

Explanation for Co-occurrence of Preverbs and the Light verb “KARDAN” in Persian Complex Predicates

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

In addition to simple verbs, Persian employs a large number of complex predicates consisting of a preverbal element and a light verb. The preverbal element can be a noun, an adjective, an adverb or a preposition phrase, which combines with a verb to form a single syntactic predicate. Persian complex verbs have attracted some researchers (e.g. Folli, Harley & Karimi 2005, Karimi 1997; Karimi Doostan 1997; Megerdooian 2001; Mohammad & Karimi 1992; Vahedi-Langroudi 1996; ;). This paper aims to analyze co-occurrence of preverb and the light verb “KARDAN” in Persian compound verbs, based on the theory of Generative Lexicon (Pustejovsky, 1995) and to investigate how these two elements combine in the compound verbs made with this light verb.

2. Theoretical Framework

Generative Lexicon (henceforth, GL) introduces a knowledge representation framework which offers a rich and expressive vocabulary for lexical information. GL is concerned with explaining the creative use of language. In GL, the lexicon is the key repository holding much of the information underlying this phenomenon. More specifically, however, it is the notion of a constantly evolving lexicon that GL attempts to emulate; this is in contrast to currently prevalent views of static lexicon design, where the set of contexts licensing the use of words is determined in advance, and there are no formal mechanisms offered for expanding this set. This theory of linguistic semantics focuses on the distributed nature of compositionality in natural language. Unlike purely verb-based approaches to compositionality, Generative Lexicon attempts to spread the semantic load across all constituents of the utterance. Following standard assumptions in GL, the computational resources available to a lexical item consist of the following four levels:

- a. Argument Structure (ARGSTR): specifying the number and nature of the arguments to a predicate.
- b. Event Structure (EVENTSTR): defining the event type of the expression and any subeventual structure it may have; with subevents.
- c. Quali Structure (QUALIASTR): a structural differentiation of the predicative force for a lexical item.

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The qualia structures are defined as the modes of explanation associated with a word or phrase in the language, and are defined as follows (Pustejovsky, 1991):

- Formal : the basic category of which distinguishes the meaning of a word within a larger domain;
- Constitutive: the relation between an object and its constituent parts;
- Telic: the purpose or function of the object, if there is one;
- Agentive: the factors involved in the object's origins or "coming into being".

d. Lexical Typing Structure (Lexical Inheritance Structure):

giving an explicit type for a word positioned within a type system for the language.

A set of generative devices connect the four levels, providing for the compositional interpretation of words in context. These devices include: selective binding, type coercion, and co-composition (Pustejovsky, 2007).

3. Methodology

Among the possible factors and characteristics, we will focus particularly on semantic factors. This study will show that the co-occurrence of preverbs and 'KARDAN' in Persian Complex Predicates is a function of their semantic information (such as information in qualia structure). In this regard, preverbs are firstly classified into predicative /non predicative. Non predicative preverbs in turn are divided into several subtypes: natural types, functional types and complex types.

Co-occurrence of preverbs and the light verb "KARDAN" is then accounted for by applying generative devices (such as type coercion, and co-composition) on the information encoded in the lexical-semantic representations (such as qualia structure) of preverbs and "KARDAN". The research is descriptive-analytic. Studied compound verbs and meanings and examples are cited from Anvari (2002).

4. Results and Discussion

This analysis indicates that encoded information in multiple levels of the lexical-semantic representations of preverbs and light verbs plays an important role in restricting their co-occurrence. It is argued that qualia have the necessary information to explain the lexical semantic relation between words and co-occurrence constraint. Exploiting the information encoded in the lexical-semantic representations (in particular qualia structure), which consists of limited but necessary information to explain the lexical semantic relations and co-occurrence constraints, allows us to explain the co-occurrence of two elements of compound verb, based on the concepts of the theory.

5. Conclusion

Studying the co-occurrence of light verbs alongside the preverbs, shows the role of information encoded in the lexical-semantic structures of preverbs and light verbs (including arguments types of predicative preverbs and aspectual characteristics of each light verb) in co-occurrence of light verbs with the preverbs.

Key Words: Persian complex predicates, Co-occurrence, Compositionality constraints, Generative lexicon theory.

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