A Cross-linguistic Analysis of Pro-drop Parameter in Farsi[1]

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Abstract

The Null Subject Parameter (NSP) can be defined based on 'Subject Requirement Constraint' proposed by Perlmutter (1971) in early generative studies (Jaeggli & Safir 1989). According to this parameter, Null Subject Languages may have phonologically null subjects in tensed sentences whereas non-Null-Subject-Languages require phonologically realized subjects. Then all languages of the world can be divided to two subgroups: pro-drop or null subject languages and non-null subject languages. However in this article, following Roberts & Holmberg (2010) we want to show that the null subject languages, in spite of some similarities, have different properties and they are divided to four subgroups: consistent,

expletive, discourse and partial null subject languages. This article deals with common properties of each subgroup and investigates each of them based on null subject parameters of Rizzi (1982). It also studies the behavior of Farsi and tries to find the position of Farsi in such classification. This issue is critical especially when linguists want to investigate a syntactic phenomenon in Farsi and try to achieve a generalization in this area.

Keywords: non- null subject languages, consistent null subject, expletive null subject, partial null subject languages, discourse null subject, Farsi