snippets

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Persian *ezafe* and proportional quantifiers

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In Persian, nominal complement relations are marked by ezafe, a clitic -(*y*)*e*. It occurs on the head in noun-modifier/complement constructions and on prepositions derived from nouns (cf. Ghomeshi 1997).

(1) a. manzel-e Maryam
house-EZ Maryam
'Maryam's house'

b. taxrib-e shahr
destruction-EZ city
'destruction of the city'

c. dor-e estaxr
around-EZ pool
'around the pool'

Ezafe also is found with certain D-quantifiers (cf. Toosarvandani and Nasser 2017). One generalization not made by these authors is that it is restricted to, and required for, proportional quantifiers. Ezafe is thus obligatory for (2) and ruled out for (3).

(2) Hame-ye / bishtar-e / yek dovom-e / shast darsad-e ketab-ha rooy-e miz hastand.
all-EZ / most-EZ / one half-EZ / sixty percent-EZ book-PL on-EZ table are.PL
'All / most /one half of the / sixty percent of the books are on the table.'

(3) a. Do-ta mard vared shodand.
two-CL man enter did.3PL
'Two men entered.'

b. Bazi / tedadi / kheily / chand-ta ay daneshjoo-ha hazer hastand.
some / several / many / few-CL of student-PL present are.3PL
'Some / several / many / few of the students are present.'

This suggests that proportional quantifiers are heads followed by complements, whereas non-proportional quantifiers are specifiers. We propose the structures in (4).

(4) a. $[_{DP}\ [[_{D^0}$ hame-ye$]\ [_{NP}$ ketab-ha$]]]$ proportional, 'all'

b. $[_{DP}$ yek $[[_{D^0}$ dovom-e$]\ [_{NP}$ ketab-ha$]]]$ proportional, 'one half'

c. $[_{NP}$ yek/do-ta $[_{N^0}$ mard$]]$ non-proportional, 'one/two'

d. $[_{NP}$ bazi $[[_{N^0}\ \emptyset]\ [_{PP}$ az daneshjoo-ha$]]]$ non-proportional, 'some'

We propose that proportional quantifiers restrict a discourse referent d the size of which is measured by a proportion of the extension of the noun, as in (5a). Hence the nominal N must be a complement of the quantifier, predicting that ezafe is required. For numeral and partitive constructions, the size restriction is independent of the head noun, (5b) and (5c), predicting the impossibility of ezafe. Quantifiers in (3b) occur in partitive constructions but are not proportional, as the selected size of d does not depend on the extension of the partitive nominal.

(5) a. $[\![[_{D^0}\ \text{dovom}]]\!] = \lambda N \lambda n \left[N(d) \wedge \#(d) = n \times \frac{1}{2}\#(N)\right]$
b. $[\![[_{N^0}\ \text{mard}]]\!] = \lambda n[\text{man}(d) \wedge \#(d) = n]$
c. $[\![[_{N^0}\ \emptyset]]\!] = \lambda n[\#(d) = n]$
$[\![[_{PP}\ \text{az daneshjoo-ha}]]\!] = [d \sqsubseteq \text{the students}]$

This representation contradicts classical Generalized Quantifier theory, (Barwise and Cooper 1981), which assumes that all quantified DPs consist of a determiner that takes a noun meaning as arguments. According to our data, only proportional determiners do.

The following example is an apparent exception regarding ezafe placement:

(6) Shast darsad zan dar in company estekhdam shodand.
sixty percent woman in this company employment got.3PL
'Sixty percent of the employees in this company are women.'

But here the noun *zan* is not used to identify a proportion. It is a non-conservative interpretation, as identified by Ahn and Sauerland (2017); for mechanisms of semantic interpretation, see the discussion there.

Another apparent exception is *har*, which appears to be a universal quantifier:

(7) Har sib-i ra ke didam, bardashtam.
every apple-IDF OBJ that saw.1SG took.1SG
'I took each apple that I saw.'

But *har* differs from proportional quantifiers: it is strictly distributive, requires a noun that is marked as indefinite (possibly plural, cf. *har do-ta sib* 'every/each two apples'), and its discourse referent cannot be picked up in subsequent sentences except in cases of modal subordination. We propose that *har* indicates the presence of a universal quantifier whose discourse referent carries the presupposition expressed by the noun (8).

(8) $[\![[[_{DP}\ [[_{D^0}\ \text{har}]\ [_{NP}\ \text{yek sib/sib-i}]]]\ \text{ra bardashtam}]]\!]$
$= \forall d : \text{apple}(d)[\text{speaker took } d]$

Notice that non-universal proportional quantifiers such as "most" could not be expressed in this way. Hence, we suggest that at least in Persian, distributive universal quantifiers and truly proportional quantifiers are represented differently.

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