

BENEDIKT PESCHL

Avestan

Morphosyntactic structures – Part 4: Clause (cont.)



MUYA —
The Multimedia Yasna Project

Roadmap

- Modality
- Interrogation
- Information structure

Deontic modality: wishes

- Wishes: opt.

*tōi vaēm **xiiāmā** (PRS.OPT) yōi īm fərəšām kərənaon ahūm*

“**may we be** the ones who will make the world thriving” (OAv., Y 30.9)

- Negated wishes:

***nōiṭ** daibitīm duš.sastiš ahūm **mərəšiiāṭ** (PRS.OPT)*

“**not** a second time **may** the one of bad teaching **ruin** the world” (OAv., Y 45.1)

Deontic modality: command/exhortation

- Aspectual distinction in OAv.:

“do once...!” imperative aorist

“keep doing...!” imperative present

- YAv.: imperative present in either case

Deontic modality: command/exhortation (cont.)

- OAv. aor. *taṭ mōi vaōcā* (**tell.AOR.IMP.2SG**) *ahurā*
tell me that, Ahura!” (OAv., Y 44 passim)
- prs. *vīduuā vīdušē mraōtū* (**speak.PRS.IMP.3SG**)
“let the knowing one speak to the knowing one” (Y 31.17)
- Contrast: ***gaidī*** (**come.AOR.IMP.2SG**) *mōi ā mōi rapā* (**support.PRS.IMP.2SG**)
“come to me, (and then) keep supporting me!” (Y 49.1)
- YAv. prs. ***apa druxš nase*** (**disappear.PRS.2SG**)!
“disappear, o Deceit!” (V 8.21)

Deontic modality: prohibition in OAv.

- Preventive: *mā* + injunctive aorist

mā *nā* *dušə.xšaθrā* *xšəntā*
NEG we.GEN of.bad.rule.NOM.PL assume.rule.AOR.INJ.3PL

“Let not those of bad rule assume rule over us!” (Y 48.5)

- Inhibitive: *mā* + injunctive present

mā *əuuīduuā* *aipī.dəbāuuaiiaṭ*
NEG unknowing.NOM deceive.PRS.INJ.3SG

“Let the unknowing one no longer deceive!” (Y 31.17)

Deontic modality: verbal adjectives

- Gerundive formations in *-iia-*, *-θβa-*

var- ‘to choose’ → *va'r-iia-* ‘(someone/something) to be chosen’

jan- ‘to smash’ → *jqθβa-* /*jan-θβa-*/ ‘to be killed’

- Cf. also verbal adjective in *-ata-*, denoting possibility/permission:

yaz- ‘to sacrifice to, worship’ → *yazata-* ‘which may be sacrificed to; god’

- Attributive usage:

xšaθra- vairiia-

“(the kind of) rule that is to be chosen”

Deontic modality: verbal adjectives (cont.)

- Predicative usage:

yaθā ahū ***vairiō*** *aθā ratuš* ...
as world.INS choose.GDV.NOM.SG.M so model.NOM.SG.M

“as it is to be chosen by the world, so the model ...” (OAv., Y 27.13)

jaθva *vāhrka*
smash.GDV.NOM.PL.M wolf.NOM.PL.M

“the wolves are to be killed” (YAv., V 13.40)

Epistemic modality

- Certain particles such as YAv. *bāδa* ‘clearly’ (de Vaan 2015) may be read as marking epistemic modality (epistemic evidentiality)
- Optative as potentialis (epistemic possibility):

*dāidī ... taṭ ahiīā yā taṭ **upā.jamiiāmā** (AOR.OPT) tauuacā saram aṣaxiiācā
vīspāi yauuē*

“give us ... that (share) of this (prize) by which **we may attain** the following: union with you and with *Aṣa* [true order] for all life time” (OAv., Y 41.6)

Epistemic modality (cont.)

- “Prospective” subjunctive: action expected to take place in the future (epistemic probability):

*darəgām āiiū təmaŋhō duš.xʷarəθām auuaētās vacō
tām vā ahūm drəguuaŋtō šīiaōθanāiš xʷāiš daēnā **naēšat** (AOR.SUBJ)*

“A long life-time of darkness, bad food, the wailing of the voice -
to this existence, oh deceitful ones, your mindset/vision (Daēnā) **will lead you** through your own actions.”

→ Distinct feature of subjunctive compared to use of *hiia/šīia*-future (see video 3.3)?

Interrogation: content questions

- (Adverbial) interrogatives derived from stem *kV-/ci-*:

ka-, *či-* ‘who’

kadā/kaδa ‘when’

kaθā/kaθa ‘how’

kudā, kuθrā/kuθra ‘where’? etc.

- WH-movement: fronting of interrogative to sentence-initial position

kaēibiiō ... rāniiō.skəraitīm gq̄m tašō

“**for whom** did you shape the joy-providing cow?” (OAv., Y 44.6)

but: **[gq̄m vāstriiāi tašam]* “I shaped the cow **for the herdsman**”

Interrogation: polar questions

- Interrogative particles:

kaṭ ašauiā ... vāṇghaṭ draguuaṇtəm

“shall the one partaking in Aša (“True-Order”) overcome the adherent of Deceit? (OAv., Y 48.2)

čim hqm.bərəθa hqm.bqraiiama

“shall we organize gatherings [literally: gather gatherings]?” (YAv., V 19.44)

Information structure

- Strategies for encoding information structure
- Deviations from basic word order (dislocation)
- Split sentences
- Topic/focus particles
- (Intonation)

Focus strategies: fronting

- Often combined with focus particles:

huxšaθrō.tamāi bā at xšaθrəm ... dadəmahi(=cā ...)

best.ruling.DAT FOC CONN rule.ACC give.PRS.1PL=and

“Now, **to the best-ruling one** ... do we give the rule (and ...)” (OAv., Y 35.5)

Focus strategies: backing (lowering)

aiiā *nōiṭ* *arəš* *vīšiiātā* ***daēuuā=cinā***
DEM.GEN.DU NEG correctly distinguish.AOR.3PL. Daēuua.NOM.PL=EMPH

“Between these two **especially the Daēuuas** [the old gods] do not distinguish correctly.” (Y 30.6)

(NB: =*cinā* is not a 2nd position clitic)

Focus strategies: fronting and split sentence

kahmāi *paoiriiō* *mašiiānqm* *apərəsə* *tūm*
who.DAT.SG first.NOM.SG.M mortal.GEN.PL ask.IMPERF.2SG you.NOM

yō *ahurō* *mazdā* *aniiō*
REL.NOM.SG.M Ahura.NOM.SG Mazda.NOM.SG other.NOM.SG.M

mana *yaṭ* *zaraθuštrāi*
I.GEN REL Zarathustra.DAT

“With whom of the mortals had you first conversed, you, Ahura Mazda, other than with me, Zarathustra?”

Focus strategies: fronting and split sentence (cont.)

yimāi

Yima.DAT.SG.M

srīrāi

beautiful.DAT.SG.M

huuqθbāi

with.good.herds.DAT.SG.M

ašāum

partaker.in.aša.VOC

zaraθuštra

Zarathustra.VOC

ahmāi

DEM.DAT.SG.M

paoiriio

first.NOM.SG.M

mašiiānqm

mortal.GEN.PL.

apərəse

ask.IMPERF.2SG

“With beautiful Yima who has good herds, o Zarathustra, partaker in Aša – with him had I first of the mortals conversed” (YAv.,V 2.1-2)