

Negation is low in Persian: Evidence from nominalization
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In much of the syntactic literature on Persian, negation is proposed to be in a high position above TP (see, for example, Karimi 2005, Taleghani 2008, Farudi 2013). In this talk I provide evidence from nominalization to argue that negation is in a lower position inside the vP. This is done in two steps: first, I show that the domain of nominalization is the vP, and second, I show that negation can be included in this nominalization domain.

There is a type of deverbal nominalization (also referred to as a long infinitive) in Persian which is formed by attaching the nominalizing suffix *-an* to what is known as the past stem in traditional grammars. Some examples are given in (1).

- (1) a. *xordan* ‘eating’ b. *xundan* ‘reading’ c. *didan* ‘seeing’

A closer look at the data reveals that the nominalizer *-an* can attach to structures bigger than just the verb. In (2) we see examples involving a verb and a nonspecific object.

- (2) a. *keyk xordan cake eating* ‘eating cake’ b. *ketaab xundan book reading* ‘reading books’

Note that the examples in (2) cannot be seen as the nominalized verb being modified by a noun phrase, as in such cases, like any other nominal modifier in Persian, it would have to appear postnominally, with the noun being marked by the *Ezafe* (see Samiian 1983, Ghomeshi 1997, Kahnemuyipour 2014). This is shown in (3).

- (3) *xordan-e keyk eating-Ez cake* ‘eating of (the) cake’

In fact, the examples in (2), can be treated as nouns and modified as such by taking the *Ezafe* marker followed by an adjective or possessor. We can also use a demonstrative to mark the left edge of the nominalized structure, as shown in (4). The preceding demonstrative and following modifier give us a good frame to identify the left and right edges of nominalization.

- (4) *in keyk xordan-e Ali this cake eating-Ez Ali* ‘this cake eating of Ali’

In (2)/(4), the domain of nominalization includes the verb and a nonspecific object.

Meanwhile, manner adverbs can also be included in this domain, as shown in (5a). (5b) shows the parallel structure with a modified deverbal noun (akin to (3)). It has been argued that manner adverbs mark the left edge of the vP indicating that the domain of nominalization is at least as large as the vP (see Holmberg 1986, Webelhuth 1992).

- (5) a. *in sari? ketaab xundan-e Ali* b. *xundan-e sari?-e ketaab tavassote Ali*
this fast book reading-Ez Ali *reading-Ez fast-Ez book by Ali*
‘this fast book-reading of Ali’ ‘fast reading of books by Ali’

Further investigation of the nominalization data in Persian reveals that the domain of nominalization cannot be larger than the vP, as elements outside of vP, such as higher adverbs, and subjects cannot be part of this domain, as shown in (6).

- (6) a. **in xoshbaxtaane ketaab xundan-e Ali* b. **Ali ketaab xundan vs. ketab xundan-e Ali*
this fortunately book reading-Ez Ali *Ali book reading book reading-Ez Ali*
‘*this fortunately book reading of Ali’ ‘Ali’s reading books’

Crucially, as we can see in (7), negation can also be part of the nominalization domain, providing strong evidence that negation is low and inside vP, contrary to what has been argued in much of the syntactic literature on Persian.

- (7) a. *in ketaab na-xundane-e Ali* b. *in sari? ketaab na-xundan-e Ali*
this book neg.-reading-Ez Ali *this fast book neg.-reading-Ez Ali*
‘?this not reading books’ ‘?this not reading books fast of Ali’

We have shown using evidence from nominalization in Persian that unlike proposals in the literature with respect to a high position of negation, negation has to be low and inside vP. This has serious implications for Persian clausal structure, to be explored in future research.

References

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