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Resumption in Persian Relative Clauses: An HPSG Analysis

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10.1. Introduction

Persian is a null-subject verb final language with SOV word order that allows personal pronouns to be used resumptively in relative clause (RC) constructions. RCs in Persian are head-modifying constituents, all typically introduced by the invariant complementizer *ke*. Persian RCs are Unbounded Dependency Constructions (UDCs), containing either a gap or a resumptive pronoun (RP). The gap or the RP is linked to and licensed by the NP modified by the RC. In some positions only gaps are allowed, and in other positions only RPs. There are also some positions where both gaps and RPs are alternatively allowed. Illustrating the striking similarities between Persian gaps and RPs, I will provide an HPSG unified approach to take care of the long distance dependency between the licensing structure and the gap or the RP in Persian restrictive RCs with a truly single feature-based mechanism, using only the SLASH feature.

10.2 The Data

Example (1) shows a Persian sentence containing a RC. The RC is put in brackets.

Proceedings of Formal Grammar 2004
Paola Monachesi, Gerhard Jäger, Gerald Penn and Shuly Wintner (eds.).

(1)
mærd-i[1] [*ke piræn-e zærd pu_ideh*] *Dr. Bayat-eh*
man-RES COMP shirt-EZ yellow wear-PP-3sg Dr. Bayat is
'The man who is wearing a yellow shirt is Dr. Bayat.'

Example (2a) shows another Persian RC in which the gap is shown by ___. Example (2b) represents the same RC with a resumptive pronoun. The pronoun *u*, i.e. 'he', is used resumptively in (2b). Example (2c) shows the cliticized form of the pronoun '*u*'.

(2a)
mærd-i [*ke* _*oma* ____ *diruz molaqat kærdid*]...
man-RES COMP you Ø yesterday meet-PAST-2pl …
'The man whom you met yesterday…'

(2b)
mærd-i [*ke* _*oma* ***u*** *ra*[2] *diruz molaqat kærdid*]...
man-RES COMP you **he** RA yesterday meet-PAST-2pl …
'The man whom you met (***him**) yesterday…'

(2c)
mærd-i [*ke* _*oma diruz molaqat-****æ***_ *kærdid* ...]
man-RES COMP you yesterday meet-**him** do-PAST-2pl…
'The man whom you met (*him) yesterday…'

It is not always possible to replace a gap with a RP. For instance, if we replace the gap in (1) above with a RP, the result will be example (3), which is ungrammatical.

(3)
mærd-i [*ke* ***u*** *piræn-e zærd pu_ideh*] *Dr. Bayat-eh*
man-RES COMP **he** shirt-EZ yellow wear-PP-3sg Dr. Bayat is
'The man who (***he**) is wearing a yellow shirt is Dr. Bayat.'

The pattern of distribution of RPs and gaps in Persian RCs depends on two factors. The first factor is their position inside the RC and the second factor is whether the RC is restrictive or nonrestrictive.

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1 Particle *-i* (-RES in gloss) is a suffix that attaches to the nouns modified by restrictive RCs.

2 This particle (whose colloquial form is *ro*) is a specificity marker in Persian and is shown, henceforth, by RA in gloss.

	Subject	Object of Prep.	Genitive	Direct Object
Gap is allowed?	Yes	No	No	Yes
RP is Allowed?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 1: Distribution of Gaps or Resumptive Pronouns in Persian restrictive RCs

Table 1 above shows the pattern of distribution of RPs and gaps in restrictive RCs in Persian. Table 2 below shows this pattern in nonrestrictive RCs in this language. A comparison between the two tables shows that it is not possible to use gaps or RPs alternatively in direct object positions in nonrestrictive RCs in Persian.

	Subject	Object of Prep.	Genitive	Direct Object
Gap is allowed?	Yes	No	No	No
RP is Allowed?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2: Distribution of Gaps or Resumptive Pronouns in Persian restrictive RCs

While examples like (2) above showed the possibility of alternative options in restrictive RCs when the relativized position is direct object, examples like (4) below show lack of this possibility in non-restrictive RCs in this language. In non-restrictive RCs, RPs are obligatory if the the relativized position is direct object.

(4a)
Omid, ke shoma ***u*** *ra molaqat+kærdid, daee-ye mæn æst.*
Omid, COMP you **he** RA meet-PAST-2pl, uncle-EZ I is
'Omid, who(m) you met (*__him__) yesterday, is my uncle.'

(4b)
**Omid, ke shoma ____ molaqat+kærdid, daee-ye mæn æst.*
Omid, COMP you ____ meet-PAST-2pl, uncle-EZ I is
'Omid, who(m) you met____ yesterday, is my uncle.'

Persian Gaps and RPs show striking similarities. I will provide a variety of evidence in favour of this similarity to conclude that Persian RCs contain traces, rather than null constituent gaps.

A strong argument in support of the fundamental similarity of RPs and gaps are comes from coordinate structures. Example (5) shows that in Persian a RP can be used with a gap in coordinate structures in unbounded

dependencies. In fact, it is possible to have gaps in both conjuncts, RPs in both, or a gap in one conjunct and a RP in the other (in any order).

(5)

mærd-i	*ke*	____	*pirahæn-e*	*zærd*	*pu_ideh+bud*	*væ*
man-RES	COMP	Ø	shirt-EZ	yellow	wear-PRESPART-3sg	and

shoma	*diruz*	*az*	***u***	*pul*	*qærz+gereftid*	*Ali*	*bud.*
you	yesterday	from	**him**	money	borrow-PAST-2pl	Ali	was

'The man who___ was wearing a yellow shirt and you borrowed money from (***him**) was Ali.'

The second argument that supports the similarity between Persian RPs and gaps comes from parasitic gaps. Persian data shows that RPs, like gaps, can license parasitic gaps. I will bring examples (6a) and (6b) to illustrate this possibility. In (6a) there are two gaps, the second of which is parasitic. (6b) shows a sentence in which the second gap is still parasitic but licensed by the RP *un*.

(6a)

in	*ketab-i-ye*	*ke*	*Yasmin*	*bedun*	*in*
this	book-RES-is	COMP	Yasmin	without	this

ke	___	*bexuneh*	___	*xærid.*
COMP	Ø	read-3sg	Ø	bought-3sg.

'This is the book that Yasmin bought ___ without reading ___'

(6b)

in	*ketab-i-ye*	*ke*	*Yasmin*	*bedun*	*in*
this	book-RES-is	COMP	Yasmin	without	this

ke	***un***	*ro*	*bexuneh*	___	*xærid .*
COMP	**it**	RA	read-3sg	Ø	bought-3sg.

'This is the book that Yasmin bought (*it) without reading ___'

Another piece of supporting evidence for the similarity of Persian gaps and RPs is the sensitivity of RPs, like gaps, to certain islands. This is unlike what we see in Hebrew, for instance (see Vaillette (2001)). As an example, Persian gaps are sensitive to Subject Condition as shown in (7).

(7a)
[in ede'a ke Ali Hæmid ra dideh]
this claim COMP Ali Hamid RA seen

Yasmin ra narahat+kærd.
Yasmin RA annoyed

'The claim that Ali has seen Hamid annoyed Yasmin.'

(7b)
**mærd-i ra ke [in ede'a ke Ali___/ u ra dideh]*
man-RES RA COMP [this claim COMP Ali___/ him RA seen]

Yasmin ra narahat+kærd.
Yasmin RA annoyed.

'The man that the claim that Ali has seen ___ /him annoyed Yasmin.'

Thus, Persian gaps and RPs are strikingly similar: they have the same status within conjuncts, they can both license parasitic gaps; and, they are both sensitive to some island constraints. Based on this similarity, I will propose that they are both signs associated with the SLASH feature.

10.3 An HPSG Analysis

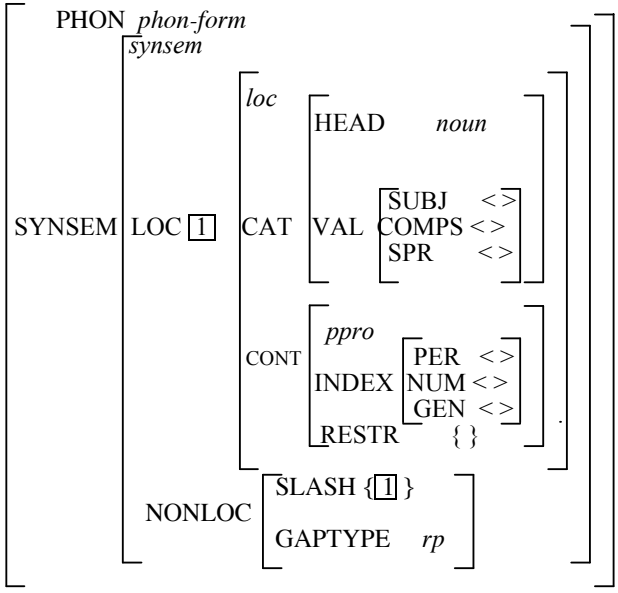
10.3.1 Bottom

I will assume that the unbounded dependency in Persian RCs appear at the bottom of the dependency by a special sign that has a nonempty value for the SLASH feature. This special sign is either a trace or a RP. The nonempty SLASH feature encodes the information that there is a dependency between the trace/RP and the NP modified by the RC.

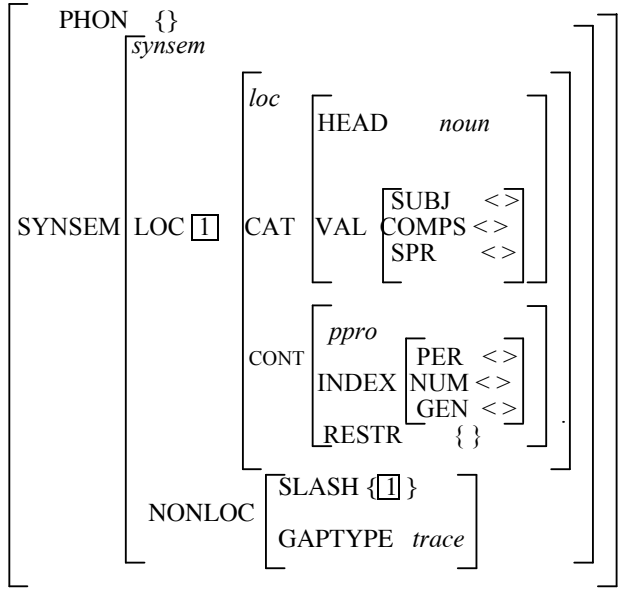
I will propose the lexical entry in (8) for RPs and the one in (9) for traces. The lexical entries in (8) and (9) are the same except in two respects. Firstly, the value of the PHON feature in traces is an empty set. This means that RPs as overt elements have phonology but traces do not. The second

difference between these two lexical entries is that the value of their GAPTYPE features is different.

(8) Lexical Entry for a **resumptive pronoun**



(7) Lexical Entry for a **trace**



GAPTYPE is a feature that I have introduced in order to capture the distributional properties of RPs and traces. GAPTYPE is a non-local feature whose value can be either *trace* or *rp*, for traces and RPs, respectively. The reason for distinguishing traces and RPs with a NONLOCAL feature is that this is not reflected within the value of SLASH and hence it is possible for a single unbounded dependency to be associated with a trace and an RP.

As for the pattern of distribution of RPs and traces, I will, first prevent RPs from appearing in subject position. I will propose the constraint in (10) to deal with this.

(10)
[SUBJ < [1] >] → ~ ([1] = [SYNSEM|NONLOC|GAPTYPE *rp*])

The effect of this constraint is that if an element is in subject position, then the value of its GAPTYPE feature cannot be *rp*. In other words, if an element is a RP whose value of the GAPTYPE feature is *rp*, then it cannot come in subject position.

The second constraint, I will propose here, is to prevent traces from appearing in the positions of object of prepositions and possessors (i.e., in positions of the complements of non-verbs). This constraint is proposed in (11) below.

(11)

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{HEAD} \quad [1] \\ \text{COMPS} <\ldots, [\text{GAPTYPE } \textit{trace}], \ldots> \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow [1] = \text{verb}$$

The effect of (11) is that if there is a trace as a complement of a head, then that head has to be a verb. Therefore, as in the case of object of preposition and genitive cases (possessors), the head is not a verb, we will not have a trace therein.

10.3.2 Middle

In the middle of the dependency, I will follow Sag (1997). The SLASH is inherited by two constraints: Lexical Amalgamation of SLASH, and SLASH Inheritance Principle, given in (12) and (13) below.

(12) Lexical Amalgamation of SLASH

$$\textit{word} \Longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{BIND} \quad \boxed{0} \\ \text{ARG-ST} \ <[\text{SLASH } \boxed{1}], \ldots, [\text{SLASH } \boxed{n}]> \\ \text{SLASH} \ (\boxed{1} + \ldots + \boxed{n}) - \boxed{0} \end{bmatrix}$$

According to (12), all words, except SLASH binding elements like *tough*, specify empty value for the feature BIND. That is, in most cases nothing is subtracted from the disjoint union of the argument's SLASH values. Therefore, if a non-head-daughter is slashed so should the head daughter.

(13) SLASH Inheritance Principle (SLIP):

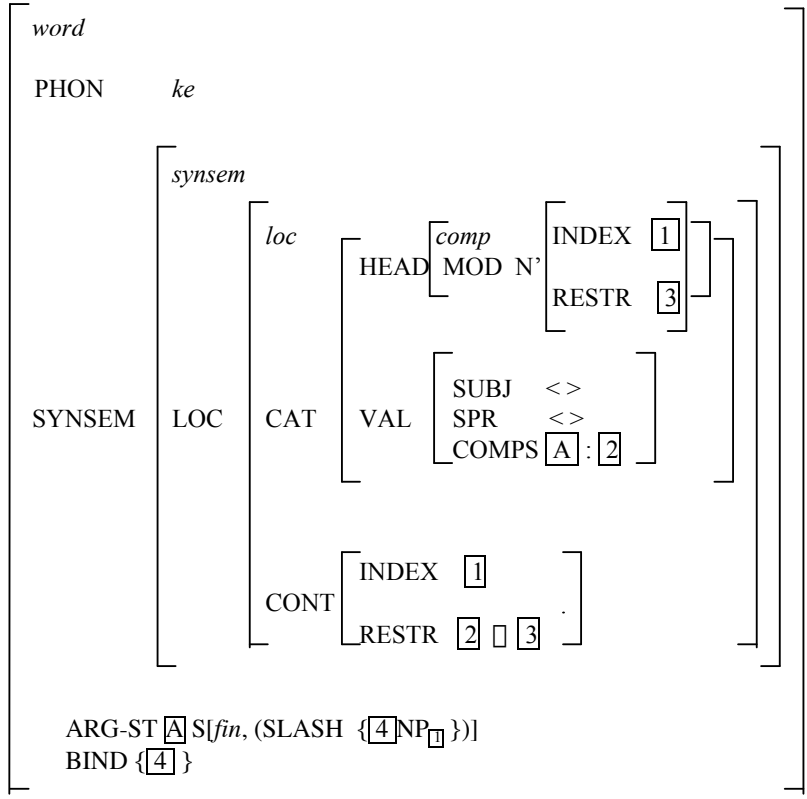
$$\textit{hd-nexus-ph} \Longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{SLASH} / \boxed{1} \\ \text{HD-DTR} / [\text{SLASH} \quad \boxed{1}] \end{bmatrix}$$

The constraint in (13) guarantees that the SLASH value of a phrase (of the type head-nexus-phrase) is the SLASH value of its head-daughter. In this way, any SLASH inheritance is mediated by the head-daughter, whose SLASH value contains that of the relevant non-head daughter.

10.3.3 Top

At the top of the dependency, I will need some way to bind the SLASH feature. In other words, I will need a way to ensure that the non-empty SLASH value stops at an appropriate point. This appropriate point, in Persian RCs, is the complementizer *ke*. I will propose the lexical entry in (14) for *ke* in RCs (i.e., ke_{RC}).

(14) Lexical Entry for ke_{RC}



The lexical entry for *ke* specifies some lexical information that ensures that the index of the N' (the NP modified by the RC) is identical to the SLASH value of *ke*. This structure-sharing, which is shown by tag [1], relates the trace or the RP to the NP modified by the RC. In addition, (12) also ensures that *ke* requires a sentential complement, shown by tag [A]. Tag [A] is the only member of *ke*'s ARG-ST list that stands for a finite sentence, containing a trace or a RP. The lexical binding of SLASH is accounted for by the feature BIND, which has a non-empty set as value for *ke*. This is shown by tag [4]. The BIND feature will ensure that the trace or the RP is not amalgamated into the SLASH value of *ke* itself.

10.4 The Open Issue

In Section 1, I noted that the pattern of distribution of resumptive pronouns in non-restrictive relative clauses is different. That is, while the resumptive pronoun or gap can be used alternatively in restrictive RCs (as shown in (2) above), the two cannot substitute one another in non-restrictive counterparts (as shown in (4) above).

My account for RPs at its present state cannot provide any analysis for non-restrictive clauses.

References

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