Incorporation and Complex Predication in Persian

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Persian is a predominantly SOV language which displays a variety of multiword verbal expressions. This paper focuses on one such verbal expression, namely the N+V construction. Following Dabir-Moghaddam (1997) and Megerdoomian (2009), I propose a distinction between what I label *incorporation* and cases of so-called *complex predication*. Noun incorporation is here taken to refer to all cases of N+V compounds where the noun has an argument relationship to the verb, as shown in [1a] (Mithun 1984, Baker 1988). The term complex predicates, in contrast, is applied to constructions where more than one grammatical element contributes to the overall meaning of the complex and the argument structure of the complex results from the interaction of the contributing predicative elements, as illustrated in [1b] (Alsina et al., 1997; Butt, 1995, Mohanan 1994).

1a) āryā [Gazā]_N [xord-Ø]_V
Arya food eat-Past.3.sg
'(lit.) Arya ate food.'
1b) āryā [kotak]_N [xord-Ø]_V
Arya beating hit-Past.3.sg

'Arya was beaten.'

The contribution of this paper is threefold. First I survey the state-of-the-art for incorporation and complex predicates. After refining the definition of incorporation and adopting an argument merging analysis for complex predicates (Butt, 1995), I introduce a distinction between these two classes of syntactic multiword verbal expressions. Finally, I provide a c-structure and a-structure analysis of incorporation and complex predicates in Persian, drawing on the tools provided by the LFG framework.

The investigation of N-V constructions in Persian has taken either a lexical or a syntactic approach. Some researchers claim that all multiword verbal expressions are lexical and that they are the result of the morphological processes of incorporation and combination (Dabir-Moghaddam 1997, Vahedi-Langrudi 1996). However, a lexicalist approach falls short of explaining the syntactic behavior of both constructions. Other researchers discuss multiword verbal expressions as syntactic constructions, but they fail to observe the distinction between the two types of N+V sequences and take incorporation into account. (Karimi 1992, Folli et al. 2005). Megerdoomian (2009), in contrast, deals with the syntactic and semantic differences between these two N+V sequences, treating the nominal part under the term bare nominal as opposed to preverbal nominal (in my analysis incorporated noun and nominal part of the complex predicate, respectively). She does not deal with scrambling, topicalization, and relativization of preverbal noun, and these processes pose a challenge to a derivational analysis. The incorporation analysis I put forward, not only accounts for the bare nominals in Megerdoomian's analysis, but it can also be extended to include other multiword verbal expressions in Persian, such as PP+V and most of the Adv+V constructions, which are treated in the literature as complex predicates (Foli et al, 2005; Megerdoomian, 2009; Pantcheva, 2010).

What follows is a reanalysis of N+V sequences in the light of the LFG theory. The subcategorized noun in N+V sequences shows some of the properties that are usually associated with incorporation: a) With respect to stress pattern, the whole complex behaves like one unit and the nominal part receives the main VP stress; b) The whole complex can be nominalized (example 2); c) the noun is not available to bind a nominal, but the whole complex can bind a pronominal, as illustrated in [3a] and [3b] (Dabir-Moghaddam, 1997).

2. Gazā xordan-aS

food eating-his

(Lit.) 'His food-eating'

3a) *man Gaz \bar{a}_i xordam va kami az $\bar{a}n_i$ $r\bar{a}$ be gorbe d \bar{a} dam.

I food eat-past.1.sg. and some from it OM to the cat give-past.1.sg.

'I ate the food and gave some of it to the cat.' (examples adapted from Dabir-Moghaddam, 1997)

3b) man [Gazā xord-am]_i va bad az ān_i xābid-am

I food eat-past.1.sg. and after from it sleep-Past.1.sg.

(Lit.) 'I ate food and after that I slept.'

Inflectional morphology, however, rules out a lexical analysis of this N+V sequence: if they were the results of morphological compounding, the incorporated element would not be separated from the verb by the Negative marker (ne-), the Imperfective prefix (mi-), the Subjunctive prefix (be-) and the future auxiliary(x \bar{a} stan). Therefore, I posit that Incorporation in Persian is syntactic, involving Semantic Incorporation and packaging of the event as a conceptual whole. The claim is that incorporation encompasses all cases where a verb and its arguments are combined to make a conceptual whole. I follow an argument merger analysis as a diagnostic for the relationship between non-verbal and verbal elements. As a result, it can be shown that other Persian multiword verbal expressions, which have been treated unambiguously as cases of Complex Predicate by most scholars (Dabir-Moghaddam, 1997; Foli et al, 2004; Megerdoomian, 2009; Pantcheva, 2010), are in fact cases of incorporation which have undergone metaphorical extension. For instance, Folli et al (2004) treat [$[be\ b\bar{a}d]_{PP}\ [d\bar{a}dan]_V$] (to wind give 'to lose') and [$[b\bar{a}l\bar{a}]_{Adv}\ [\bar{a}vardan]_V$](up bring 'to vomit') as cases of Complex

Predicates, while PP and Adv are internal argument and optional argument of the verb, respectively, and as such are cases of the incorporation of prepositional phrase and the adverbial with the verb.

To account for the differences between Incorporation and Complex Predicates, I avail myself of the multi-representational nature of the LFG analyses. Based on their syntactic behavior, I conclude that both constructions are syntactic, but they have different c-structure representations. Following King and Butt (1996) and in line with the literature on Persian complex predicates, I posit that the incorporated noun appears adjacent to the verb as the daughter of V' and sister of V with a non-specific interpretation [-restricted] functioning as OBJ, in contrast to the specific NP in Spec, VP, functioning as OBJ_θ. As there is no evidence to distinguish cases of Noun Incorporation from bare Noun and Verb juxtaposition, this analysis can equally account for both cases without introducing a new grammatical function (Asudeh and Ball ,2005; Duncan,2007). For the syntactic representation of Complex Predicates, I follow Mohanan (1996) by positing a verb complex that includes not only a light verb and an auxiliary, but also the nonverbal element of a Complex Predicate. That the noun in Complex Predicates cannot be generated in the same position as non-specific objects follows from the fact that Complex Predicates can also incorporate nouns (Megerdoomian, 2009).

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mā tamām-e ruz otāG jāru mi-kard-im we complete-EZ day room sweep IMP-do-Past-1PL ] 'We swept rooms all day.'
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The other difference between the two N+V sequences lies in the argument structure. Incorporation involves a flat argument structure where the verb and its argument merge for a joint predication, illustrated in representation [4]. Complex Predicates are assumed to have a complex argument structure as a result of argument merging, where light verb has a variable (%PRED) in its a-structure that is to be filled by a predicative element, as illustrated in [5] (Butt, 1995).

4) Gazā xordan 'food-eat < __ >'

5) kotak xordan 'beating-hit' <exp %Pred> kotak kotak

Argument merging analysis of complex predicate formation proposes a new look at Persian N+V constructions, and shows that they can be divided up on the basis of the relationship between the nominal and the verbal element in the two categories of Incorporation and Complex predicates. Assuming that some of the multiword verbal expressions are cases of incorporation, some of the main verbs like "āmadan" (to come) will not be listed among the light verbs. Moreover, the researchers have studied the PP+V and Adv+V constructions as argument bearing predicative parts of complex predicates that contribute to the event structure of the whole complex (Foli et al, 2004; Megerdoomian, 2009; Pantcheva, 2010). I claim that these categories are not predicative but rather arguments of the verbal element.

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