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¹ Assistant Professor of Persian
Language and Literature, Faculty
of Humanities, Tarbiat Modares
University, Tehran, Iran
(Corresponding Author).
E-mail: abasiz@modares.ac.ir

² Assistant Professor of Teaching
English as a Foreign Language,
Kosar University of Bojnord,
Bojnord, Iran.
E-mail:
h.yaghoubinezhad@gmail.com

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Typological Analysis of Counterfactual Conditions in Persian Language

Zahra Abbasi¹, Hadi Yaqubinejad²

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to contribute to studies on counterfactuals by exploring counterfactual conditions in Persian. Here, counterfactual sentences in Persian have been studied based on typological findings of the same in different languages. In order to study the typology, two main parameters are examined: symmetrical and asymmetrical morphological patterns of counterfactual conditional sentences and the range of TAM (Tense Aspect Mood) values in protasis and apodosis. The main concepts of counterfactual conditionals, including the construction of complex sentences, imagined conditions that have not occurred, false events, and the two above parameters were taken into account. This is a library-based research and the required data was extracted from the Persian Linguistic Database (PLDB). Findings show that the counterfactual conditions in Persian have a complex sentence construction and protasis acts as a subordinate clause and in typological classifications, Persian has counterfactual conditionals for past, present and future and counterfactual conditionals have both symmetrical and asymmetrical patterns. Also in the TAM spectrum, counterfactual conditions have both symmetrical and asymmetric morphological patterns. In these patterns, both protasis and apodosis are used in the past continuous and past perfect tenses. In all three types of counterfactual conditions, the past tense is used, with either perfective or imperfective appearance.

Keywords: Counterfactual Condition; Typology; TAM (Tense-Aspect-Mood); Complex Sentences; Past Marking; False Events.

Introduction

Conditional sentences are constructions with an adverbial clause that express condition(s) so that with their realization, the proposition made by apodosis is also realized. The form of conditional structures consists of a two-part compound sentence, which includes protasis or antecedent and apodosis or consequence (Inchaurrealde, 2005). Counterfactual conditionals (abbreviated CF) are conditional sentences that include a conjunction /"agar" (if, اگر) that express something contrary to the reality. The term "counterfactual" was first coined by Nelson Goodman in 1947 to refer to a certain type of conditionals. In fact, conditional sentences have always been one of the key topics in the fields of semantics, pragmatics, and philosophy of language, and they have been examined from various approaches (Kaufmann, 2001; Haegeman, 2003; Rawlins, 2008; Bjorkman, 2011). In this regard, there are important categories of conditional sentences. In most cases, researchers have divided conditionals into event and premise conditionals (Haegman 2003). Dabiri Moghadam and Sedighifar (2012) have also

recognized the quadruple category of Samareh (1993) for teaching conditional sentences in Persian, which describes the probability of occurrence. They explain the classification of conditionals as follows: The first type is conditionals that are likely to occur in the present tense. The second type is conditionals that are unlikely to occur in the present, and the third type is conditionals that could have occurred in the past, but did not happen since the condition was not met. The fourth type is conditionals that are likely to occur in the future, depending on whether the condition is fulfilled. Two types of conditionals in the classification of Dabiri Moghadam and Sedighifar (2012) are conditionals that are unlikely to happen and can, therefore, be considered counterfactual conditionals. It should be noted that counterfactual assertions are not limited to conditional sentences, and the functional domain of counterfactual assertions is encoded by different grammatical structures, including:

- A) Counterfactual wishes: (ey kâš injä budi) ای کاش اینجا بودی
(I wish you were here)

B) Counterfactual simple clauses: (to bāyad be mehmāni mi-āmadī) (تو باید به میهمانی می‌آمدی) (You should have come to the party)

C) Counterfactual conditionals: (agar rafte budam, u rā mi-didam) (اگر رفته بودم، او را می‌دیدم) (If I had gone, I would have seen him)

In general, counterfactual structures imply that the described situations are false (Karawani 2014: 3; Nordström, 2010, 24); In other words, they refer to imagined situations that did not or could not take place (Givón 2001, 332-333). The goal of this paper is to contribute to typological studies on counterfactual assertions, including Qian (2016) and Martinez (2018), by examining counterfactual conditionals in Persian.

This article, in addition to reviewing the literature on counterfactual conditionals in Persian, examines the construction of counterfactual conditionals from a typological perspective and discusses issues raised with respect to the typology of counterfactual conditionals including complex sentence construction, imagined situation that did not occur and false events. It then continues to discuss two main parameters in studies of typological analysis of counterfactual

conditions: the symmetric and asymmetric morphological patterns of counterfactual conditionals and the range of TAM that appear in the protasis and apodosis of counterfactual conditionals. Although there are other works that have dealt with different types of conditional constructions, the present study examines the main parameters of the typology of Persian conditionals, which makes it innovative in this regard.

Literature Review

Traugott (1986) argues that conditional constructions are linguistic expressions consisting of a subordinate clause and a main clause, asserting that the occurrence of a phenomenon or situation is conditional upon the realization of another phenomenon or situation (Traugott et al., 1986: 3). The syntactic structure of conditionals is founded on three basic elements: word if, protasis, or subordinate clause, and or consequence.

“agar” (If, اگر) is one of key elements in the formation of a conditional sentence, which makes the realization of a sentence contingent on fulfillment of a condition. In Persian “agar”

is the main conjunction word. This word, as a conjunctive or linking word, connects two clauses. The sentence that begins with *if* is called a “protasis” or “subordinate clause” and the apodosis upon which the condition clause depends is called “consequence” or “independent conditional clause”. The protasis and apodosis constitute the pillars of the conditionals. Conditional clauses are traditionally divided into different types. First, simple/ realistic conditional clauses, which refer to present, general, past, or future situations in which the probability that a condition is fulfilled is very high (Dixon, 2009: 15). Second, hypothetical conditional clauses, which describe unreal circumstances that may occur hypothetically (Givón, 2001: 333-334). Third, counterfactual conditional clauses, which describe hypothetical situations that did not occur or could not have occurred in the past (Kortmann 1997: 85; Givón, 2001: 332-333). A recent typological study suggests that most languages tend to create a kind of tripartite lexical-syntactic and hypotheticality distinction in conditional clauses, which seems to support traditional classification.

In classification studies of counterfactual unconditional sentences, Haspelmath examined a cumulative sample consisting of 165 languages (Haspelmath et al., 2005). Qian (2016) also studied counterfactual conditions based on data from 155 languages. Qian (2016: 87) asserts that two types of elements are employed in most languages to denote counterfactuals: syntactic elements (such as past/perfective/imperfective) and morphological elements. He argues that with respect to linguistics, most languages tend to recruit syntactic elements to indicate counterfactuals, and languages with counterfactual morphological elements are relatively rare compared to languages with syntactic elements (e.g. past, perfect, imperfect).

In Persian, grammarians have addressed various subjects related to conditional sentences. In almost all Persian grammar textbooks, a separate section is devoted to the study and classification of conditional sentences. There are some seminal grammar books including the *Principles of Persian Grammar* by Shafaei (1984) and the *Comprehensive Grammar of Persian* by Mohtashami (1991). In addition to grammar

books, this subject has received growing scholarly attention in a host of dissertations and theses, some of which are summarized as follows:

Some studies have looked into conditional sentences from the perspective of formal linguistics, e.g. Kabiri (2013), Sukaki (1996), Rasoolnia and Aghajani (2013), Mohammadi (2014), Ibn al-Rasool et al. (2016) and Pashaei et al. (2017). The study and analysis of conditionals in the field of cognitive linguistics has been the subject of numerous studies, including Rostami (2010), Yousefzadeh (2016) and Baghaei and Naghzgoo Kohan (2018). The event-related conditional sentences in the Persian were investigated by Kabiri and Darzi (2015). Some research has addressed the field of second language teaching and conditional sentences for example, Mahmoudi Gahruei (2010), Abbasi (2013), Haji Rezaei and Sahraei (2015) and Salimi (2015).

Methodology

The goal of this paper is to study the counterfactual conditionals from a typological perspective. To this aim, subjects within the typology of counterfactual conditionals,

including construction of complex sentences, imagined conditions that have not occurred, false events, and the two main parameters mentioned, are taken into consideration.

1. Symmetrical and asymmetrical morphological patterns of counterfactual conditional sentences;
2. The range of TAM values that tend to appear in protasis and apodosis of counterfactual conditional constructions.

This is a theoretical study in terms of purpose, and it is descriptive concerning the nature and methodology. Data of the study was obtained through a library method from <http://pldb.iics.ac.ir> and the long sentences were simplified.

Counterfactual Conditionals in Typological Studies

Counterfactual conditional clause is a kind of complex sentence structure in which the relationship between the antecedent (protasis) and the consequence (apodosis) relies on a hypothetical situation that has not taken place. While the protasis describes an unreal event, the apodosis provides an unreal event too, suggesting what would have happened if the

protasis had actually occurred. To better understand the definition of counterfactual conditional clause, it is essential to expound on complex sentence structures and hypothetical unreal situations to clarify the false event:

Complex Sentence Construction

In the definition of "complex sentence construction," it should be noted that this structure indicates a special relationship between (at least) two situations in (at least) two clauses (Longacre, 1985: 235). Therefore, the complex sentence construction contains more than one clause. Similarly, a clause can be defined as a unit composed of at least one predication (Gast & Diessel, 2012: 4). The syntactic relationship between these two situations in different languages may be in form of coordination, co-subordination, subordination, pseudo- coordination, pseudo-subordination. What complicates the matters further is that conceptual subordination is problematic because distinguishing its various types is considered as a gradual process (Gast & Diessel, 2012: 5; Lehmann, 1988: 190). The concept of "complex sentence construction" is also important, because it helps us to consider

the different forms of subordinate constructions. In this regard, the traditional analysis of complex sentences divides subordinate clauses into three categories according to the function of predication (Croft, 2001: 321), which includes adverbial clauses, complement clauses, and relative clauses. However, sometimes it is difficult to draw the line between these constructions.

In Persian:

Counterfactual conditionals actually have complex sentence construction in Persian. The conditional clause represents a subordinate clause and is considered as an adverbial clause (Kazemi Najafabadi et al., 2016: 28) and the relationship between protasis and apodosis is of subordination. The protasis in counterfactual conditional sentences cannot be considered as relative or complement clause.

Imagined Situation that Did Not Happen

The imagined situation that did not happen is the second constituent of the counterfactual conditionals. This constituent refers to three types of counterfactual conditional sentences, which include past counterfactual conditionals,

which express an unreal situation in the past.

For example:

1. Agar Maryam fardā mi-āmad, mā xošhāl mi-šodim. (If Mary had come yesterday, we would have had fun.) (اگر مریم فردا می آمد، ما خوش حال می شدیم)

The present counterfactual conditionals, which express an unreal situation in the present, for example:

2. Faqat agar Maryam ʔalān injā bud, mā xošhāl mi-budim. (If only Mary were here now, we would be happy.) (فقط اگر مریم الآن اینجا بود، ما خوش حال (می) بودیم.)

And future counterfactual conditionals, which indicate an unreal situation in the future, for example:

3. Agar Maryam diruz āmade-bud, be mā xoš mi-gozašt (If Mary were to come tomorrow, we would be happy) (اگر مریم دیروز آمده بود، به ما خوش می گذشت.)

Some researchers, such as Iatridou (2000: 231) and Karawani (2014: 4), posit that only past and present counterfactual conditionals are true counterfactuals, for people only have access to the past and present facts. However, there are probable conditions to which future counterfactuals may apply, despite the absence of information. The languages in Qian's (2016)

research sample often have past counterfactuals rather than present and future counterfactuals.

There is no language in his sample that contains future counterfactuals but lacks past and present conditionals. However, unlike previous research that demonstrates there is no language that have present counterfactuals but lacks past conditionals (Hogeweg, 2009: 193).

In Persian:

Among these typological classifications, Persian is one of the languages that have counterfactual conditionals in the past, present and future.

Past counterfactual conditionals:

4. Agar ānhā pārsāl vāqeyyat rā be Ali goftē budand, ʔalān in hame darde-sar nadāštand.

(If they had told the truth to Ali last year, he wouldn't be in so much pain now.) (اگر آنها پارسال واقعیت را به علی گفته بودند، الان این همه درد سر نداشتند)

Present counterfactual conditionals:

5. Agar ādam-e servatmandi budam, in māšin-e gerān-qeymat rā mi-xaridam. (If I were rich, I would buy this expensive car.) (اگر آدم ثروتمندی بودم، این (ماشین گرانبه را می خریدم)

(اگر آدم ثروتمندی بودم، این (ماشین گرانبه را می خریدم)

Future counterfactual conditionals:

6. Havā-šenāsi eʔlām karde fardā bārān-e šadida mi-bārad, be hamin xāter ordu-ye točal

rā laqv kardim. Agar bārān nemi-bārid, hatman be ordu-ye točal mi-raftim (The meteorologist forecast heavy rain tomorrow. So, we canceled the resort camp to Tochal. If it would not rain tomorrow, we would definitely go to the resort camp.) (هواشناسی اعلام کرده فردا باران شدیدی می بارد. به همین خاطر اردوی (camp.)

(توچال را لغو کردیم. اگر فردا باران نمی بارید، حتما به اردوی توچال می رفتیم)

False Events

The third and final element is "false event," which refers to the fact that counterfactual conditionals semantically reflect the polarity of the expressed structure. Vanlinden & Verstraete (2008: 1866) argue that counterfactual conditionals with positive polarity include a corresponding negative predication in their interpretation, and counterfactual conditionals with negative polarity include a corresponding positive proposition. For example, in Example 6, protasis and apodosis have a positive polarity, but are interpreted as a clause with negative predication. That is, I am not rich and do not buy an expensive car. "False event" explains the concept of polarity of reversal, and protasis and apodosis must both describe "false events" in counterfactual conditionals. In this regard,

while the protasis describes a fictitious event, the apodosis also defines a false event, suggesting what would have happened if the protasis had occurred. The concept of false event and polarity of reversal also applies in Persian, as exemplified by Examples 5 and 6.

Parameter 1 in Typological Analysis of Counterfactual Conditions: Symmetrical and Asymmetrical Patterns are Protasis and Apodosis

Linguistically, the verbs in protasis and apodosis of counterfactual conditionals may sometimes be coded with different values of TAM. This feature is called asymmetry of conditionals (Molencki, 2000: 325; Haiman & Kuteva, 2002: 101). However, sometimes protasis and apodosis, regardless of their specific morphological forms, have parallel structures, which indicate a symmetrical pattern. There are even languages in which counterfactual conditionals may be symmetrical or asymmetrical, or neither the protasis and apodosis indicate any TAM.

In Persian:

As mentioned earlier, in Persian, counterfactual conditional sentences are semantically divided

into three categories: sentences that indicate an event is counterfactual and unlikely to happen in the past, sentences that indicate an event is counterfactual and unlikely to happen in the present and sentences suggesting that an event is counterfactual and unlikely to happen in the future. Example 8 shows that counterfactual conditionals in the Persian follow both a symmetrical and an asymmetric pattern.

8 a) Past counterfactual conditionals:

Agar ānhā vāqeyyat rā be Ali goftē budand,

اگر آنها واقعیت را به علی گفته بودند،

If they had told the truth to Ali,

Agar ānhā vāqeyyat rā be Ali mi-goftand,

اگر آنها واقعیت را به علی می گفتند،

If they told the truth to Ali,

ʔalān in hame dare-sar nadāštīd (nemi-dāštīd).

الان این همه درد سر نداشتند. (نمی داشتند).

They would not have (did not have) all these troubles.

ʔalān bā u be tavāfoq reside budand.

الان با او به توافق رسیده بودند.

They would have reached an agreement with him.

ʔalān dar ārāmeš-e bištar-i budand (mi-budand).

الان در آرامش بیشتری بودند (می بودند).

They were (would be) more relaxed now.

mi-tavānestand bā u moʔāmele konand.

می توانستند با او معامله کنند.

They could trade with him.

šāyad mi-tavānestand bā u be tavāfoq beresand.

شاید می توانستند با او به توافق برسند.

They might have reached an agreement with him.

bā u be tavāfoq mi-residand

با او به توافق می رسیدند.

They agreed with him.

8 b) Present counterfactual conditionals:

Agar ādam-e servatmandi budam (mi-budam),

اگر آدم ثروتمندی بودم (می بودم)،

If I were rich,

in mășin-e gerăn-qeymat ră mi-xaridam

این ماشین گرانقیمت را می خریدم.

I would buy this expensive car.

Agar dar qo²e-keši-ye bank barande mi-šodam,

اگر در قرعه کشی بانک برنده می شدم،

If I had won the bank lottery,

mi-tavānestam be safar-e dor-e donyā beravam.

می توانستم به سفر دور دنیا بروم.

I could travel around the world

8 c) Future counterfactual conditionals:

Agar farad bārān nemi-bārid,

اگر فردا باران نمی بارید،

If it was not raining tomorrow,

hatman be ordu-ye tochal mi-raftim.

حتما به اردوی توچال می رفتیم.

would definitely go to the resort camp.

As can be seen, in all three types of counterfactual conditions in the Persian, a symmetrical pattern is found in which the verb of both subordinate and main clauses are in past continuous. This pattern applies to all three types of past, present, and future conditionals, with the adverbs of time or the context specifying whether these conditionals belong to the past, present, or future;

The tense of counterfactual conditionals to which the sentence used with the past

continuous verb refers is determined by non-linguistic and linguistic evidence.

Of course, the past continuous of verbs “to be” and “to have” is also represented as simple past, where the simple past of these two verbs has been used instead of the past continuous in the above examples. However, in addition to this symmetrical pattern, there are another symmetrical patterns and asymmetrical patterns in the past counterfactual conditionals.

In another symmetrical pattern, which is used

only in the past counterfactual conditionals, the verb in both protasis and apodosis are in past participle. In asymmetric patterns, past continuous and past perfect tenses are represented in the protasis and apodosis. If there are modal verbs, the verb is again represented in past continuous (Examples 8a). From a linguistic point of view, asymmetric counterfactual conditionals are the most powerful type found in all macro areas (Qian, 2016). Therefore, Persian is classified among languages that have both symmetrical and asymmetric patterns in the TAM range.

Parameter 2 in typological analysis of counterfactual conditions: TAM range in counterfactual conditionals (intra-clausal markers of counterfactual conditionals)

Intra-clausal markers refer to a range of TAM values that may appear in protasis and apodosis (Hetterle 2015: 82). Intra-clausal markers specify component clauses for characteristics such as tense and aspect. These markers can affect the meanings of complex sentence constructions as much as conjunctives. However, unlike conjunctives, these markers are not considered specialized (Verstraete 2014:

195). Since counterfactual conditionals express imagined situations, it can be expected that these sentences will be considered as purely irrealis (Sun 2007: 798).

In Persian:

According to the data obtained from Persian, only the past marking and prototypical realis operator (past, perfective or imperfective) can be found in counterfactual conditional sentences. We now turn to past marking, perfective and imperfective marking related to the Persian data.

Past Marking, Perfective and Imperfective Marking

Research shows that past markers are key elements, but they appear with other types of verbal markers. This point has been raised by Dahl (1997) as well. The past tense takes place with the verbal operator, which is expected to appear in non-actualized situations. These results are aligned with those reported by Givon (2001:330). He explains that counterfactual conditionals are sometimes marked by a combination of two present verbal inflections (1) a prototypical realis operator (past,

perfective or imperfective), and (2) a prototypical irrealis operator (future, subjunctive, conditional or modal. Steele (1975) contends that the relationship between past tense and conditional sentences is that the core meaning of "past tense" does not lie in the past but something distant from the present reality.

In some cases, the past tense could indicate counterfactuals in some of the languages in Qian's (2016) research sample. The most common occurrence is related to the past tense, with irrealis marking, where the past tenses of the verb with the irrealis prefixation express past counterfactual meaning.

In Persian, all three types of conditions mentioned (examples of which are labelled no. 8), demonstrate that Persian uses past tense to express counterfactual conditionals in three types of past, present and future situations, both with perfective and imperfective marking, which is in line with Givon's view and includes the prototypical realis operator (past, perfective or imperfective). As exhibited by examples 8A, B, and C, past continuous, past perfect, and simple past (for "to be" and "to have" verbs) appear in protasis and apodosis with the simple past and past perfect having a perfective making

and the past continuous having an imperfective marking. It is necessary to mention that in the case of the verb "to be" and "to have", the past continuous and past perfect are usually not used, and simple past is used instead (Anvari-Givi, 1991: 2/48; Mohtashami, 1991: 337)

Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to investigate the typology of counterfactual conditionals in Persian based on previous typological studies including Qian (2016) and Martinez (2018). In this paper, after reviewing theoretical foundations and research background, two parameters of symmetrical and asymmetric construction patterns of counterfactual conditionals and the range of TAM values that appear in protasis and apodosis in counterfactual conditional sentences were investigated and the following results were obtained:

1. In the typological classifications, Persian is one of languages that have past, present and future tenses for counterfactual conditional. Counterfactual sentences in Persian have complex sentence construction.

The protasis is a subordinate clause and acts as an adverbial clause, and there is a subordinative relationship between protasis and apodosis. Counterfactual conditionals in Persian describe a situation that has not taken place and both clauses in counterfactual conditional sentence express a false event with reversal of polarity. These false events suggest how the world would be if the condition had been fulfilled.

2. Also, from a linguistic point of view, Persian is among languages that have both symmetrical and asymmetric patterns. In the symmetrical model of counterfactual conditionals, both protasis and apodosis are used in past continuous tense. This pattern applies to all three types of past, present, and future conditionals, and the adverb of tense or context indicates whether the counterfactual conditionals belong to the past, or present, or future. In another symmetrical pattern, which is used only in the past counterfactual conditionals, the verb of both protasis

and apodosis is in past perfect tense. In asymmetric patterns, past continuous and past perfect tenses appear in the protasis and apodosis. If there are modal verbs, the verb will still be in past continuous.

3. In examining the TAM range in Persian data, it was concluded that in three types of counterfactual conditions in the past, present and future tense, the past tense with perfective or imperfective representation are used. The past continuous, past perfect, and the simple past (for "to be" and "to have" verbs) appear in the protasis and apodosis, where the simple past and past perfect have a perfective appearance and the past continuous has an imperfective appearance. It is important to note that in the case of the verb "to be" and "to have", the past continuous and the past perfect tenses are usually not used, and in both cases, the simple past is preferred.

Therefore, it can be concluded from the study of important parameters in the counterfactual conditions and research findings that Persian is

one of the languages in which there are counterfactual conditional sentences for the past, present and future tenses. The counterfactual conditions in Persian have a complex sentence construction and protasis acts as a subordinate clause. Also counterfactual conditions have both symmetrical and asymmetric morphological

patterns. In these patterns, both protasis and apodosis are used in the past continuous and past perfect tenses. There are two different TAM ranges in Persian. In all three types of counterfactual conditions for the past, present and future tenses, the past tense is used, whether with perfective or imperfective appearance.

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تحلیل رده‌شناختی خلاف‌واقع‌ها در زبان فارسی

زهرا عباسی^۱، هادی یعقوبی‌نژاد^۲

چکیده: هدف این مقاله مشارکت در مطالعات صورت گرفته در حوزه خلاف واقعیت از طریق بررسی شرطی‌های خلاف‌واقع در زبان فارسی است. با توجه به یافته‌های مطالعات رده‌شناختی در حوزه شرطی‌های خلاف‌واقع در زبان‌های مختلف، جملات شرطی خلاف‌واقع در زبان فارسی بررسی شده است. به منظور مطالعه رده‌شناسی، دو پارامتر اصلی مورد بررسی قرار گرفت: الگوهای متقارن و نامتقارن ساختواژی در جملات شرطی خلاف‌واقع و طیف TAM در بند پیش‌شرط و جواب شرط در زبان فارسی. همچنین در این راستا مفاهیم اصلی شرطی‌های خلاف‌واقع از جمله ساخت جمله‌ای غیربسیط، موقعیت تصور شده‌ای که رخ نداده و رخ داده‌های ساختگی مورد بررسی قرار گرفته اند. این پژوهش از نوع کتابخانه‌ای است و داده‌های مورد نیاز از پایگاه داده زبان فارسی (PLDB) استخراج شده است. یافته‌ها نشان می‌دهد جملات شرطی خلاف‌واقع فارسی دارای ساخت جمله‌ای غیربسیط و بند شرط بند پیرو محسوب می‌شود و در دسته‌بندی‌های رده‌شناختی زبان فارسی دارای جمله شرطی خلاف واقع برای زمان‌های گذشته حال و آینده است. همچنین در طیف TAM جملات شرطی خلا واقع هم الگوی متقارن دارند و هم الگوی نامتقارن. در الگوهای متقارن و نامتقارن در جمله شرطی خلاف‌واقع هر دو بند شرط و جواب شرط ماضی استمرای و ماضی بعید به کار می‌رود. در سه نوع شرطی خلاف‌واقع برای زمان گذشته حال و آینده از زمان گذشته استفاده می‌کند به همراه نمود کامل و یا ناکامل.

واژه‌های کلیدی: شرطی خلاف‌واقع، رده‌شناسی، طیف TAM (Tense-Aspect-Mood)، ساخت جمله‌ای غیربسیط، ابزار پیوندی.

^۱ استادیار آموزش زبان و ادبیات فارسی، دانشگاه تربیت مدرس، تهران، ایران (نویسنده مسئول).

E-mail: abasiz@modares.ac.ir

^۲ استادیار آموزش زبان انگلیسی، دانشگاه کوثر، بجنورد، ایران.

E-mail: h.yaghoubinezhad@gmail.com