A-structure alternation in Persian LVCs

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The argument structures (a-structure) and event structures of Persian light verb constructions (LVCs), consisting of a light verb and a preverb (PV) have been studied from different viewpoints. Mohammad & Karimi, 1992; Vahedi Langruodi, 1996; Karimi-Doostan, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2008b claim that the argument structure of LVCs is determined by PVs while Megerdoomian 2000; Folli, Harley & Karimi, 2005, propose that both PVs and LVs compositionally contribute to the a-structure of LVCs. Some linguists have claimed that the choice of LV determines whether or not the Persian LVC selects for an agent argument (Karimi, 1997; Megerdoomian, 2002a cited in Folli, Harley & Karimi, 2005).This approach faces two problems. First, it does not account for the fact that altering the PV while keeping the LV constant in an LVC can affect the a-structure of the whole LVC in general and the appearance or absence of Agent argument in particular. This is the case of the LV *gereftan* 'to take'; *qarz gereftan* 'to borrow money' is agentive while *dard gereftan* 'to start to hurt' is non-agentive. So as we can see the Agent-selecting properties of the LVs are not consistent across all the corresponding LVCs. The behavior of these PVs counters the claim of Folli, Harley & Karimi, 2004 that the PV determines the agentivity of the LVC. Second, their claim is mainly based on the alternations between the causative and inchoative LVs (DO-type LVs and BECOME-type LVs) like the shift from agentive *dadan* ('to give') to inchoative *xordan* ('to collide'). According to Karimi-Doostan, 2005; in languages like Persian, Kurdish and Korean DO-type LVs may be replaced with BECOME-type LVs and form passive-like clauses. Here we are dealing with two totally different types of LVs. By replacing each DO-type LV with its BECOME-type counterpart we turn an active construction to its corresponding passive-like construction. So the a-structure alternation is a natural result of passive (or unaccusative) formation. Also several questions emerge with respect to the causation of Persian LVCs. For instance, if we accept the claim that the argument structure of LVCs is determined by PVs, how can we account for the a-structure alternations in cases like *tamrin kard* 'He exercised' and its causative counterpart *Ali ?u-ra tamrin dad 'Ali caused him to exercise'*. The preverbal element is the same in these constructions however the LV is different and we have an unergative clause with a causative counterpart.

In this paper, we show how these kinds of alternations can be accounted for within the linking hypothesis proposed by Randall, 2010. The arguments advanced in the linking approach lead to the conclusion that replacing a DO-type LV with a BECOME-type LV is a kind of verbal passive formation operation. This operation applies to the a-structure of an active LVC such as *anjam dadan* 'to do'. It delinks the conceptual structure (CS) argument linked to the external a-structure position and strips the verb of its ability to assign accusative case (as in the case *anjam shodan* 'to be done'). The implicit argument that results from this operation can be expressed by an adjunct. In addition, As described in Baker, 1988:162-163 cited in Randall, 2010, in Chichewa dialect 'B' causative formation applies to the verb and delinks the inherited agent. The delinked argument then relinks internally. We show that this operation can be applicable to Persian LVCs, yielding a causative construction.

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