

Super-High and Low applicatives in Persian

I study constructions that have been introduced as *Impersonal or Subject-less* in the Persian literature (Thackton 1983, Ghomeshi 1996, Karimi 2005, among others). Although these constructions always denote a psychological state to an experiencer, they have not been previously explored from the point of view of psychological constructions (Belletti & Rizzi 1988). In (1), the experiencer in subject position *mæn* is a 1st singular pronoun while the verb appears with 3rd sing/default morphology. This situation *appears* to be a violation of subject-verb agreement. Unlike the common belief, I provide evidence to show that these constructions do not involve compound verbs and that the lack of verbal agreement is only apparent. Adopting the Minimalist Program of Chomsky (1995-2004) and following Dabir Moghaddam (1997), I propose that the psychological state *xosham* is the theme subject of an unaccusative verb that induces agreement on the verb. I further propose that psych constructions have a *Tense requirement* and involve “non-core” arguments. I introduce two Applicative Phrases (Pylkannen 2002, Cuervo 2003) to account for the application of arguments in psych constructions. I propose a *Super High Applicative* head which takes a TP as complement and hosts the experiencer *mæn*. The SupHighAppIP is a strong phase, similar to CP and vP of Chomsky, is propositional, and assigns the thematic role of experiencer to the arguments generated in its specifier. My analysis is along the lines of Heycock & Doron’s *Broad Subjects* (2003) for Arabic and Hebrew, and Pardeshi & Shibatani’s *Dative Subjects* (2001) for South Asian languages.

The second applied argument relates to the clitic pronoun *-æm* (1sg) that is attached to the psychological state *xosh*, and is co-referential with the sentence initial experiencer *mæn*. In the spirit of Pylkkänen’s (2002) and Cuervo’s (2003) analysis for possessor datives, I argue that this pattern is not a case of a genitive construction; rather, it constitutes a low possessive applicative phrase. The theme subject *xosham* constitutes a *Low Applicative Phrase* indicating a possession relation between the applied argument – *æm* and the psych-state *xosh*. The clitic pronoun *æm* (1sg) is not a direct argument of the verb *amæd-Ø*; rather it is the argument of the theme/psychological state *xosh*. The LowAppIP expresses transfer of a theme (psych state/*pleasure*) towards a goal/location/affectee *æm*. Intuitively the informal semantic relations of the structure for (1) would be: To me came (my) pleasure and I am now in the possession of it/affected by it

- (1) (mæn) xosh-æm amæd-Ø
I pleasure-1sg came-3sg
I was pleased/I liked (something/someone)

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