

## Abstract

### A Typology of Persian Complex Predicates

One of the major issues in Persian linguistics is the study of light verb constructions, verbal constructions that consist of a nonverbal element and a light verb combining to form a single predicate. These constructions are of particular interest for a study of event structure and shed light on the interface properties between the lexical and syntactic components. In this paper, I compile the results of past research on the behavior of light verb constructions in Persian and provide a typology of these complex predicates based on their syntactic and semantic properties.

Persian light verb constructions have been the focus of much research, since they lie at the center of a number of linguistic issues: One main concern in the study of light verb constructions has been the determination of the components of meaning in these predicates and their close correlation with structure. Investigation of the interdependencies between the nonverbal element and the light verb, and the constraints on the expression of their arguments is fundamental to a theory of lexical semantics. The dual lexical and syntactic behavior of these verbs is also crucial to the study of the interface between the various linguistic components.

In this paper, I examine a variety of verbal constructions in Persian by bringing together past research on the subject. The investigation of the syntactic properties of these complex predicates, such as causative alternation possibilities, argument structure, aspectual properties, and the interdependence of the nonverbal element and the light verb, undertaken in numerous works such as Barjasteh (1998), Dabir-Moghaddam (1982), Dabir-Moghaddam (1997), Goldberg (1996), Kahnemuyipour (2004), Karimi (1997), Karimi-Doostan (1997), Khanlari (1986), Megerdooomian (2002), Sadeghi (1993), Samvelian (2001) and Vahedi-Langrudi (1996), lead to a systematic classification of light verb constructions. These results are combined with an examination of online Persian corpora, which provide new insight into the properties of complex verbs that allow the separation of their components within the clause. Along with Folli, Harley and Karimi (forthcoming), I argue that the properties of the light verb constructions provide strong evidence for a constructionist approach, rather than a system where all properties are projected from the lexicon. By adopting a compositional approach to verb construal, closely based on Hale and Keyser (2002), the paper works toward a delineation of the meaning components of verbal predicates and the general principles governing their composition.

The paper provides a complete description of Persian complex predicates by compiling past researches and augmenting them with a study of online corpora. The investigation of the close relation between meaning and structure furthers the development of a theory of the lexicon-syntax interface.

# 1 Bibliography

- Barjasteh, Darab. 1998. *Morphology, Syntax, and Semantics of Persian Compound Verbs: A Lexical Approach*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois.
- Dabir-Moghaddam, Mohammad. 1997. Compound Verbs in Persian. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences*, 27(2):25–59, Fall.
- Dabir-Moghaddam, Mohammad. 1982. *Syntax and Semantics of Causative Constructions in Persian*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- Folli, Raffaella, Heidi Harley and Simin Karimi. forthcoming. Determinants of Event Type in Persian Complex Predicates. *Lingua*.
- Goldberg, Adele. 1996. Words by Default: Optimizing Constraints and the Persian Complex Predicate. In *Berkeley Linguistic Society 22*.
- Hale, Ken and Samuel Jay Keyser. 2002. *Prolegomenon to a Theory of Argument Structure*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Kahnemuyipour, Arsalan. 2004. *The Syntax of Sentential Stress*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto.
- Karimi, Simin. 1997. Persian Complex Verbs: Idiomatic or Compositional. *Lexicology*, 3(2):273–318.
- Karimi-Doostan, Mohamad-Reza. 1997. *Light Verb Constructions in Persian*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Essex.
- Khanlari, Parviz. 1986. *Tarix-e zaʕban-e farsi (A History of the Persian Language) - 3 volume set*. Tehran, Iran: Nashr-e Now Publishing Company.
- Megerdooimian, Karine. 2002. *Beyond Words and Phrases: A Unified Theory of Predicate Composition*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Southern California.
- Sadeghi, A. 1993. On denominative verbs in Persian. In *Farsi Language and the Language of Science*, Tehran, Iran. University Press. pp. 236-246.
- Samvelian, Pollet. 2001. Les Compléments d’Objet “Nus” en Persan: Incorporation ou Non? *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*.
- Vahedi-Langrudi, Mohammad-Mehdi. 1996. *The Syntax, Semantics and Argument Structure of Complex Predicates in Modern Farsi*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Ottawa.