Ellipsis in Persian Complex Predicates: VVPE or Something Else?
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Introduction: Persian has two main verb groups, namely Heavy Verbs and Complex Predicates (CPr), which consist of a Non-Verbal element (NV) and a Light Verb (LV) (Vahedi-Langarudi, 1996). The NV can be a noun, adjective, preposition, or an adverb (Vahedi-Langarudi, 1996, Folly et al, 2004, Karimi, 2005, Toosarvandani, 2009). Folli et al (2004) believe that the CPr is headed by the LV which takes the NV as its complement. Adopting this view, Toosarvandani (2009) proposes that during ellipsis the NV strands the LV and then undergoes elision. He bases this proposal on the fact that Persian is not a raising language and does not allow v to T raising (quoting Karimi, 2005). Rasekhi (2014) by providing evidence from ellipsis inside islands proposes that it is not any V-type element that is elided, rather it is the NP or PP [in transitive structures] which undergoes ellipsis (Rasekhi, 2014).

The Problem: As the example in (1) shows, when there is ellipsis in CPr, the NV can be either pronounced or not. This phenomenon that has not been dealt with in either of the cited works.

1. a. Amir doost-esh ro davat kard.
   Amir friend-Gen.3sg ACC invite do.Past.3sg.
   “Amir invited his friend.”
   b. va Jila ham [doost-esh ro davat/davat] kard.
   and Jila also [friend-Gen.3sg ACC invitation/invitation] do.Past.3sg
   “Amir invited his friend, and Jila did so, too.”

Proposal: In this paper, I have a novel approach towards ellipsis in Persian. Making use of Şener & Takahashi (Ş&T), and Sato’s analysis of ellipsis, I make a comparison between Strict/Sloppy, and E-type/Quantificational interpretation of Persian elided subjects and objects. I show that Persian, a subject-verb agreement language, shares the same characteristics with similar languages in regard with subject and object ellipsis. That is to say, its missing objects show Strict/Sloppy or E-type/Quantificational reading while the missing subjects allow only for Strict or E-type reading. Sentence (b) in (1) above can either mean that “Jila invited Amir’s friend” (Strict) or that “Jila invited her friend” (Sloppy); whereas the sentence (b) in (2) can only mean that “Arman thinks Shahla’s son studies French”. Consequently, missing subjects are null pronouns while missing objects undergo ellision.

2. a. Shahla fekr mikone pesar-esh ingilisi mikhoone.
   Shahla think do.Hab.3sg son-Gen.3sg English study.Hab.3sg
   “Shahla thinks her son studies English.”
   Arman think do.Hab.3sg [son-Gen.3sg] French study.Hab.3sg
   “Arman thinks e studies French.”

Having Sloppy and Quantificational reading is a proof of ellision according to Ş&T and Sato. This leaves me with the fact that NV element can either be or not be elided, the fact that has not been dealt with in the literature. Providing more evidence in this regard and redressing the CPr structure proposed by Folli et al, I propose that the NV and LV make a compound verb similar to Turkish compound verbs (Aydemir, 2004). Moreover, I claim that this is the CPr, not only the LV, that strands the VP which undergoes ellision. And this is how the NV can escape deletion.
To summarize, I believe that Persian is a vVPE language as Toosarvandani suggests; however, the CPr structure used to reach this conclusion needs revision, which is the focus of my paper.

References