RELATIVIZATION IN PERSIAN

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the structure of relative clauses in Standard Persian will be discussed within the frame of reference of Generative Transformational Grammar. The procedure employed in this paper involves (a) the presentation of the surface structure of relative clauses in Persian by means of a selected set of data, (b) the determination of their deep structure of the basis of the data presented, and (c) the application of transformational rules necessary to relate the deep structure to the surface structure. Throughout the paper, Persian relative clauses and other related grammatical points will be compared and contrasted with their English counterparts, wherever necessary.

Before discussing the structure of Persian relative clauses in detail, a few notes on the relative marker, direct object marker, and particles and determiners related to relative clauses in Persian may prove helpful in the following discussion.

Unlike English, Persian has no relative pronoun as such; instead, it has only one relative marker, namely ke, which can equally be used with nouns having the semantic features [+human], [+animate, -human] or [-animate] and also with adjuncts of place and time. In other words, the Persian relative marker ke is the equivalent of all English relative pronouns (who, whom, that, which, whose) as well as 'where' and 'when'. A few illustrative sentences may help make this point clearer.

1. (án) sás-í ke ámad dust-e man ast
   (that/the) person-part who came-he friend-of I
   The person who came is my friend.

2. (a) Ali ketáb-i xaríd ke feld nadást
    Ali book-part bought-he that cover had not-it
    'Ali bought a book that had no cover.'

2. (b) Ali yek ketáb xaríd ke feld nadást
    Ali one/a book bought-he that cover had not-it
    'Ali bought a book that had no cover.'

3. (án) mard-i rá ke did-i mo?alem-e
    (that/the) man-part D.O.marker whom saw-you teacher-of
    man ast
    I
    'The man whom you saw is my teacher.'

4. (án) sag-i rá did-am ke češm nadást
    dog-part D.O. Marker saw-I which eye had not-it
    I saw a dog which was blind.

5. (án) pesar-i ke ketáb-aš gom šod barádár-e
    (that/the) boy-part whose book-his lost become brother-of

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man ast
I is-he
The boy whose book got lost is my brother.

6. Ḥān pārk-i ast ke dar ānja bāzī mikard-im
that park-part is where in there play did-we
'That is the park where we used to play.'

7. vaqt-i (ke) Ḥavān bud-am varzeš mikard-am
time-part (when) young was-I exercise made-I
'When I was young I used to do exercises.'

(part = particle, D.O. = Direct Object)

From the above examples, the following observations can be made:
(i) Definite nouns in Persian may optionally be preceded by the definite determiner ān 'that/the', as in sentences 1, 3, and 5.
Note that ān is obligatory when it is used as a demonstrative, as in sentence 6.
(ii) The particle -ī, which is added to the head noun in the majority of cases, has two functions:
(a) Demonstrative Suffix or 'referential -ī' when it is attached to a definite noun, as in sentences 1, 3, 5, and 6. This suffix is traditionally known as 'yay-e ēṣarat' 'the -ī of indication'.
(b) Indefinite Suffix when it follows an indefinite noun, as in sentences 2a and 4. It should be noted that instead of this -ī, the determiner yek 'a, an, one' can be used, as in sentence 2b.
(iii) rā in sentences 2 and 4 is the direct object marker. It should be pointed out that only specific direct objects are followed by rā, non-specific direct objects are unmarked. For example, compare the following sentence, in which the direct object is not specific, with sentence number 4.

8. xu az sag mitarsad
he/she from dog afraid is
'He/she is afraid of dogs.'

(iv) In Persian there is a phenomenon called zamāyer-e mottasal-e ūsxi 'attached personal pronouns.' These personal pronouns are suffixed to verb stems, as in:

did - am
did - i
did - and
saw - l
saw-you
saw-they
'I saw'
'you saw'
'they saw'
(v) ke is obligatory used before all types of relative clauses (sentences 1-6) except for time adverbial clauses in which case the use of ke is optional, as in sentence 7.

Relative Clauses in Persian

A relative clause in Persian can be defined as a subordinate clause which modifies a noun phrase in the embedded clause which is replaced by the relative marker ke in the surface structure.

There are two main types of relative clauses in Persian: (i) restrictive (attributive), and (ii) non-restrictive (appositive). Restrictive relative clauses identify a person or a thing, whereas appositives simply give further information about an already mentioned person or thing. Here the discussion will be confined to restrictive relative clauses on two grounds: (i) shortage of space, and (ii) the fact that restrictive relative clauses, as Comrie (1981) points out, are more central to the notions of relative clause than non-restrictive, ones.

On the deep structure of relative clauses in Persian, Tabaian (1975: 73) asserts that:

There are no deep structure relative clauses. Instead, all surface relative clauses are represented in the deep structure as full sentences joined to the surface main clause by a coordinator, specifically, va 'and'.

However, it is the present author's conviction that there is a deep structure for Persian relative clauses, as follows:

Diagram 1: The Deep Structure of Relative Clauses in Persian.

This is identical to the deep structure of relative clauses in English in the earlier models of Transformational Grammar (see, for example, Ross 1967: 118-31; and Jacobs and Rosenbaum 1968: 199). It is also similar to what Chomskians have proposed in recent years for the deep structure of English relative clauses within the frame of reference of the 'x-bar model' (see Matthews 1981; and Radford 1985).

To support our claim for the existence of a deep structure for Persian relative clauses, let us analyze the deep structure of one of the sentences above (sentence number 3), which represents an indefinite number of Persian sentences.
Diagram 2. The deep structure of sentence 3.

The above tree is analyzed to undergo relativization. According to the general rule of relative clause transformation, we change the NP in the embedded sentence, which is coreferential with the head NP in the matrix sentence, to the relative pronoun ke and propose it to the beginning of the embedded sentence so that is so immediately adjacent to the head NP. Then we apply T-Relative Particle Addition which adds to relative particle i to the head NP, and T-Pronoun Deletion which deletes the personal pronoun to, "you, 2nd. per. sing.", for in Persian if a personal pronoun functions as the subject or the direct object of the relative clause, it is optionally deleted. However, it should be mentioned that if a personal pronoun functions as the indirect object of a relative clause, it may never be deleted. Also pronoun deletion does not apply to attached personal pronouns, as defined above. These rules may be illustrated as follows:

T-rules:

T-Relative Clause Formation $\Rightarrow [\text{an}-\text{mard} - [\text{ke}-\text{to-didi}]-S_2 S_1 S_1 \text{mo?aleme-man-ast}]$ 

T-Relative Particle Addition $\Rightarrow [\text{an}-\text{mard}-i - [\text{ke-to-didi}]-S_2 S_1 S_1 \text{mo?aleme-man-ast}]$ 

T-Pronoun Deletion $\Rightarrow [\text{an}-\text{mard}-i [\text{ke}-\text{didi}]-S_2 S_1 S_1 \text{mo?aleme-man-ast}]$ 

Lower level rules optionally delete the definite article an 'that/the', add the object marker rá, and give us the surface structure of sentence 3 above.

The above proposal for the existence of a deep structure for relative clauses in Persian and the application of NP-S analysis is a possible one for any particular language." (Bach 1973:268).

However, it should be pointed out that this proposal holds true only with cases of simple relative clauses in Persian. The deep structure of multiple relative clauses will look somehow different, as illustrated in diagram 3 below.

Diagram 3: The deep structure of multiple relative clauses.

As Diagram 3 shows, when there is more than one relative clause in the deep structure we have to conjoin the lower clauses by means of the coordinating conjunctive va'and', and then incorporate the whole construction into the matrix sentence by the relative pronoun ke as in the following examples:

8. kétáb-i ke ru-ye miz ast va jeld-e ābi book-part that surface-of table is-it and cover-of blue dārad be mani tā aloq dārad has-it to I belong has-it 'The book which is on the table and which as a blue cover belongs to me.'

9. dar-i ke az āhan sāxt-e şode bud va xeli door-part with from iron made become was and very ham mohkam bud bāz šod also firm was open becom 'The door which was made of iron and was also very firm opened.'

10. fāgerdi ke bāzigul ast va zyād dārs nemixānad student-part who playful is and very lesson not-read-he nomre-ye xub nemigirad grade-of good not-get-he
The student who is playful and doesn’t study hard won’t get good grades."

The following diagram will further illustrate the construction of this type of relative clauses in Persian.9)

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Diagram 4: The deep structure of sentence 8.

T-Rules
Conj.-Placement ⇒ \{ketāb [ - \{ketāb - ru-ye - miz - ast\} - va - \}
ketāb-jeld-e-ābi- dārad\} \{be - man - ta aliqua - dārad\}
S1 S3 S2 S4 S1 S3 S4
Equi-NP Deletion ⇒ \{ketāb \} \{ketāb - ru-ye - miz - ast\} - va -
ketāb [ - \{ketāb - ru-ye - miz - ast\} - va -
ketāb - ru-ye - miz - ast\]
S1 S3 S2 S4 S1 S3 S2 S4
Relative clause Formation ⇒ \{ketāb - \{ke - ru-ye - miz - ast\} -
va - \{jeld-e-ābi - dārad\} - \{be man - ta aliqua - dārad\}
S1 S3 S2 S4 S1 S3 S2 S4
Relative Particle Addition ⇒ \{ketāb - \{ke - ru-ye - miz -
ast\} - va - \{jeld-e-ābi - dārad\} - \{be man - ta aliqua - dārad\}
S1 S3 S2 S4 S1 S3 S2 S4

After the application of lower-level rules and morphological changes we get the surface structure of sentence 8 above.

From the above discussion we can conclude that for relativization to occur in Persian, the relative clause must be immediately adjacent to the matrix sentence, and if there is more than on relative clause in a complex construction, the lower clause are conjoined by means of the coordinating conjunctive va, 'and', and then the whole construction is incorporated into the main clause immediately after the head noun, by the relative marker ke.

In some cases, however, one may notice that the relative clause in Persian occurs outside the matrix sentence; that is, the relative clause does not immediately follow its antecedent (the head NP). This has lead some to conclude that 'a relative clause in Persian may either immediately follow its antecedent or occur outside to domain of the main sentence" (Tabaian, 1975:73). (See also Yarmohammadi, 1965:157). However, it is maintained here that this holds true only on the level of the surface structure, and not in the deep structure. In the deep structure, the relative clause always follows its antecedent, and the constructions in which the relative clause is outside the domain of the matrix sentence, in the surface structure, are derived from the deep structure by the application of second rule, namely, 'Extraposition from NP.' A few examples and a subsequent tree diagram will illustrate this point.

11. u ketāb-i xarid ke jeld nadāšt he book-part bought-he that cover not-had-it
'He bought a book which and no cover.'
12. anhā xane-i xarid-and ke xeili gerān bud they house-part bought-they which very expensive was-it
'They bought a house which was very expensive.'
13. u be madrase-i miravad ke nazdik-e xane-ās ast he to school-part goes which near- of house his is-it
'He goes to a school which is near his house.'

The following is a tree diagram which shows the underlying deep structure of sentence 11 above.

Diagram 5: Deep structure for sentence 11.
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T-Rules

Relative clause Formation: \( [u \text{-} \text{ketab-i} [\text{ke-} \text{jeld-} \text{nadaat-}] \text{-xarid}] \)

Rel. Particle Addition: \( [u \text{-} \text{ketab-i} [\text{ke-} \text{jeld-} \text{nadaat-}] \text{-xarid}] \)

Thus far, after the application of lower-level rules and morphophonemic changes, we have the surface structure:

\[ u \text{-} \text{ketab-i ke jeld nadaat xarid} \]

The book-part which cover not-had-it bought-he

Which is an acceptable sentence in Persian. However, for stylistic variation we may extrapose the relative clause out of the matrix sentence by the application of Extraposition from NP, as follows:

Diagram 6: Intermediate structure of sentence 11 after having undergone Extraposition from NP.

As can be seen, after the application of Extraposition from NP we get the surface structure of sentence 11.

In this paper, the structure of relative clauses in Persian was discussed and an underlying deep structure was postulated for these clauses. Other types of relative clauses in Persian will be presented in a separate paper.

Notes
1. It should be pointed out that although use will be made here of tree diagrams and other transformational conventions, we are not by any means concerned here with the theoretical issues of any model of Transformational Grammar. Rather, the conventional tree diagrams and transformational rules are used as convenient means for stating explicitly the implicit relationships involved in the structure of Persian relative clauses.
2. Here, we are concerned only with those rules which are directly relevant to the construction of relative clauses in Persian, and assume that irrelevant rules such as ezafe construction, T-article, T-Copula, and so forth have been applied to this structure.
3. Henceforth, I will not include the features of the segment transformation, for the sake of brevity and simlicity.

References


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