

Argument structure affects relative clause extraposition

Evidence from a corpus study on Persian

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Previous research has shown that relative clause extraposition is influenced by several factors, including dependency length, verb type, and the grammatical function of the modified NP. While the role of dependency length has been attributed to pressures associated with the processing of a discontinuous dependency, it is less clear whether the other two factors—verb type and NP grammatical function—are related to properties of the processing system. Using corpus data from Persian, I show that these two factors can be redescribed in terms of argument structure, a factor shown to influence planning mechanisms in the production of other grammatical phenomena. I argue that studying the role of argument structure in RC extraposition allows us to understand why people extrapose RCs more often with certain verbs or from certain grammatical positions.