A General Overview of Spatial Events in Persian  
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This study provides an overview how the manner of location and motion are expressed in Persian. As far as we know, this is the first study of Persian spatial events using corpus analysis method that provides us with a set of naturally occurring data and statistics. Based on Talmy’s 2002 study, dependent on the way that languages express manner of motion and location, they are divided into two groups. In the first group, the verb is responsible to express the manner of motion and location, while in the second group the manner may be expressed via other elements such as adverbal clauses or adjuncts. For example, in English, speakers would typically say he ran into the house where run expresses the manner. In the same situation, French speakers would rather say il entra dans la maison (en courant), here the adjunct en courant refers to the manner. In this article, we will explain how manner is expressed by Persian verbs, and we will discuss simple verbs vs complex predicates (CP) behaviors (syntactically and semantically) in such situations. Based on the outcome, we will explain the motivations for which the simple verbs have been replaced by CPs. According to certain studies, in contemporary Persia, simple verbs are not productive and since the 13th century have gradually been replaced by CPs which are quite productive and frequent (Bateni, 1989; Barjesteh, 1983; Folli, Harley, and Karimi, 2005). Sharifi (1975), among others, has argued that these predicates either replace verbs of Arabic origin, introduce new semantic concepts, or provide new ways to express concepts that already exist. To compare simple verbs and CPs we consider their frequencies, ratio, transitivity, and the way in which they express manner.

Since the available Persian corpora were few and also could not satisfy our needs, in order to identify the verbs used in spatial events we decided to create our own corpus with 2304 sentences from different online sources, namely, novels and news. We needed a corpus wherein by searching a word the whole sentence appears; we also needed to figure out which words can co-occur with light verbs to form CPs. Finally, we intended to code certain criteria, which are not present in available Persian corpora. Of the 2304 sentences, 820 were spatial based on Talmy’s definition of spatial events. According to Talmy “the basic motion event consists of one object (the figure) moving or located with respect to another object (the reference object or the ground)” (Talmy 2000, II:25). Subsequently, simple verbs and CPs used in spatial events were distinguished. The extracted sentences were coded in a spreadsheet, according to a number of criteria, namely, simple verb/CP, location/motion, transitivity, semantic group, novel/news, and frequency.

Per our analysis, 63.24% of all the verbs in spatial events are complex predicates and 37.76% are simple verbs. However, the distribution of these predicates and simple verbs is not the same in novels and news. The percentage of simple verbs in novels is higher than that of simple verbs in news; in fact, in novels, 42.54% of the verbs are simple and 57.46% are CPs, while in news, only 25.71% of the verbs are simple and 74.29% are CPs. Therefore, the frequency of simple verbs is close to the frequency of CPs in novel data.

Figure (1) shows a comparison between the transitivity of simple verbs and CPs in spatial events. As it is indicated in Figure (1a), simple verbs mostly appear intransitive while according to figure (1b) CPs have both transitive and intransitive constructions adequately. Intransitive simple verbs mostly have CPs counterparts. Therefore, we suggest that, at least for spatial events, one of the reasons for the replacement of simple verbs by CPs is the shortage of transitive verbs in the simple verb system.

![Figure 1: Transitivity in (a) simple verbs and in (b) CPs](image-url)
Finally, the way that simple verbs and CPs encode the manner of motion and location differs. In CPs the manner is expressed by the verb while in simple verbs, in the majority of cases, the manner is expressed in an adverbial clause. Therefore, the syntactic distribution varies between these two systems. The fact that CPs have the potential to express manner, shows that they are rich semantically while simple verbs have basic meanings. Figure (2) shows the semantic groups in simple verbs and in CPs.

Per figure (2), 95% of the CPs contain specific information (manner) while 55% of the simple verbs express manner. See the following examples:

1. (a) *dar-haalike lebaas-haa-raa mi-paraakanad aanhaa-raa ru-ye zamin mi-gozarat.*
   while cloth-PL-ACC PROG-spread them-ACC on-EZ ground PROG-put.PRS.3SG
   ‘He spreads the clothes on the ground.’

   (b) *lebaas-haa-raa ru-ye zamin pakhsh-mi-konad.*
   cloth-PL-ACC on-EZ ground spread-PROG-doo.PRS.3SG
   ‘He spreads the clothes on the ground.’

As it is indicated in 1(a) the way in which clothes are putting on the ground is explained in an adverbial clause and the main verb is *gozaashatn* ‘put’ which is a neutral verb and contains no manner or specific information. On the contrary, in 1(b), the CP *pakhsh kardan* ‘spread’ contains manner of motion. In fact, CPs are economic and no adverbial clause is required to add specific information. In addition, CPs enjoy a high degree of productivity and diversity of meaning.

In sum, although the frequency of CPs is higher in spatial events, this frequency depends on the genre of the discourse, and in our case, simple verbs are more frequent in novels in comparison with news. Therefore, a difference in the genre can lead to a different type of verb in spatial events. In fact, in novels, the tendency for writing complex and long sentences is more than that of news, and the usage of simple verbs with adverbial clauses increases. The difference of transitivity and meaning between CPs and simple verbs can be signs that CPs are compensating for a shortage of transitive verbs and meaning among simple verbs. Since the manner is explained in the CPs, they have rich meaning and are economic. Finally, Persian has the characteristics of both groups in Talmy’s typology and can express manner either in the verb or in an additional element.

**References**


