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Split Headedness in Persian

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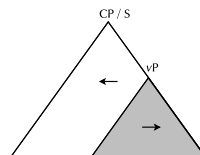
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Introduction
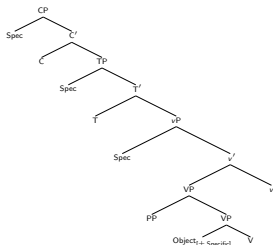
Word order typology of Persian?

- Head-final / Left-branching: SOV

- Head-initial / Right-branching: Prepositions, N-Rel, N-Gen
  - "Persian is operand-operator language . . . , but exceptionally it has OV word order" (Comrie, 1989: 98; see also Mahootian, 1997: 5)

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Mixed Headedness

- Roberts (2000) suggests Pashto has mixed headedness
  - Functional categories: head-initial
  - Lexical categories: head-final

- Application to Persian
  - Karimi (2005) and Dehdari (2006)

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Karimi (2005: 7)

A syntax tree:
- CP
  - Spec
  - C'
    - C
    - TP
      - Spec
      - T'
        - T
        - vP
          - Spec
          - v'
            - VP
              - PP
              - VP
                - Object$_{[\pm \text{Specific}]}$
                - V
            - v

Statistically significant V − O correlations

Dryer's (1992) extensive survey of 625 languages

V Correlate	O Correlate
Complementizer	S
Interrogative	S
Adverbial Subordinator	S
Tense Aux	VP
'want'	VP
V	Manner Adv
V	PP
Copula V	Pred
Adposition	NP
Article	NP
N	Rel
N	Gen
Adj	Standard of Comparison

Head − Dependent relations in Persian

Relation	Head Initial	Head Final
Complementizer − S	x	
Interrogative − S	x	
Adverbial Subordinator − S	x	
Tense Aux − VP	x	
'want' − VP	x	
Perf Aux − VP*		x
Passive Aux − VP*		x
V − Manner Adv		x
V − PP		x
V − O		x
Copula V − Pred		x
Adposition − NP	x	
Article − NP	x	
Numeral − NP*	x	
N − Rel	x	
N − Gen	x	
Adj − Standard of Comparison	x	

* Not investigated in Dryer (1992).

Examples

(1) a. enteğāl dāde   šodænd
         transfer give-PSPT become-3.P
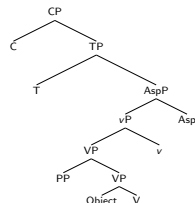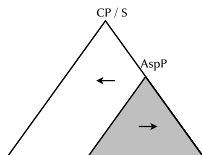   'They were transferred.'   (Kayhan online 1383-04-22 AP)

(2) a. tæzækkor dāde   šode   bud
         notice   give-PSPT become-PSPT was
         'Notice had been given.'   (Kayhan online 1383-03-13 AP)

     b. možde dāde   šode   bud
         news give-PSPT become-PSPT was
         'News had been given.'   (Kayhan online 1383-03-10 AP)

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CP / S

AspP

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CP
 C   TP
 T   AspP
 vP   Asp
 VP   v
 PP   VP
 Object   V

Issues

Future Auxiliary:

(3)   a.   (ānhā) x̲āhænd zæd
           they   FUT-3.P hit
           'They will hit.'

       b.   be zæmin x̲āhænd zæd
           to earth   FUT-3.P hit
           'They will overthrow.'   (Kayhan online 1383-05-27 AP)

       c.   be zæmin zæde   x̲āhænd šod
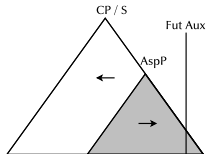   to earth   hit-PSPT FUT-3.P become
           'They will be overthrown.'   (Kayhan online 1383-07-26 AP)
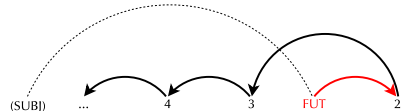
Future Auxiliary Cont'd

(4)   a.   tæmām x̲āhæd šod
           complete FUT-3.S become
           'It will be completed.'

       b.   tæmām šode   x̲āhæd bud
           complete become-PSPT FUT-3.S was
           'It will have been completed.'   (Kayhan online 1383-08-25 AP)

Future Auxiliary Cont'd

Future Auxiliary Cont'd

- $V2^R$?

Conclusions

- Split-headed explanation accounts for wider range of phenomena than simple head-initial or head-final accounts
- CP / S: head-initial
- AspP: head-final
- Future Auxiliary: $V2^R$

Further Research

- Other Iranian languages (see Stilo, 2005)

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Appendix

Roberts' (2000: 63) Functional *vs.* Lexical Categories

Category	Direction of Head
NP	final
VP	final
AspP	final
PP	initial
NegP	initial
CP	initial
DP	initial
ModalP	initial
AgrP	initial