Lab 2, Writeup 1: Determiner Semantics

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1 Farsi Determiners

Farsi marks the definite/non-definite distinction morphologically. A noun without an indefinite clitic is either specific or generic. A noun with the indefinite clitic -*i* is indefinite.

(1) *ketab*
    book   (definite/generic)
    'the book' 'books (in general)'

(2) *ketabi*
    book   (indefinite)
    'a book'

Since the citation form of a noun is definite, I made the PRED value of the covert-det-phrase rule def_q_rel. An as-yet-unwritten lexical rule will add -*i* and change this to indef_q_rel.

Farsi has two demonstratives: *in* is for nouns close to the speaker and *an* is for nouns distant from the speaker. These always precede the noun and have the same form regardless of number.

(3) *in*   *ketab*
    this   book
    'this book'

(4) *in*   *ketabha*
    these   books
    'these books'

(5) *an*   *ketab*
    that   book
    'that book'

(6) *an*   *ketabha*
    those   books
    'those books'

1

I treat *in* and *an* as optional demonstrative determiners with PRED values proximal+dem_q_rel and distal+dem_q_rel respectively.

2   Optional Determiners

Since Farsi only has demonstrative determiners, all determiners are optional. All of the following sentences generate a parse.

(7)   *pesar   bidar*
      the boy   wake up

      'the boy wake up'

(8)   *in   pesar   bidar*
      this   boy   wake up

      'this boy wake up'

(9)   *an   pesar   bidar*
      that   boy   wake up

      'that boy wake up'

(10) *Shirin   ketab   xandan*
      Shirin   the book   read

      'Shirin read the book'

(11) *Shirin   in   ketab   xandan*
      Shirin   this   book   read

      'Shirin read this book'

(12) *Shirin   an   ketab   xandan*
      Shirin   that   book   read

      'Shirin read that book'

Note that these are not grammatical Farsi sentences because the verbs are not properly inflected. To reflect this I have left the English translations in infinitive form.

3   Overgeneration

Since Farsi does not mark any kind of agreement on its demonstrative determiners, all parses unambiguously regenerate from their semantics. For example, the following sentences all generate only one string, which is identical to the original.

(13) *gorbe   ketab   xandan*
      the cat   book   buy

      'The cat buy the book'

(14) *in   gorbe   ketab   xandan*
this   cat   book   buy
'This cat buy the book'

(15) *an   gorbe   ketab   xandan*
that   cat   the book   buy
'That cat buy the book'

(16) *gorbe   in   ketab   xandan*
the cat   this   book   buy
'The cat buy this book'

(17) *gorbe   an   ketab   xandan*
the cat   that   book   buy
'The cat buy that book'

(18) *in   gorbe   in   ketab   xandan*
this   cat   this   book   buy
'This cat buy this book'

(19) *an   gorbe   an   ketab   xandan*
that   cat   that   book   buy
'That cat buy that book'

(20) *in   gorbe   an   ketab   xandan*
this   cat   that   book   buy
'This cat buy that book'

(21) *an   gorbe   in   ketab   xandan*
that   cat   this   book   buy
'That cat buy this book'