

Persian singular bare nouns; a case of noun incorporation

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This paper investigates the status of Persian bare nouns (BNs), which coexist in Persian with an indefinite marker *-i*, in the framework of Chierchia (1998). We claim that Persian bare nouns are incorporated in object positions, and propose a semantic mechanism of incorporation which makes unnecessary postulating type-shifting operations both for BNs and for incorporating verbs.

Persian singular BNs as well as objects with the indefinite marker appear in argumental positions. In the framework of Chierchia (1998), if singular bare nouns function freely as arguments, it means that there is a covert type-shifting operation of type \exists , creating existential generalized quantifiers out of properties. At the same time, indefinite markers, such as the English article *a*, are traditionally considered to be (overt) type-shifters of the same type \exists . These are available in Persian. This violates the Blocking Principle of Chierchia, which rules out the existence of languages with covert type-shifting operation doubling the function of an overt type-shifter.

We propose an analysis of Persian BNs that solves this conflict. Namely, we show that Persian BNs in object positions demonstrate a number of properties associated in the literature with noun incorporation, such as constituting one phonological word with the verb, focalizing an action rather than an object (3), narrow scope (4), and non-modification by adjectives (5) (Baker 1988, Borer 1999, Mathieu forthcoming).

Furthermore, we claim that a bare noun in an object position does not change its type as a result of some covert type-shifting operation, but gets incorporated as a property (as proposed by van Geenhoven 1998). Here a potential type-mismatch arises: a transitive verb of the traditional type $\langle e, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle$ cannot take as an argument a property of the type $\langle e, t \rangle$. We propose an incorporating mechanism that allows us to avoid type-shifting for both bare noun and the verb (contrary to what is proposed, i.e., by Cohen and Erteschik-Shir (2002), who say that an incorporating verb changes its type from $\langle e, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle$ to $\langle \langle e, t \rangle, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle$). Namely, we propose that a bare noun gets raised by a Quantifier Raising (Heim, Kratzer 1998) operation from its object position higher up in the little vP. The trace that it leaves has the type $\langle e \rangle$, compatible with the verb type $\langle e, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle$. Importantly, there is no need for a special motivation for this operation, since we show that the Persian indefinite marker is a quantifier rather than a determiner (a similar idea is discussed in Ghomeshi 2003), and that Persian so called indefinite DP's are actually QP's. It means that an object in Persian, be it a BN or and a QP, always gets QRed out of its Merge position. The difference is their landing sites: BNs land higher up inside of the little vP, whereas QP's are QRed out of the little vP higher up in the sentence. The latter hypothesis is supported by the difference in their scope behaviour.

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