**The Right Periphery in Persian**

**Statement of the Problem:** Dislocation, generally construed, refers to a construction in which an element appears in the left or right periphery of the sentence leaving behind a (potentially covert) pronoun (correlate) in its canonical position (Lambrecht, 2008). Although both right dislocation (henceforth “RD”) and left dislocation (henceforth “LD”) are well attested across different languages, dislocations to the right edge of the sentence are not very frequent (examples 1 and 2) and LD (examples 3 and 4) is comparatively more prevalent.

1. He is smart, **that Peter**
2. motoahel-an **baCCe-hA**?

Married-3pl child-pl

“Are the children married?”

1. **My mother**, she used to buy books for me.
2. **Ali ro,** man diruz did-am-eS

**Ali ACC I yesterday saw-1sg-him**

 “Ali, I saw him yesterday”

The motivation behind situating an element non-canonically in the right or left periphery varies across languages. In English, there is a general consensus that both LD and RD highlight the constituent with respect to which some information is provided (Lambrecht, 2001). The same holds true for LD in Persian. However, as for Persian sentences with right peripheral elements, the motivation varies according to the type of the element used in the right edge. For example, the most commonly-held view for using subjects in the right periphery in a sentence such as 2 is providing the unpredictable information sentence initially and placing the predictable information in the right edge (Frommer, 1981).

In Persian, dislocation has attracted researchers’ attention. However, unlike LD, RD has not received the attention it deserves and the very few studies conducted on Persian RD are silent about the syntactic analysis of these constructions and their syntactic properties are highly understudied (Frommer, 1981; Haig and Rasekhmahand, 2019). Furthermore, previous studies have failed to distinguish superficially-similar Persian constructions whose common denominator is the postverbal use of a preverbal element but differ in terms of the type of the correlate (i.e., null (example 2), clitic *eS* (example 5), and overt pronoun *unhA* (example 6)), syntax, prosody, and function. Hence, the present research attempts to address these overlooked aspects of RD in Persian.

1. Xund-am-eS **maqAl-at ro**

Studied-1sg-it paper-your ACC

“I studied it, your paper”

1. unhA ro ham davat kard-i? **Ali inA ro**

They ACC too invite did-2sg? Ali they ACC

“Did you invite them, Ali’s family I mean”

**Theoretical Background:** In the literature on the syntax of constructions with RDed elements, researchers pursue investigating whether the RDed element has started off in its canonical position and then moved to the right periphery (dubbed the “movement-based approach”) or it starts off in the right periphery (referred to as the “base-generation approach”) (Ott and de Vreis, 2016; Fernández-Sánchez and Ott, 2020). The former approach favors clause-internal properties of RDed constituents and the latter draws on and corroborates their clause-external properties. Different criteria have been put forward to investigate which approach can account for postverbal elements in different languages. As for the semantic criterion, the semantic connectivity between the RDed element and preceding part of the sentence is proposed. Regarding syntactic criteria, postverbal elements’ binding properties, opacity of the postverbal element to extraction, exhibiting reconstruction effects (variable and anaphor binding, idiom interpretation, locality and case matching), the obligatory or optional presence of the correlate, and showing island sensitivity (among others) are advanced (de Vreis, 2007; Ott and de Vreis, 2016).

**Research Objectives**: Based on the preceding remarks, the main question the present research aims at answering is which of the above approaches can account for RD in Persian. However, achieving this aim requires distinguishing different Persian constructions which accommodate a postverbal element but differ in terms of the nature of the correlate (examples 2, 5, 6). Answering the main question is also intertwined with investigating whether the postverbal element exhibits clause-internal or clause external behaviors. Accordingly, at first, an attempt is made to investigate these two issues to pave the way for answering the main research question.

**Research Hypothesis**: Based on semantic and syntactic criteria, it is hypothesized that Persian sentences with a postverbal element and a null correlate can be regarded as exemplifying RD in Persian. It is further hypothesized that the postverbal element in Persian sentences with a postverbal element and a null correlate can be regarded as clause-internal in that the postverbal element participates in the compositional semantics of the sentence and is not opaque for extraction, exhibits reconstruction effect, and demonstrates sensitivity to islands. Accordingly, given that the movement-based analysis favors the clause-internal properties of RDed element, it can be argued that RD in Persian lend itself to the movement-based analysis.

**Significance of the Study:** The findings of this study will afford valuable insights into syntactic theory because the RDed constituent, by exhibiting a mixed (both clause-internal and clause-external) behavior towards the clause containing it, defies some of the core assumptions of syntax (Fernández-Sánchez and Ott, 2020). The findings will also provide valuable information regarding Persian word order. In fact, the results can help to answer the question whether the postverbal position is changing to a grammatically fixed position for some arguments such as goal or these postverbal elements are just discourse frequent?

Given that the present research is highly understudied in Persian, has important consequences for Persian word order and syntactic theory, is the continuation of my previous research, and fills the gap in the literature on Persian RD, I am really excited about the prospect of conducting this research at Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute of Iranian Studies at the University of Toronto. Furthermore, since this institute is recognized for high quality research, I would cherish the opportunity to continue my research there.