SOLAB

Persian syntax and constituency: Insights from processing approach to grammar and psycholinguistics

Majid Alaee[1]

1. PLSWA (Persian Language School, Western Australia)

Abstract

According to the theory of processing approach to grammar developed by Hawkins (1994; 2004), the grammaticalization of any structure in languages is grounded in processing considerations suggesting that any phenomena in language seem inclined towards easing the processing burden. From this perspective, any rearrangements in the constituency in general and long-distance dependencies, in particular, are not implemented haphazardly. The operation of that part of the linguistic representation system that leads to the formulation of concepts is governed by processing mechanisms. As Hawkins postulates, the processing mechanisms make it possible for humans to comprehend (and produce) grammatical structures rapidly and efficiently. The formulator in the language production model is also planned in a way that minimizes the processing load. Therefore, it appears that constituent ordering and reordering (syntactic movement), grammatical constraints in word order, and any syntactic phenomenon are motivated by the flawless performance of human linguistic processors and driven by the incentive of increasing processing efficiency. Given that this mechanism favors the presence of some orderings and the rarity of others, some syntactic phenomena, such as dislocation of the head and dependent adjacency, should not be interpreted as a violation of a tendency known as a continuous dependency. However, it is certainly meant to fulfill some processing motivation. As eye behavior analysis can be a window onto the realization of real-time cognitive processing, drawing upon data collected from eye tracker, the presentation aims to address how processing principles are grammaticalized in Persian concerning long-distance dependencies and syntactic movement.

Keywords: Eye movement, Long-distance dependencies, Language processing, Syntactic movement

Email: Majid.alaee@gmail.com

doi.org/10.30514/icss.25.0v.16