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## **Conversational Repairs in Persian Dramatic Discourse: Akbar Radi's *Pellekân* (The Steps)**

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### **Abstract**

The present study is an attempt to investigate conversational repair phenomenon in Persian dramatic discourse and it tries to check the presence of any predominant preference for employing a specific type of repair rather than the others in the context of Persian drama. To reach the aforementioned purpose, Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks's (1977) framework has been adopted and applied to Akbar Radi's (1989) five-act play called *Pellekân* (The Steps). The results of the study indicated different applications of repair in each act and the findings of Schegloff, et al. (1977) regarding this phenomenon were also recognized in the current investigation of Persian dramatic discourse. As a systematic sample of a real talk, the characters of *Pellekân* preferred to have self-correction as their repair strategy rather than using other-correction in their conversations and negotiations of meaning. Furthermore, a tendency toward self-repair and more specifically, other-initiated self-repair was seen through the whole play. These findings indicate that the playwright has had a tendency to portray the acts in a way quite similar to real-life context. The current findings suggest that Persian drama as a representative of an ordinary talk has a similar preference toward self-correction. It is highly recommended that the interested researchers study other Persian plays to ensure whether they are also in line with the findings of the current study.

**Keywords:** Conversational Repair, Dramatic Discourse, Persian Drama, Self-repair, Other-repair, Akbar Radi

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### Introduction

As a source of discourse study, dramatic dialogue is a genre of literature that is not the exact representation of naturally occurring everyday conversations, but it is greatly similar to it (Short, 1996). In ordinary dialogues, it is the feedback mechanism that highlights this similarity. In the same manner, in dramatic dialogues, there are small overlaps between the initial point of the second utterance and the end of the previous one that accentuate this point of similarity. This is mostly employed in dramatic dialogues in order to provide a “realistic feel” (Short, 1996, p. 179) to the intended discourse; however, the rule that the participants should not talk at the same time and each individual should take turns and contribute to the discourse is mostly observed in both conversations. Another point of similarity is specific turn-taking patterns that represent the significant role of one character compared to the other ones in both types of conversations (Short, 1996).

In line with what short (1996) stated about the similarities between these two types of conversations, Burton (1980) states that: “drama scripts are markedly tidied-up versions of talk, adhering closely to the two rules that Sacks (1970) declares are the most basic conversational rules available (Sacks, 1970), that is 'one party speaks at a time' and 'speaker change recurs' ”(p. 115); however, it should be considered that dramatic discourse “is generally far more 'powerful', rhetorically and otherwise, than in its social usage, since it is subject to far greater compositional or oratorical constraints than in any other mode of discourse except literature or oratory itself” (Elam, 1977, p. 147). The difference that Short (1996) believed to be existed between everyday conversations and dramatic dialogues is that in real-life dialogues, while the speakers are conversing with one another, they naturally think about a series of sentences without any effort, in a very short time. In other words, nothing is written, a continuum of sentences is presented dynamically without considerable contemplation. In contrast, dramatic dialogues are “written-to-be-spoken” (Short, 1996, p. 174) and the presence of audience along with the related requirements of this presence are the crucial elements that need serious contemplation. As a consequence, the latter type of conversation is known as “overdetermined” (Herman, 1991, p. 99).

A typical approach to the study of the interactions between participants in everyday conversation and in dramatic discourse is Conversation Analysis (CA). This approach focuses on comprehensive analysis of the processes participants employ during interactions. Moreover, it views the ordinary conversation as the simplest form of talk that conversation analysts can take advantage from. The reason is that in this type of discourse, people are gathered, the information is exchanged, and the social relation is negotiated and maintained. When conversations come to sequence and structure, some significant aspects become of paramount importance. These aspects include adjacency pairs, conversational openings and closings, feedbacks, preference organizations, turn takings, and conversational repairs (Partlidge, 2006).

The repair phenomenon has been investigated comprehensively within the grounds of CA. Since dramatic discourse is highly similar to real-life conversations, the type of repairs that exist in the former would be extremely important in that they portray the exchanges which may also happen in real life context. In 1977, this phenomenon was introduced for the first time by Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks. As a definition,

“Repair is a speech activity during which speakers locate and replace a prior information unit. Because they focus on prior information, repairs achieve information transitions anaphorically - forcing speakers to adjust their orientation to what has been said before they respond to it in upcoming talk” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 74).

In simple terms, conversational repair refers to any effort made by the participants engaged in a conversation in order to deal with the problems of communication. These problems include pauses, hesitations, cutoffs, comprehension impediments, and or production of specific utterances.

The last two decades witnessed the blossoming of the importance of repair phenomena and its comprehensive investigations in the realm of conversation analysis (Mehrabi, 2011). Several research studies have been carried out in order

to report the repair phenomenon in English conversations (e.g. Goodwin, 1987; McHoul, 1990; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977; Wei, 1998). Generally, what all of these investigations substantiate is that they all consent with what Schegloff, et al. (1977) describe as repair phenomenon in English language. If any divergence exists between the investigations regarding this issue, it would be relevant to their repair initiators and syntactic structures. Although scarce, a few studies have also been carried out in order to discuss this phenomenon in other languages (Mehrabi, 2011); however, this phenomenon is less investigated in Persian language and further research is needed to explore it in different genres and from different points of view (Moghadamkia & Heidarpour, 2011).

Following the same purpose, the current investigation takes a conversational analysis approach to present a descriptive account of repair phenomenon in a Persian drama called *Pellekân* (Radi, 1989). Thus, the purpose of this study is twofold. First, different types of repair instances in each act are identified. Then, counts of occurrences of each repair and their distribution among different acts of the play that the Persian playwright, Akbar Radi, employed to provide a representative sample of daily conversation are reported and discussed. In other words, this study takes steps toward understanding the playwright's views about real-life discourse and realizing the possible preferences for a specific type of repair rather than others in the context of Persian drama.

### **The Framework of Study**

Repair is a kind of treatment which is used to resolve the troubles of spontaneous talks (Schegloff, et al., 1977). This process is performed with the intention of providing clear and sufficient information for the participants of the conversation and obviating any conversational failures (Philip, 2008). According to Kasper (1985), for Schegloff, et al. (1977) repairs are initiated when a source of trouble exists in the speaker's utterance. The trouble sources which are often called *repairable* initiate a repair and can be recognized by the same person who produces the repairable utterance, i.e. *self*, or by the interlocutor of the conversation, i.e. *other*. In both types, the trouble source can be resolved by the speaker him or by the other participant of the conversation. Self-initiated repairs, contrary to those that are performed by others and occur in the second turn, are

performed by the producer of the trouble source and they take place either in the same turn that the repairable is uttered or in the third turn. These types of repairs utilize various “non-lexical speech perturbations, e.g. cut-offs, sound stretches, 'uh's etc.” (Schegloff, et. al., 1977, p. 367) to indicate that a repair-initiation is likely to happen. In Persian language these initiators are *coughs, uh, ohum, and stretches of sounds*. Further initiators in Persian are the phrases like *how to say it, what I mean is that, and I mean* (Moghadamkia & Heidarpour, 2011). Considering the second type i.e. other-initiated repair, there are instances which are initiated by the other participants in the second turn and are repaired by the same person who produces the repairable, in the third turn. Other instances of repairs are both initiated and repaired in the second turn by the other participants of the conversation. It should be noticed that other-initiated repairs employ a collection of *turn-constructural devices* to start the repair; for instance, using *Huh* or *What* or question words like *who, where, when* or *partial repeat of the trouble-source turn, plus a question word or partial repeat of the trouble-source turn* or the *Y' mean plus a possible understanding of prior turn* (Schegloff, et al., 1977, pp. 367-368). In Persian language, partial repeat of the trouble-source turn plus a question word or partial repeat of the trouble-source turn is similarly followed. Moreover, the initiators might be *hah*, or *what*, or question words like *when, where, and who* or phrases like *I mean, or what I mean is that*. The repair types which happen in second turn are signaled by the word *or* or the phrases like *what I mean is that* and in the fourth turn, they are indicated by *no* and *I didn't mean that* (Jasperson, 1998, p. 13).

Another vital issue regarding this framework is the preference for self-correction rather than other correction. According to Schegloff, et al. (1977) “self-correction and other-correction are related organizationally, with self-correction preferred to other-correction” (p. 362). Moreover, “Even casual inspection of talk in interaction finds self-correction vastly more common than other-correction” (p. 362).

In the present study, Schegloff, et al.'s (1977) framework was employed in order to identify the instances of each repair type. Afterwards, these instances were counted to find the dominant preference for the use of a specific repair type rather than the other in the whole play.

There are four major types of repair based on the patterns of participation in the repair sequence (Schegloff, et al., 1977). Table 1, can clearly show the kinds and classification of repair types in this research.

Table 1.

*Repair Types According to Initiators and Conversational Turns*

	Self-repair	Other-repair
Self-initiated	S-S: Same or third turn	S-O: Second turn
Other initiated	O-S: Third turn	O-O: Second turn

When the repair is initiated, then it can be clarified by the same person who produced the trouble source to modify his/her utterance or by the other person engaging in the conversation. Considering the source of trouble, self-initiated and other-initiated repairs may have different positions. For example, the former may have an initiation in three core positions. It may be placed in the same turn where the repairable exists or it may be positioned in the transition space. The third possibility is that of its placement in the third turn. In contrast, the latter may have initiation in only one core position i.e. the next turn after the turn in which the repairable is uttered (Kasper, 1985).

### ***Pellekân (The Steps)***

*Pellekân*, a five-act play depicts the fortune of a character named Bolbol from poverty to prosperity. The setting of this dramatic discourse is north of Iran, in a village. Each of these acts considers this character in a different circumstance of life. For instance, in the first one which is called *That Rainy Night*, the story starts in a wooden coffee house in a rural district in north of Iran in 1954 and depicts the protagonist of the play in a poor life condition. In this act, Bolbol, a young man who is tired of his life, decides to start a business to make money. He together with the help of Masolehei, the master of the village and for whom

Bolbol's mother works, and another character named Kasali, has stolen Agha Gol's only way of living and income, his cow and its calf. Agha Gol helplessly decides to go to Rasht city to pass his lifetime.

On the contrary, the last act of the play named *The Pause*, portrays the same person seventeen years later sitting on a Louis chair in his big house located in one of the luxurious districts of Tehran. Bolbol who is now a tycoon, has a son named Sa'id who is studying in America and he is under the pressure of his father and mother to marry a beautiful girl from another rich family. At the end of the story, after Bolbol divides his huge wealth between his only son and his wife, while playing with his diamonds, feels that the death is close, remembers his crimes and then he dies. *At the End of the Fog* (1956), *The Winter of our City* (1961), and *The Sun for Soliman* (1971) are the three other acts of the play, respectively. Except Bolbol and a few other characters, according to the context of each act which is totally apart from the previous or subsequent ones, different characters are introduced and then fade away during the story. This play is selected for the present repair study on the grounds that it provides its readers with dialogues containing a range of diverse repair structures. Thus, it is promising to investigate the possible similarities and differences that may exist among different acts of the play which the playwright has utilized in order to introduce the characters of the play and the repair types employed to illustrate the poverty and poor condition or prosperity and wealth.

### Results and Discussion

As it has been stated previously, conversational repair refers to the efforts that the participants of the conversation make in order to cope with inadequacies of communication (Schegloff et al. 1977). With the intention of identifying the repair instances and the repair preferences of characters throughout the whole play, Schegloff et al.'s (1977) definition and organization system of repair was adopted. Thus, counts of occurrences of each repair type along with different instances are provided to see if the same preferences are observed in the present

discourse and to know which act has the highest number of repair structures. Table 2, summarizes the results of this analysis and it is quite revealing in several ways which will be elaborated on in the following.

Table 2.  
*Counts of Occurrences of Each Repair Type*

Act	Self-initiated, self-repair	Other-initiated, self-repair	Self-initiated, other-repair	Other-initiated, other-repair
<i>One</i>	2	8	0	0
<i>Two</i>	1	14	0	0
<i>Three</i>	3	5	1	0
<i>Four</i>	2	4	2	0
<i>five</i>	1	5	0	1
<i>Total</i>	9	36	3	1

The first point to mention is that forty-nine clear instances of repair phenomenon were identified through the whole play. Second, in only one instance does the other character both initiates and clarifies a repair. That is to say, in this instance, the other person initiated the repair and then the same person repaired the trouble-source in the same turn:

4.1 Sa'id: But if something happened, your situation...

→Bolbol: Which situation? I like my home land.

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 150,)

In this example, which occurs in the act five, *Sa'id*, *Bolbol's* son, utters an incomplete sentence. Then, *Bolbol*, the other participant of the dialogue considers this incompleteness as a trouble source and poses a WH question and partially repeats the trouble source in order to implicitly request for repetition and clarification. Then, the same person does not provide any chance for the other participant to take turn and complete the sentence. Immediately after initiating the repair and identifying the trouble source in the second turn, the repair solution is provided, the sentence is completed and the conversation is resumed. This is entirely consistent with Schegloff et al.'s (1977) repair organization system. That is to say, other-initiated, other-repair corroborates the grading system and like

other discourses, it is the least preferred repair type in the present dramatic discourse as well.

Third, self-initiated, self-repair with nine instances was much preferred over self-initiated, other-repair with only three examples. This type of repair can be initiated in the same turn that the trouble source is stated, be placed in turn transition spaces, or be located in the third turn (Schegloff et al., 1977). One evident case of this type was recognized in the fourth act when Alias was trying to convince Bolbol that Soliman is an honest person and he did not commit any fault:

4.2 → Alias: But your Excellency engineer you must believe that Soliman is an unlucky man. He is reasonable, he is not one of the pickets. I mean, there is a mistake here, sir!

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 107, Fourth act)

Using the signal phrase *I mean* in this example evidently depicts that the speaker is trying to follow the maxims of quantity and manner. In other words, the speaker tries to be concise, clear and unambiguous. Thus, when he recognizes this violation and the need for repair in the first turn, he signals the repair and expresses what he means in much simpler terms in the same turn.

Similarly, in another example Bolbol is talking to Haji Nor:

→Bolbol: This is useful for all of us. Me, Soliman, the others. (p. 116, Fourth act)

Looking at this example demonstrates another instance of self-initiated self-repair which has happened in the same turn. In this example, the speaker first utters the pronoun *us* and then understands that his talk may be nebulous for the interlocutor. Thus, he finishes his sentence and then starts a new one and tries to clarify his stated pronoun by adding more information and telling who he means in order to be perfect and definite. This example is what Schegloff et al. (1977) have referred to as “person references” (p. 370). In a similar vein, to illustrate another example, in the third act of the play Askandar, Bolbol’s pupil, is worried

about his sick wife and since he had to take his wife to the hospital, he is begging Bolbol for money:

4.3 Askandar: Take it from my salary in six months!

Bolbol: Are you sure that you can stay in one place for six months?

→Askandar: I... I must! Today... Now... I must take her to hospital!

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 76, Third act)

In this case, *Askandar* both initiates and repairs himself in the same turn in order to talk precisely and sufficiently. First, he says the word *Today*. Then the same participant considers a trouble in his utterance. That is to say, he fails to be precise and to the point. Thus, he pauses and repairs his utterance by replacing it with a more accurate word, which means not any time during today, but exactly right now. Therefore, he employs the word *Now* to indicate that he needs the intended money at the moment. Other instances of this type of repair are discussed in the following.

4.4 Agha Gol: What time was it KablehDa'i?

→KablehDa'i: Nine, half past nine, maybe ten! I can't remember well.

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 16, First act)

In this example, it seems that the speaker in the second turn is talking about an uncertain thing. In other words, when Agha Gol asks the other participant about the time of incident, KablehDa'i is not completely sure about the exact time. Thus, first he states *nine* then he repairs himself by replacing a more accurate phrase, i.e. *half past nine* and then he again considers this utterance as imprecise and problematic and tries to correct himself by saying *maybe ten*. After these attempts, in order to correct himself and to be accurate, KablehDa'i regards all of his efforts as a trouble source. He pauses, starts a new sentence, and replaces them with a more general sentence *it was the end of night, you know*. The reason for performing this repair may be attributable to the speaker's tendency to be truthful and to avoid dishonesties. Thus, he generalized what he had uttered in a new sentence. It can be stated that this type of repair is self-initiated, self-repair in the same turn. In another case, at first the speaker states *stand up man*, then he himself completes and repairs what he has uttered.

4.5 →Mashdi Agha: Nothing will happen with this attitude! Stand up man!  
Stand up and do something!

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 25, First act)

What is meant by saying *stand up man* is definitely not the prevalent meaning of standing up. By saying this phrase, the speaker is encouraging or asking the interlocutor to do something, to take an action. In other words, before the other person asks for a repair by using sentences like “What on earth should I stand up for?” the speaker considers his own utterance as a trouble source, pauses and repairs himself by expanding and replacing a more definite sentence. This type of repair is self-initiated and it is accomplished in the same turn.

So much for self-initiated, self-repair. Self-initiated other-repair had three evident examples in the present play. This type of repair gets accomplished in the second turn, subsequent to the turn where the trouble source is stated and where the repair is initiated. As an illustration, in a conversation between Haji Nor and Bolbol in act four:

4.6 Bolbol: Is Jalal that lame man that you said, Mashallah said... (He can't remember.) What did he say?

Haji Nor: It was about last night, sir. When we locked the lavatory door...

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 114, Fourth act)

What is remarkable about this example is Bolbol's effort to express the best of what he has heard. To be exact, he knows what Mashallah has said, but he cannot exactly remember and in order to be accurate and concise, he starts to search for the best illustrative sentence, then as he fails, he pauses and asks his interlocutor to complete the expression and repair his sentence. Thus in the second turn, the utterance is completed and the proper explanation is provided by Haji Nor.

Another important result of the current investigation that deserves serious hindsight is that of other-initiated, self-repair. As discussed formerly, in this type of repair the repairable is uttered by the first person in the first turn and the repair was initiated by the other person in the second turn. Then, in the third turn, it is repaired by the first person i.e., the same person who stated the trouble-source. In the present study, this type of repair had thirty-six instances through the whole

play. This result is also extremely consistent with Schegloff et al.'s (1977) organization of repair. For instance, in the following example, *Askandar* arrives upset and worried. Bolbol starts the dialogue and says:

4.7 Bolbol: Surprised, you are not late! Did you do the shopping?

Askandar: No, I went to my house.

Bolbol: You went where? You left my family without its daily bread and went to your own house?

→Askandar: ...

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 95, Third act)

In this example, Bolbol asks a question and Askandar provides a surprising reply in an incomplete way and does not explain any further. Since he violates the maxim of quantity, the need for repair is initiated by the other interlocutor. Therefore, Bolbol, by reiterating the trouble source and asking for repetition and confirmation initiates the repair. In the subsequent turn, Askandar does not give any response and remains silent; however, this silence does not mean that Askandar is indifferent. It means *Yes, I did*, but because he is ashamed of what he has done, he prefers to convey his meaning by refusing to provide any answer. In other words, this is an implicit way the participant of the conversation has utilized in order to clarify the trouble source but in an unspoken way.

As an alternative instance, in case 4.9, Balajeh does not give as much information as required. Moreover, his words seem not to be truthful for the interlocutor or not to be supported by any evidence. Therefore, the need for clarification, explicit affirmation, and addition of proper information is mandatory. Hence, Bolbol initiates the repair by partially repeating the trouble source. Since in the next turn Balajeh both adds more information and confirms what has been uttered, this is an evident example of repair, which is done by other. Similarly, in example 4.10, the repairable is produced by Kableh Da'i and it is recognized by Agha Gol. Thus, Agha Gol initiates the repair by asking a question containing the repairable. In other words, the repairable is produced by saying an incomplete statement and then the repair is initiated by the receiver of the message in the second turn through posing a question and repeating the trouble source. In the next turn, the imperfect utterance is repaired by Kableh

Da'i. This is an example of other initiate, self-repair by the one who utters the repairable.

4.8 Balajeh: You wanted a mouse...I am that mouse!

Bolbol: You?

→Balajeh: Yes. I placed the stone. I corroded the pipe as well.

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 117, Fourth act)

4.9 KablehDa'i: Last night when I was going to close up, from that forest road which goes behind Agha Gol's hut... (He puts the cups of tea in front of the men.) and these are two first class teas!

Agha Gol: Behind of our hut? What happened next, Kableh Da'i?

→KablehDa'i: I think there was the sound of an engine. It seems there was a lorry.

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 15, First act)

In another example, the repairable is produced by *Kableh Da'i* by uttering the word "lorry". The next turn consists of a question with only one word i.e., "A lorry?". Here, *Mashdi Agha* initiates the repair by asking a one-word question which repeats the exact word of the repairable.

4.10 Kableh Da'i: I think there was the sound of an engine. It seems there was a lorry.

Mashdi Agha: A lorry?

→Kableh Da'i: By God, It seems so, yes! But, I didn't see it! I think it went in low gear.

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 15, First act)

Thus, the repair is initiated by the other person in the second turn and consequently it is repaired by self, in the third turn.

Another instance of the same kind was also seen:

4.11 Kableh Da'i: Upon your life Mashdi, no! Bolbol saw it, too! Go and ask him.

Agha Gol: Bolbol? What did he say?

→Kableh Da'i: He says it was a lorry, as well. He says when it came from the lane into the road, it went at 80!

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 16, First act)

Here, the repairable is uttered by Kableh Da'i by saying the word *Bolbol* in *Bolbol saw it, too*. As it can be seen, in the second turn Agha Gol initiates the repair by repeating the exact word of the repairable in a question form and it is repaired, by the person who produced it, in the third turn. Nevertheless, it should be noticed that this question is followed by another question, which seeks for another trouble in the conversation, i.e. incompleteness of the utterance. When Kableh Da'i starts repairing the previous structure, he does not repair what has initially been asked to be repaired. But, it seems that KablehDa'i takes the answer of the first inquiry for granted and decides to answer the second one. In other words, the answer is implicated in the next statement. To be more specific, it can be said that the proper answer to the repair initiator was probably a sentence like *yes, Bolbol*, but Kableh Da'i completes his utterance only by saying *He says it was a lorry, as well. He says when it came from the lane into the road, it went at 80*, not providing any explicit answer to the first request. Since meaning negotiation is successful and no further dialogue is established regarding this blockade, it can be definitely concluded that it was a successful type of negotiation with no further need of repair and thus an example of other initiate, self-repair in the third turn.

Similarly, another interesting example of other-initiation, self-repair was the following part of the conversation in which the repair is initiated in the second turn by Bolbol when asking two separate questions as initiator signals. One is *a lorry*, and the other is *who said that*. That is to say, similar to the previous instance in which two types of initiator signals were indicated by the other interlocutor of the conversation in the second turn, in this example also two different initiator signals are uttered. It seems that *a lorry* is the repairable and it is repeated in the question form in the second turn to initiate the repair. Moreover, a WH question is added subsequently as another indication of the need for repair. Then, these signals start the repair and accomplish it in the third turn by the same person who utters the repairable.

4.12 Agha Gol: Bolbol? Did you see a lorry around our house?

Bolbol: A lorry? Who said that?

→Agha Gol: Da'i said you've seen it as well.

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 21, First act)

One thing that should be taken into consideration is that the first question i.e. *a lorry?*, is not assumed as important as the second question, i.e. *who said that?*, in that Agha Gol did not answer this question overtly and he merely said *Da'i said you've seen it as well*. In other words, the answer to the first initiator signal is implicitly combined with the second one, therefore, there is no need to reply the first question. The standard conversation would be similar to the following.

4.13 Agha Gol: Bolbol? Did you see a lorry around our house?

Bolbol: A lorry?

→ Agha Gol: Yes. A lorry.

Bolbol: Who said that?

→Agha Gol: Da'i said you've seen it as well.

Nevertheless, the line, which states *yes. A lorry* is removed from the conversation and it is implicated in the second statement in favor of answering the second question and repairing the whole utterance. In this sample, one instance of other-initiation which is followed by a self-repair in the third turn is obvious.

In the following, three other examples of other-initiation, self-repair are reported. In the first one, the listener is not confident about the meaning of *a huge thing*. Therefore, he initiates the repair by uttering a question to assure himself and negotiate the meaning. In other words, Enayát initiates the repair and waits for Bolbol to repair the trouble source. This case is an example of other-initiate self-repair in the third turn:

4.14 Bolbol: ...I was going down the lane, with the tray on my head when a huge thing appeared in front of me!

Enayát: Was it the lorry?

→Bolbol: Yes, it was. It was going in the direction of Masolehei's garden.

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 21, First act)

The second instance is a conversation between Enayát and Bolbol. In the first turn of this conversation, Enayát says: *I wish you had written down his number*, and by uttering this sentence Bolbol understands the implicated meaning behind Enayát's utterance so changes this covert meaning into manifest words and says *Are you saying that Tala and her calf were in the lorry?* .

4.15 Enayát: I wish you had written down its number!

Bolbol: God bless you. In that darkness? ... Are you saying that Tala and her calf were in the lorry?

→Enayát: Maybe they were. Who knows?

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 22, First act)

Adding the phrase *are you saying that* to the implicated part of the previous turn is done in order to initiate the repair. Then, in the subsequent turn, the repair is accomplished and the utterance is ended with a rhetorical question.

In the third example, the repair is initiated by the other i.e. Mashdi Agha in the second turn and it is repaired by the same person who has uttered the repairable in the third turn.

4.16 Bolbol: The lorry had a tarpaulin.

Mashdi Agha: Tarpaulin?

→Bolbol: I think so.

(*Pellekân*, 1989: 22, First act)

### Conclusion

The current article presented a descriptive account of conversational repairs in Akbar Radi's five-act play called *Pellekân (The Steps)* in order to understand the playwright's interpretations about everyday discourse. Furthermore, this study tried to investigate the possible preferences for a particular kind of repair rather than another in the context of Persian drama. To reach these objectives, Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks's (1977) framework was taken into consideration. The results of the study indicated different utilizations of repair phenomenon in each act. The investigation of repair procedures in this dramatic

discourse revealed that in line with Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks's (1977) framework, the most commonly occurring type of repair is self-repair. More specifically, out of forty-nine instances, other-initiated self-repair with thirty-six examples was the most favorable repair type. Afterwards, self-initiated, self-repair with nine instances and self-initiated, other-repair with three instances were in second and third positions, respectively. At the end, other-initiated, other-repair with merely one instance was placed in the last position. These findings represent the tendency of the playwright to depict the acts in a way similar to real life context. That is to say, one primarily prefers to repair himself by his own before any person pinpoints his trouble in an utterance and start to ask for a repair in a real-life context. On average, it can be concluded that the repair system in this Persian dramatic discourse is oriented towards expressing the preference for self-repairs rather than other-repairs.

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