

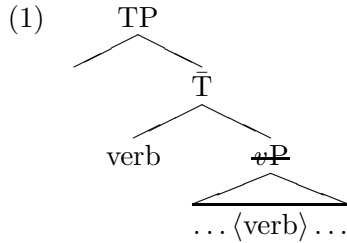
## Leaving *v* Behind: Ellipsis in Farsi Complex Predicates

Until recently, English was considered the only language to possess Verb Phrase Ellipsis (VPE), a process that is licensed by the language’s typologically rare tense-inflecting auxiliary system. Research on verb-raising languages, in particular Hebrew, Irish, and Swahili, has shown that a main verb that has raised into a higher functional projection can also license ellipsis of the verb phrase (see Goldberg 2005); this process, called V-Stranding VPE, is illustrated schematically in (1). In both attested types of VPE, however, it is the entire verb phrase, or what is identified in current research as the *v*P, that goes missing. It has gone unnoticed that ellipsis is able to target a constituent of the verbal projection smaller than the *v*P. I argue that *v*, which in Farsi (Persian) is realized as an overt light verb in the Complex Predicate (CPr) construction, can license the ellipsis of its phrasal complement.

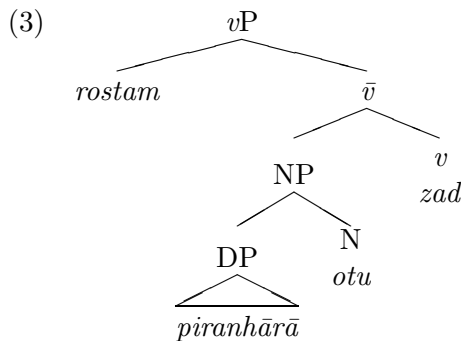
CPrs in Farsi are comprised of a light verb (LV) and a nonverbal element (NVE), either a noun, adjective, or PP. The CPr’s argument structure is predictable: the LV, glossed here with the meaning of the homophonous heavy verb in small caps, selects for the external argument, as illustrated in (2), and the NVE selects for any internal arguments. For this reason, Folli, Harley, and Karimi (2005) analyze the CPr in Farsi as an unconfused Hale and Keyser-style structure (1993 and subsequent work), in which movement of the NVE to *v* does not occur, unlike in English, and *v* is realized overtly as a LV (the structure of (2a) is given in (3)). Since the two parts of the CPr are identified with structurally distinct projections at Spell out, we predict that some syntactic processes, such as ellipsis, should be able to target the NVE phrase.

The novel type of null anaphora that I identify, illustrated in (4), does exactly this, removing the NVE and any internal arguments and leaving the LV behind. Gapping can be dismissed as a possible analysis for this phenomenon, as it: 1) does not conform to the Backwards Anaphora generalization; 2) can occur under embedding; 3) can occur across utterance boundaries; and 4) does not conform to the contrastive focus requirement of gapping. It does, however, display the typical ‘surface anaphora’ characteristics of ellipsis (Hankamer and Sag 1976), exhibiting both the Missing Antecedent Phenomenon and the inability to occur with pragmatic antecedents. Moreover, like ellipsis, this type of null anaphora requires the presence of a local overt tense-inflecting head (Lobeck 1995). On the basis of these criteria, I conclude that the type of null anaphora operating on Farsi CPrs is a variety of ellipsis, which I call *v*-Stranding VPE.

*v*-Stranding VPE and V-Stranding VPE both seem to impose an additional identity requirement on the verb left behind: it must be identical in everything but inflectional morphology to its correlate in the antecedent clause (Goldberg 2005), as is illustrated in (5) for alternations of the LV. For V-Stranding VPE, Goldberg is able to reduce this Verbal Identity Requirement to Merchant’s (2001) e-GIVENNESS condition (mutual semantic entailment between the antecedent and target phrases, modulo  $\exists$ -type shifting), since the stranded verb can be reconstructed inside the elided phrase. In Farsi, the LV originates outside the elided phrase, but nonetheless I argue that the Verbal Identity Requirement can be reduced to e-GIVENNESS here as well. By selecting or not selecting for an external argument, the LV can result in the NVE phrase having different entailments, modulo  $\exists$ -type shifting. Since the LV of the antecedent clause in (5), *šodan*, is unaccusative, the internal argument *piranhā* ‘shirts’ must raise out of the *v*P to subject position. When the e-GIVENNESS check applies at LF, the NVE *otu* ‘iron’ still has an open e-type argument variable that must be  $\exists$ -bound; therefore,  $NP_{A'}$  does not entail  $F\text{-clo}(NP_E)$ , as shown in (6), and the ellipsis is illicit (see Kratzer (1996) for the details of semantic composition). The upshot is that English VPE and Farsi *v*-Stranding VPE obey the same e-GIVENNESS identity constraint.



- (2) a. rostam piranhā-rā otu zad  
 Rostam shirts-acc iron HIT:past:3sg  
 ‘Rostam ironed the shirts.’  
 b. piranhā otu šod-an  
 shirts iron BECOME:past-3pl  
 ‘The shirts got/were ironed.’



- (4) sohrāb piranhā-rā otu na-zad                      vali rostam [<sub>NP</sub> ~~piranhā-rā otu~~] zad  
 Sohrab shirts-acc iron neg-HIT:past:3sg but Rostam shirts-acc iron HIT:past:3sg  
 ‘Sohrab didn’t iron the shirts but Rostam did (iron the shirts).’

- (5) Q: piranhā otu **šod-an?**  
 shirts iron **become:pres-3pl**  
 ‘Have the shirts been ironed yet?’

- A: \*na, vali rostam fardā [<sub>NP</sub> ~~piranhā-rā otu~~] **mi-zan-e**  
 no but Rostam tomorrow shirts-acc iron **cont-hit:pres-3sg**  
 ‘No, but Rostam will \*(iron the shirts) tomorrow.’

- (6) a. NP<sub>A'</sub> = ∃x<sub>e</sub>.∃e<sub>s</sub>.iron x (e)  
 b. F-clo(NP<sub>E</sub>) = ∃e<sub>s</sub>.iron shirts (e)

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