

**Split Topicalization in Eshkevarat Gilaki**  
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This paper investigates a type of topicalization found in a dialect of Gilaki (Northwestern Iranian, Caspian) spoken in the villages of Eshkevarat. As we can see in (1), this type of topicalization can split a possessive noun phrase, placing the possessum in a clause-initial position, while leaving the possessor in the thematic position of the noun phrase (compare (1a) and (1b)). (Note: In this abstract, we use topicalization as a cover term for both cases of true topics and focus.)

(1) a. mu don-əm Hassan-i maashin xəraab-ə  
I know-1sg Hassan-gen. car broken-is  
‘I know Hassan’s car is broken.’

b. maashin, mu don-əm Hassan-i ----- xəraab-ə

An apparently similar case of split topicalization occurs with other nominal modifiers (exemplified in this abstract with numerals). An example is given in (2).

(2) a. bogut-əm mu du tə maashin xa-m  
said-1sg I two classif. car want-1sg  
‘I said I want two cars.’

b. maashin, bogut-əm mu du tə ----- xa-m

A central question in the studies of split topicalization across languages has been whether the split involves base-generation or movement (see, for example, van Riemsdijk 1989, Ott 2011, Janosi, et al. 2014). In this paper, we argue that the Eshkevarat dialect of Gilaki uses both mechanisms. We show that the possessor split in (1) is an instantiation of movement as it exhibits all the hallmarks of this syntactic process. Meanwhile, we argue that the numeral split in (2) involves base-generation of the head noun in its surface position. In what follows, we will continue showing the gaps in the examples for both constructions using dashed lines to stay neutral with respect to our proposal. Also, the non-split counterparts, which can be constructed by placing the topicalized element in the gapped position, are always grammatical and will not be shown anymore for space considerations.

Before we move on to provide some evidence for the proposed analytical split between (1) and (2), it is worth pointing out that Persian, the dominant and official language of Iran, also a second language for the speakers of Gilaki, has the construction exemplified in (2) only. This is shown in (3)-(4).

(3) a. man mi-dun-am maashin-e Hassan xaraab-e  
I dur.-know-1sg car-Ez Hassan broken-is  
‘I know Hassan’s car is broken.’

b. \* maashin man mi-dun-am -----(-e) Hassan xaraab-e

(4) a. goft-am man do taa maashin mi-xaa-m  
said-1sg I two classif. car dur.-want-1sg  
‘I said I want two cars.’

b. maashin, goft-am man do taa ----- mi-xaa-m

The strongest evidence for a movement analysis of the possessor split topicalization in (1) and a base-generation analysis of the numeral split topicalization in (2) comes from syntactic islands (Ross 1967 and subsequent authors). As we can see in the contrasts from Gilaki given in (5)-(7), while the possessor split construction respects islands, the numeral split construction does not, providing support for the proposal that the former involves movement and the latter is base-generated.

(5) Coordinate Structure Island

a. sib mu du tə ----- ba char tə portəqaal vigit-əm  
apple I two classif. and four classif. orange took-1sg  
‘I took two apples and four oranges.’

b. \* midaad mu ti ----- ba unə xudkaar vigit-əm  
pencil I your and his pen took-1sg  
‘I took your pencil and his pen’

- (6) Complex NP Island
- a. sib mu har tə du tə ----- vəgit-ə bon dəvaa gir-əm  
 apple I whoever that two classif. take-pp. be.subj. fight take-1sg  
 ‘I will scold whoever has taken two apples.’
- b. \*sib mu har tə mi ----- vəgit-ə bon dəvaa gir-əm  
 apple I whoever that my take-pp. be.subj. fight take-1sg  
 ‘I will scold whoever has taken my apple.’

- (7) Adjunct Island
- a. maashin, tər goon puldaar-i vexti du tə ----- bə-hen-i  
 car you say rich-are when two classif. subj.-buy-2sg  
 ‘They say you are rich when you buy two cars.’
- b. \*maashin, tər goon puldaar-i vexti mi ----- bə-hen-i  
 car you say rich-are when my subj.-buy-2sg  
 ‘They say you are rich when you buy my car.’

The contrast between the split possessor and split numeral topicalization constructions established by the above island facts is further confirmed by several other diagnostics such as constituency, agreement, intervention effects and P-stranding. The intervention facts are given in (8), which shows that while a split head noun can associate with a numeral across another numeral construction (8a), it cannot associate with a possessor across another possessive construction (8b). The other arguments will be presented in the talk.

- (8) a. sib, chaar tə vəchə du tə boxord-ən  
 apple four classif. boy two classif. ate-3pl.  
 ‘Four boys ate two apples.’
- b. \*laako ti xaaxur mi ----- bedi  
 daughter your sister my saw  
 ‘Your sister saw my daughter.’

It is worth noting that the Persian split numeral construction shown in (4) shares the same properties with its Gilaki counterpart, as shown in (9).

- (9) a. Coordinate Structure Island  
 (?) sib, man do taa ----- va chaar taa porteqaal bord-am  
 apple I two classif. and four classif. orange took-1sg.  
 ‘I took two apples and four oranges.’
- b. Complex NP Island  
 sib, man har kas-i ke do taa ----- borde bud, davaa kard-am  
 apple I every person-REL that two classif. take-pp. was fight did-1sg.  
 ‘I scolded anyone who had taken two apples.’
- c. Adjunct Island  
 maashin, mi-g-an puldaar-i vaqti do taa ----- be-xar-i  
 car dur.-say-3pl. rich-are when two classif. subj.-buy-2sg  
 ‘They say you are rich when you buy two cars.’
- d. Intervention Effect  
 sib, chaar taa pesar do taa ----- xord-an  
 apple two classif. boy four classif. ate-3pl.  
 ‘Four boys ate two apples.’

In conclusion, this talk furthers our understanding of the mechanisms for establishing long distance dependencies by investigating a lesser studied phenomenon, split topicalization, in a dialect of an understudied Iranian language, Gilaki, while placing it in the comparative perspective of Persian.

**References.** Janosi, A., Van Craenenbroeck, J., Vanden Wyngaerd, G. 2014. Long split focalization in Hungarian and the typology of A'-dependencies. *Lingua*. Ott, D. 2011. *Local Instability*. PhD Diss., Oxford U. Van Riemsdijk, H. 1989. Movement and Regeneration. In *Dialect Variation and the Theory of Grammar*. Dordrecht: Foris. Ross, J. R. *Constraints on Variables in Syntax*. PhD Diss., MIT.