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The Plural Referential Marker in Colloquial Persian: A first description

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1. Topic of this talk

1.1. The referential marker

- The “referential marker” (Windfuhr & Perry 2009: 432) *-(h)e*
 - Colloquial Persian
 - Used to refer to an entity with an antecedent in the context (Nourzaei 2022)

(1) *âdam-e*
man-REF
‘the man’

(2) *âdam sâket-e*
man quiet-REF
‘the quiet man’

1.2. A plural referential marker

Plural (definite)

- (3) *ådam-å₁=ye såket*
man-PL=EZ quiet
'(the) quiet men'

Referential plural

- (4) *ådam såket-å₂*
man quiet-REF:PL
'the quiet men'

1.2. A plural referential marker

- The plural referential marker $-(h)\overset{\circ}{a}_2$
 - different from the plural suffix $-(h)\overset{\circ}{a}_1$
 - same syntactic distribution as the suffix $-(h)e$

2. The structure of Persian noun phrase

2.1. Singular

- The head of a noun phrase is linked to its modifiers with ezafe
 - To its possessor:
 - To its attribute:

(5) *ketâb=e Ali*

book=EZ I

‘Ali’s book’

(6) *ketâb=e xub*

book=EZ good

‘the/a good book’

2.2. Plural

- Plural noun: the suffix $-(h)\dot{a}_1$ attaches to the head

(7) *ketâb-â₁=ye Ali*

book-PL=EZ good

‘Ali’s books’

(8) *ketâb-â₁=ye xub*

book-PL=EZ good

‘(the) good books’

2.2. Plural

- $-(h)\acute{a}$: phonetically a part of the word (Lazard 2006: 33)
 - it carries the stress, e.g.:

*ketá**á*** ‘book’ → *ketáb-**á**₁* ‘books’

2.2. Plural

- Contraction of final *e* and PL *-(h)ǎ*
 - Not systematic: alternation *e-ǎ / ǎ*
 - Examples:

bače-ǎ / bačǎ ‘children’

gorbe-ǎ / gorbǎ ‘cats’

3. The referential marker $-(h)e$

3.1. The referential marker $-(h)e$: form

- realized as $-he$ after e
e.g. *gorbe-he* ‘the cat’
- otherwise $-e$
e.g. *ågå-e* ‘the sir’; *ketåb-e* ‘the book’
- realized as $-(h)a$ in contact with some clitics:
 - pronominal clitics, e.g. *ketåb-a=mun* ‘our book’
 - DDO marker $=(r)o$, e.g. *ketåb-a=ro* ‘the book (acc.)’
 - 3SG copula $=(a)s$, e.g. *ketåb-a=s* ‘it is a book’

3.2. The referential marker $-(h)e$: function

- Discussed by:
 - Lazard (2006: 62–63)
 - Windfuhr (1979: 33, 41)
 - and particularly by Nourzaei (2022)

3.2. The functions of the marker *-(h)e*:

- Nourzaei (2022): two functions

A. “anaphoric”;

(9) *doxtar-e* *čegad* *lus* *harf* *mi-zan-e!*
 girl-REF how_much pampered word IPFV-hit.PRS-3SG
 ‘**The girl** talks so badly!’

- ‘the girl’: mentioned earlier

3.2. The functions of the marker *-(h)e*

- Nourzaei (2022): two functions

B. “situational”: used with the DEM; the entity is identified in the immediate context (possibly accompanied by a gesture).

(10) *asan az un sokut-e bad=am miy-umad.*
absolutely from DEM2 silence-REF bad=PC:1SG IPFV-come.PST.3SG
‘I was feeling quite uneasy because of **that silence**.’

- The silence is implied and identified at the moment she says *az un sokut-e*.

3.2. The functions of the marker *-(h)e*

- A third function can be identified:
 - Cataphoric: entity identified in what follows (cf. QUIRK & GREENBAUM 1973: 302–303 for English)

(11) *un* *film* *vahšatnāk-a=ro* *did-i?*
 DEM2 film horrible-REF=DDO see.PST-2SG

Kånĵuring-ā=ro *did-i?*
Conjuring-PL=ddo see.PST-2SG

‘Have you seen **that horrible film**? Have you seen **(the movies)**
“Conjuring”?’

4. The plural referential marker $-(h)\acute{a}_2$

4.1. Existing research

- Milāniān (1969: 178) and Windfuhr (1979: 33, 41):
 - PL suffix can express the reference
 - after numbers higher than ‘one’

(12) *do* *tā* *mard(-hā)* *āmad-and.*
two piece man(-PL) come.PST-3PL
‘(The) two men came.’ (Milāniān 1969: 178)

4.1. Existing research

- Lazard (2006: 63): $-(h)e$ used in the singular only.
- Windfuhr (1979: 41): $-(h)e$ is “mutually exclusive with the plural $h\hat{a}$ ”.
- Samvelian (2007: 618–620): $-(h)e$ is “complémentaire” with $-(h)\hat{a}_1$.
- no mention of a PL equivalent of $-(h)e$ in Windfuhr & Perry (2009); Saeed (2018); Nourzaei (2022)

4.2. First observations

- Plural constructions similar to $-(h)e$

(13) *ketâb* *xub-hâ₂=ro* *ham* *xund-am.*
book good-REF:PL=DDO ADD read.PST-1SG
‘I read **the good books** as well.’

- common construction
- observed in both spoken and written colloquial Persian

4.2. First observations

- regular PL:
 - *ketâb-hâ₁=ye xub*
 - *ketâb=e xub*
- but parallel to *-(h)e*
 - *ketâb xub-hâ₂* ‘the good books (in question)’
 - *ketâb xub-e* ‘the good book (in question)’
- *-(h)â₂* attaches to the noun phrase

4.3. Functions

- Anaphoric function:

(14)	<i>kāse</i>	<i>čubi-hā₂</i>	<i>dar</i>	<i>model-hā₁=ye</i>
	bowl	wooden-REF:PL	in	model-PL=EZ
	<i>gunāgun=i</i>	<i>‘arze</i>	<i>mi-šav-and.</i>	
	various=IDV	offering	IPFV-become.PRS-3PL	

‘**The wooden bowls** are available in various models.’

- ‘the wooden bowls’: topic of the discussion

4.3. Functions

- Anaphoric function:

(15) *ye tãblo=am pasandid-am.*

one painting=ADD appreciate.PST-1SG

az in nağãš māruf-ã₂ bud.

of DEM1 painter famous-REF:PL be.PST.3SG

‘There was also a painting I (particularly) liked. It was (one) of **these famous painters.**’

- ‘these famous painters’: not mentioned earlier but known to the speakers

4.3. Functions

- Situational function:

(16) *pâzel az in tikke bozorg-â₂ be-gir-in.*
puzzle of DEM1 part big-REF:PL SBJV-take.PRS-2PL
'Buy (lit. take) a puzzle with **these large pieces.**'

- 'these large pieces': identified the moment the sentence is uttered

4.3. Functions

- Cataphoric function:

(17) – *raft-im* *a* *in* *baste* *čiz-ǎ₂* *xarid-im*.
go.PST-1PL from DEM1 package thing-REF:PL buy.PST-1PL

– *Hanǎ?*

henna

– *Hanǎ-ǎ₁* *xarid-im*.

henna-PL *buy.PST-1SG*

SPEAKER1: ‘We went (there and) we bought (some of) these whatchamacallit packages.’

SPEAKER2: *Henna?*

SPEAKER1: We bought some *henna*.’

4.4. Summary

- 1) Identical distribution of the suffixes $-(h)\overset{\circ}{a}$ and $-(h)e$
viz. the suffixes $-(h)e / -(h)\overset{\circ}{a}_2$ attach to the noun phrase;

- 2) $-(h)\overset{\circ}{a}_2$ and $-(h)e$: same functions
 - (a) Anaphoric
 - (b) Situational
 - (c) Cataphoric

5. The emergence of $-(h)\text{\AA}_2$

5.1. Hypothesis (1)

(1) REF:PL $-(h)\dot{a}_2$ = fusion of REF:SG $-(h)e$ and $-(h)\dot{a}_1$

cf. literary Persian *xāle zan-īk-e-hā* ‘the aunts’ (rare, cf. Nourzaei 2022: 132)

cf. other Iranian languages, e.g.

Coastal Balochi *zāg-ok-ān* ‘the children’ (Nourzaei 2021: 709)

Bashkardi *morg-ak-an* ‘the hens’ (Seddiqi Nejad 2010: 90)

5.1. Hypothesis (1)

(1) $-(h)\acute{a}_2$ stems from a fusion of $-(h)e$ and $-(h)\acute{a}_1$

- $-(h)e + (h)\acute{a}_1 > -(h)\acute{a}_2$
- compare *bače-â* / *bačâ*
- exception: **pesar-eâ₂* / *pesar-â₂*
- but: no such data found

- Conclusion: not probable

5.2. Hypothesis (2)

(2) $-(h)\dot{a}_1$ = degrammaticalization and new functions

- plural noun:
 - “indicator of reference” (Windfuhr 1979: 33)
 - always definite (Ghomeshi 2003: 57–60)

	indefinite / generic	definite	referential
SG	<i>pesar</i>	<i>pesar</i>	<i>pesar-e</i>
PL	<i>pesar</i>	<i>pesar-â</i>	

- $-(h)\dot{a}_1$ shares some features of $-(h)e$

5.2. Hypothesis (2)

(2) $-(h)\acute{a}_1$ = degrammaticalization and new functions

- analogy and degrammaticalization:
 - analogy with $-(h)e$,
 - PL = detached from the head and attached to NP
 - resulting in a reordering of the noun phrase
- Hypothesis (2) is more likely

6. Conclusion

6. Conclusion

- analogy with the referential marker $-(h)e$
 - acquired the ability to detach from the head noun
 - adopts the same syntactic distribution as $-(h)e$
 - used as a plural referential marker, equivalent to $-(h)e$
- plural suffix $-(h)\acute{a}_1$ was degrammaticalized

Thank you
for your attention!



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