MRS Design for Light Verb Constructions in the Grammar Matrix

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Definition (WIP)

- light verb construction (LVC): a type of complex predicate comprised of a light verb (LV) and a "coverb" where most (but not necessarily all) of the [?lexical meaning] comes from the “coverb"
  - V+N, V+Adj, V+V
  - LV and coverb share one argument structure?
- complex predicate should consist of things in same position in scope tree (shouldn’t be able to have e.g. negation modify one part or have quantifiers go between)
  - “I persuaded Francis to take a hike.” (narrow vs wide scope of “a hike”) complex predicates should not have these two scopes

Examples

- French
  faire une proposition
  make a proposition
  “to make a proposal; to propose”

- Persian
  Be Omid tohmat **zade** šod.
  to Omid slander hit.PST.PTCP become
  “Omid was slandered.”

  Passive

  Omid **sili** [zad va xord].
  Omid slap hit and stroke
  “Amid have and received slaps.”

  Coordination

Examples

- English
  have a rest, a read
  take a drive, a bath
  give a shout, a ring

- Urdu
  naadyaa=ne kahaanii yaad **k-ii**
  Nadya.F.SG=ERG story.F.SG memory.F do-PERF.F.SG N-V
  “Nadya remembered the story.”

  nadyaa=ne xat lik^{h} **lii-yaa**
  Nadya.F.SG=ERG letter.M.NOM write take-PERF.M.SG V-V
  “Nadia wrote a letter (completely).”

Examples

- Japanese
  John-wa Mary-ni hanashi-o **shita.**
  John-TOP Mary-DAT talk-ACC do(suru)
  “John talked to Mary.”

- Bardi (N. Australian)
  Gooljoo lol **inyjiidigal**
  grass burn 3SG.PST.go.REM.PST
  “The grass caught fire.”

HPSG Handbook Feature Structures (Persian)

Compositional

- Olāq be Omid lagged **zad.**
  donkey to. Omid kick hit
  “The donkey kicked Omid.”

(79)

$$\begin{bmatrix} \textit{zadan1-lexeme} \\ \text{CAT} \begin{bmatrix} \text{HEAD} & \textit{verb} \\ \text{ARG-ST} & \langle \text{NP}_k, (\textit{be})\text{NP}_m, \text{N}[\text{PRD+}]:\boxed{1} \rangle \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{CONT } \boxed{1} \begin{bmatrix} \textit{soa} \\ \text{NUCLEUS} \begin{bmatrix} \textit{kick-relation} \\ \text{ACTOR} & k \\ \text{UNDERGOER} & m \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

Somewhat Compositional/Somewhat Idiomatic

- Maryam mu-hā=yaš=rā šane **zad.**
  Maryam hair-PL=3SG=RA comb hit
  "Maryam combed her hair."

(81)

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{zadan2-lexeme} \\ \textsc{synsem|loc} \left[\begin{array}{ll} \textsc{cat} & \left[\begin{array}{ll} \textsc{head} & \textit{verb} \\ \textsc{arg-st} & \langle \mathrm{NP}_k, \mathrm{NP}_m, \mathrm{N}[\textsc{prd}+]:\boxed{2} \rangle \end{array}\right] \\ \textsc{cont}\ \boxed{2} & \left[\begin{array}{ll} \textit{soa} & \\ \textsc{sit} & \boxed{1} \\ \textsc{nucleus} & \left[\begin{array}{ll} \textit{comb-relation} & \\ \textsc{actor} & k \\ \textsc{undergoer} & m \end{array}\right] \end{array}\right] \end{array}\right] \\ \textsc{background}\ \{\text{involves}(\boxed{1}, \exists\, x\, [\, \text{comb}(x) \wedge \text{use}(\boxed{1}, k, x)\,]\,)\} \end{array}\right]$$

Somewhat Compositional/Somewhat Idiomatic

- Maryam xod=rā be divānegi **zad**
  Maryam self=RA to madness hit
  "Maryam feigned madness."

(83)

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{zadan3-lexeme} \\ \textsc{cat} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textsc{head} \quad \textit{verb} \\ \textsc{arg-st} \left\langle \mathrm{NP}_k, \mathrm{pro}_k, \mathrm{PP} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textsc{cat}\mid\textsc{head} \left[\begin{array}{ll} \textsc{pform} & \textit{be} \\ \textsc{prd} & + \end{array}\right] \\ \textsc{cont} \boxed{1} \left[\textsc{nucleus} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{internal-problematic-state} \\ \textsc{experiencer} \ k \end{array}\right]\right] \end{array}\right] \right\rangle \end{array}\right] \\ \textsc{cont} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{soa} \\ \textsc{nucleus} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{pretend-relation} \\ \textsc{actor} \quad k \\ \textsc{soa-arg} \ \boxed{1} \end{array}\right] \end{array}\right] \end{array}\right]$$

Idiomatic

- Barā=yaš zeyli dest **zad-im.**
  for=3SG a.lot hand hit-1PL
  “We applauded him a lot.”

(85)
$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{zadan4-lexeme} \\ \textsc{cat} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textsc{head} \quad \textit{verb} \\ \textsc{arg-st} \left\langle \mathrm{NP}_k, \mathrm{PP}[\textit{be}]{:}\boxed{1}, \mathrm{N}[\textsc{prd}+, \textsc{lid}\ \textit{i-dast-relation}] \right\rangle \end{array}\right] \\ \textsc{cont} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{soa} \\ \textsc{nucleus} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{i-start-relation} \\ \textsc{actor} \quad k \\ \textsc{soa-arg}\ \boxed{1} \left[\textsc{nucleus}\ \textit{event-relation}\right] \end{array}\right] \end{array}\right] \end{array}\right]$$

Alternative Split

- split based on how much the light verb contributes to the semantics

    1. all meaning comes from coverb; light verb is semantically empty/bleached
       japanese verbal nouns

    2. some meaning comes from coverb; light verb is semantically "light"
       make vs. take (a bath)

Help with MRS Design

References

Bowern, C. (2010). The typological implications of Bardi complex predicates.

Butt, M. (2010). The light verb jungle: Still hacking away. Complex predicates in cross-linguistic perspective, 48-78.

Godard, D., & Samvelian, P. (2021). Complex predicates. HeadDriven Phrase Structure Grammar, 419.