Persian Perception Verbs

Background & Goals

Background

Persian perception verbs (e.g., ḡarān, ḡalān, sītān) have been an ongoing topic of research in linguistics and philosophy of language (e.g., Dretzke 1969, Akmajian 1977, Barwise 1981, Evans and Wilkins 2000, Jackendoff 2007, Galton 2008, Asudeh and Toomanian 2012, Poukriel 2018).

• Syntax: one of the central issues has been defining what types of complements these verbs take and how and why these complements vary among perception verbs.

• Semantics: one of the key questions is to determine the sorts of macro-roles (ACTOR, UNDERGOER, LOCATION; Foley and Van Valin 1984) and thematic roles (e.g., EXPERIENCER, AGENT, STIMULUS) to assign to the subjects and complements of Persian compredicates and to determine what relationship they have to the event or situation described by the clause that the perception verb heads.

Table 1: Persian Perception Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persian Verb</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ḡarān</td>
<td>feel, notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḡalān</td>
<td>see, perceive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sītān</td>
<td>listen, hear</td>
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Goals

1. An analysis of perception verbs in Persian (including complex predicates) that also accounts for semantic entailments of perception verbs.

2. An account of Persian complex predicates using Glue Semantics.

A discussion of how the structure of Persian complex predicates reveals the conceptual argument structure of perception constructions with regards to language, English, where this is hidden by fuller lexicalization.

Complex Predicates

Persian verbal constructions are of two main kinds: simplex/fully lexicalized verbs and complex predicates (CPRED).

- **Simple predicates:** These are verbs that do not take any arguments.
- **Complex predicates:** These are verbs that take arguments.

- **Example:**
  - Simple predicate: ḡarān
  - Complex predicate: ḡarān + subject + object + other arguments

Components of Complex Predicates

- **PVE:** Persian Complex Verb (e.g., ḡarān, ḡalān, sītān).
- **PVP:** Persian Complex Predicate (e.g., ḡarān + subject + object + other arguments).
- **PP:** Persian Phrase (e.g., subject + object + other arguments).

Complex predicates and Persian perception verbs

- **The light verbs in the vast majority of Persian complex predicates are the following:**
  - ḡarān (to feel/notice)
  - ḡalān (to see/perceive)
  - sītān (to listen/hear)

Analysis

V′ \rightarrow PVE \rightarrow V

Complex predicate c-structure rule

PVE = \{A \mid N \mid PP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Persian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>ḡarān</td>
<td>'I smelled the food.'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḡalān</td>
<td>'I saw the book.'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some Consequences

- **Comparison to Previous Approaches**
  - Lowe (1993) proposes the notion of a complex predicate as something that includes Greek-type light verbs and main verbs. This notion is implicit in the verbs but also in the substantive approach of Lowe (1993).
  - Lowe's approach emphasizes the syntax of complex predication and the LFG+Glue approach emphasizes the semantics, but neither approach captures the full lexicalization of light verbs.

- **Comparison to Prior Work**
  - ALSINA and BUTT (1990) propose a theory of complex predication in which complex predication is not reified.

- **Comparison to Lowe's Analysis**
  - Lowe's approach emphasizes the syntax of complex predication and the LFG+Glue approach emphasizes the semantics, but neither approach captures the full lexicalization of light verbs.

- **Comparison to Prior Work**
  - Lowe (1993) proposes a theory of complex predication in which complex predication is not reified.
  - Lowe's approach emphasizes the syntax of complex predication and the LFG+Glue approach emphasizes the semantics, but neither approach captures the full lexicalization of light verbs.