

Control and Raising in Persian Language: A Comparative Approach

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Abstract

This paper provides a comparative analysis of PRO in Persian and English. How control structure in Persian differs from control structure in English is described in this paper in detail. Analyzing the kinds of verbs making this structure, a list of these verbs is presented. Then, according to the Landau (2004) and Hornstein and Boeckx (2003), a comparison between Control and Raising in Persian and English is made.

Keywords: Control Structure, PRO, Raising, Persian, English, GB Theory, Theta Roles, Minimalist Program, Null Case

1. Introduction

In Government Binding (GB) theory by Chomsky (1981, 1986), control was described in English language in which Chomsky suggested infinitival control of English language for control theory. The GB theory was considered to be a syntactic concept which required an empty subject to follow both A and B principles in GB at the same time. This problem can be solved considering the empty subject without any governor. According to Control theory in the early 1980s, infinitival complement subject replaced an abstract pronominal element, PRO. PRO justified the absence of an overt subject, which means it is a pronominal determiner phrase but has no phonological content. This theory also considered a standard theory of theta-role assignment, so that embedded verbs can give their external theta-role in the same way as matrix verbs. At the beginning of the control theory, infinitival complements without subject were considered with more syntactic structure than infinitival complements with subject (Chomsky, 1981, see also Koster, 1984, for more discussion). To explain the way, the embedded clause got the accusative case from the matrix verb; the embedded clause was considered transparent to government from the matrix verb. It means the embedded clause needed to be non-transparent to the government. That is because PRO happens only in ungoverned positions. There is a mutual relationship between relative transparency and presence/absence of a complementizer phrase (CP) projection.

A new analysis or even reanalysis was necessary for constructions previously analyzed using the concept of “Government”, because it was invalid after the emergence of Minimalist Program (MP) (Chomsky, 1995); therefore, a different analysis is offered by the recent literature. According to Chomsky and Lasnik (1993), PRO has null case, which is verified for the case of nonfinite. However, Martin (2001), who is a follower of Stowell’s (1982) observation, claims that nonfinite T can check null case only if it is [+tense]. Hornstein (1999, 2003) reduces the control problem with Raising by treating theta-roles as features, showing the differences between the two of them. According to Manzini and Roussou (2000), the determiner phrase (DP) controller in the control construction is shown in its surface position. That is the place in which the strong D-feature of the matrix I (or T) is lexicalized and then an aspectual or a theta- feature of the embedded predicate is gained considering Chomsky’s (1995) Minimal Link condition and Kayne’s (1984) definition of connectedness. Jackendoff and Culicover (2003) decline the merely syntactic examination of control and prefer a semantic one. In addition, they develop control into nominal, too. Wurmbrand (2001) worked on the grammatical category of complements to control predicates and suggested that some control verbs do not take a full clause to be their complement but they accept a verbal phrase (VP):

Example (1)

- a. I believe [IP him to be smart]
- b. I try [CP [IPPRO to be smart]]

2. Control in Persian

Considering Persian, the clausal complements are subjunctive (see Hashemipour, 1988) not infinitival, and inflection is done on the embedded verbs for their subject agreement. In

Persian, although it is a null subject language, the presence of verb agreement shows that these clauses are not different from clauses with a null pronominal subject (Darzi, 1991). Considering the facts in Persian language, Hashemipour (1988) figured out that Chomsky's GB theory is not appropriate for Persian language; therefore, he was looking for theory that can explain control in Persian language. He says that control verbs are in subjunctive mood in Persian; accordingly, based on GB theory, he described the necessity of having governor for an abstract pronominal element. Landau (2004) believes that Persian language has two kinds of subjunctive: control and non-control. Moreover, he said, in other place, that subjunctive complements of special predicates could take both articles (non-control subjunctive and abstract pronominal control subjunctive). Lazard (1957) said that against present mood that makes the real actions in Persian, subjunctive mood is for showing wishes, constraints, suspicions, and conditions. The point that makes the verbs and the structures of subjunctive different from infinitival verbs is the tense feature. While the verbs in infinitival clauses have no tense, subjunctive verbs are [+Tense] in Persian. Syntactically, tense has two features i.e., person and number and of course in some languages, gender. In Persian language, present verbs and subjunctive verbs have the same word formations. Therefore, Persian language has the strong [+Tense]. It is noteworthy that the subjunctive mood in Persian includes the morpheme "be". See the following examples to compare the present moods in English and Persian:

Present: (to eat)

Example (2)

a. "mi-xor-am, mi-xor-i, mi-xor-ad"

"mi-xor-im, mi-xor-id, mi-xor-and"

Subjunctive: to eat

b. "be-xor-am, be-xor-i, be-xor-ad"

with subjunctive mood .

"be-xor-im, be-xor-id, be-xor-and"

It is clear that subjunctive mood, as present mood is inflective in Persian and its word-formation like other finite verbs in Persian. This is illustrated in example 6 .

In both English and Persian, verbs that take clausal complements may be constrained to appearing with a certain type of complement. Certain verbs, for example, may appear with non-finite complements. In both English and Persian 'WANT' is such a verb while 'KNOW' is not :

Example (3)

a. Reza mi-xa-d (ke) [Narges *mi-mun-e/be-mun-e]

Reza want-3sg (comp) [Narges * stay-3sg/ SBJ-stay-3sg]

'Reza wants Narges * will stay/to stay '

b. Reza mi-dun-e (ke) [Narges mi-mun-e/*be -mun-e]

Reza know -3sg (comp) [Narges stay- 3sg/SBJ – stay-3sg]

Reza knows (that) Narges will stay/*to stay

Moreover, among the verbs that take nonfinite complements, some can never appear with a complement containing an overt subject. In English, ‘TRY’ is such a verb while in Persian the best example is the verb ‘*tavanestān*’ which means ‘can’ or ‘to be able to’:

Example (4)

I tried (*John to go)

Example (5)

Reza mi-tun-e (ke) [(**Ashkan*) be-r-e]

Reza be-able-3sg (comp) [**Ashkan* SBJ -go-3sg]

‘Reza is able (*Ashkan*) to go’

In the generative literature, verbs that take subjunctive infinitival complements are known as “control”. For most part, in all languages the set of the verbs that exhibits control characteristics, for most part, are the same (Ghameshi, 2001).

Table 1.

Persian Verbs Illustrating Control Properties in Persian

1. <i>tavanestān</i>	to be able/ Can
2. <i>yad=raftān</i>	to forget
3. <i>saiy=kardān</i>	to try
4. <i>tasmim= gereftān</i>	to decide
5. <i>xastān</i>	to want

According to information provided in Table 1, it seems that there are five verbs in Persian which illustrate control properties including *tavanestān* ‘can/to be able’. *Yad=raftān* ‘to forget’, *saiy=kardān* ‘to try’, ‘*tasmim= gereftān*’ ‘to decide’, *xastān* ‘to want’. These verbs are passed the tests for control as core control verbs .

Persian is a pro-drop language and major phrasal categories, except VPs, are head-initial (Samiian, 1983, Ghameshi, 1996). Persian is a dominant SOV type, yet complement clauses follow the matrix verb (Karimi, 1989; Darzi, 1996). In some sentences, covert subject of an embedded clause is precisely co-referential with the matrix subject and shows instances of subject control in finite clauses. Example 1 shows this issue. Inflections of person and number are done for the head of the embedded sentence that shows that the clause is finite. However, the verb may not be morphologically in the past tense, because of the prefix of subjunctive mood. Mentioned earlier, the subjunctive mood in Persian includes the morpheme “be” prefixed to the present stem of the verb.

Example (6)

“*man qasd*”

dar- am [PRO name be-nevisam]

I intentionhave-1sg

‘I intend to write a letter’

letter sub-write-1sg

There are also sentences corresponding to the example 6 in which the embedded clause is apparently non-finite as illustrated in the example 2. In the example 7a, ‘neveštān’ means ‘writing’ follows its complement ‘letter’, whereas in the sentence 7b, it precedes its complement with the morpheme “e” means ‘of’, known as *Ezafe*, intervening between the two. According to Samiiān (1983), *Ezafe* usually links a non-verbal head (N, P, A) to its postmodifiers. Given the uniformity of theta assignment hypothesis, assigning a structure to the bracketed infinitival clause in example 7, identical to the corresponding finite clause in example 6 is warranted within GB framework (Chomsky, 1981; Chomsky, 1986).

Example (7)

a. mān qāsd-e name neveštān dar-ām .

I intention –Ez letter writing

“I intend to write a letter”

have -1sg

b. mān qāsd-e neveštān-e name dar-ām

I intention-Ez writing –Ez

“I intend to write a letter”.

letter have -1sg

One of the most discussible issues in GB is the central task (control theory) which manages the distribution of PRO orderly. GB has two kinds of solutions for this issue. According to the case approach, PRO happens in careless positions (Boucharld, 1984). However, according to government approach, PRO happens in ungoverned positions (Chomsky, 1981). The government theory was dominant in the 80s but lost its power in minimalist analyses. The case approach has survived in different ways, literally (Hornstein, 1999) or through the advent of null case (Chomsky & Lasnik, 1993; Martin, 2001). Nowadays, PRO has a special designated case or no case at all in a standard view.

Case concord is the source for proving case-marked PRO. Many languages include case when it comes to items such as predicates, empathic pronouns or reflexives and floating quantifiers, and morphological case. The specific morphological case they bear reflects or agrees with the case taken by local DP with which they are associated (Landau, 2000). Landau proves his ideas through the facts that PRO has its own locally assigned case where that case is distinct from the case where the case of controller DP, especially in some languages like Basque and welsh.

Example (8)

Mary proposed to Paul [PRO to become partners]

What does the plural morpheme “s” in the infinitive agree with? Plainly, with the [plural] feature on PRO (there is no other plural DP in the sentence). Does it make any sense to agree that PRO has a special null case features that lexical DP “s” cannot bear .

Case concord in several languages where some subject-oriented element agrees with PRO in case. Abstracts case is irrelevant for PROs distribution for a good reason .

In Persian, there is no specification to prove that PRO has a standard case and pieces of research on this issue will be continued. Hornestain (2003) believes that null case is unsubstantial. He says that the only item showing the null case is abstract pronominal. He adds, this case is not compatible (concord) with other kind of cases (Hornestain, 2003, p. 20).

According to Rosenbovm (1967), control has been dealt with as a non-movement relation involving a controller (covert referential noun phrase) and controlee, an unpronounced element, either identical to the controller or a dedicated empty category called PRO. The standard view of control brings with it a completely additional module whose function is to determine the controllers of PRO and the interpretation carried by a particular control structure .

Control has played an important role in theoretical debates within the minimalist program (e.g., Hornestain, 1999; Hornestain, 2001; Hornestain, 2003; Boeckx & Hornestain, 2003; Culicuver & Jackendoff, 2001; Culicuver & Jackendoff, 2005; Landau, 2000; Landau, 2003; Manzini & Roussou, 2000). This is because control implicates notions such as module, theta role, the last resort nature of syntactic operations, movement, Case, etc, all relevant when it comes to finding out what the shape of the language faculty is .

3. Raising and Control in Persian

Since the emergence of generative grammar, Raising and Control constructions have been discussed. Some linguists assign the same syntactic structure to both constructions, but others consider the structural and semantic differences between them .Yet among the second group, some linguists believe that the distinctions are syntactical, but others consider the differences to the semantic nature of the predicates. According to Chomskyan concepts ranging from Standard theory through Minimalism, the differences come from a syntactic nature.

There are predicates in Persian which let the embedded subject appear in the seemingly subject position. Compare the English construction in example 9b to its Persian counterpart in example 9b:

Example (9)

a) John seemed to be smart.

b) Kimia be-nazar mi-yad (ke) bahuš baš-e.

Kimia to view dur-comes (that) smart be-3sg

“Kimia seems to be smart”

In both sentences, the subject of the embedded clause appears in the subject position of the matrix clause. Compare the following two sentences:

Example (10)

John decided [VP to go] Control

Example (11)

John seems [VP to be happy] Raising

It has been acknowledged by different researchers (e.g., Postal, 1974; Davies & Dubinsky, 2004) that there are differences between these two types of constructions. For example, while raising verbs can have pleonastic subjects as you can see in example 12, this is not true of control predicates as illustrated in the example 13:

Example (12)

It seems to be dark.

***Example (13)**

It tried to be dark .

Moreover, the overt subject is linked to one predicate in a raising construction as in example 14, while it is linked to two predicates in control constructions:

Example (14)

John seemed to smile .

Example (15)

John tried to smile .

Finally, while raising allows scope reconstruction, as in example 16, this is not possible in control constructions as in example 17:

Example (16)

A unicorn seems to be in the room (narrow scope possible for a unicorn seems a unicorn to be in the room)

Example (17)

A unicorn tried to enter the room

(narrow scope NOT possible for a unicorn *tried a unicorn to be in the room)

Before discussing raising constructions in Persian, a few facts about the syntax and verbal morphology of this language need to be reviewed here .

Raising predicates, the following facts hold with respect to these constructions in Persian. First, the embedded subject does not need to move into the matrix clause as in example 18:

Example (18)

Be nazar mi-yad (ke) bachche-ha xaste baš-an

To view dur-come-3sg that child-pl tired subj-be-3pl

“It seems that children are tired ”.

Second, there is no agreement between the matrix verb and the moved embedded verb in these cases. The letter ‘t’ in this and similar examples represents the trace of the moved element .

Example (19)

Bachche-ha be-nazar mi-ya-n t xaste baš-an

Child-pl to view dur-come-3pl tired be-3pl

“As for the children, it seems that they are tired ”.

Furthermore, any other phrasal element from the embedded clause may move into the matrix

clause in these constructions .

Example (20)

Ketab-a- ro-be-nazar-mi-yad/*mi-ya-n (ke) bache-ha t xunde bash-an

Book-pl-ra

to view dur-come-3sg/*dur-com-3pl that child pl read be-3pl

“As for the books, it seems that children have read (them)”

Minimalism considers a possibility of a movement theory of control (MTC) which means that control is a subspecies of movement (Hornstein, 1999, 2001). Control approximates familiar raising examples in standard cases. When raising takes an element from the (embedded) lexical domain and moves it to the subject position of the finite clause, control takes an element from the (embedded) lexical domain, re-merges it in the (embedding) lexical domain, and finally moves it to the subject position of the finite clause. In above, the object has moved into the matrix clause while the embedded subject remains in-situ. As the inflection on the matrix verb indicates, there is no agreement between the verb and the extracted object. Based on these pieces of evidence, it has been argued that Persian lacks raising constructions (Hashemipour, 1989; Karimi, 1999; Ghomeshi, 2001).

4. Presence of (Ke) in Persian Control Structure

Almost, every example sentence given in this paper, embedded clause has been optionally introduced by (ke). This particle is usually glossed as “that” and such looks like a complementizer. If *ke* heads a CP; however, it is not possible to assert that control verbs select VP as their complement. Therefore, *ke* cannot be a complementizer .

First, as noted in Hashemipour (1989) and Darzi (1996), *ke* does not appear by the matrix verb –it can just easily introduce a declarative or an interrogative embedded clause .

Example (21)

(mən) fekr-mi-kon- m [ke Ali pandered-ra šekast-e]

I thought-do-1sg COMPL Ali window –om break. past-3sg

“I think that Ali has broken the window ”.

In fact, as suggested by Lazard (1957, 1992), *ke* introduces not only subject and complement clause but also relative clauses .

Example (22)

Mard-i- ke amad baradar-e man- ast

Man –COMPL

come. PAST. 3sg brother-EZ me-3sg

“The man who came is my brother ”.

(Lazard, 1992, p. 230)

Example (23)

Raftam [ke un ketab-o be-xa r-am]

Went - 1sg [(COMP) that book-om SBJ-buy-1sg]

I went to buy that book .

(Lazard, 1992, p. 218)

Ke is only obligatory when it introduces relative clauses or complement clauses to nouns. The presence of *ke* does not produce that –trace affects as has been noted by Hashemipour (1989) and Karimi (1999), among others :

Example (24)

Ki

Who

be-naza r=mi-yad

to=view-come-3sg

[ke t xeyli bahuš baš-e]

[COMP very smart SBJ-3sg]

Who seems that (he) is very smart ’

(Karimi, 1999, p.175)

Lazard (1992) points out that *ke* is added “expletively” to other conjunctions. For example, it can be optionally added to elements like *agar* ‘if’ (to yield *agar ke*), to temporal conjunctions “*vaqt-i-ke*” “when” (at the moment that). In addition, to relative pronouns such as *har-ke* ‘whoever’. Many of those who have considered this particle conclude that it is subordinator. According to Hashemipour (1989), *ke* lacks complementizer features and merely marks finite subordination. Darzi (1996) goes as far as to offer a syntactic analysis of this particle, proposing that it adjoins to projection below CP .

According to Ghomeshi (2001), *Ke* (subordinate marker) can be cliticized onto any lexicalized item with a propositional constituent (VP, CP) follower, but it does not come as the head itself for the functional projection. Thus, issue does not deny its complementizer function. *Ke* is not optional in relative clauses to nouns and it belongs to clause not the preceding element in cases that the relative clause is extra-posed.

Example (25)

Un ketab-o

That book-OM

.part bud] be. PAST.3SG [

dust=dar- α m [CP ke ali bar-am xaride .

friend –have-1 sg [CP COMPL Ali for -1sg.CL bought

“I like that book that Ali had bought for me ”.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, control and raising constructions in both English and Persian were analytically reviewed and compared based on the minimal approach to show their differences. Then, a list of five control verbs in Persian was introduced. In addition, the case of Pro in Persian based on GB was analyzed in detail. Based on the findings, PRO in Persian is null case. In addition, there is no raising structure in Persian. Accordingly, the role of *ke* complementizer in Pro in Persian was explained.

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