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On the Aspectual Properties of Persian Complex Predicates: A Corpus-based Study

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Identifying the contribution of verbal and non-verbal elements in determining telicity of Persian complex predicates (CPr) has been the focus of much research in recent decades, yet there is no consensus on it. Three main views have been proposed so far, however these views, in some aspects, turn out to be generalizations without enough accuracy or reliability when a larger set of data is taken into consideration (Samvelian 2012; Samvelian and Faghiri 2014). With this in mind, the present study aims to systematically investigate the role of preverb (PV) and light verb (LV) in determining aspectual properties of Persian CPrs and to propose a new bipartite classification consisting of a macro and a micro level. In doing so, based on the data from the corpus of PerValLex (Version 3.0) containing more than 5000 CPrs, the author provides and discuss examples:

- i) To argue against the proposal that LV determines telicity (Karimi Doostan 1997).
- ii) To argue against the proposal that PV determines telicity (Folli et al. 2005).
- iii) To specify the level of contribution of each component in determining telicity (in line with Megerdooian 2002b)

To meet the first objective two counterexamples are provided.

(1) Ahmad sāat-hā otāq rā jāru zad. (atelic)

Ahmad hour-s room OM brush hit

'Ahmad swept the room for hours.'

(2) *Police sāat-hā Ahmad rā dastband zad. (telic)

police hour-s Ahmad OM handcuff hit

'Police handcuffed Ahmad for hours.'

As can be seen in (1) and (2), the LV is constant, while the PVs are different leading to the representation of different activities showing different telicities. Thus, it can be concluded that the telicity of the CPr is dependent on the preverbal element (contrary to Karimi Doostan 1997). Put it differently, the PVs in (1) and (2) regardless of the LV they combine with, can give rise to either telic or atelic CPrs considering only their grammatical category (Folli et al. 2005). This is shown in table (a) and (b) for nominal PVs.

PV + LV	+ E-P/R (Telic)	- E-P/R (Atelic)
N + šodan	tasvib	tanbih
N + xordan	šekast	telo-telo
N + yāftan	nejāt	edāmeš
N + āmadan	padid	keš
N + gereftan	tasmim	duš
N + raftan	lo	kalanjār
N + didan	tahieh	āmuzeš

Table (a)

PV + LV	+ E-P/R (Telic)	- E-P/R (Atelic)
N + kardan	Fath	farar
N + āvardan	band	tāqat
N + bordan	bu	zaman
N + baxšidan	tahaqqoq	ārāmeš
N + dādan	talāq	kešik
N + zadan	gereh	harf
N + kešidan	dam	jāru
N + gozāštan	sarpuš	ehterām

Table (b)

However, contrary to Folli et al's proposal that deadjectivals and prepositional phrases always give rise to telic CPRs, it has been shown that there are extensive inconsistencies in the telicity of deadjectivals and prepositional phrases (Samvelian and Faghiri 2014). These inconsistencies can also be explained in terms of the characteristics of PV (scalar/non-scalar adjectives and prepositional phrases with/without goal) or LV (discussed in below).

To meet the second objective two counterexamples are provided.

(3) sāat-hā dard kešid-am. (atelic)
hour-s pain carry-AGR
'I suffered from pain for hours'

(4) *sāat-hā dard-am gereft. (telic)
Hour-s pain-INDEX took
'I felt pain for hours'

As can be seen in (3) and (4), the PV is constant and thus representing a single activity, however the change in LV results in a change in telicity of the CPR regarding the initiation of pain in (4) which is telic and duration of the pain in (3) which is atelic (in line with Megerdoomian 2002a, and Karimi Doostan 1997). Although here the LV is responsible for telicity of the CPRs, the distinction between Initiatory and Transition LVs is not accurate in determining telicity as shown in table (a) and (b), and as reported by Samvelian (2012), inconsistencies are also observed. Other examples showing the role of LV in determining telicity are:

(5) a. geryeh kardan 'cry do' 'to cry' (atelic)
b. geryeh anādxtan 'cry throw' 'to make s.o. start crying' (telic)
(6) a. tašrif dāštan 'respect have' 'to be present' (atelic)
b. tašrif āvardan 'respect bring' 'to come' (telic)

As for the last objective, one important point to be noticed regarding the examples (1) and (2) is that each represents a different activity (macro level), while (3) and (4) represents a constant activity only with a different focus on duration and initiation of the activity (micro level), respectively. Further data from the corpus support the idea that in macro level there is no constraint on how different PVs combine with a single LV to form either telic or atelic CPRs, and it is the preverbal element which is responsible for the telicity of the CPR, however in the micro level, LV can act as a modifier of telicity by shifting the focus between the initiation and duration of an activity.

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