb:

\text{na-bāy-ad be-rav-īd.} \quad \text{'You must not go.' (lit.} \quad \text{'It must not [that] you go.')}

It is also the case with the petrified 3rd sg. form\(^{26}\) kayad 'perhaps':

\text{šayad be-rav-īm.} \quad \text{'Perhaps we will go.'} \quad \text{(originally 'It is probable [that] we go.')\(^{27}\)}
10. VERBAL DERIVATIVES

Two types of infinitives and four genres of participles are grouped here.

10.1. INFINITIVES

(1) Full Infinitives = [Base 2] -an

Unlike the English counterpart, it cannot directly follow the finite verb; the function is that of action nouns:

\[
\begin{align*}
dānā & \text{ šod-an} \\
tavanā & \text{ šod-an ast.}
\end{align*}
\]

'To be learned is to be powerful.'

barāy-e didan-e reza raft tehrun. 'He/She went to Tehran to see Reza.'

(2) Short Infinitives = [Base 2]

Their occurrences are limited after the future auxiliary xāh- (see 7.3) and the impersonal verbs, and never interchangeable with the foregoing item. The designation of 'infinitive' is better restricted for the short type.

10.2. PARTICIPLES

10.2.1. PRESENT PARTICIPLES

One is that with the function of agent nouns ([Base 1] - [-ande]) and the other, that with the very restricted function of gerunds ([Base 1] - [−ān]).

(1) -ande

nevis-ande 'writer'
entexāb-kon-ande 'elector' (lit. 'selection-maker')

sāl-e āy-ande 'next (lit. 'coming') year'

(2) -ān

They are generally reduplicated in utterance:

dav-ān dav-ān umad. 'He/She came running.'

10.2.2. FUTURE PARTICIPLES
They are of the form (full infinitive) - (-i) and carry the meaning of 'fit for/worthy of':

āb-e xordan-i 'drinking water'
inja hic didan-i nist. 'Here is nothing to see.'

10.2.3. PAST PARTICIPLES

As is mentioned above, it is used both to actualize the perfective aspect, combined with the copula, and to form the passive construction together with šav-/šo-D-. Otherwise, they function:

(1) Adjectivals

āb-e jušid-e 'boiled water'
kōšt-e 'killed'; pl. kōšt-e-g-an 'the killed'
sāl-e gozašt-e 'last year' (lit. 'the year passed')

(2) Gerunds

vāred-e otāq šod-e goft. 'Having entered the room, he/she said.'

10.3. NEGATION OF INFINITIVES AND PARTICIPLES

The above verbal derivatives, except for the present participle -ān, can directly take the verbal negative na-:

na-xarid-an 'not buying'

11. CONCLUDING REMARK

What the present paper was intended to achieve is to offer not a new insight into the Persian predicates but a systematic, as complete as possible, picture of the known data within this limited space. The primary requisites were how to systematize and how to economize. The first forced me to resort to unduly overloaded footnotes.
and the second, to be content with those not sufficient sample utterances which are controlled but fully grammatical and acceptable. If the paper is intelligible, if to some extent, to one who has no previous knowledge of Persian, I am ready to admit that it has proved more than successful.

( November 16, 1975).
NOTES

1) Exceptions are much limited when one excludes minor sentence types (= those logically minus the finite verb) [exclamational utterances: áfarin! 'Bravo!', ajab! 'Wonderful!'; responsive utterances: bale 'Yes.', cašm 'Yes, sir.', etc.—note that all these one-word sentence take accent on the first syllable while it is on the last otherwise]:

    in behtar. 'This is better.'
    ħal-etun cetor? 'How are you?'
    hasan ku? 'Where is Hasan?'

Minus-copula constructions are marginal and conversational, and are restricted, needless to say, to the type of minuscopula.

2) Namely, the finite verb contains its subject overtly in the form of conjugational endings, and also, if it is semantically transitive, carries its object in itself covertly and intrinsically, insofar as the subject or the object is not topicalized. See, for instance, the cases of xor-/xor-D- 'to eat':

    xord-am 'ate(it)-1.Sg.'
    xord-i 'ate(it)-2.Sg.'
    xord-∅ 'ate(it)-3.Sg.'

There is no grammatical distinction, as is above suggested by 'semantically transitive', between the intransitive and the transitive. kard-am, for example, corresponds both to English 'I did.' (absolute transitive) and to 'I did it/that/those.' Where the subject or the object, the former in particular, is expressed, it is more or less topicalized (the details of which
remains to be clarified):

`xord-am. 'I ate.' : man xord-am. 'It is me who ate.'


4) [Base 1] = traditional present stem, and the root form itself. Moreover, [Base 1] is a formal equivalent of the imperative 2nd sg., with a few exceptions(:ra̱v-/ra̱f-D- 'go'; the imperative 2nd sg. row.).

5) [Base 2] = traditional preterite stem.

6) Denominatives belong to the class 2. The above example itself is originally a denominative verb: ra̱qz 'dance'; ra̱qz-/ra̱qzi-D- 'to dance', do̱zd 'thief'; do̱zd-/do̱zdi-D- 'to steal'.


8) When two forms are juxtaposed, separated by a slant, the left one belongs to written language and the right, spoken.

9) Exceptional are suffixal personal pronouns:
`boland-eš kon. 'Raise it.'

10) The causative does not count here because it is realized by adding the causative extension -āni/-ān to the root form ( = [Base 1]): ra̱s-/ra̱si-D- 'reach'
ra̱s-ān-/ra̱si-āni/ān-D- 'cause to reach'. -āni is literary.

11) Logically it goes without saying that the imperative mood does not take any other than the second person endings.
12) Sometimes ma, a special negative particle for the imperative, is found in literary works.

13) The vocalism is assimilated to that of the following syllable.

14) dār-/dāš-D- shows unique behavior: 1) It does not take either durative marker mi- or modal be-. 2) In the non-indicative moods only the compound formation is used like the above example of the imperative and one below of the subjunctive:

    bāy-ad pul dāšt-e bāš-am. 'I must have got money.'

15) Two series, combined with the negative na, become uniformal:

    | Sg. 1. nistam | Pl. 1. nistim  |
    | 2. nisti     | 2. nistid/nistin |
    | 3. nist      | 3. nistand/nistan |

16) Free forms are primarily used to denote existence: kojā hastin? 'Where are you?', cf. ahl-e koja-in? 'Where are you from?' (lit. 'people of where are you?') with a bound copula.

17) Note that the enclitic paradigm of the copula is identical with [E 1] except for the 3rd sg.; conversationally they are completely identical with the 3rd sg. -e for both.

18) Thus, the abbreviation of [E 3] (endings 3) implies that they can be no carrier of the negative na.

19) The copula, and this is the only case, has a distinct stem for the subjunctive as is above noted.

20) I tried to pick up only some of exemplifying examples; thoroughness in the matter of usage of indi-
vidual mood or tense is far from intended and will make no sense where a general, as brief as possible, survey of Persian predicates is my duty assigned.

21) Used in the sense of 'I'm coming.' as a reply to 'Come along, Hosein!' (hosein, bi-yā.—note 23). Confirmativity and anteriority are at the front here and in the next.

22) The semantically main finite never precedes the dār-/dāḵ-D- section.

23) /y/ is an automatic glide insertion.

24) I use the term roughly as that in English grammar.

25) In other words, xāstan-xāh- works auxiliarily only in the present tense. Cf., furthermore, mi-xāh-am be-rav-am. 'I want to go.' (employed as a normal verb with mi attached) versus xāh-am raft. 'I will go.' (with no mi and a short infinitive). tavān-/tavānes-D- 'be able to' and already described dār-/dāḵ-D- of the progressive (see 7.1.2. and 7.2.2.), for example, structurally perform exactly the same function as the former, main verb xāh-/xās-D-.

26) This origin is still felt, note the subjunctive be-rav-ad.

27) Some other literary types belong here:

in-rā mi-tavān(special form for the impersonal usage)

kard. 'It is possible to do this/One can do this.'

mi-šav-ad raft. 'It is possible to go.'
From the latter usage of Ṣav-/Ṣo-D- comes spoken miṣ-e.
'It is possible/It can be done.'

28)'Infinitive', consequently, is a misnomer.

29) Again, therefore, a traditional 'future participle' is a misnomer and misleading.

30) Which are of very frequent occurrence in literature.

31) The full infinitive, the present participle in -ande, the future participle, and the past participle adjectivally employed take also the nominal negative prefix nā- : nā-xarid-an 'not buying' as is in nā-raht 'un-easy'.

-148-