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MISSING OBJECTS IN PERSIAN¹

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article étudie les objets manquants en persan. Je soutiens que les objets manquants dans les structures avec des verbes simples impliquent une DP définie (DDP). Je prouve que l'analyse de l'ellipse du verbe dans le syntagme verbal proposée pour les prédicats complexes persans (Toosarvandani 2009) ne peut pas expliquer ces données. En outre, je montre que l'ellipse de la DDP est autorisée par V et les données éclairent l'exigence d'identité structurale en ellipse.

Mots-clés: persan, les objets manquants, l'ellipse de la DP définie, l'ellipse du verbe dans le syntagme verbal

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates missing objects in Persian ellipsis structures. I argue that missing objects in structures with simple predicates involve Definite DP (DDP) ellipsis. I provide evidence that the verb-stranding verb phrase ellipsis analysis proposed for Persian complex predicates (Toosarvandani 2009) cannot account for such constructions. In addition, I show that DDP ellipsis is licensed by V and the data shed some light on the structural identity requirement in ellipsis.

Keywords: Persian, missing objects, definite DP ellipsis, verb-stranding VPE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Persian allows constructions in which transitive verbs appear without their internal argument(s). For instance, as shown in (1b), the verb “to buy” is overt while the object “coffee” is elided.

- (1) a. *Maryam qahve kharid?*
 Maryam coffee bought.3SG
 “Did Maryam buy coffee?”
- b. *āre, [qahve] kharid.*
 yes coffee bought.3SG
 “Yes, she bought (coffee).”

The sentence in (1b) can be analyzed in three ways. The structure involves (a) a null object, (b) Verb-stranding Verb Phrase Ellipsis (VVPE), or (c) Determiner Phrase (DP) ellipsis. Huang (1984) argues that null objects in Mandarin Chinese are not null pronominals (*pro*) but rather variables, A-bar bound with a topic. According to Huang, as shown in (2a), null subjects can be co-indexed with the matrix subject or someone salient in the discourse. However, null objects cannot be co-indexed with the matrix subject but rather have to be co-indexed with someone salient in the discourse (2b). Based on this asymmetry between null subjects and objects, Huang argues that null objects in Mandarin Chinese are bound with a topic.

- (2) a. *Zhangsan_i zhidao [e_{ij} mei banfa shuifu Lisi]*
 Zhangsan know no method persuade Lisi
 “Zhangsan_i knows that he_{ij} cannot persuade Lisi.”
- b. *Zhangsan_i zhidao [Lisi mei banfa shuifu e*_{ij}]*
 Zhangsan know Lisi no method persuade
 “Zhangsan_i knows that Lisi cannot persuade him*_{ij}.” (Huang 1984:539)

Persian also has a similar asymmetry between null subjects and null objects. The embedded null subject can be co-indexed with the matrix subject (3a), while the embedded null object cannot (3b).

- (3) a. *Ali_i midun-e ke [e_{ij} bā hich raveshi ne-mitun-e]*
 Ali know-3SG that with nothing method NEG-can-3SG
Maryam-ro motaqāed kon-e
 Maryam-ACC persuade do-3SG
 “Ali_i knows that he_{ij} cannot persuade Maryam.”

- b. *Ali_i midun-e ke [Maryam bā hich raveshi ne-mitun-e*
 Ali know-3SG that Maryam with nothing method NEG-can-3SG
*e*_{ij} motaqāed kon-e*
 persuade do-3SG

“Ali_i knows that Maryam cannot persuade him*_{ij}.”

In this paper, I do not discuss null objects but focus instead on missing direct objects involving ellipsis. Elided objects can either involve VVPE or DP ellipsis. In VVPE, the verb leaves the verb phrase before the ellipsis takes place (Goldberg 2005). The structure in (4b) is an instance of VVPE in Hebrew, in which the verb “drove” escapes deletion by moving to T, and then the vP is elided.

- (4) a. (*Ha'im*) *Miryam hisi'a et Dvora la-makolet*
 Q Miryam drove.3FSG ACC Dvora to.the-grocery store

“Did Miryam drive Dvora to the grocery store?”

- b. *ken, hi hisi'a*
 yes she drove.3FSG

“Yes, she drove (Dvora to the grocery store).” (Goldberg 2005:53)

According to Toosarvandani (2009), VVPE exists in Persian complex predicates.² An example of such construction is given in (5). The sentence has the complex verb *davat kardan* “to invite” and in the second clause, the light verb *mikonam* is overt while the rest of the clause is elided. Based on Toosarvandani’s analysis, in (5), the light verb *mikonam* is stranded in *v* and its complement (the nonverbal element and the objects) is elided.

- (5) *Nilufar be mehmuni dāneshju davat ne-mi-kon-e vali man*
 Nilufar to party student invitation NEG-IMPF-do-3SG but I
 [~~*be mehmuni dāneshju davat*~~] *mi-kon-am*
 to party student invitation IMPF-do-1SG

“Nilufar doesn’t invite students to the party, but I do.” (Toosarvandani 2009:71)

² “Complex predicates” are complex verbs that include a nonverbal element and a light verb, as in (i). In this paper, “simple predicates” refers to simple verbs, as in (ii).

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| (i) a. <i>harf zadan</i>
speech hit
“to speak” | b. <i>davat kardan</i>
invitation do
“to invite” | c. <i>tamiz kardan</i>
clean do
“to clean” |
| (ii) a. <i>kharidan</i>
“to buy” | b. <i>gereftan</i>
“to take” | c. <i>neveshtan</i>
“to write” |

In this paper, I show that the VVPE analysis cannot account for elided objects in simple predicates. I provide evidence that such structures involve DP ellipsis. Since only definite objects can be elided, I refer to these constructions as Definite DP (DDP) ellipsis. The paper is structured as follows. In Section 1, I provide diagnostics for distinguishing whether missing objects involve ellipsis or null objects. In Section 2, I present evidence against the VVPE analysis for missing objects in simple predicates. In Section 3, I show how DDP ellipsis can account for the data. Section 4 provides a conclusion.

2. DISTINGUISHING ELLIPSIS FROM NULL OBJECTS

Although the generalization that ellipsis requires a linguistic antecedent has not consistently held up in the literature (see Merchant 2004:717-732), I follow Hankamer and Sag's (1976) analysis that verb phrase ellipsis (VPE), a type of surface anaphora, cannot occur with a contextual antecedent (6a) but rather requires a linguistic antecedent (6b). However, this does not hold in other types of anaphora such as null objects and *do it* anaphora. As shown in (6a), *do it* anaphora is acceptable with a contextual antecedent.

- (6) a. Deep Anaphora
 [Hankamer attempts to stuff a 9-inch ball through a 6-inch hoop.]
 Sag: # "It is not clear that you'll be able to [VP]." VPE
 Sag: "It is not clear that you'll be able to do it." *do it* anaphora
- b. Surface Anaphora
 Hankamer: I'm going to stuff this ball through this hoop
 Sag: "It is not clear that you'll be able to [VP]." VPE
 (Hankamer & Sag 1976:392)

It is also known that in English VPE, it is possible to embed the ellipsis site inside an island.

- (7) Q: Did Sadie put the jam on the table?
 A: Yes, and she left [after she did [put the jam on the table]]. (Gribanova 2013:15)

Now consider the Persian example in (8). The sentence is grammatical with a contextual antecedent. To determine if this sentence involves ellipsis or a null object construction, we can use our two diagnostics: islands and having a linguistic/contextual antecedent.³

³ These diagnostics and the examples in (8-10) are adapted from Gribanova (2013:107-112).

- (8) Context: A vase falls; no one wants to pick it up.
boland na-sho bābā ke umād az-ash mi-khāy-im
 up NEG-become.2SG dad that come.3SG from-him IMPF-ask-1PL
~~[goldun-ro]~~ *bardār-e*
 vase-ACC pick up-3SG

“Don’t get up. When dad comes, we will ask him to pick up (the vase).”

When the sentence in (8) is embedded inside an island, it becomes ungrammatical (9).

- (9) Context: A vase falls; no one wants to pick it up.
 **in ke kes-i [goldun-ro] bar=na-dāsht nārāhat-am*
 this that person-INDF vase-ACC up=NEG-have.3SG upset-1SG
mi-kon-e
 IMPF-do-3SG

Intended: “The fact that no one picked up (the vase) upsets me.”

However, if the sentence in (9) is provided with a linguistic antecedent, the result becomes a grammatical sentence (10).

- (10) a. *be nazar mi-res-e ke kes-i goldun-ro bar=na-dāsht*
 to view IMPF-arrive-3SG that person-INDF vase-ACC up=NEG-have.3SG
 “It seems that no one picked up the vase.”
 b. *in ke kes-i [goldun-ro] bar=na-dāsht*
 this that person-INDF vase-ACC up=NEG-have.3SG
nārāhat-am mi-kon-e
 upset-1SG IMPF-do-3SG

“The fact that no one picked up (the vase) upsets me.”

Based on the evidence from English VPE, we know that ellipsis is acceptable with a linguistic antecedent and inside an island. Therefore, we can say that the sentence in (10) involves ellipsis while the one in (8) involves a null object construction. We can conclude that providing a linguistic context and embedding the missing object inside an island assure us that the structure involves ellipsis rather than a null object construction. To ensure that missing objects involve ellipsis, all relevant examples in this paper are embedded within an island and have a linguistic antecedent.

3. ARGUMENTS AGAINST VERB-STRANDING VERB PHRASE ELLIPSIS

Goldberg (2005) argues that various languages such as Hebrew, Swahili, and Irish have VVPE. In these languages, the main verb obligatorily raises out of the verb phrase and VVPE is derived by V→T movement, followed by vP ellipsis.⁴ However, Persian lacks obligatory verb movement and there is independent evidence that verb movement out of the verb phrase is only triggered by topicalization and focus features (Karimi 2005:159-160). Toosarvandani (2009:61) proposes that in Persian complex predicates, the light verb is stranded in *v* and constructions like (5) involve *v*-stranding verb phrase ellipsis.

In this section, I show that the VVPE analysis cannot account for missing objects in structures with simple predicates in Persian. I provide evidence based on the impossibility of extraction, adverbs, and restrictions on object elision.

3.1. Impossibility of Extraction

Verb phrase ellipsis elides all internal arguments of the verb. For instance, as illustrated in (11b), both the direct object *the book* and the indirect object *to Maryam* are elided.

- (11) a. *az in ke ali ketāb-ro be maryam dād tazjob=na-kard-am*
 from this that Ali book-ACC to Maryam gave.3SG surprise=NEG-did-1SG
 “The fact that Ali gave the book to Maryam didn’t surprise me.”
- b. *vali az in ke hasan [ketāb-ro be maryam] na-dād*
 but from this that Hasan book-ACC to Maryam NEG-gave.3SG
tazjob=kard-am
 surprise=did-1SG
 “But the fact that Hasan didn’t give (the book to Maryam) surprised me.”

Now, consider the examples in (12). In (12b), only the direct object *the book* is elided and the indirect object *to Hasan* is overt.

- (12) a. *az in ke ali ketāb-ro be maryam dād tazjob=na-kard-am*
 from this that Ali book-ACC to Maryam gave.3SG surprise=NEG-did-1SG
 “The fact that Ali gave the book to Maryam didn’t surprise me.”
- b. *vali az in ke [ketāb-ro] be hasan na-dād*
 but from this that book-ACC to Hasan NEG-gave.3SG

⁴ Gribanova (2013) proposed VVPE for Russian even though there is no V→T movement in Russian. According to her analysis, the verb survives the deletion by moving to AspP. However, Bailyn (2014) argues against VVPE analysis in Russian. See Gribanova (2013) and Bailyn (2014) for discussion.

taʒjob=kard-am
surprise=did-1SG

“But the fact that he didn’t give (the book) to Hasan surprised me.”

If the structure in (12b) was an instance of VPE, both arguments should have been elided since VPE targets the whole verb phrase. However, it is known that VPE allows extraction of an argument from the elided constituent (Schuyler, 2001). For instance, as illustrated in (13), the *wh*-phrase “which one” moves out of the ellipsis site before the verb phrase is elided.

- (13) I don’t know which puppy you SHOULD adopt, but I know [_{CP}[which one]_i [_{IP} you SHOULD_N’T [_{VP} adopt _{t_i]]]. (Schuyler 2001:1)}

Following the account that extraction in verb phrase ellipsis is possible, one might say that the structure in (12b) involves verb phrase ellipsis, in which the indirect object *to Hasan* has been extracted from the VP prior to ellipsis. However, I argue against extraction of the object from the verb phrase based on the evidence from reciprocal anaphora.⁵

- (14) a. *maryam [dāneshju-hā-sh-ro] [be khune-ye hamdige] ferestād*
Maryam student-PL-POSS-ACC to house-EZ each other sent.3SG

“Maryam sent her students to each other’s houses.”

- b. **maryam [be khune-ye hamdige] [dāneshju-hā-sh-ro] ferestād*
Maryam to house-EZ each other student-PL-POSS-ACC sent.3SG

In (14a), the direct object *the students* precedes and binds the reciprocal anaphor *to each other*. However, as shown in (14b), the reciprocal anaphor cannot precede and bind the direct object.⁶ Now consider the sentences in (15).

⁵ The examples and argument in this section are adapted from Şener and Takahashi (2009:89-90).

⁶ According to Karimi (2005:122-123), in Persian, the specific direct object is interpreted at the edge of the *vP* and it can bind the indirect object from this position, as in (i). However, the sentence in (ii) violates Principle A of Binding Theory since the anaphora “each other” is not locally bound by its antecedent “children.”

(i) *Kimea bache-hā-ro_i be hamdige_i mo’arrefi kard*
Kimea child-PL-ACC to each other introduction did.3SG
“Kimea introduced children to each other.”

(ii) **Kimea hamdigar-ro_i be bache-hā_i mo’arrefi kard*
Kimea each other-ACC to child-PL introduction did.3SG
“Kimea introduced children to each other.”

- (15) a. *az in ke maryam [dāneshju-hā-sh-ro] [be khune-ye hamdige]*
 from this that Maryam student-PL-POSS-ACC to house-EZ each other
ferestād tazjob=kard-am
 sent.3SG surprise=did-1SG
 “The fact that Maryam sent her students to each other’s houses didn’t surprise me.”
- b. *vali az in ke ali [~~dāneshju-hā-sh-ro~~] [be khune-ye hamdige]*
 but from this that Ali student-PL-POSS-ACC to house-EZ each other
na-ferestād tazjob=kard-am
 NEG-sent.3SG surprise=did-1SG
 “But the fact that Ali didn’t send (his students) to each other’s houses surprised me.”

In (15b), the direct object *his students* is elided. If the sentence in (15b) were derived by VVPE, we would expect the reciprocal anaphor to be removed from the VP before the ellipsis takes place, which has to be analyzed as in (16).

- (16) * $[_{TP} \text{Ali } [_{VP} \text{be khune-ye hamdige}]_1 [_{VP} \text{~~dāneshju-hā-sh-ro}~~]_{-t_1}] [_v \text{na-ferestād}]]$

Based on the analysis in (16), the anaphor has escaped deletion by moving out of the verb phrase. However, as shown in (14b), we know that the representation in (16) is ill formed and yields an ungrammatical sentence. Therefore, VVPE cannot account for the sentence in (15b).

3.2. Adverbs

The second argument against VVPE comes from the interpretation of adverbs. Consider the English example in (17), which is an instance of VPE. The manner adverb *carefully* is present only in the first conjunct. However, it is obligatorily interpreted in the second clause.

- (17) John read the book carefully, Mary did too.
 a. “Mary read the book carefully too.”
 b. *“Mary read the book.”

Now, consider the Persian examples in (18). The manner adverb *carefully* is present in (18a) but not in (18b). The structure in (18b) has only one meaning: “Maryam didn’t read the book.” If the structure in (18b) were an instance of VVPE, it would obligatorily have the interpretation of the adverb *carefully*.⁷

⁷ For some speakers, the sentence in (18b) can have two readings: “Maryam didn’t read the book” and “Maryam didn’t read the book carefully.” However, they have the second interpretation only if the adverb “carefully” in the preceding clause is emphasized.

- (18) a. *az in ke ali ketāb-ro bā deqqat khund tazjob=na-kard-am*
 from this that Ali book-ACC with care read.3SG surprise=NEG-did-1SG
 “The fact that Ali read the book carefully didn’t surprise me.”
- b. *vali az in ke maryam [ketāb-ro] na-khund tazjob=kard-am*
 but from this that Maryam book-ACC NEG-read.3SG surprise=did-1SG
 “But the fact that Maryam didn’t read (the book) surprised me.”

3.3. Restrictions on Object Elision

Verb phrase ellipsis in English can elide both definite (19) and indefinite (20) objects. However, in Persian, eliding the definite direct object is acceptable (21) while eliding the indefinite one is not acceptable (22).

- (19) John took **his daughter** to the park, Mary did too. (Mary took **her daughter** to the park, too).
- (20) John took **a girl** to the park, Mary did too. (Mary took **a girl** to the park, too).
- (21) a. *az in ke ali dokhtar-esh-ro be pārk bord*
 from this that Ali daughter-POSS-ACC to park took.3SG
tazjob=na-kard-am
 surprise=NEG-did-1SG
 “The fact that Ali took his daughter to the park didn’t surprise me.”
- b. *vali az in ke maryam [dokhtar-esh-ro] be pārk na-bord*
 but from this that Maryam daughter-POSS-ACC to park NEG-took.3SG
tazjob=kard-am
 surprise=did-1SG
 “But the fact that Maryam didn’t take (her daughter) to the park surprised me.”
- (22) a. *az in ke ali ye dokhtar be pārk bord tazjob=na-kard-am*
 from this that Ali a girl to park took.3SG surprise=NEG-did-1SG
 “The fact that Ali took a girl to the park didn’t surprise me.”
- b. **vali az in ke maryam [ye-dokhtar] be pārk na-bord*
 but from this that Maryam a girl to park NEG-took.3SG
tazjob=kard-am
 surprise=did-1SG
 Intended: “But the fact that Maryam didn’t take (a girl) to the park surprised me.”

To the best of my knowledge, verb phrase ellipsis can occur regardless of the definiteness of the object. Therefore, the structure in (21b) does not involve

VVPE. Now that we have shown the VVPE analysis cannot account for missing objects in structures with simple predicates, we need to provide an alternative analysis that can account for such constructions.

4. DEFINITE DP ELLIPSIS

In this section, I provide evidence that the elided objects in simple predicates involve DP ellipsis. As was shown in Section 2.3, only definite DPs can be elided. Therefore, I call this type of construction Definite DP (DDP) Ellipsis.⁸

In formal Persian, there is no definite determiner; however, in colloquial speech, the suffix *-e* marks definiteness (Ghomeshi 1996). It surfaces as *-e* word-finally (23) and as *-a* elsewhere (24). In addition, definite DPs must appear with *-rā*, which in conversation is pronounced as *-ro* or *-o*.⁹

- (23) *ketāb-ro be dokhtar-e dād-am*
 book-ACC to girl-DEF gave-1SG

“I gave the book to the girl.”

- (24) *dokhtar-a-ro did-am*
 girl-DEF-ACC saw-1SG

“I saw the girl.”

(Ghomeshi 1996:125-126)

Now consider the following constructions, in which the object *the kid* is elided. The difference between these structures is that in (25) the object has the definite marker *-a* while in (26) there is no overt determiner.

- (25) a. *az in ke ali bache-ha-ro be pārk bord*
 from this that Ali kid-DEF-ACC to park took.3SG

taʔjob=na-kard-am
 surprise=NEG-did-1SG

“The fact that Ali took the kid to the park didn’t surprise me.”

- b. *vali az in ke maryam [bache-ha-ro] be pārk na-bord*
 but from this that Maryam kid-DEF-ACC to park NEG-took.3SG

taʔjob=kard-am
 surprise=did-1SG

⁸ In this paper, I don’t consider the following types of ellipsis. For convenience, English examples are given:

(i) “John bought the green book, and Mary bought the red [~~book~~] one.”

(ii) “John bought three books, but Mary bought two [~~books~~].”

⁹ *-rā* can also occur on categories that are not direct objects such as adverbs, relative clauses, possessors. See Ghomeshi (1997, 2003) for further discussion on *-rā*.

“But the fact that Maryam didn’t take (the kid) to the park surprised me.”

- (26) a. *az in ke ali bache-ro be pārk bord*
 from this that Ali kid-ACC to park took.3SG

tazjob=na-kard-am
 surprise=NEG-did-1SG

“The fact that Ali took the kid to the park didn’t surprise me.”

- b. *vali az in ke maryam [bache-ro] be pārk na-bord*
 but from this that Maryam kid-ACC to park NEG-took.3SG

tazjob=kard-am
 surprise=did-1SG

“But the fact that Maryam didn’t take (the kid) to the park surprised me.”

As the examples in (25-26) show, eliding definite DPs is acceptable. However, eliding indefinite DPs is not acceptable (27b).

- (27) a. *az in ke ali ye bache be pārk bord*
 from this that Ali a kid to park took.3SG

tazjob=na-kard-am
 surprise=NEG-did-1SG

“The fact that Ali took a kid to the park didn’t surprise me.”

- b. **vali az in ke maryam [ye bache] be pārk na-bord*
 but from this that Maryam a kid to park NEG-took.3SG

tazjob=kard-am
 surprise=did-1SG

Intended: “But the fact that Maryam didn’t take (a kid) to the park surprised me.”

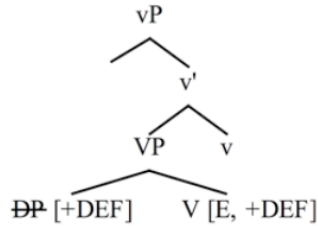
4.1. Licensor

To account for the elision of the definite direct objects, we need to discuss what licenses such constructions. According to Lobeck (1995:52), ellipsis is licensed by an inflection-bearing head.¹⁰ For instance, in English, VPE is licensed by T and sluicing is licensed by C. I argue that Definite DP ellipsis is licensed by V. On Merchant’s (2001:60) approach to ellipsis, the head licensing ellipsis carries the E-feature. This feature causes the complement of the head to be unpronounced at PF and to be interpreted identically to its antecedent. Under this analysis, in DDP ellipsis the E feature is on V, which triggers the deletion of its

¹⁰ Ellipsis is also licensed by the functional heads COMP and DET (Lobeck 1995:50-58).

complement at PF, as schematically illustrated in (28). The E feature on V is licensed only if the DP has [+DEF] feature. This blocks DPs with [+INDEF] feature from being elided. Therefore, the E feature should be bundled with [+DEF] feature to allow DDP ellipsis.

(28)



4.2. Verbal Identity

Ellipsis requires an identity condition, in which the elided elements should be identical to their antecedent.¹¹ For instance, in (29b), the elided object can only mean “coffee.”

(29) a. *qahve kharid-i?*
 coffee bought-2SG

“Did you buy coffee?”

b. *na, az in ke [qahve] na-kharid-am nārāhat shod-i?*
 no from this that coffee NEG-bought-1SG upset became-2SG

“No, did the fact that I didn’t buy (coffee) upset you?”

In addition, ellipsis is constrained by a verbal identity requirement. For example, in Hebrew VVPE the main verbs must be identical in root and derivational morphology (30b); otherwise, the result will be ungrammatical (30c), (Goldberg 2005).

(30) a. *(Ha'im) Miryam hevi'a et Dvora la-xanut?*
 Q Miryam brought.3FSG ACC Dvora to-the.store

“Did Miryam bring Dvora to the store?”

b. *ken, hi hevi'a*
 yes she brought.3FSG

“Yes, she brought (Dvora to the store).”

¹¹ The identity condition is not necessarily surface morpho-syntactic identity such as voice, tense, and “vehicle change” (Merchant 2004:700).

- c. **ken*, *hi lakxa*
yes she took.3FSG

Intended: “Yes, she took (Dvora to the store).” (Goldberg 2005:160)

According to Toosarvandani (2009), in VVPE for Persian complex predicates, the verbs must either be identical or have identical meaning. On this account, the alternation of light verbs is acceptable as long as their argument or event structures do not change and the meaning of the complex predicate does not change. For instance, as shown in (31), even though the verbs *otu kardan* and *otu zadan* have different forms, they both mean “to iron.”

- (31) a. *pirhan-ro otu=kard-i?*
shirt-ACC iron=did-2SG

“Have you ironed the shirt?”

- b. *are, diruz [~~pirhan-ro-otu~~]=zad-am*
yes yesterday shirt-ACC iron=hit-2SG

“Yes, I did (iron the shirt) yesterday.” (Toosarvandani 2009:89)

Now, let us consider eliding objects in constructions with simple predicates. In (32), the verbs are identical and eliding the object is acceptable (32b).

- (32) a. *az in ke ali mādar-esh-ro busid tazjob=na-kard-am*
from this that Ali mother-POSS-ACC kissed.3SG surprise=NEG-did-1SG

“The fact that Ali kissed his mother didn’t surprise me.”

- b. *vali az in ke maryam [~~mādar-esh-ro~~] na-busid*
but from this that Maryam mother-POSS-ACC NEG-kissed.3SG

tazjob=kard-am
surprise=did-1SG

“But the fact that Maryam didn’t kiss (her mother) surprised me.”

However, in (33-34), the verbs have neither identical forms nor identical meaning but the structures are grammatical.¹²

¹² In complex predicates also eliding the object is acceptable when the verbs are not identical.

a. *az in ke Ali khuna-ro tamiz kard tazjob=na-kard-am*
from this that Ali house-ACC clean did.3SG surprise=NEG-did-1SG
“The fact that Ali cleaned the house didn’t surprise me.”

b. *vali az in ke Maryam [~~khuna-ro~~] kasif kard tazjob=kard-am*
but from this that Maryam house-ACC dirty did.3SG surprise=did-1SG
“But the fact that Maryam made (the house) dirty surprised me.”

- (33) a. *bā deqqat livān-hā-ro be ali dād-am*
with care glass-PL-ACC to Ali gave-1SG
“I carefully gave the glasses to Ali.”
- b. *az in ke bā deqqat [livān-hā-ro] na-gereft*
from this that with care glass-PL-ACC NEG-took.3SG
taʔjob=kard-am
surprise=did-1SG
“The fact that he didn’t take (the glasses) carefully surprised me.”
- (34) a. *az in ke ali pār-sāl yeho un khuna-ro kharid*
from this that Ali last-year suddenly that house-ACC bought.3SG
taʔjob=na-kard-am
surprise=NEG-did-1SG
“The fact that Ali bought that house suddenly last year didn’t surprise me.”
- b. *vali az in ke em-sāl yeho [un—khuna-ro] furukht*
but from this that this-year suddenly that house-ACC sold.3SG
taʔjob=kard-am
surprise=did-1SG
“The fact that he suddenly sold (that house) this year surprised me.”

Now, consider the examples in (35-36). Similar to the structures in (33-34), the verbs in (35-36) are not identical. However, eliding the object in these sentences yields ungrammatical sentences. The verbs in these constructions have different structures. The sentences in (35a) and (36a) have simple predicates while the ones in (35b) and (36b) have complex predicates. Based on the data presented in this section, we can make the generalization in (37).

- (35) a. *bā deqqat boshghāb-hā-ro be ali dād-am*
with care plate-PL-ACC to Ali gave-1SG
“I carefully gave the plates to Ali.”
- b. **az in ke bā deqqat [boshghāb-hā-ro] rang=kard*
from this that with care plate-PL-ACC color=did.3SG
taʔjob=kard-am
surprise=did-1SG
Intended: “The fact that he carefully colored (the plates) surprised me.”
- (36) a. *lebās-ā-ro bā deqqat shost-am*
clothes-PL-ACC with care washed-1SG
“I washed the clothes carefully.”

- b. **az in ke maryam [tebās-ā-ro] kasif=kard*
 from this that Maryam clothes-PL-ACC dirty=did.3SG
nārāhat shod-am
 upset became-1SG

Intended: “The fact that Maryam made (the clothes) dirty upset me.”

- (37) Structural Identity Requirement in Definite DP (DDP) Ellipsis:
 The antecedent and target main verbs of DDP Ellipsis should have identical structures. They should have either simple or complex predicates.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have shown that the verb-stranding verb phrase ellipsis analysis cannot account for missing objects in structures with simple predicates in Persian. I provided evidence based on the impossibility of extraction, adverbs, and restrictions on object elision.

I proposed that the alternative strategy to account for such missing objects is DP ellipsis. Since only definite objects can be elided, I refer to this type of ellipsis as Definite DP (DDP) ellipsis. I showed that DDP ellipsis is licensed by V, which triggers non-pronunciation of its complement at PF. In addition, the antecedent and target main verbs of DDP ellipsis should have identical structures.

Based on the data presented in this paper, Persian has two types of ellipsis. The complex predicates involve *v*-stranding VPE (Toosarvandani 2009) while simple predicates have DDP ellipsis. In addition, Persian has null objects, which, following Huang (1984), I assume are A-bar bound with a topic.

The questions that require further research are: (i) What is the relationship between DP ellipsis and definiteness? and (ii) What is the verbal identity requirement? I assume that DDP ellipsis is only possible in languages that do not have definite articles. However, more languages should be studied to find out whether this assumption holds. Further research is also required into the issue of why the structural identity of verbs matters in DDP ellipsis even though they are not at the ellipsis site.

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ABBREVIATIONS

1	first person	INDF	indefinite
2	second person	IMPF	imperfective
3	third person	NEG	negation
ACC	accusative	PL	plural
DEF	definite	POSS	possessive
F	feminine	SG	singular

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