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.....
SEDIGHI, Anousha

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE - AUTHOR OF THESIS

.....
M.A. (Linguistics)

GRADE - DEGREE

.....
Department of Linguistics

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT - FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

.....
TITRE DE LA THÈSE - TITLE OF THE THESIS

Quirky Subjects: Do They Exist in Persian?

.....
Maria Luisa Rivero

DIRECTEUR DE LA THÈSE - THESIS SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS DE LA THÈSE - THESIS EXAMINERS

.....
P. Hirschbuhler

.....
T. Paribakht

.....
J.-M. De Koninck, Ph.D.

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**Quirky Subjects:
Do they exist in Persian?**

by

Anousha Sedighi

Supervisor: Prof. Maria-Luisa Rivero

**A thesis submitted to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral
In fulfillment of the thesis requirement
for the degree of**

**Masters of Arts
in Linguistics**

**Department of Linguistics
University of Ottawa
Sept. 2001**

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Acknowledgements

Since my early childhood, I have watched my father, Ahmand Sedighi, reading and doing research. He encouraged me to look beyond accepted boundaries and never lost faith in me. My father is my inspiration and my role model. My mother, Ladan Rahiminia, gave me love and strength. She taught me perseverance and introduced me to academics when she took me to the classes she was teaching.

I want to express my gratitude to my thesis advisor, Professor Maria-Luisa Rivero. The first class that I took with her, English Syntax, sparked my interest in syntax. She is an extraordinary person and an inspirational teacher. As my thesis advisor, her firmness of purpose and her discipline gave me the courage and organization to complete my thesis.

I would also like to thank my Thesis Committee: Professor Paul Hirschbühler, who has always been intellectually stimulating and never hesitated to spend hours of discussion about any linguistic topic; Professor Sima Paribakht, for her helpful and challenging insights and her precise judgment as a native speaker of Persian; Professor Eta Schneiderman, for organizing and administering the entire process of my thesis defense. Thanks are due to Professor André Lapierre, Chair of the Department of Linguistics, University of Ottawa, and Professor Ian Mackay for their unfailing encouragement.

Thank you also to Lise Picard, who was so much more than a secretary. She always looked after the interest of the students. June Manson edited my thesis. June is a special friend, and I gained from her a new perspective on life: one must never give up.

Dr. Farid Shodjaee has been a great source of strength ever since my arrival in Canada. He persuaded me to continue my education, and has been like an uncle to me. I will always be in his debt.

I want to thank all my friends for their help and support, particularly the following: Dr. Ahmad Moin Zadeh, Dr. Michele Foley, Magdalena Goledzinowska, Ian Wallace (the greatest host!), Rok žaucer (affix hopping!), Atousa Madipour, Michael Corugano, Dawn Harvie, Anahita Eslami, Jane Baregheh, Reza Shadman, Dave Lavoie. Finally I want to thank my brothers, Soroush and Sepehr Sedighi, whose love warms my heart.

I thank God for helping me come this far in my academic life.

**Quirky Subjects:
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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the nature of certain subject-like NPs in Persian and examines whether or not they can be considered “Quirky Subjects”. Quirky subjects are subject-like NP’s that bear non-nominative case and a non-agentive theta role, yet have some properties of subjects. This work demonstrates that subject-like NPs in Persian are neither subjects nor, quirky subjects. In fact, they are “Left-dislocated constituents”. In these constructions the reason for the default format of the verb is the nature of the subject, which is the psychological state rather than the subject-like NP (experiencer). Moreover, the notion of “Subject” and “Subjecthood” will be discussed and the claim that subject is not a rigid concept will be supported.

To My Parents.

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Chapter One

1. Introduction

The notion of subject has been extensively studied in the past decade. What is a subject? Why do we learn in grade school that “every sentence must have a subject”? What is the philosophy behind that? Is the notion of subject a rigid concept with fixed syntactic properties and attributes?

Some linguists have assigned many conditions and definitions to the notion of subject. Nonetheless, Sigurdsson (2000) states:

“ ...the notion of ‘subject’ is a theoretical artifact, albeit a pedagogical and a useful one, and is thus not an entity or a relation of universal grammar.”

(Sigurdsson, 2000:1)

This work is an attempt to explore Sigurdsson’s insight with respect to the fact that there are no postulated standards for subject and subjecthood, and it is not possible to provide a specific definition or description for them. The notion of subject and the Extended Projection Principle (EPP), which states that clauses must have a subject (Chomsky, 1981), should be relaxed to the extent that there is an NP in every clause of a language that fills a position fulfilling certain conditions and relations.

In support of this claim, this thesis studies the nature of certain subject-like NPs in Persian and examines whether or not they should be analyzed as subjects. For example, consider the Persian examples in (1) and (2):

(1) *mæn un ra/ro dust dar-æm.*
I her/his/it Acc. friend have-1sg
I like her/him.

(2) *mæn æz un xoš-æm amæd-Ø*
I from her/his/it liking-my came-3sg
I liked her/him. (She/he appeals to me).

Example (1) does not involve any complications: it has a nominative subject and an accusative object. By way of contrast, constructions like example (2) are interesting because they seem to violate the obligatory rule of subject predicate agreement; the verb is in third person singular while the subject-like preverbal NP, *mæn*, is in first person singular.

In this work, I argue that the preverbal NP is not the subject, rather it is a left-dislocated constituent. In addition, some linguists believe that the verb in example (2) is complex, and that *xoš-æm* is the non-verbal part of the compound. Hence, I propose that *amæd-Ø* is an independent light verb, and that *xoš-æm* is the subject of the sentence.

1.1 Outline of the Thesis

The outline of this work is as follows. First, ‘Case’ (which provides information about the configuration of any phonetically realized nominal), and its types will be introduced. Second, “Quirky Subjects”, which are subjects with non-nominative (oblique) case that do not exhibit subject-verb agreement will be introduced, and an overview of Icelandic quirky subjects will be provided. An example of a quirky subject in Hindi is as follows.

- (3) Raaju-koo eek ladkii-Ø dikhii
Raaju(D) one girl(N) appear-sg.fem.pst
Raaju caught sight of a girl

(Narasimhan, 1998)

As can be seen in the Hindi construction in (3), *Raaju* is a quirky subject and bears a non-nominative case. In addition, recent analyses of case types based on the minimalist approach will be discussed. Third, the notion of subjecthood will be discussed. Moreover, Icelandic and German preverbal NPs will be compared. Examples are as follows:

- (4) Ihm wurde geholfen. (German)
Honum var hjalpad. (Icelandic)
him(D) was helped
He was helped.

(ZMT¹, 1985:444)

¹ Zaenen, A., Maling, J. & Thrainsson, H.

In the examples in (4), the two constructions appear very similar, but differ syntactically. This result yields us to consider the fronted dative elements in German as topicalized constituents and not subjects (ZMT, 1985). Last, the Persian data will be introduced, and the nature of the subject-like NPs in Persian will be studied. In addition, an analysis of these constructions based on a minimalist approach will be provided.

Chapter two

2. Case

In order to discuss subjects or any kind of nominal in a sentence we have to understand what “Case” and case marking are. In this section the notion of case is introduced, as well as an overview of the development of proposals on case.

In general, case is a morphological feature, which gives information about nominal relations as well as their distribution; it is always present abstractly. Chomsky (1995) states that in some languages case is morphologically visible, while in others it has little or no overt (phonetic) realization. Let us consider two languages, for example, Japanese and Persian.

- (5) a. Tanaka kyouzyu ga sono hon o yonde i-masu (Japanese)
Tanaka prof. Nom. that book Acc. reading be-DISTAL
Prof. Tanaka is reading that book.

(Toyoshima, 1998:400)

- b. Arya un ketab ra xand-Ø (Persian)
Arya that book Acc. read-3sg
Arya read that book.

As can be seen, the Japanese construction in (5a) has overt nominative and accusative case markers (case types will be explained in detail in 2.2), whereas the Persian

construction in (5b) contains no overt nominative case marker, while an accusative case marker “*ra*” is overtly present.

Furthermore, Chomsky (2000) responds to the following question of: “Why case exists at all?”

“uninterpretable features activate the goal of a probe, allowing it to implement some operation (Agr or Move)”.

Chomsky (2000:127)

In simple terms, case is the trigger for grammar operations.

2.1 The Case filter

Based on insights by Vergnaud, in Government and Binding, (GB), Chomsky (1981) introduces the following case filter:

(6) *NP, where NP has a phonetic matrix, but no case.

Chomsky (1981:49)

Later, Chomsky and Lasnik (1995) revise this version as follows:

(7) Every phonetically realized NP must be assigned (abstract) case.

Chomsky & Lasnik (1995:111)

Moreover, Chomsky (2000) reconfirms the need for a form of Case Filter by stating that it functions to determine the distribution of noun phrases. In order to understand the case filter better, consider the following example in Icelandic:

- (8) Olafur fann peysuna sina i skuffunni
Olaf(N) found sweater(A) his[+Refl] in the-drawer(D)
Olaf found his sweater in the drawer.

(ZMT, 1985)

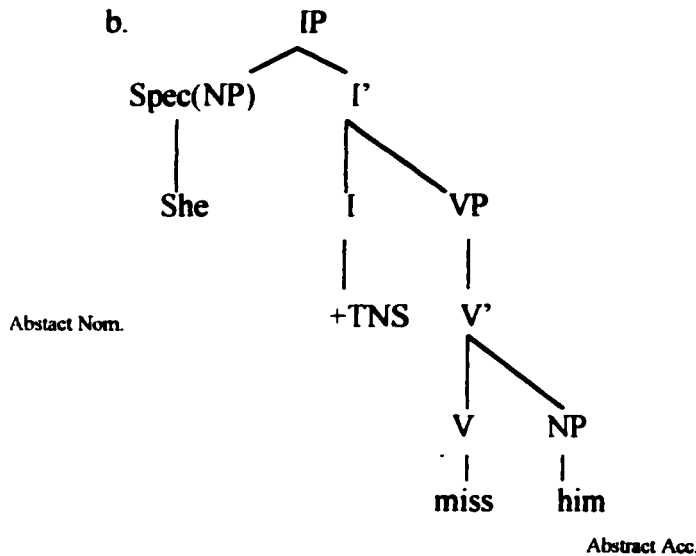
As can be seen every NP in the sentence is carrying some kind of case (Nominative, Accusative, Dative) without which the NPs could not be expressed, and the construction would have crashed. Note, the case filter ensures identification of the information that is being encoded, but it does not specify case types.

2.2 Case types

In the GB framework, it is assumed that there are two fundamentally different types of case: Abstract (Structural) and Inherent. The reason for also naming abstract case as structural case is that abstract case is assigned structurally. The morphological realization of structural case is determined according to which head does the assigning. Finite I (inflection) assigns abstract (structural) Nominative case to nominals whereas V (verb) assigns abstract (structural) Accusative case to them, as is shown in (9b).

(9) Structural Case Assignment in English:

a. She misses him.



Above, finite I assigns structural nominative to the NP *she*, and V assigns structural accusative to the NP *him*.

Structural case has nothing to do with theta-role assignment. The case connected to theta-role assignment is known as Inherent Case. Chomsky (1981) describes inherent case in GB as follows:

- (10) NP is inherently case-marked as determined by properties of its [-N governor]

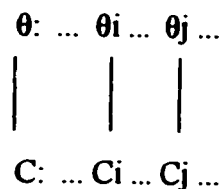
(Chomsky, 1981:170)

Inherent case assignment does not necessarily license an NP. Therefore, if inherent case is assigned by a verb to the subject or direct object, the former still needs to

be licensed by structural nominative or accusative. Case-assignment as well as theta-assignment are local relations. Chomsky (1986) states that structural case (nominative and accusative) is assigned at S-structure under government, whereas Inherent case (genitive, dative...) is assigned at D-structure and realized at surface structure. Inherent case is lexically idiosyncratic and thematically related, while structural case is non-idiosyncratic.

Belletti and Rizzi (1988) state that lexical entries of each verb contain a case grid, a basic requirement of the inherent case that is being assigned by the verb. Therefore, slots in the case-grid will be systematically related to the slots in the θ -grid. They provide the following diagram to demonstrate the linking between theta and case-grids:

(11) The interaction of case and theta grid on the verb



(Belletti and Rizzi 1988:332)

Furthermore, Belletti and Rizzi state that inherent case can only be assigned to a member of the argument structure of the verb, and consequently to the bearer of a specific θ -role. Whereas structural case assignment is thematically blind, i.e. the receiver of the structural case does not have to be specified in the θ -grid of the assigner.

Chomsky (1986) proposes the Uniformity Condition stated below to ensure that the association of inherent case and θ -marking holds for case-realization as well as case-assignment.

(12) Uniformity Condition

If α is an inherent case-marker, then α case-marks NP iff it θ -marks the chain headed by NP.

Chomsky (1986:194)

Moreover, Burzio (1986) states the following:

(13) Burzio's Generalization

Case is assigned to the object iff a θ -role is assigned to the subject".

(Burzio, 1986:178)

Consider the following example.

- (14) a. [e] was killed John.
b. John was killed [t]

As can be seen, in the passive construction in example (14) the D-structure object moves to [Spec IP] position. The reason being that it is generally assumed that the passive morphology absorbs the case of the object. As a result, the D-structure object is unable to get accusative case *in situ*, and it moves to [Spec IP] where it gets nominative case,

otherwise the Case Filter is violated. This explanation is assumed to account for NP-movement for example in ‘Subject-to-Subject Raising’ constructions. See below:

- (15) a. [e] seems [John to be happy]
b. John seems [[t] to be happy]

In example (15a) non-finite **I** is defective and unable to assign nominative case to *John*. On the other hand, the verb *seem* does not have an external theta-role, therefore, the [Spec IP] position is empty and ready to accommodate *John*, where it is assigned nominative case. The result is (15b).

Belletti and Rizzi (1989) interpret Burzio’s generalization as the following: “V is a structural case assigner iff it has an external argument” (1989:332). Let us consider the following example in Italian by Belletti and Rizzi.

- (16) Questo lo preoccupa.
this him worries
This worries him.

(Belletti and Rizzi, 1989:331)

As can be seen in example (16), the experiencer object lacks the typical properties of canonical objects, but it does manifest some object properties. It receives ‘accusative’ case; however, this is not the ordinary accusative of simple transitive verbs. The accusative case here is not a structural case because there is no external argument. Hence, this is an inherent accusative case.

Furthermore, Belletti and Rizzi (1989) declare that the syntactically spurious nature of the morphological notion accusative is clearly shown in languages like German, where some prepositions assign a morphological accusative, which has the syntactic properties of inherent cases.

Similarly, in Icelandic, accusative case may be one of the morphological manifestations of quirky case. Again, Belletti and Rizzi believe that inherent case is certainly different in nature from structural case since it is idiosyncratic, and θ -related.

In addition, ZMT (1985) state that unlike structural case, which is configurationally assigned under government and/or agreement to NPs on the basis of their S-structure positions, inherent case requires the inherently case marked NP to be governed by the lexical category which θ -marks it at D-structure.

Harley (1995) questions Burzio's generalization in several respects. First, she paraphrases Burzio's generalization in the following way:

“Abstract accusative case is assigned iff an external theta-role is assigned”.

Furthermore, she states that in cases like English possessives, psych verbs² [as in example (16)], and perfectives there is no underlying “external subject” while abstract accusative case is assigned. She introduces the “Mechanical Case Parameter” (MCP) in the following statements:

² Psychological Verbs will be further explained in 3.7.

(17) The Mechanical Case Parameter

- a. If one case feature is checked structurally in a clause, it is realized as Nominative (mandatory case).
- b. If two case features are checked structurally in a clause, the second is realized as Accusative.
- c. If three case features are checked structurally in a clause, the second is realized as Dative and the third as Accusative.
- d. The mandatory case in a multiple-case clause is assigned in the *top/bottom AgrP*.

(Harley, 1995:161)

The application of this generalization can be seen in the following Icelandic example, where there are three cases checked structurally in the clause, nominative, dative, and accusative.

- (18) Olafur fann peysuna sina i skuffunni
Olaf(N) found sweater(A) his[+Refl] in the-drawer(D)
Olaf found his sweater in the drawer.

(ZMT, 1985)

In the example above, I assume that if dative is assigned second, it is because it is higher up in the tree than the accusative NP, i.e. ‘*in the drawer*’ modifies the verb ‘*found*’.

Furthermore, following Marantz (1991), Harley (1995) considers Burzio’s generalization somewhat redundant. She reasons that the EPP forces the first argument in every clause to be raised to subject position. This happens regardless of where that argument is base generated or case-licensed. In addition, the MCP ensures checking of

nominative case on that NP, no matter which AgrP it checks in. Therefore, the combination of EPP and MCP will result in Burzio's generalization. Harley (1995) proposes that the EPP is responsible for the distributional phenomena of abstract case.

Chomsky (1992) proposes that case assignment is a sub-case of a broader requirement that abstract features attached to NPs be "checked" against matching features elsewhere before LF. Case, agreement, and tense features are all checked in this way and the derivation will crash if any features fail to be verified (checked).

2.3 Quirky case

Harley (1995) introduces the phenomenon of a non-nominative marked NP behaving as though it still required licensing by a structural case, as "Quirky Case". An Icelandic example is as in (19).

(19) *Calvini liki verkid*
Calvin(D) like the job(N)
Calvin likes the job.

(Harley, 1995:144)

She points out that quirky case marking is a typical property occurring in many languages. The subject is morphologically marked dative or oblique, while the syntactic subject is marked nominative and triggers verbal agreement. Furthermore, she states the following:

“ Case that is checked in Spec-AgrS is abstract nominative, realized as morphological nominative unless quirky inherent case is assigned. Case that is checked in Spec-AgrO is abstract accusative, realized as a morphological accusative unless quirky inherent case is assigned”.

(Harley, 1995:142)

Furthermore, she believes that quirky case is not a consequence of a syntactic position; rather, it is a particular relation between a given verb and the related argument.

2.4 Quirky Subjects

The case canonically assigned to subjects across languages has been considered nominative and ergative case except when there is a Quirky Subject involved. Basically, quirky subjects are preverbal subject-like nominals that bear non-nominative case and non-agentive theta roles, as Georgian example in (20) shows.

(20) Bavašvs šia
 child(D) he-hungers-IND
 The child is hungry.

(Harris, 1984:280)

As can be seen in the above example, the preverbal NP *child* bears dative case and is an experiencer rather than the agent of the sentence.

Verbal agreement is severely constrained in constructions with quirky subjects.

Below is an Icelandic example:

- (21) Sjúklinganna var vitjad
the patients-pl.m(G) was-dflt visited-supine
The patients were visited.

(Andrews, 1990)

As can be seen in example (21), the verb has default morphology (third person, singular).

However, Cole et al. (1980), Andrews (1990), ZMT (1985), and Sigurdsson (1989), among others, demonstrate that these NPs have some of the syntactic properties of subjects. They can be found in a wide variety of constructions with different types of predicates (passive, impersonal, active, adjectival, nominal, prepositional, particle-headed, and so on (Sigurdsson, 1989)).

Quirky subjects have been proven to exist in some older languages like Sanskrit, Latin, Old English, and Old German, as well as some modern languages like Icelandic, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Finnish, and some Indo-Iranian languages.

Sigurdsson (1992) argues that quirky subjects exist only in languages that contain morphological inherent case, and allow non-assignment of structural case.

2.5 Quirky subjects in Icelandic

In this section quirky subjects in Icelandic, a widely debated topic, are introduced. Importantly, Icelandic has the richest inflectional system of any modern Germanic language, with four cases (nominative, accusative, dative, genitive) and three genders (masculine, feminine, neuter). The basic word order of Icelandic is SVO, both in main and embedded clauses. Although this language has the ordinary nominative subjects and accusative objects, it is specifically known for its quirky subjects. Examples are given in (22-24), where the preverbal NP in subject position appears with dative, accusative, and genitive case. If there is a second NP involved, that NP appears with nominative case.

- (22) Henni var kalt
Her(D) was cold
She was freezing.
- (23) Hana vantadi vinnu
Her(A) lacked job(A)
She lacked/needed a job.
- (24) Hennar var saknad
Her(G) was missed (by someone)
She was missed (by somebody).

(Sigurdsson, 2000:4)

Moreover, Subject-verb agreement is severely violated in these constructions. Example is as in (25).

- (25) Okkur hafði lengi vantað vinnu
us(A) had(3sg) long lacked a job(A)
We had lacked needed a job for a long time.

(Sigurdsson, 1992:4)

With regard to the agreement, Sigurdsson (1996) states the following:

“ The finite Inflection agrees with a nominative NP in its domain, if there is one, if there is no nominative NP in the domain of the inflection, it shows up in a default nonagreeing form.”

(Sigurdsson, 1996:2)

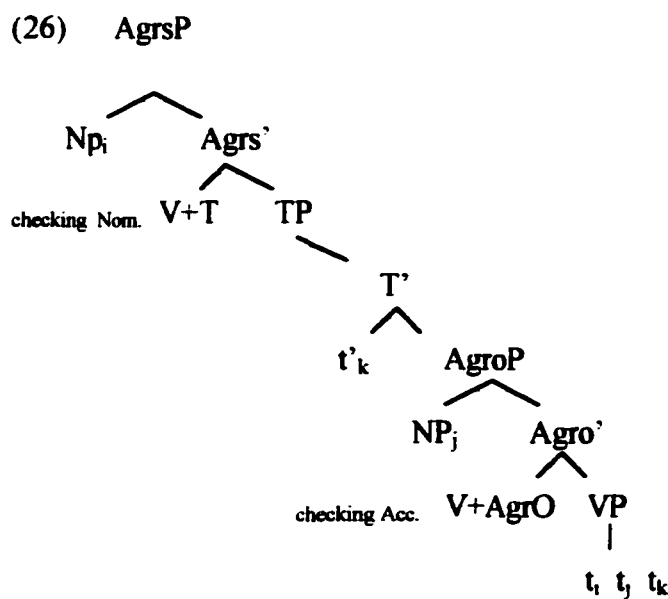
Furthermore, Sigurdsson (1992) states that quirky subjects in Icelandic are not assigned any invisible abstract nominative case in addition to their inherent case. Therefore the movement of quirky subjects into the domain of inflection is not case-driven.

In the next section we will see that these non-nominative NPs (quirky subjects) do satisfy properties that are typical of subjects, and consequently are considered subjects.

2.6 Minimalist approaches to Case and Quirky Case

In the Minimalist Program, Case-assignment is replaced with Case-checking. Structural case and agreement are assumed to be reflections of a Spec-head relation. Nouns and verbs come from the lexicon already inflected for case and agreement. The case filter states the fact that the case features of NPs must be checked or structures

would crash. The process of checking requires the raising of features of the verb to Agr as an instance of head movement. The movement of the object to the Spec of AgrO creates the required configuration for checking the case feature of the object. The same holds true between the subject, which moves to the Spec of AgrS and T. The features of the verb raise to the T. Raising of the features of the verb may also be accompanied by the overt movement of the verb. This is demonstrated in example (23).



In example (26), t_i , t_j , and t_k represent the traces of the subject, object, and the verb respectively. The case of the object in the Spec of AgrO is checked by the verb in the head AgrO position, and the case of the subject in the Spec of AgrsP is checked by the T+V raised to the head AgrS. Note that in both GB and the Minimalist Program, NP-movement is triggered by the need for the case to be assigned or checked.

In the minimalist program (Chomsky, 1995:174) structural case and agreement are regarded as “manifestations of the Spec-head relation (NP, Agr)”, and the Case Filter is viewed as an interface condition, which occurs between a head and an NP, facilitated by Agr.

In order to solve the problem of quirky case, Schutze (1993) proposes an extension to the minimalist theory of case to encompass morphological case as well as positional case licensing in Icelandic, giving support to the account of case and licensing as independent feature checking complexes, and equally, to the minimalist framework. Schutze solves the problem of lack of agreement in constructions with quirky subjects by proposing that there is a way for an object to check case and agreement features with the AgrS head of AgrSP.

Within this approach Boeckx (2000) develops an account of case in Icelandic based on proposals by Bonet (1994). Bonet introduces a universal constraint called “The Person-Case Constraint” (PCC), which states that human language disallows the presence of first or second person agreement with a direct object when there is also dative agreement.

(27) The Person-Case constraint

If Dative (agreement) – Accusative (agreement) = 3 rd

(Bonet, 1994:36)

Boeckx (2000) uses the PCC to explain agreement in Icelandic. He adopts the distributed morphology framework (Halle & Marantz, 1993), according to which some PF phonological operations take place after syntax, in morphology, as part of the PF component. This will allow the PCC to be “Inoperative” in narrow syntax; its effects will be manifest only in overt morphology.

Following Collins & Thrainsson (1996), and Lasnik (1995), Boeckx argues that the PCC does not force us to view inherent case as special, or ‘inert’ for agreement; rather, he argues in favour of unifying structural and inherent cases. He states that the consequences of such unification remain to be investigated, but he believes that it might overcome many problems which the Inherent/Structural distinction had encountered, including the combined cases, etc. Furthermore, he returns to George & Kornfilt’s theory (1981) that agreement and Case are but one feature.

Boeckx demonstrates that agreement between the quirky element and the verb obtains covertly, that is, it is an instance of AgrS checking. The agreement cannot be realized morphologically for independent economy reasons. On the contrary, AgrO-Checking can surface on the verb if a nominative element is involved since there is an intricate link between agreement on T and Nom. The morphological shape of the agreement is constrained by PCC. Therefore, he argues in favour of considering quirky subjects as “full-fledged subjects”. Ultimately, he states the following:

“...agreement takes place with quirky subjects, but the result is almost ‘null’ for the verb’s morphological make-up, it only forces third person agreement, leaving morphological room for object number agreement, with objects (if any).”

(Boeckx, 2000:375)

Boeckx’s arguments can be considered to be somehow but not completely in accord with Chomsky (2000). Chomsky (2000) demotes structural case significantly by taking into account Lasnik’s (1995) Enlightened Self-Interest, and also changing Greed (which keeps an element A from entering a syntactic operation unless it satisfies a need of A itself) into Suicidal Greed. He states that Suicidal Greed does not have the “look ahead” property of Greed.

Moreover, Chomsky (2000) declares the following:

“agreement (hence movement) is driven by uninterpretable features of the probe, which must be deleted for legibility”.

(Chomsky, 2000:127)

Furthermore, he declares that quirky case is (θ -related) inherent case, with an additional structural case feature.

2.7 Subjecthood

According to ZMT (1985), nominative case marking is not a prerequisite (at least not a sufficient one) for subjecthood. It means that subjects can bear non-nominative case. Furthermore, as mentioned in 1.1, not every NP in the subject position with a non-nominative case is a quirky subject, as there can be topicalization or other processes involved.

Moreover, Andrews (1976), and Sigurdsson (1989, 2000) demonstrate that quirky subjects share many syntactic properties with nominative subjects; they behave like ordinary nominative subjects and not like preposed objects or topicalized elements. Andrews (1976), Thrainsson (1979), ZMT (1985), and Sigurdsson (1989) propose several syntactic properties to distinguish a subject from a non-subject NP. In the literature, these are known as ‘tests of subjecthood’.

Sigurdsson (1989) names eleven tests for subjecthood:

- Topicalization
- Non-Topicalization
- Position in subordinate clauses
- AcI (Accusative Case Infinitives)
- NcI (Nominative Case Infinitives)
- Reflexivization
- Control

- Extraction
- Heavy subject shift
- Cliticization
- Conjunction reduction

Boeckx (2000) and Sigurdsson (2000) cite only six of these tests. Examples in Icelandic are as in (28-29).

Tests of Subjecthood

- (28) *Nominative Subjects:*
- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <p>a. Hun sa myndina sina
She(N) saw picture self
<i>She saw her own picture.</i></p> | <i>Reflexivization</i> |
| <p>b. Hefur hun sed myndina?
Has she(N) seen pictures
<i>Has she seen the pictures?</i></p> | <i>Inversion</i> |
| <p>c. Eg tel [hana hafa sed myndina]
I believe her(A) have seen picture
<i>I believe her to have seen the picture.</i></p> | <i>Exceptional Case Marking (ECM)</i> |
| <p>d. Hun_i virdist [t_i hafa sed myndina]
She(N) seems have seen picture
<i>She seems to have seen the picture.</i></p> | <i>Raising</i> |
| <p>e. Hun vonast til [ad PRO sja myndina]
She hopes for to PRO(N) see picture
<i>She hopes to see the picture</i></p> | <i>Control</i> |
| <p>f. Hun horfdi og (hun)sa myndina
She(N) looked and (she_{nom}) saw picture
<i>She looked and saw the picture.</i></p> | <i>Conjunction Reduction</i> |

(29) **Quirky Subjects:**

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| a. Henni _i ledist bokin sín;
her(D) bores book self's
<i>She finds her own book boring.</i> | <i>Reflexivization</i> |
| b. Hefur henni leiddist bokin?
Has her(D) bored book
<i>Has she found the book boring?</i> | <i>Inversion</i> |
| c. Eg tel [henni hafa leiddist bokin]
I believe her(D) have bored book
<i>I believe she found the book boring.</i> | <i>Exceptional Case Marking</i> |
| d. Henni _i virðist [t _i hafa leiddist bokin]
Her(D) seems have bored book
<i>She seems to have found the book boring.</i> | <i>Raising</i> |
| e. Hun vonast til [ad PRO leiddist ekkibokin]
She hopes for to PRO (D) bore not book
<i>She hopes not to find the book boring.</i> | <i>Control</i> |
| f. Hun var syfjud og (henni) leiddist bokin
She was sleepy and (her _{dat}) found the book boring
<i>She was sleepy and found the book boring.</i> | <i>Conjunction Reduction</i> |

(Sigurdsson, 1992:55)

As can be seen all the properties of constructions with a nominative subject in example (28) are applicable to the forms with a quirky subject in example (29).

It should be mentioned that not all the tests of Subjecthood that are mentioned here are applicable to every language. In other words, the architecture of each language might cause limitations to the tests of Subjecthood. For instance, since the process of

interrogation in Persian occurs by changing the intonation and not the word order, the subject verb inversion test is not applicable.

The interesting point is that Sigurdsson (1989) states the following:

“In general, subjecthood tests are not tests of ‘subjecthood’ but of properties and patterns that are typical of ‘subjects’”.

(Sigurdsson, 1989:209)

This more or less means that an NP can be a subject but not follow all of these formats or an NP which is not the subject may pass some of the standard tests of subjecthood.

2.8 Icelandic vs. German

Although syntactic properties of subjects have not been studied as extensively in German as in Icelandic, it has been proven (Cole et al 1978, ZMT 1985) that German does not follow Icelandic regarding the syntactic properties of subjects. Consider the German example in (30) followed by its Icelandic equivalent:

(30) <i>Ihm</i>	<i>wurde</i>	<i>geholfen</i>	(German)
<i>Honum</i>	<i>var</i>	<i>hjalpd</i>	(Icelandic)
<i>him(D)</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>helped</i>	
<i>He</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>helped.</i>	(ZMT, 1985:476)

ZMT (1985) demonstrates that *ihm* in (30) is a grammatical subject. They argue that German is not parallel to Icelandic with regard to quirky subjects, and they provide the following evidence.

Subject of infinitives in German can be controlled, but this is not possible with the constructions with non-nominative element in the subject position. Arbitrary PROs can be found as the understood subject of German infinitivals, as shown in (31a), but not with idiosyncratically marked NPs as shown in (31b).

- (31) a. **Im sommer zu reisen ist angenehm**
in summer to travel is agreeable
To travel in the summer is nice.
- b. ***Geholfen zu werden ist angenehm**
helped to be is agreeable
To be helped is nice.
- c. **Aufgenommen zu werden ist angenehm**
admitted to be is agreeable
To be admitted is nice.

Furthermore, ZMT (1985) illustrate that German preverbal NPs do not undergo conjunction reduction. Example (32) states:

- (32) a. **Er kam und (er) besuchte die kinder**
he(N) came and (he) visited the children
He came and visited the children.
- b. ***Er kam und --- wurde geholfen**
he came and ---(D) was helped
He came and was helped.

As well, the oblique NP can be deleted by relative clause reduction.

- (33) a. **Der das buch lessened junge heisst Wilhelm**
the [the book reading] boy is-named Wilhelm
The boy reading the book is named Wilhelm.

- b. *Das der junge lessened buch heisst Sieben Legenden
the [the boy reading book] is-named Seven Legends
The boy reading the book is named Seven Legends.

(ZMT, 1985:482)

Consequently, ZMT (1985) demonstrate that the type of tests that show quirky subjects can be analyzed as syntactic subjects in Icelandic, show that the parallel constructions in German cannot be analyzed as such. ZMT (1985) account for these differences by means of Language-specific association principles. Consider the Icelandic association principles stated by ZMT (1985):

(34) Icelandic Association Principles

- a. If there is only one thematic role, it is assigned to SUBJ; if there are two, they are assigned to SUBJ and OBJ; if there are three, they are assigned to SUBJ, OBJ, 2 OBJ. (*Universal*)
- b. AGENTS are linked to SUBJ. (*Universal*)
- c. Case-marked THEMATIC ROLES are assigned to the lowest available GF. (*Language Specific*)
- d. Default Case Marking³: the highest available GF is assigned NOM case, the next highest ACC. (*Universal*)

German follows all the Universal Association Principles but differs in a language-specific association principle in the following way:

- (30) Case-marked THEMATIC ROLES are assigned to 2OBJ.
(*Language Specific*)

³ ZMT (1985) use default case marking as the equivalent of “structural case marking”.

Note that Universal Principles are said to be applicable after any Language-Specific Principle. Furthermore, ZMT state the following:

“...hence all the idiosyncratically marked arguments will have the status of 2
OBJs, and thus will not passivize under the assumption that German has only the
unmarked passive rule according to which only (direct) OBJs passivize. Thus,
they will never be subjects in either passive or active sentences. This is exactly
the result that we want for German”.

(ZMT, 1985:479)

Ultimately, ZMT (1985) put forward the idea that fronted dative elements in German are Topicalized constituents and not subjects. This idea has been widely accepted in the literature.

Furthermore, Boeckx (2000) argues that the Icelandic/German contrast results from an overt/covert asymmetry. He believes that the reanalysis process (which might underlie every instance of dative agreement) takes place covertly in German, but overtly in Icelandic. He supports this hypothesis with raising predicate constructions; unlike Icelandic, German experiencers do not block raising, which leads him to suggest that reanalysis does not take place prior to Spell-Out in this language.

- (35) Peter_i scheint mir, t_i zufrieden zu sein
Peter_{nom} seems me_{dat} happy to be
Peter seems to me to be happy.

Sentences like (36) are well formed in German:

**(36) Mir scheint Peter_i, t_i zufrieden zu sein
me_{dat} seems Peter_{nom} happy to be**

Peter seems to me to be happy.

(Boeckx, 2000:375)

Boeckx (2000) states that the covert reanalysis option in German explains why dative elements fail subjecthood tests such as control and conjunction reduction. He argues that these phenomena are associated with full category movement, and not with feature movement (Lasnik, 1995), hence their incompatibility with covert processes.

Chapter Three

3. Persian Construction

In this Chapter basic information is provided on the Persian language. Following this, the Persian construction mentioned at the beginning of the thesis will be reintroduced and investigated.

3.1 Background information of Persian

As it is necessary for the following discussion, a brief survey of relevant attributes of the Persian language will be given here. The specific dialect under investigation, the Modern Standard Persian, is spoken in the capital of Iran, Tehran.

Many linguists including Dabir Moghadam (1982), Samiiian (1983), Karimi (1989), and Browning & E. Karimi (1990) believe that the underlying word order in Persian is SOV. One example of this is in (37).

(37) mæn ketab ra be Sepehr dad-æm
I book Acc. to(Dat.) Sepehr gave-1sg
I gave the book to Sepehr.

Note that SVO is also possible in this language, but this order is uncommon. In general, the verb in Persian is in agreement with the subject, except in constructions that will be introduced later.

- (38) *mæn dad-æm ketab ra be Sepehr*
 I gave-1sg book Acc. to(Dat.) Sepehr
I gave the book to Sepehr.

The pronominal system of Persian is shown in table (39), and each of these full pronouns has a corresponding clitic form, listed in table (40). Pronouns in Persian do not display any case distinction.

(39) **Full Pronouns in Persian**

	Singular	Plural
1 st	<i>mæn I</i>	<i>ma we</i>
2 nd	<i>to/shoma you</i>	<i>shoma/shomaha. you</i>
3 rd	<i>u(un) s/he/it</i>	<i>anha/unha they</i>

(40) **Enclitic pronouns in Persian**

	Singular	Plural
1 st	<i>-æm my</i>	<i>-eman ours</i>
2 nd	<i>-æt yours</i>	<i>-etan yours</i>
3 rd	<i>-æsh her/hi/its</i>	<i>-eshan theirs</i>

Persian is a “Pro Drop” or “Null Subject” language; in other words, an overt subject is not required in the clause, and a pronominal subject may be phonetically null in tensed sentences:

- (41) *Sepehr ra did-æm*
 Sepehr Acc. saw-1sg
I saw Sepehr.

It is generally assumed that in pro-drop languages like Italian, subject is the element 'pro'; accordingly, this pro is licensed by the verbal inflection and consequently, (morphological) agreement features.

In Persian, the morphology of the verb is rich enough to have both subject and object as enclitics. Negation, tense and mood in Persian may also be attached to the verb by proclitics. Darzi (1995) describes the verbal morphology of the verb in Persian as follows.

(42) Verbal morphology of the verb in Persian

negative marker-mood marker-verb stem-Pt-Psp-personal ending

(Darzi, 1995:19)

The verb in example (43) is a representative example.

- (43) ne- mi- resan- d- e- æm- æsh
not-ind-deliver-Pst-Psp-1sg-3sg
I have not been delivering that.

Note that there is no gender marker in Persian, as can be seen in example (44).

- (44) u mæn ra did-Ø
she/he I Acc. saw-3sg
She saw me.

Example (44) also illustrates that there is no overt nominative case marker in Persian. The common accusative case marker in Persian is the clitic *ra*⁴. However, it has been proposed in the literature that “*ra*” can be an instance of “topic marker” or “specificity marker” (Karimi, 1983). Depending on the context, there are different kinds of prepositions in Persian, which are the morphological realization of dative case. Examples are below.

(45) mæn ketab ra baraye to xærid-æm
 I book Acc. for you bought-1sg
I bought the book for you.

(46) mæn ketab ra æz to xærid-æm
 I book Acc. from you bought-1sg
I bought the book from you.

As can be seen in (45), the preposition *baraye* is the dative marker, while in (46) *æz* is the dative marker. Genitive case in Persian is shown by the “Ezafe Construction”; as shown in (47).

(47) mæn ketab-e to ra did-æm
 I book-of you Acc. saw-1sg
I saw your book.

In this example, the genitive case marker is the enclitic *-e*, which is suffixed to the NP and precedes the pronoun.

⁴ Sometimes “*ra*” is not overt but covert.

3.2 Data and Observations

The constructions being investigated here are as follows:

- (48) mæn teshne-æm æst-Ø
I thirsty-my is-3sg
I am thirsty.

The most important attribute of the constructions under investigation is that the verb is in default form (third person singular), as in example (48).

All of these atypical constructions have an ordinary counterpart in which the verb is in agreement with the subject, as in (49), which is the counterpart of (48).

- (49) mæn teshne hast-æm
I thirsty is-1sg
I am thirsty.

Both constructions are possible without *mæn*, the subject-like NP⁵, as in the following example.

- (50) teshne-æm æst-Ø
thirsty-my is-3sg
I am thirsty.

Additional examples will further illustrate this construction.

- (51) un saxt-esh æst-Ø
S/he hard-her/his is-3sg
It is hard for her/him.

⁵ I will develop an analysis of the nature of this subject-like constituent in the rest of the thesis.

Note that *it* in the English translation of the example (51) is semantically empty, and does not correspond to a precise syntactic constituent in Persian.

- (52) ma hoselea-mun [sær ræft-Ø]
we patience-our exploded
we got bored.

It should be mentioned that in (52), verb *sær ræft* is positively a compound verb, where *sær* is the nominal part and *ræft* is the light verb. However, in the literature the whole phrase (*hoselea-mun [sær ræft-Ø]*) has been considered a compound verb. Later in the discussion, I introduce a new analysis for the two items.

- (53) to goshne-at shod-Ø?
You(sg) hungry-yours became-3sg?
Did you(sg) become hungry?

Example (53) shows that even when the construction is in interrogative form, the verb is in default form.

- (54) shoma pul lazem-e-tun mi-shævæd-Ø
you(pl) money necessary-yours future-become-3sg
you(pl/or sing. formal) will need money.

Example (55) shows the same construction as in (54) without the NP *pul*, where the meaning changes to general necessity rather than having a specific object.

- (55) shoma lazem-e-tun mi-shævæd-Ø
 you(pl) necessary-yours future-become-3sg
you(pl or sing. formal) need (something).

As mentioned earlier, all these constructions have a regular counterpart in subject-verb agreement. The following example is the regular counterpart of (55).

- (56) shoma [lazem dar-id]
 you(pl) necessary have-2pl
you(pl) require (something).

As can be seen in (56) both the subject and verb are second person singular. It should be mentioned that as in example (52), the verb in (56) is a complex (compound) verb, where *lazem* is the nominal part, and *dar-id* is the light verb.

- (57) mæn æz an/un xoš-æm amæd-Ø
 I from s/he/it liking-my came-3sg
I liked her/him/it. (S/he/it appealed to me).

Although in the English translation of the example (57) *him/her* is the direct object, in the Persian construction it is the complement of preposition *æz*, which by no means can be an accusative marker. Consequently, in Persian it is analyzed as the indirect object. The construction is also possible without this indirect object *un*, which makes it an adjunct. An example of this can be found in (58) below.

- (58) xoš-æm amæd-Ø
 liking-my came-3sg
I am pleased. [I liked (it)]. (Lit. liking came to me)

Example (59) demonstrates where the negation stands in the construction.

- (59) mæn æz un xoš-æm na-y-amæd-Ø
 I from s/he/it liking-my neg-came-3sg
I did not like her/him. (S/he/it did not appeal to me).

As mentioned briefly earlier, the first and most important attribute of these constructions is that if one considers the preverbal NP as the subject of the sentence, there is no subject-predicate agreement. Regardless of the constituent in preverbal position, the verb is always in third person singular (default form), in violation of the following principle:

- (60) subject-predicate agreement (revised)

A predicate must unify with its subject in person, number, and gender.

(Moore & Perlmutter, 2000:396)

In these constructions the nominal part of the supposedly compound verb contains an enclitic, which is always co-referential with the subject-like NP in the preverbal position.

The other interesting point is that, as can be seen in all of the examples mentioned, the subject-like NPs in the preverbal position are somehow experiencers, a thematic role often associated with subjects. Furthermore, it can be seen that in all of the

examples provided in this section, the action or state described by the predicate is beyond the subject-like NP's control.

The next attribute of this construction, which is exclusive to Persian, is the limitation on the kind of predicate with which it can occur. The predicate in these constructions appears to be a “complex verb”; this is widespread in Persian. Many linguists including Ghomeshi (1996), and Barjasteh (1983) have considered these predicates as complex verbs (to be explained). For example, in (57) they consider the predicate as the complex *xoshæm amæd-Ø*. They believe that *xoshæm* is the nominal part of the compound and the light verb is *amæd-Ø*.

In the following sections, I will provide a summary of the existing analyses on these Persian constructions.

3.3 Compound verbs of experience

Similar to many other linguists, Barjasteh (1983) considers the predicates of the constructions studied here as complex predicates, and calls them “Compound Verbs of Experience”. He states the following:

“This category of compounds consists of a large number of verbal constructions in which the nominal component satisfies some types of human experience, such as *xoš* ‘liking’, *bæd* ‘disliking’, *del* ‘passion’, etc.”

(Barjasteh, 1983: 327)

Furthermore, he provides the following examples:

- (61) (a) xoš amæd-æn
liking come-inf
'to like'

(b) xab amæd-æn
sleeping come-inf
'to feel sleepy'

He states that the nominal component of these compounds must obligatorily combine with the verbal element '*amædæn*'. He fails to consider the other verbal elements that may be used in these constructions. Examples in infinitival form are as in (62-63).

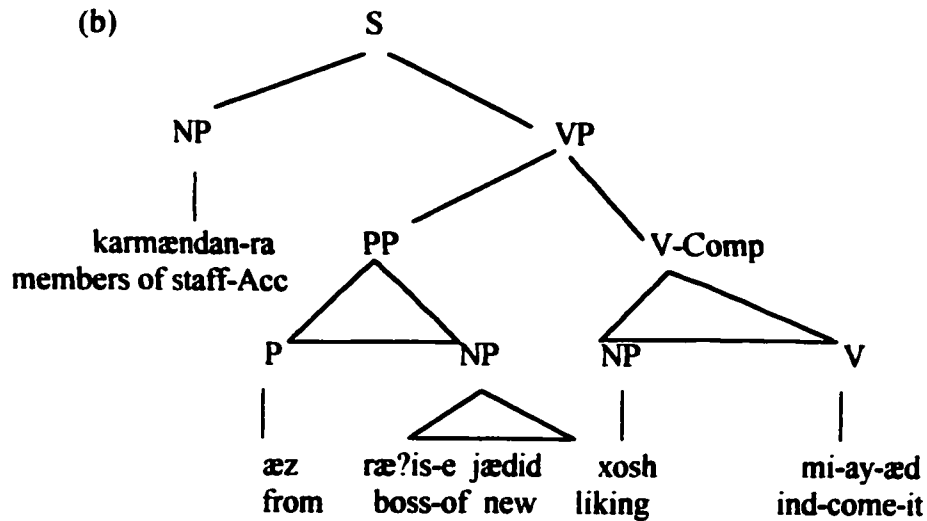
- (62) del gereft-æn
heart got-inf
'to feel sad'

- (63) teshne shod-æn
thirsty became-inf
'to become thirsty'

Barjasteh believes that each compound verb of experience such as (64a) has a corresponding underlying representation where the subject-like NP is accompanied by an accusative case marker *ra*, as (64b)⁶. In other words, in this analysis the construction has an accusative "subject".

- (64) (a) karmændan æz ræʔis-e jædid [xoš-ešan mi-ay-æd]
members of staff from boss-of new liking-they ind-come-it
The members of the staff like the new boss

⁶ This structure is archaic and not used in Modern Persian.



Barjasteh bases this assumption on two facts. First, he states that Persian has an optional rule of “Accusative Object Cliticization” where a clitic pronoun attaches to the inflected form of the verbal stem. In the case of a compound verb it attaches to the nominal part of the compound verb and refers to the NP in the subject position. He believes that such NP subjects are underlyingly accusative, such as in (65):

- (65) *anha karmændan-ra [extraj-eshan kærd-ænd]*
 They members of staff-Acc. dismissal-their did-they
They dismissed the members of the staff.

He generalizes the rule for ordinary objects and calls it “Accusative Subject Cliticization.”

(66) Accusative Subject Cliticization Rule

[NP-ra	x	[NP	V] _{C-<i>como</i>}	Y] _s	
1	2	3	4	5	6 →
1	∅	3	4 + I _[pronoun]	5	6

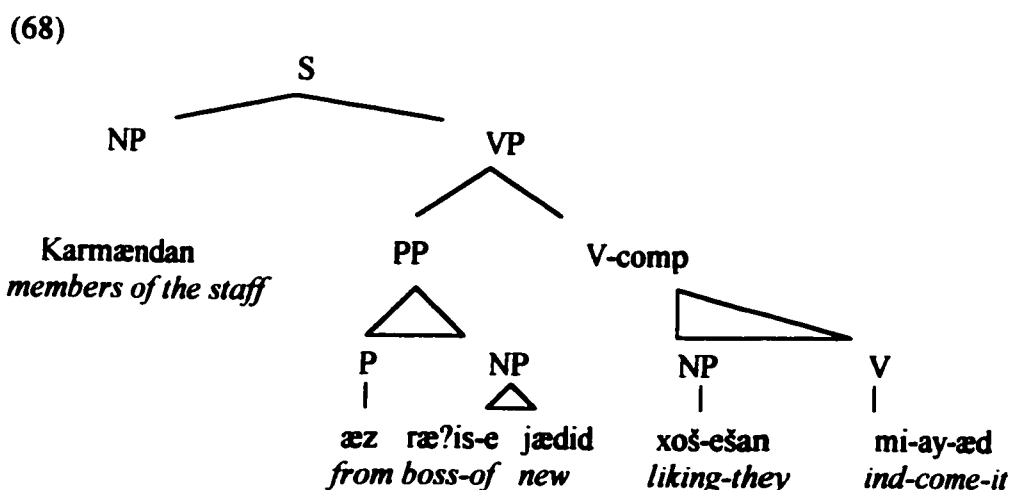
(Barjasteh, 1985:74)

As can be seen the subject with the accusative marker undergoes the above rule, where the accusative marker is omitted, and the rule states that a pronominal co-referential with that subject appears in the nominal part of the compound verb.

Barjasteh's second piece of evidence in support of the assumption of accusative subject cliticization is diachronic and comes from an Early New Persian text.

(67) eskændær-ra æz išan ?æzim [xoš amæd-Ø]
 Alexander-Acc from him a lot liking came-it
Alexander liked him a lot.

Consequently, Barjasteh states that structure (64b) undergoes the syntactic rule of accusative subject cliticization to produce the surface form (65a), and ultimately the following form:



Persian has an accusative object cliticization rule, as well as subject cliticization where an enclitic pronoun co-referential with the object attaches to the verb or, in the case of compounds, to the nominal part of the compound verb. The first part of

Barjesteh’s analysis, which is about accusative subject cliticization, could be manifested but not in this construction. I do not agree with the second part of the analysis, when he discusses the accusative subject cliticization. The reason is that, as Karimi (1990) states, *ra* is not only the accusative marker, it can also demonstrate obliqueness, specificity, and discourse functions. In the cases when *ra* accompanies the subject (usually used in old style) it is a specificity marker and what appears to be a subject in those cases is actually a left dislocated element. I will tackle this issue in more detail further in the discussion.

Another important shortcoming of Barjesteh’s analysis is that he does not mention anything about the lack of subject-verb agreement in these constructions, as in (64). Consequently, I do not agree with Barjesteh’s analysis.

3.4 The Impersonal Construction

Ghomeshi (1996) examines the constructions studied here, and introduces them as “Impersonal Constructions”. She observes that in these constructions, the subject is indicated by a pronominal clitic, while the verb does not bear agreement. She adds that often these constructions have a regular direct counterpart. Examples are shown below. Form (69a) is the regular version with a nominative NP and a verb that agrees with it, whereas form (69b) is the experiencer subject version.

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| (69) | (a) mæn xabid-æm
I slept-1sg
I slept. | (a') Sepehr un -o dust dasht-Ø
Sepehr s/he/it-Acc. friend had+3sgS
Sepehr liked that. |
|------|---|---|

(b) mæn xab-æm amæd
I sleep-my came
I was felt sleepy.

(b') Soroush æz an xosh-esh amæd
Soroush from s/he/it good-3sg came
Soroush liked that.

Ghomeshi points out several similarities between these constructions and Compound Verbs. She states the following:

“ There are similarities between these verbs and the transitive compound verbs. For example, these constructions involve a non-verbal element and a light verb, although in these cases the verb is intransitive. Like the transitive compounds, these ‘compounds’ receive only one stress”.

(Gomeshi, 1996:277)

I do not agree with her observation about the stress pattern. For example the following can be stated with two stresses, suggesting that the form is not a compound.

(70) xo'shet mi'-y -ad-Ø?
liking-your ind-y_{insertion}-come-3sg
Do you like it?

Furthermore, Ghomeshi believes that there is another similarity between these constructions and compound verbs: nothing can intervene between the non-verbal element and the verb. Below is her example with a prepositional phrase.

(71) (a) æz un ketab xoshæm amæd
from that book liking-1sg came
I liked that book.

(b)*xoshæm æz un ketab amæd
liking+1sg from that book came

Ghomeshi's analysis is accurate with regard to the example (71). However, there are cases where a prepositional phrase intervenes between what she calls the non-verbal element and the light verb. The following example reveals that is not a compound:

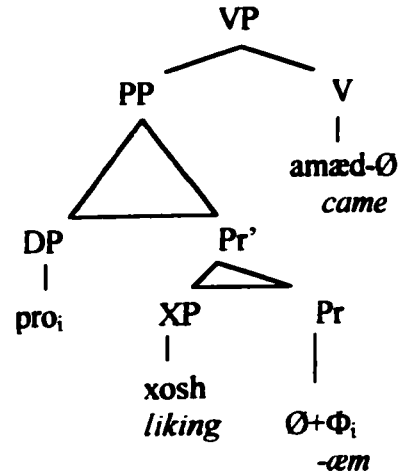
(72) unha del-e-shun gereft-Ø
they heart-of-their got-3sg
They became sad.

In (72), according to Ghomeshi's analysis, [*del-e-shun gereft-Ø*] is a compound verb and nothing can intervene between the non-verbal part and the light verb, whereas in (73) a prepositional phrase intervenes.

(73) unha del-e-shun æz donya gereft-Ø
they heart-of-their from world got-3sg
They felt depressed about this world.

Ghomeshi suggests that the nominal part and the light verb involve only a VP projection. Furthermore, she solves the lack of subject-verb agreement by introducing 'pro' as the 'subject'. She states that since subject agreement is responsible for nominative case assignment, and assuming that 'pro' does not need case, it is the best candidate for the subject position. Therefore, she proposes the following structure for Impersonal Constructions:

(74)



This analysis is fairly attractive; however, I argue that this structure does not need *pro*. The subject of the main verb is what she calls the nominal part of the compound verb, just as in simple adjectival clauses in English. An example is given below:

(75) My singing is important.

For the cases with an overt 'subject' such as the following form, she proposes that these overt subjects are generated in [Spec TopP], and therefore do not require the presence of agreement between the subject and the verb.

(76) mæn az an xoshæm amæd
I from that liking+1sg came
I liked that.

Ghomeshi states that cases like (76) show that when the subject is overtly expressed it must appear at the beginning of the sentence, and be construed as co-referential with the

clitic, while the main verb is in default form. She states that the resulting construction resembles “Clause-level Topicalization”. She makes use of the following idea from Thackston (1983) to explain the structure.

(77) *The Resumptive Sentence Construction*

“A common type of sentence in Persian is the resumptive (or topic-comment) sentence, wherein a topic which is not the subject of the main verb is introduced as subject of the sentence; the predicate then affords some information about that subject. Since the sentence-subject is not the subject of the main verb, the sentence-subject must be referred to pronominally in its proper position in the predicate. Both the independent and the ecliptic pronouns are used for this purpose.”

(Thackston, 1983:92)

- (78) an zan-i-ke dærbare-ash sohbæt mi-kærd-im: æz
 that woman+indef+rel about+3sg talk con+did+1plS from

 xane-æsh ræd mi-shod-æm
 house+3sg pass con+became+1sgS

*That woman that we were talking about, I passed by her house.
 (I passed by the house of that woman we were talking about.)*

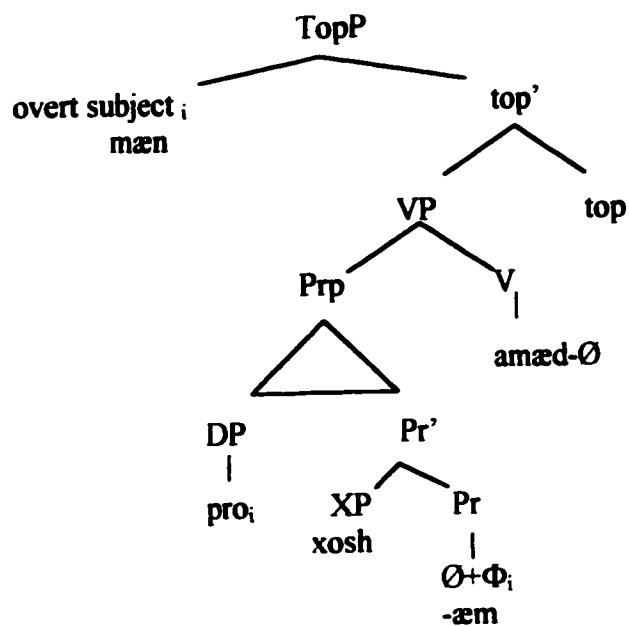
(Thackston, 1983:92)

I argue that this is left-dislocation, which tends to be distinguished from topicalization, since left-dislocation does not involve movement. Therefore, I adopt the hypothesis that

the subject-like NPs are left-dislocated constituents. Findings of Darzi (1995), which will be introduced in the next chapter, will help us provide a better understanding.

Nevertheless, Ghomeshi proposes the following structure for these constructions, admitting that further research about the nature of the ‘subject’ in these constructions may provide a better answer.

(79)



3.5 Dabir Moghadam's Observation

Dabir Moghadam (1997) disregards Barjasteh's analysis that these constructions contain compound verbs of experience. Instead, he believes that the verbs in the following infinitival examples are simple verbs:

(80) (a) xoš amæd-æn
liking came-inf
'to like'

(b) bæd amæd-æn
disliking came-inf
'to dislike'

(c) xab amæd-æn
sleeping came-inf
'to feel sleepy'

(Dabir Moghadam, 1997:44)

Furthermore, He states that the following forms are not compound verbs at all but “full fledged” sentences in which the nominal element of the compound verb is the ‘subject’, and the obligatory rule of subject-verb agreement in Persian systematically treats these NPs as the subject. He gives the following examples to support his observation:

(81) (a) xoš-æm amæd-Ø
liking-my came-it
I liked it. (my liking came.)

(b) xoš-eš amæd-Ø
liking-his/her came-it
He/she likes it. (His/her liking came.)

(c) xoš-etan amæd-Ø
liking-you-pl came-it
you liked it. (your liking came.)

(Dabir Moghadam, 1997:44)

I argue in favor of this judgment, in addition, I argue that the enclitic attached to the subject (for instance *-æm* in (81a)) checks the EPP feature of *xosh*, so that the total is a clause-like IP *xosh-æm*.

Dabir Moghadam argues that although subject incorporation has been proposed in the literature, there is not enough evidence to assume that the above items are instances of such a process in Persian. He believes that these constructions are:

“frozen sentences whose verb meanings are metaphorically extended”.

(Dabir Moghadam, 1997:46)

In the following section, I apply the standard tests of subjecthood to the Persian constructions studied and examine the results.

3.6 Tests of Subjecthood on Persian

The following is the application of the tests in (28) and (29) in chapter 2 to Persian. Each test is first applied to the regular subject, and then to the subject-like NP.

Reflexivization

a. *mæn æks-e xodæm ra did-æm*
I picture-of myself D.O saw-1sg
I saw my own picture.

b. * *mæn dæst-e xodæm dærd-æm gereft-Ø*
I hand-of-myself pain-my got-3sg
my own hand ached

As can be seen in form (b), the process of reflexivization is not possible when we are dealing with these subject-like NPs. Moore and Perlmutter (2000) state the following:

“A subject behaviour such as the ability to antecede subject-oriented reflexives is often interpreted (as it is by Avrutin and Babyonyshev) as a sufficient condition for subjecthood.”

(Moore and Perlmutter, 2000:375)

Thus, failure to antecede subject-oriented reflexives is a sufficient ground to claim that these preverbal subject-like NPs are not subjects.

Inversion

As mentioned in section 3.2, the process of interrogation in Persian occurs by changing the intonation and not the word order or subject-predicate inversion. Therefore, the inversion test is not applicable to Persian.

The following examples demonstrate that Persian has no “ordinary” ECM, raising, and control, since it has no infinitives. Therefore, these tests of subjecthood would be inapplicable to Persian.

ECM

a. mæn motægedam ke un æks ra did-Ø-e

I believe that she picture D.O saw-3sg-is
I believe that she has seen the picture.

- b. mæn motægedam ke un benæzæresh ketab [xæste konænde] amæd-Ø
 I believe that she to her eyes book boring came-3sg
I believe that she found the book boring.

Raising

- c. u [benæzæzær miresæd-Ø] ke aks ra did-Ø-e
 she seems that picture D.O saw-3sg-is
She seems to have seen the picture.
- d. u [benæzæzær miresæd-Ø] ke ketab be næzæzær-esh [xæste konænde] amæd-Ø-e
 she seems that book to sight-her boring came-3sg-is
She seems to have found the book boring.

Control

- e. u omidvar-e ke aks ra be-binæd
 she hopeful-is that picture D.O. pre-see-3sg
She hopes to see the picture.
- f. un omidvar-e ke ketab be næzæzær-esh [xæste konænde] be-yad-Ø
 she hopeful-is that book to sight-her boring pre-come-3sg
She hopes to find the book boring.

Conjunction-reduction test is applicable to Persian, and construction with subject-like NP passes this test.

Conjunction-reduction

- g. u [negah kærd-Ø] væ æks ra did-Ø
 she looked and picture D.O saw-3sg
She looked and saw the picture.

**h. u xab-esh mi-amæd-∅ va ketab be næzær-esh [xæste konænde]
she sleep-her pre-came-3sg and book to sight-her boring**

**amæd-∅
came-3sg
*She was sleepy and found the book boring.***

Among six standard tests of subjecthood, four of them (inversion, ECM, raising and control) can not be applied to Persian because of the structure of the language. The construction with the subject-like NP did not pass the Reflexivization test, which is believed to be a sufficient test to determine the subjecthood of a nominal. Only the conjunction reduction test is applicable and passed by the construction with subject-like NP. Therefore, we can conclude that these subject-like NPs in Persian are neither regular subjects nor quirky ones.

In addition, Harley (1995) states the following, which can be related to the constructions studied in Persian.

“ ... the properties that are commonly associated with the notion ‘subject’ need to be characterized as deriving from varied sources. Constructions involving locative inversion or experiencer predicates can contain elements that have properties associated with some of the sources, but not with others”.

(Harley, 1995:23)

The question now arises, if these subject-like NPs in Persian are neither regular subjects nor quirky ones, what are they? Before answering this question, let us look at some unusual attributes of subjects in other languages.

The next section introduces somehow-related constructions in other languages, which can help understanding the Persian construction being investigated.

3.6 Psychological predicates and Incorporation

Belletti and Rizzi state the following as the definition of psychological verbs:

“... in the general case, verbs expressing psychological states have a uniform theta-grid, involving an experiencer, the individual experiencing the mental state, and a theme, the content or object of the mental state.”

(Belletti & Rizzi, 1988: 291)

Examples in English are as follows:

- (82) a) Calvin fears the weirdos from another planet.
b) Calvin is afraid of the weirdos from another planet.
c) Calvin has a deep-rooted fear of the weirdos from another planet.

(Harley, 1995:208)

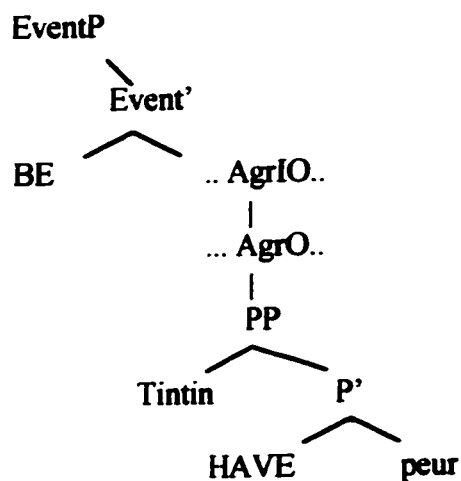
Let us look at another example of psychological predicates in French, which involves the prepositional HAVE.

- 83) Tintin a peur (de q.q.ch)
Tintin has fear (of sthg)
Tintin fears. (Tintin is afraid of ...)

(Harley, 1995:200)

The former is a psychological predicate construction, where the verb is the result of incorporation of the underlying nominal constituent indicating the psychological state into HAVE and subsequent incorporation of that complex into the BE head and above that. Furthermore, Harley cites Noonan (1993), stating that in languages with the predicate HAVE, the psychological states are expressed underlyingly as possession relations, with the ordering [Goal/Possessor/Holder HAVE theme], as diagrammed below:

(84)



(Harley, 1995:202)

3.7 Psych predicates and Subject-verb idioms

In languages without HAVE such as Dine' languages this kind of psychological/experiential state is expressed using transitive verbs like "kill". Forms like "*hunger kills me*" which mean "*I am hungry*", or "*sleep kills me*" meaning "*I am sleepy*".

Examples from Slave are as follows:

- (85) a) mbeh sedhehxi
 sleep 1sgO.pf.kill
I am sleepy. (lit. "sleep killed me")

- b) **wheko ?anihwhw**
fever 2sgo.pf.affect
You (sg) have a fever. (lit. "fever affected you")

(Rice & Saxon, 1994:176)

Harley (1995) states that such examples appear to be subject-verb idioms. KILL is at first glance a transitive agentive verb. Furthermore, the experience is not marked with a prepositional phrase, as in possessive constructions with *have*. Harley believes that the crucial point here is not the verb stem *kill* but the ordering of the arguments and that in these constructions the subject is the psychological state and the experiencer/goal/location argument is the object.

Rice and Saxon (1994) point out an interesting reason for realization of the experiencer object in these constructions, which they call psychological idioms: the experiencer can be realized as a regular pronominal inflectional form shown in (86) or alternatively as the disjoint anaphor *zh* in (87).

- (86) **thekoni?ameuleh**
ever 3O.opt.affet
S/he might get a fever. (lit. "fever might affect him/her")

- (87) **thekoni?azhuleh**
fever 3O.opt.affect
S/he might get a fever. (lit. "fever might affect him/her")

(Rice and Saxon, 1994:177)

They believe that the anaphoric realization of the pronominal inflection is possible when the subject and object of the transitive m-command each other. They hold that this requirement is met when a subject is VP internal.

Moreover, Harley (1995) states that Dine' has a verb meaning "hold" or "keep" which is used to express a locative construction, with a location subject and theme object. These Dine' patterns are very much similar to the Persian construction being studied here. Consider the example (57), repeated below:

- (88) *mæn az an xoshæm amæd-Ø*
I from s/he/it liking+1sg came-3sg
I liked that/. (liking came to me from that)

In the example above or any of the other examples of Persian constructions being discussed, it can be seen that the subject is the psychological state and the subject-like argument is somehow the experiencer/goal/location (regardless of the English translation which makes it confusing). However, I would not go to the extreme of stating that there is subject-verb incorporation involved in these Persian constructions.

So far in section 3.6, we argued that the subject-like NP in the initial position, (for instance *mæn* in example (88)) cannot be considered as the subject since it does not pass the tests of subjecthood. In addition, it is obvious that in order to satisfy the EPP feature, the construction requires a subject, and the best candidate for subject would be *xosh-æm*. But why does the subject have an enclitic, which is always co-referential with the NP in the initial position? What is the nature of this NP? The findings below will help to answer

these questions.

3.9 Clitic Left-Dislocation Constructions In Persian

Darzi (1995) discusses the phenomenon of Clitic Left Dislocation Constructions (CLD) in Persian. He states that the former is used in the colloquial register and involves clitic doubling. He defines clitic doubling as a construction in which a clitic doubles an NP in the sentence. He states that the NP is construed as bearing the theta role that it would have born in the position of the clitic, if the clitic had been absent. Example of clitic doubling in Persian is as follows.

(89) mæn Sepehr_i ra avord-æm-esh_i inja
I Sepehr Acc brought-1sg-him/her here
I brought Sepehr here.

(90) mæn Soroush_i ra ghæza-sh_i dad-æm
I Soroush Acc. food-his gave-1sg
I gave food to Soroush. (I fed Soroush.)

Furthermore, Darzi states that in Persian CLD involves a bare definite NP which, like subjects, is not overtly case marked, while CD (clitic doubling) NPs are marked with accusative case (see the above examples).

Moreover, he states that CLD occurs only in sentence-initial position and is linked to a clitic pronoun to its right and in its c-commanding domain. Darzi states that CLD is construed as bearing what Wager (1983) calls 'about X' theta role, and the presence of

the clitic pronoun is obligatory. An example of CLD follows.

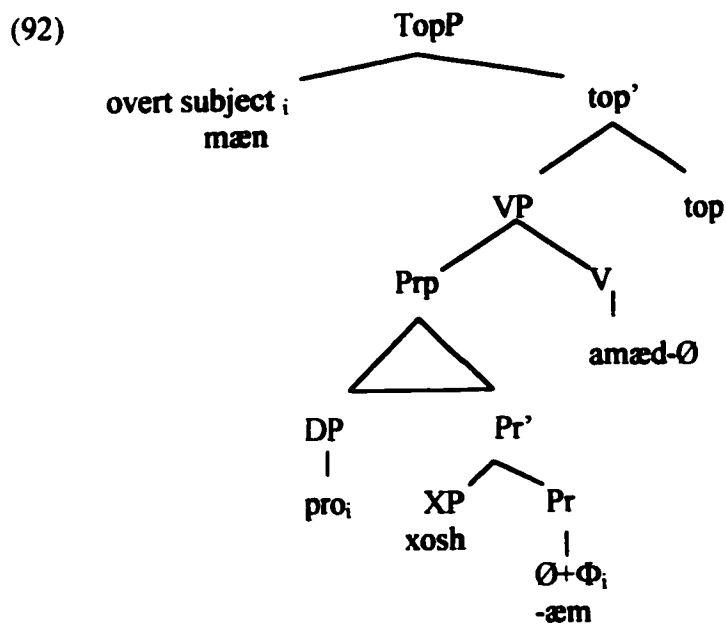
- (91) Ali_i dust-*(esh)_i dær zendan æst-Ø
 Ali friend-his/hers in jail is-3sg
(speaking of) Ali, his friend is in jail.

Furthermore, following Jaeggli (1986), Everett (1987), Suner (1988), and Cinque (1990) (among others), Darzi states that the process of CLD does not involve movement of the doubled NP and is not the spell-out of the trace left behind by the movement of an NP. Rather, it involves base-generation of a doubled NP outside the minimal IP, and this NP is co-indexed with a clitic in the argument position. The clitic is affixed to a head, and bears no theta-role or case.

3.10 Analysis

The proposed analysis of the Persian constructions studied consists of two parts.

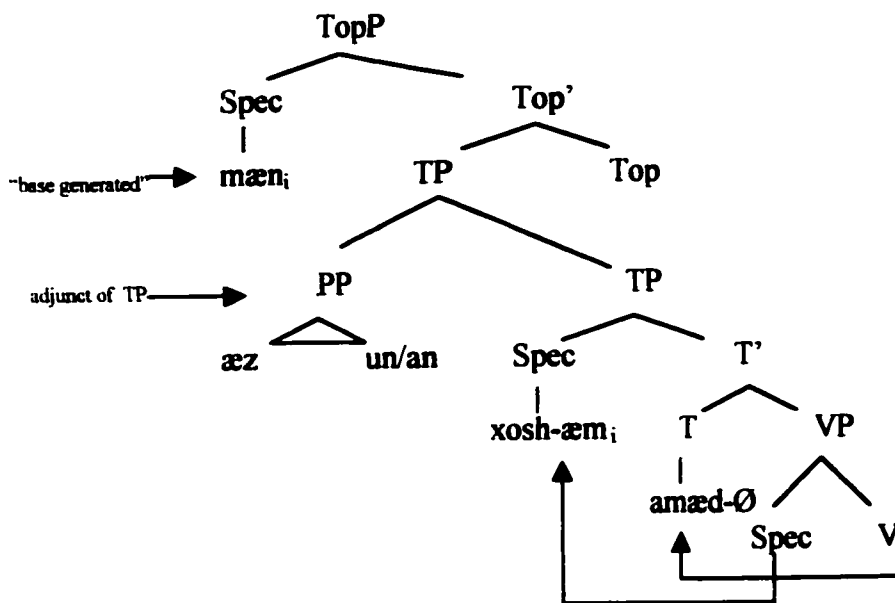
Recall the proposed analysis by Ghomeshi in (79), repeated below.



The first part of my analysis differs from Ghomeshi's in the upper clause with seeming to be non-agreeing V. I argue that the subject is the psychological state *xosh* and not *pro*, which causes the default format on the verb.

In the second part of my analysis, I argue that in the lower part there is no complex verb involved but rather, there is a simple verb (*amæd-Ø*). The following is the proposed structure, containing the CLD element (which was previously known as subject in some previous analyses).

(93)



In the construction above, I argue that *xosh-æm*, is the subject of the verb. It is generated in [Spec VP] and then moves to [Spec TP] to check the EPP feature. The verb *amæd-Ø* moves from its original position as the head of VP to TNS to check its V feature.

In addition, I argue that the verb is an independent light verb, rather than being a complex one. Supporting this idea are examples (72) and (73), repeated below as (94a and b), where the so-called compound verb in (94a) has been separated by a prepositional phrase in (94b).

- (94) a. unha del-e-shun gereft-Ø
 they heart-of-their got-3sg
They became sad.
- b. unha del-e-shun æz donya gereft-Ø
 they heart-of-their from world got-3sg
They felt depressed about this world

Unlike real compound verbs, the [Spec TopP] of these pseudo-compound verbs should be co-indexed with the subject enclitic, and the verb should always be in default form. Therefore, the following can be stated:

If we present the format of a sentence with a compound verb as form (95a), (where X is the subject of the sentence and Y is the non-verbal constituent of the compound verb), and form (95b) as the structure of a sentence with a simple verb, we can then speculate that the construction under discussion can be shown as in form (95c). They are in the process of becoming (95a), which is a compound verb. That means the subject and the verb tend to become conjoined.

- (95) (a) X (Y+V) 'Structure of a sentence with a compound verb'
 (b) X V 'Structure of a sentence with a simple verb'
 (c) X+V 'Conjunction of the subject with the verb'

Chapter Four

4. General Discussion and Conclusion

To sum up, I studied certain subject-like NPs in Persian, and demonstrated that they are neither subjects, nor quirky subjects. In fact, they are left-dislocated constituents. Furthermore, I argued that the verb in these constructions is not a compound, rather a simple verb with the psychological state as the subject, which is the reason for the default format of the verb.

Findings of my work confirm the fact that subjects exhibit distinct behaviors across languages. This supports Sigurdsson (2000), where he states the following:

“ ... there is no way of giving a theory-independent definition or even a description of “subject” that comes anywhere near to being universally valid.”

(Sigurdsson, 2000:27)

Note that Sigurdsson (2000) also states that whenever language does not comply with the definition given for the subject, there must be a language-specific explanation involved. As we explained in chapter five, this statement is also true with regard to Persian.

Sigurdsson (2000) demonstrates subject as what he calls a “taxonomic artifact” and provides the following hierarchy that holds between different syntactic constituents:

(96) Nominative subjects>Icelandic quirky subjects>Russian infinitival datives>I-nominals>Indirect objects>.....

(Sigurdsson, 2000:30)

Within this classification it makes sense to consider Persian left-dislocated subject-like constituents in between “I-nominals” and “Indirect objects”, since they do not satisfy subjecthood prerequisites but neither are they indirect objects. (because of the case reasons mentioned).

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