

Determinants of event type in Persian complex predicates^{*}

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In this paper we analyse the interdependence of Persian nonverbal (NV) element and the light verb (LV) in determining the syntactic properties, the event structure, and the alternation possibilities of the entire complex predicate (CP) and we argue that these properties provide strong evidence against a Lexicalist approach to such phenomena. Further we show how these facts may be naturally accommodated within a constructionalist position such as Hale and Keyser (1993, 2002), and argue that the combination of compositionality and syntactic independence effects observed in these constructions, are difficult, if not impossible, to deal with in a projectionist approach.

1 INTRODUCTION

It has been argued in the literature that the argument and event structures of Persian *complex predicates* (CPr), as well as syntactic properties such as control, cannot be simply derived from the lexical specifications of the *nonverbal element* (NV) or the *light verb* (LV), therefore suggesting that the syntactic and semantic properties of these elements must be determined post syntactically rather than in the lexicon (Karimi 1997). In this paper, we show that the event structure of LV is not always the same as the event structure of its heavy counterpart. Furthermore, although LV determines the *agentivity* (*xordan* 'collide' versus *zadan* 'hit') and the eventiveness of the CPr, it fails to completely determine the event structure and the telicity of the CPr. Thus, depending on the NV element, the same LV may occur in different types of event structure. For example, the LV *xordan* 'collide' may occur in both *accomplishment* and *achievement* complex predicates, while the LV *zadan* 'hit' can occur in *activity*, *accomplishment*, and *semelfactive* complex predicates, when combined with different NV elements. We argue that when the LV allows for event type variation (as in the case of *xordan* 'collide'), it is the category of the NV element that determines the event structure of the whole CPr. That is, if the NV element is a noun, the CPr is *atelic* (activity or semelfactive), unless the noun is eventive (see section 5), in which case the CPr may be *telic* (accomplishment)). If the NV element is an adjective, an adverbial particle, or a prepositional phrase, the CPr is always *telic* (accomplishment or achievement). This is summarized in (1):

(1) Event Structures

Category of NV	Telic	Atelic
Noun (if not eventive)	*	√
A/Adv Particle/PP	√	*

However, there are also cases where the event type of the complex predicate is determined by the LV alone, and not the NV element. This is the case of *shodan* 'become' which gives rise only to accomplishments and achievements, due to its inherently telic meaning which does not allow for aspectual variation (see section 4.3.3). (This inherently telic meaning may turn

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