BEITRÄGE ZUR IRANISTIK

Gegründet von Georges Redard, herausgegeben von Nicholas Sims-Williams

Band 34

Topics in Iranian Linguistics

Herausgegeben von Agnes Korn, Geoffrey Haig,
Simin Karimi und Pollet Samvelian

Topics in Iranian Linguistics

Herausgegeben von Agnes Korn, Geoffrey Haig,
Simin Karimi und Pollet Samvelian

On Direct Objects in Modern Persian:
The Case of the Non-*râ*-Marked DOs[1]

Shadi Ganjavi

1. Introduction

Direct objects in Persian have been the focus of much research in the last two decades (cf. KARIMI 1989, 1990, 1996, 2003a, 2005, BROWNING / KARIMI 1994, GHOMESHI 1996, 1997b, among others). That direct objects (henceforth, DOs) ought to be classified based on their semantic interpretation, i.e., indefinite/nonspecific as in (1a) on the one hand, versus definite/specific, which is overtly marked with the bound morpheme -*râ* as in (1b) on the other, has been widely discussed and assumed by many. For instance, Karimi and Browning / Karimi assume the relevant feature to be [±specificity], while for Ghomeshi it is a combination of definiteness, animacy or topic-hood, to which she refers to as "high transitivity." (In order to stay theoretically neutral, throughout this paper I refer to these objects as non-*râ*-DOs and -*râ*-DOs respectively.)
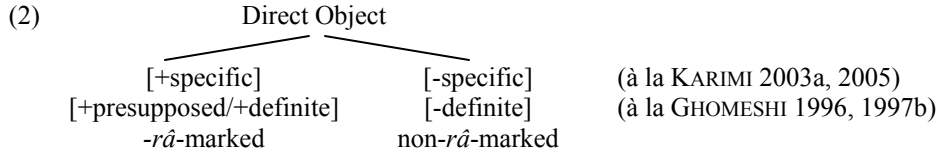
(1) a. *râstin   -o   târâ   barâ   man   **ketâb**   xarid-an*
         PN   and   PN   for   me   book   bought-3PL
         "Rusteen and Tara bought books for me."
     b. *râstin   -o   târâ   **ketâb-o**   barâ   man   xarid-an*
         PN   and   PN   book-RÂ   for   me   bought-3PL
         "Rusteen and Tara bought the book for me."

With much of the research focused on the -*râ*-DOs, due in part to the illusive nature of the morpheme -*râ*, much emphasis was placed on the interpretive differences between the two types of object, with little regards as to the internal syntax of these elements. Most of the previously mentioned researchers assumed all direct objects to be NP/DP, with the distinguishing criterion being non-specific/indefinite versus specific/definite.

In all these works, the non-*râ*-DOs are used only as a point of comparison for their -*râ*-marked counterparts. For instance, KARIMI 2003a lists a series of asymmetries that exist between the two. She points out that while the non-*râ*-DOs (nonspecific objects in her work) have to precede the verb and are "part of the description of the predicate," no such restriction exists for the -*râ*-DOs (specific objects in her work), which are not considered to be part of the description of the verb (ibid.). This is also illustrated in (1), where the non-*râ*-DO appears to the right of the indirect object and adjacent to the verb, while the -*râ*-DO appears to the left of the indirect object. Furthermore, following GHOMESHI / MASSAM 1994, KARIMI 2003a points out that sentences containing non-*râ*-DOs are compatible with adverbs modifying processes while those containing -*râ*-DOs are compatible with adverbs modifying accomplishments. Additionally, she notes that non-*râ*-DOs in contrast to -*râ*-

DOs "allow a process of lexicalization (compounding) with the verb" (KARIMI 2003a: 104). Finally, she indicates that the two types of objects "cannot appear together in a coordination construction" (ibid.). Notice that such classification implies that non-*râ*-DOs in Persian form a natural class, displaying a uniform behavior and as such stand in contrast to -*râ*-DOs. This is summarized in (2):

(2)   Direct Object

[+specific]	[-specific]	(à la KARIMI 2003a, 2005)
[+presupposed/+definite]	[-definite]	(à la GHOMESHI 1996, 1997b)
-*râ*-marked	non-*râ*-marked	

In what follows I will examine the non-*râ*-DOs closely and show that despite the underlying assumption in (2), not all non-*râ*-DOs behave similarly at all times and that some of the non-*râ*-DOs demonstrate very similar properties compared to their -*râ*-marked counterparts. This suggests that any account that is based on the interpretive dichotomy of definite/specific versus indefinite/nonspecific cannot be entirely correct.[2] In Section 2. we will take a quick look at the non-*râ*-DOs and the properties discussed in the literature to support the claim that they form a natural class. A more detailed discussion of these objects appears in Section 3., where I show that non-*râ*-DOs exhibit different behavior. An analysis as to why such similarities and difference exist will be presented in Section 4. Section 5. offers a brief summary and conclusion.

2. A Quick Glance at Non-*râ*-Marked Direct Objects

Let us start by examining some data pertaining to non-*râ*-DOs. As the following examples suggest, non-*râ*-DOs can be (i) bare nouns, as in (3); (ii) nouns modified by an adjective (or an AP), as in (4); (iii) nouns modified by a PP, as in (5); or (iv) nouns modified by a numeral, as in (6) and (7).

(3) *amir* **ketâb** *xarid-∅*
     PN   book   bought-3SG
     "Amir bought books (lit. Amir book-bought)."

(4) *nâder* **ketâb-e akâsi(-e   siyâh   -o   sefid)** *xarid-∅*
     PN   book-EZ photography-EZ black -and   white   bought-3SG
     "Nader bought (black and white) photography books
     (lit. Nader black and white photography book-bought)."

(5) *rezâ   barâ   unhâ* **[ketâb-e [**PP** *zir-e   panj   sâl* **]]** *xarid-∅*
     PN   for   them   book-EZ   under-EZ   five   year   bought-3SG
     "Reza bought books for them that are for children under the age of five
     (lit. Reza for them book under five year-bought)."

(6) *târâ   barâ   mân   **ye / do-tâ   sher**   xund-∅*
     PN   for   me   one/ ten -CL   poem   read-3SG
     "Tara read a / two poem(s) for me."[3]

---

2   See GANJAVI 2007, where I argue that a full understanding of the nature of DOs would only come about if we classify DOs based on their syntactic properties and not their interpretive properties.

(7) *bachche-hâ* **[*haft,* *hasht* *dah-tâ* *asbâbbâzi*]** *âvord-an*
     child-PL   seven   eight   ten -CL   toy   brought-3PL
     "The children brought a bunch of toys
     (lit. The children seven, eight, ten toys brought)."

As noted in the literature, these objects demonstrate a strong preference to precede the verb and to stay adjacent to it (cf. KARIMI 2003a). In other words, under a neutral intonation, they do not allow any other argument to intervene between them and the verb. This fact is illustrated below. Consider the following example, in which the non-*râ*-DO is a bare noun:

(8)   a.   *nâder*   *barâ*   *mâ*   ***qazâ***   *poxt-∅*
           PN   for   us   food   cooked-3SG
           "Nader (food-)cooked for us."
      b.?? *nâder*   ***qazâ***   *barâ mâ*   *poxt-∅*
      c. * *nâder*   *barâ mâ*   *poxt-∅*   ***qazâ***

The unacceptability of the sentences in (b) and (c) is a reflection of this preference, where in (b) the DO is not adjacent to the verb and in (c) it follows the verb. Examples (9) and (10) further illustrate this point, where the non-*râ*-DO is a noun modified by an AP[4] and a noun modified by a numeral, respectively:

(9)   a.   *rezâ*   *har*   *shab*   ***film-e***   ***xeyli***   ***ahmaqâne***   *mi-bin-e*
           PN   every night   movie-EZ   very   stupid   DUR-see-3SG
           "Reza watches really stupid movies every night."
      b.?? *rezâ*   ***film-e xeyli ahmaqâne***   *har shab*   *mi-bin-e*
      c. * *rezâ*   *har shab*   *mi-bin-e*   ***film-e xeyli ahmaqâne***

(10) a.   *parvin* { *tu har mehmuni / ma'mulan* } ***châhâr panj-tâ sher***   *mi-xun-e*
          PN   in every party /   usually   four five-CL poem   DUR-read-3SG
          "Parvin usually reads four, five poems in every party."
     b. ?? *parvin* ***châhâr panj-tâ sher*** { *tu har mehmuni / ma'mulan* }   *mi-xun-e*
     c. * *parvin* { *tu har mehmuni / ma'mulan* } *mi-xun-e* ***châhâr panj-tâ sher***

As is suggested by the judgment reported in (9b) and (10b), when an adverb intervenes between a non-*râ*-DO and the verb it results in unacceptability (*har shab* "every night" in (9b), *tu har mehmuni* "in every party" and/or *ma'mulan* "usually" in (10b)). The un-grammaticality of (9c) and (10c) further illustrate the preference of these objects for preceding the verb.[5]

---

[3] It is important to note that *ye(k)* in Persian is ambiguous between the indefinite article "a" and the numeral "one" in English. As pointed out by one of the reviewers, the numeral *ye(k)* is usually followed by the classifier *dune* "piece" in spoken language. In order to avoid any confusion, throughout this paper I have tried to use other numerals in addition to *ye(k)* to illustrate the relevant point.

[4] Non-ra-DPs that are composed of a noun modified by an AP or a PP also display similar behavior. See GANJAVI 2007 for more examples.

[5] It is important to note that as observed by KARIMI 2003a, 2005, these elements can appear away from the verb, for instance, to mark contrastiveness, marked in bold and small caps. Consider the following example:

(i) *shirin* ***KETÂB*** *barâ* *bachche-hâ* *gerefte-∅*
     PN   book   for   child-PL   has gotten-3SG
     "Shirin has gotten/purchased **BOOKS** for the children (and not toys)."

So, it is not the case that they have to be adjacent to the verb at all times.

The preference to be verb adjacent is also observed when the verb is moved for question formation purposes. In Persian questions are usually formed by a rising intonation without altering the basic SOV order both in yes/no questions, as in (11), and in *wh*-questions, where the *wh*-word appears in-situ, as in (12).

(11)   *nâder   raft-∅?*
       PN   left-3SG
       "Did Nader leave?"

(12)   *(to)   ki-o   did-i?*
       (you)   who-RÂ   saw-2SG
       "Who did you see?"

Rising intonation, however, is not the only option for forming yes/no questions in Persian. The other option is to move the verb to the sentence initial position in addition to the rising intonation. This is illustrated in (13).

(13)   *raft-∅   nâder?*   (cf. 11)
       left-3SG   PN
       "Did Nader leave?"

Now consider the following three examples containing a non-*râ*-DO, in which the latter question formation strategy is adopted. As the contrast between (a) and (b) suggests, when the verb is the only fronted element (with the subject and object in their canonical position), the result is ungrammatical. However, when the non-ra-DO is fronted along with the verb, the result is grammatical. This is irrespective of whether the non-ra-DO is a bare noun, a noun modified by an adjective or a numeral.

(14)   a. * *poxt-∅   nâder   qazâ ?*
             cooked-3SG PN   food
       b.   *qazâ   poxt-∅ nâder ?*
             "Did Nader cook food?"

(15)   a. * *mi-bin-e   rezâ har   shab   film-e   xeyli ahmaqâne ?*
             DUR-see-3SG PN   every night   movie-EZ very stupid
             "Does Reza watch really stupid movies every night?"
       b.   *film-e xeyli ahmaqâne   mi-bin-e rezâ   har shab ?*

(16)   a. * *mi-xun-e   parvin { tu har mehmuni / ma'mulan } châhâr panj-tâ sher ?*
             DUR-read-3SG PN   in every party / usually   four five-CL poem
       b.   *châhâr panj-tâ sher   mi-xun-e   parvin   { tu har mehmuni /*
                                                                  ma'mulan }
             "Does Parvin usually read four, five poems in every party?"

In other words, data pertaining to one type of question formation which involves verb fronting, further support the claim that the non-*râ*-DOs show a preference for preceding the verb and staying adjacent to it.

The other property that all the non-*râ*-DOs seem to share is that sentences containing them tend to be about activities without referring to a specific direct object, e.g., a "book-

reading" or a "book-buying" activity without referring to a specific book. To illustrate this, consider a situation where a few friends have come to see Elham, who is not at home. Her mother insists on keeping them until she comes back by trying to convince them that what she went out to do is not going to take long and that she would be back soon. Now consider the two possible scenarios, where her mother uses sentences containing non-*râ*-DOs:

Scenario I:

(17) *elhâm   raft-e   **ketâb** be-xar-e   (zud bar migarde)*
      PN   has gone-3SG   book   SUBJ-buy-3SG   (she'll return soon)
      "Elham has gone to buy books (she'll be back soon)."

Scenario II:

(18) *elhâm   raft-e   **do, se-tâ**   **ketâb** be-xar-e   (zud bar migarde)*
      PN   has gone-3SG   two   three-CL   book   SUBJ-buy-3SG   (she'll return soon)
      "Elham has gone to buy a couple of books (she'll be back soon)."

A felicitous clarification seeking response to these utterances would be as in (19), which solicits information on the type of activity in which Elham was engaged.

(19) *chi   be-xar-e   /   chi-kâr   bo-kon-e?*
      what   SUBJ-buy-3SG   what-work   SUBJ-do-3SG
      "To buy what? / To do what?"

An equally felicitous answer to (19) would be as in (20):

(20) *ketâb   /   ketâb-e   akâsi   be-xar-e*
      book   /   book-EZ   photography   SUBJ-buy-3SG
      "Buy books/photography books."

An infelicitous and odd response, even in the form of an echo question, to (17) and (18) would as in (21), since no particular book(s) seem(s) to be intended, which could serve as an answer to this question:[6]

(21) # *kodum   ketâb-(â)-ro?*
      which   book-PL-RÂ[7]

---

6   Compare the cases in (17) through (21) to the following, in which the direct object is -*râ*-DO (in bold):
  (i) *elhâm   raft-∅   **un**   **ketâb-o**   be-xar-e   (zud bar migarde)*
       PN   went-3SG   **that**   **book-RÂ**   SUBJ-buy-3SG   (she'll return soon)
       "Elham went to buy that book (she'll be back soon)."

  (ii) *kodum   ketâb-o?*
       which   book-RÂ

  (iii) *sad   sâl   tanhâi-ro*
       hundred   year   solitude-RÂ
       "One hundred years of solitude."

  The question *kodum ketâb-o?* "Which book?" can be used felicitously in response to (i), in order to solicit information, which can be answered by naming a particular book, in this case *sad sâl tanhâi* "one hundred years of solitude."

In other words, sentences containing non-*râ*-DOs, regardless of whether the noun is a bare noun or modified somehow, describe an activity without referring to any specific direct object participating in that activity. As we will see in the following section, despite some shared characteristics these objects tend to show different behavior with respect to other properties.[8]

3. A Closer Look at Non-*râ*-Marked Direct Objects[9]

In the previous section we saw that non-*râ*-DOs can be bare nouns, nouns modified by an adjective or nouns modified by a numeral. We also saw that regardless of which of these nominal expressions appears as the non-*râ*-DO, they all show a preference for preceding

---

[7]   It is important to note that at least to one of the reviewers this question does not sound odd and appears to be a felicitous response to (17) and (18) above. But to the native speakers that I consulted, the utterance sounds odd.

[8]   For a further discussion of the -*râ*-marked versus non-*râ*-marked direct objects, in addition to the sources mentioned in the text, the reader is referred to KAHNEMUYIPOUR 2009, which examines them in the context of sentential stress.

[9]   As was pointed out at the ICIL3 meeting, another property with regards to which different non-*râ*-DOs show different behavior seems to be the notion of referntiality. As the following data suggest, only the non–*râ*-DOs that are composed of a noun modified by a numeral can serve as the antecedent of a full or a clitic pronoun and that bare nouns or nouns modified by an AP and PP could not (see GANJAVI 2007 for more examples). Consider the following sentences in (i) and (ii), where the non-*râ*-DO is a bare noun and a noun modified by an adjective:

(i)   a. *   *nâder*   **qazâ**   *poxt-∅,*   *va*   *be*   *hame*   **un-(o)**   *tâ'rof*   *kard-∅*
                PN   food   cooked-3SG   and   to   everyone   that-RÂ   offer   did-3S
        b. *   *nâder*   **qazâ**   *poxt-∅,*   *va*   *be*   *hame*   *tâ'rof-esh*   *kard-∅*
                PN   food   cooked-3SG   and   to   everyone   offer-**3SG**   did-3SG
        "Nader (food-)cooked and offered **it** to everyone"

(ii)   a. *   *ali*   **ketâb-e**   { *xeyli jâleb /*   *zir-e panj sâl* }   *xund-∅*
                PN   book-EZ   very interesting /   under-EZ five year   read-3SG
                va   **un-o**   *belâfâsele*   *be*   *ketâbxune*   *pas*   *dâd-∅*
                and   **it-RÂ**   immediately   to   library   return   gave-3SG
        b. *   *ali*   **ketâb-e**   { *xeyli jâleb /*   *zir-e panj sâl* }   *xund-∅*
                PN   book-EZ   very interesting /   under-EZ five year   read-3SG
                va   *belâfâsele*   *be*   *ketâbxune*   *pas-esh*   *dâd-∅*
                and   immediately   to   library   return-**3SG**   gave-3SG
        "Ali did {very-interesting/under the age of 5}-book$_i$-reading
        and immediately returned **it**$_i$ to the library"

As the ungrammaticality of these examples suggest, neither the bare noun nor the noun modified by an adjective can serve as an antecedent to a full or a clitic pronoun. Now, compare these examples to the following in which the non-*râ*-DO is a noun modified by a numeral.

(iii)   a. ?   *sirus*   **(châhâr),**   **panj-tâ**   *xune*   *sâxte-∅*   *ke*   **unhâ-ro**   *be-forush-e*
                PN   four,   five-CL   house   has built-3SG   that   them-RÂ   SUBJ-sell-3SG
        b.   *sirus*   **(châhâr),**   **panj-tâ**   *xune*   *sâxte-∅*   *ke*   *be-forush-at-eshun*
                PN   four,   five-CL   house   has built-3SG   that   SUBJ-sell-3SG-**3PL**
        "Sirus has built (four), five houses in order to sell-**them**"

While the non-*râ*-DOs that are composed of a noun modified by a numeral might sound a bit odd as an antecedent of a full pronoun, they can serve felicitously as the antecedent of clitic pronouns. (For more examples see GANJAVI 2007). This intuition was confirmed by one of the reviewers. Their (slightly reformatted) example was:

(iv) ??   *ali*   *mi-xâd-∅*   *aks*   *be-kesh-e*   *ba'd*   *un-o*   *be-forush-e*
            PN   PROG-want-3SG   picture   SUBJ-draw-3SG   then   that-RÂ   SUBJ-sell-3SG
        "Ali wants to draw picture, and then sell it."

I would like to thank Pollet Samvelian, Richard Larson and other participants in the conference for bringing these points to my attention.

the verb and staying adjacent to it. We also saw that sentences containing them tend to describe an event without referring to any particular direct object participant in that event. In this section we will take a look at some other properties to determine whether being a bare noun or a noun modified by an AP or a noun modified by a numeral would make a difference.

3.1. Number Neutrality

The most obvious difference between the non-*râ*-DOs is that the direct objects that are composed of bare nouns or nouns modified by an AP are neutral with respect to quantity, while the ones modified by a numeral (and a classifier) are not. To illustrate this point, consider the following question which can serve as a felicitous question in response to (18) above, where the non-*râ*-DO is a noun modified by a numeral, but not (17), where the non-*râ*-DO was a bare noun.

(22) *chand-tâ   ketâb?*
      how many-CL   book
      "How many books?"

In other words, while sentences containing non-*râ*-DOs seem to describe an activity without providing any information about the specific direct object participants in the activity, only sentences with non-*râ*-DOs that contain numerals provide further information regarding the exact/approximate number of entities involved in that event. Those in which the non-*râ*-DO is a bare noun or a noun modified by adjectives do not.

3.2. Aspectuality

It was first noted by GHOMESHI / MASSAM 1994 that sentences containing bare N objects are compatible with durative adverbials, indicating that they are modifying a process. They show that these sentences are incompatible with frame adverbials, which modify accomplishments. Consider the relevant data from GHOMESHI / MASSAM 1994 (pp. 190-191, (27b) and (28b) respectively):

(23) a. * *(man)   dar   do   daqiqe   sib   xord-am*
           I   in   two   minutes   apple   ate-1SG
           "I ate the apple in two minutes."
      b.   *(man)   barâye yek   sâ'at   sib   xord-am*
           I   for   a/one   hour   apple   ate-1SG
           "I ate apples for an hour."

As the following data indicate, the same seems to be true in cases where the direct object is a noun modified by an AP.

(24) a. * *(man)   dar   (arz-e)   haft   daqiqe*
           I   in   during-EZ   seven   minutes
           ***moz-e   xeyli   reside*   xord-am*
           banana-EZ   very   ripe   ate-1SG
           "I ate very ripe bananas in seven minutes."

    b.   *(man)*   *barâye* *nim*   *sâ'at*
           I   for   half   hour
           moz-e   ***xeyli***   ***reside***   *xord-am*
           banana-EZ very   ripe   ate-1SG
           "I ate very ripe bananas for half an hour."

Let us turn our attention to the cases in which the non-*râ*-DO is composed of nouns modified by a numeral. As is indicated by the contrast between the (a) and (b) sentences in (25), the non-*râ*-DOs that are composed of a noun modified by a numeral are compatible only with the adverbs of accomplishments, while the non-*râ*-DOs that are composed of a bare N or a noun modified by an AP are compatible with durative adverbs.

(25) a.   *(man)* *dar* *(arz-e)*   *haft*   *daqiqe* ***ye(k) / se-tâ*** *sib*   *xord-am*
            I   in   during-EZ seven minutes a/one / three-CL apple ate-1SG
           "I ate an/three apple(s) in seven minutes."
     b. * *(man)* *barâye*   *nim*   *sâ'at*   ***ye(k) / se-tâ*** *sib*   *xord-am*
            I   for   half hour   a/one / three-CL apple ate-1SG
           "I ate an/three apple(s) for half an hour."

Here again we see that non-*râ*-DOs that are composed of a noun modified by a numeral behave differently from those that are composed of a bare noun or a noun modified by an adjective.

It is important to note that sentences that contain a -*râ*-DO are compatible with adverbs of accomplishment, just like non-*râ*-DOs that are composed of a noun, modified by a numeral. This is illustrated in (26) (also see GHOMESHI / MASSAM 1994 and KARIMI 2003a):

(26) a.   *(man)* *dar* *(arz-e)*   *haft*   *daqiqe* ***un*** ***hendevâna-ro*** *xord-am*
            I   in   during-EZ seven minute   that watermelon-RÂ ate-1SG
           "I ate that watermelon in seven minutes."
     b. * *(man)* *barâye*   *nim*   *sâ'at*   ***un*** ***hendevâna-ro*** *xord-am*
            I   for   half hour   that watermelon-RÂ ate-1SG
           "I ate that watermelon for half an hour."

In other words, the contrast between examples like (23) and (24) on the one hand and (25) on the other seriously undermines the assumption that non-*râ*-DOs form a natural class. The similarity between (25) and (26) further questions any classification of direct objects in Persian that would suggest no overlapping between -*râ*-DOs and non-*râ*-DOs.

3.3. Compound Noun Formation

Recall that among the differences between the two types of direct objects noted by KAIRMI 2003a was the assertion that non-*râ*-DOs allow the process of lexicalization (or compounding) with the verb, while -*râ*-DOs do not (KARIMI's nonspecific and specific direct objects, respectively, KARIMI 2003: 104).[10] Consider the examples in (27).

---

[10] It is important to note that this generalization appears under the heading "Morphological Asymmetries" between the so-called specific and nonspecific direct objects (KARIMI 2003a: 104, #3). The relevant example that illustrates the fact that the so-called nonspecific objects allow a process of lexicalization is the following (KARIMI, 2003a: 101, #39):

(27) a. *nâder*   ***qazâ***   *poxt-∅*
          PN   food   cooked-3SG
          "Nader (food-)cooked."
      b. ***qazâ****-poxtan-e   nâder*
          food-cooking-EZ   PN
          "Nader's food-cooking"

As the following data illustrate, -*râ*-DOs indeed do not allow compounding with the verb. Just as in (27), in (28a) we have a basic sentence (SOV), where the direct object is -*râ*-marked and the corresponding compound noun appears in (28b).

(28) a. *râstin*   ***boshqâb-o***   *shekast-∅*
          PN   plate-RÂ   broke-3SG
          "Rusteen broke the plate."
      b. * ***boshqâb-o****-shekastan-e   râstin*
          plate-RÂ-to break-EZ   PN

Now, consider the following examples, in which the non-*râ*-DO is a noun plus an adjectival modifier. As in (27) and (28) the sentence in (a) provides the basic sentence and (b) the corresponding compound noun.

(29) a. *târâ*   ***sib-e-sorx***   *xord-∅*
          PN   apple-EZ-red   ate-3SG
          "Tara ate red apples."
      b. ***sib-e-sorx****-xordan-e   târâ*
          apple-EZ-red-eating-EZ   PN
          "Tara's red-apple-eating"

(30) a. *minâ*   ***lebâs-e-loxt***   *xarid-∅*
          PN   dress-EZ-sexy   bought-3SG
          "Mina bought sexy outfits."
      b. [***lebâs-e-loxt****-xaridan*]*-e   minâ*
          dress-EZ-sexy-buying-EZ   PN
          "Mina's sexy-dress-buying"

As is evident by the acceptability of (29b) and (30b), when the non-*râ*-DO is composed of a noun that is modified by an adjective, a compound noun can be created with the verb. However, as the unacceptability of (31) and (32) suggest, when the non-*râ*-DO is a noun modified by a numeral, the non-*râ*-DO do not allow compound noun formation.

(31) * ***panj-tâ*** ***ketâb****-xundan-e   reyhâne*
          five-CL   book-reading-EZ   PN
          "Reyhaneh's five-book-reading"

---

  i)   *ghaza*   *poxtan*   *bara*   *Kimea*   *kar-e*   *saxt-iy*   *e*
       food   cooking   for   Kimea   job-Ez   difficult-ind   is
       "Cooking is a difficult task for Kimea"
But no specific example is provided to show that the -*râ*-DO (specific objects) do not allow this process. Therefore, I assume that the generalization regarding the morphological asymmetry between KARIMI's specific and nonspecific direct objects in fact refers to the contrast between example (27) and example (28).

(32) * ***do-tâ-magas**-koshtan-e   roshanak*
      two-CL-fly-killing-EZ   PN
      "Roshanak's two-flies-killing"

The unacceptability of examples (31) and (32) mirrors the impossibility of compound noun formation of a -*râ*-DO and a verb, as illustrated in (28). In other words, with regards to compound noun formation, non-*râ*-DOs that are composed of a noun modified by a numeral behave more similarly to the -*râ*-DOs than to the non-*râ*-DOs that are composed of a bare noun or a noun plus a modifier, further highlighting the fact that any classification which would assume that non-*râ*-DOs to be a natural class cannot entirely be correct.

4. Discussion

Let us start by reviewing the emerged generalizations. In Section 2. we saw that non-*râ*-DOs show a clear preference for preceding the verb and being adjacent to it. In that section we also saw that sentences containing them seem to describe an activity without referring to any specific direct object participant. However, upon closer scrutiny in Section 3., it became clear that not all non-*râ*-DOs demonstrate similar properties all the time. Table 1 summarizes the properties with respect to which they illustrate different behavior:
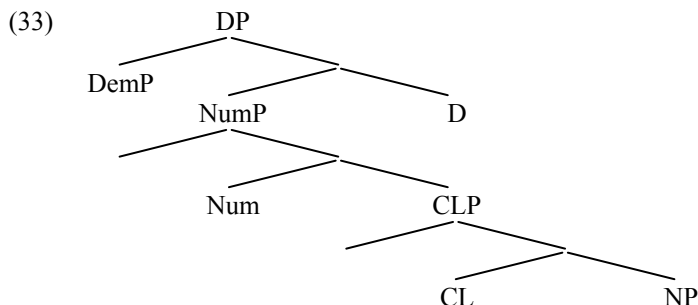
Table 1: Summary of the Emerging Generalizations

		Non-*râ*-Marked DO			-*râ*-Marked
		Bare N	**N+AP/PP**	**Num(+Cl)+N**	**DOs**
1.	Number Neutrality (Section 3.1)	√	√	*	*
2.	Predicate: Compatible with Durative Adverbs (Section 3.2)	√	√	*	*
3.	Predicate: Compatible with Frame Adverbials (Section 3.2)	*	*	√	√
4.	Compound Noun Formation with the Verb (Section 3.3)	√	√	*	*

In order to account for the similarities and differences demonstrated by the non-*râ*-DOs, following SZABOLCSI 1987, STOWELL 1989, LONGOBARDI 1994, BORER 2005a among others, I assume that NPs are predicate nominals, which could be dominated by the following functional projections: Classifier Phrase (CLP), NumP, and DP[11] (as originally proposed in RITTER 1991, 1995), represented below:[12]

---

[11]   For a detailed analysis of DPs in Persian, the reader is referred to GEBHARDT 2009. A preliminary review of this work suggests that Gebhardt's SQP and WQP are roughly on a par with what I assume to be a DP and a NumP in (33). However, a more in depth study of this work is required before any definitive comparison/claim can be made. I would like to thank one of the reviewers for bringing this dissertation to my attention.

[12]   As is evident by the schematic representation in (33), I assume that in Persian DPs are head final (also see GHOMESHI 1996, 1997a, 2003 and SAMIIAN 1983). I also assume that Demonstrative Phrases appear in the Specifier of DPs. It is important to note that this does not seem to be unique to Persian (for discussion of examples from Norwegian, see GANJAVI 2007, Section 2.2.2). In the case of Persian, we can assume that the demonstratives are licensed when the DP is headed by a null definite determiner. I also assume that nominals like *se-tâ ketâb* "three books" are structurally ambiguous between a DP headed by the null definite determiner or a NumP, where only the former would be definite and referential.

(33)

```
                            DP
              _____|_____
            DemP              |
                        _____|_____
                      NumP            D
                   _____|_____
                 Num         CLP
                          ____|____
                        CL        NP
```

I also assume that the uninterpreted feature *case* is only associated with the DP projection and not the lower projections. In other words, an NP or a NumP nominal expression would not have *case* as part of their feature specification[13] (see GANJAVI 2007 for a detailed discussion). Furthermore, I assume that direct object nominals merge with a transitive verb to check its uninterpretable N feature. Given (33) we would expect the nominal expressions, which do not have *case* as part of their feature specification, viz., an NP or NumP, to show a preference for being adjacent to the verb, since nothing forces them to move after merging with the verb.

On the other hand, we would expect DPs that have *case* as part of their feature specification to appear where their *case* feature is checked, i.e., away from the verb. Recall that this was indeed one of the most widely cited differences between the non-*râ*-DOs and the -*râ*-DOs (cf. the contrast in (1), repeated below as (34) for convenience).

(34) a. *râstin*   *-o*   *târâ*   *barâ*   *man*   **ketâb**   *xarid-an*
          PN   and   PN   for   me   book   bought-3PL
          "Rusteen and Tara bought books for me."
      b. *râstin*   *-o*   *târâ*   **ketâb-o**   *barâ*   *man*   *xarid-an*
          PN   and   PN   book-RÂ   for   me   bought-3PL
          "Rusteen and Tara bought the book for me."

In other words, what we have thus far referred to as non-*râ*-DOs and -*râ*-DOs could in fact be referred to as non-DP and DP direct objects, respectively.

This line of argument would straightforwardly account for the data in (14) through (16), in which we saw that if the verb is moved to the sentence-initial position in one type of question formation, then the non-*râ*-DO would have to move along with it, since after merging with the verb, the direct object stays inside the verb phrase and when the verb phrase is moved, the direct object has to move as well. This close relation between non-DP direct objects and the verb also seems to manifest itself as an expression of an activity without any reference to a particular direct object participant in that event.

Hence we can argue that the absence of a DP projection manifests itself as similar behavior with respect to the properties discussed in Section 2., regardless of whether the direct object is an NP or a NumP, which have been contrasted in the literature with those of the -*râ*-DOs, i.e., the direct objects that do have a DP project.

---

[13]   Also see DANON 2006 for Hebrew.

Notice that the claim here is not that these elements are radically incorporated into the verb since elements like negation and focus particles can intervene between them and the verb.[14] Consider the following examples from GANJAVI 2007 (example (102), p. 84 and example (104), p. 85, respectively):

(35) *târâ* **sib**   <u>*ne*</u>-*mi-xor-e*
      PN   apple   NEG-DUR-eat-3SG
      "Tara does not eat apples / Tara does not engage in apple-eating."

(36) *rezâ* **film-e**   **xub**   <u>*ham*</u> *mi-bin-e*
      PN   movie-EZ   good   also   DUR-see-3SG
      "Reza also watches good movies."

Nor can we assume (in the line of GHOMESHI / MASSAM 1994) that this is an instance of Type I Noun Incorporation in the sense of MITHUN 1984, since as we have seen so far DOs do not have to be an N^0. Consider the following example, in which a conjoined nominal appears as non-*râ*-DO:

(37) *minu* **miz**   **-o**   **sandali** *mi-xar-e*   *-o*   *mi-forush-e*
      PN   table   and   chair   DUR-buy-3SG   -and   DUR-sell-3SG
      "Minoo buys and sells tables and chairs."

As we saw in Section 3., not all the non-*râ*-DOs, i.e., non-DP direct objects, behave similarly with respect to other properties. As the representation in (33) suggests in addition to a DP, a nominal expression that merges with the verb can be an NP or a NumP, i.e., a property-denoting nominal expression or a quantity-denoting nominal expression. When NP direct objects that are property-denoting elements merge with the verb as its complement, they narrow down the meaning of the predicate, not by introducing the specific object(s) that serve(s) as the theme, but rather by specifying the type of objects that can potentially do so.[15] For instance the verb *xundan* "to read" denotes a certain type of activity that may involve books, magazines, letters, etc. as themes. When the direct object used with this verb is a bare noun like *ketâb* "book" which denotes the general property of "book-hood" the reading activity denoted by the VP is interpreted to involve some "book-stuff" (and not "magazine-stuff") without referring to any specific book. This is in contrast to cases where the object is a -*râ*-DO, depicting a particular book. Consider (38):

(38) *(man)* { *un*   *ketâb / shâhnâme* }-*ro*   *xund-am*
      I   that   book / PN-RÂ   read-1SG
      "I read that book / the Shahnameh."

By uttering the sentence in (38), the speaker specifies which element served as theme in this activity, namely the *Shahnameh*, a very particular instance of "book-stuff". But in cases where the direct object is an NP, no particular elements are assumed by the speaker and hearer, the only thing that is assumed is a general property that would identify them. Furthermore, in sentences where the direct object is a property-denoting nominal, because there is no particular individual that can mark the end point of an event or help to determine

---

[14]   Recall also that as was mentioned in fn. 5, these elements can be moved away from the verb when contrastively focused.
[15]   See DAYAL 2003 for similar argument for Hindi, from a semantic point of view.

whether a given event has culminated with respect to its referent, we would expect an unbounded/atelic interpretation, i.e., we would expect them to be compatible with durative adverbs. As we saw in examples (23) and (24), this is in fact the case. Furthermore, without having a NumP projection, by definition the NP-DOs would not have any number specification, making questions like "How many x?" invalid as a response (cf. Section 3.1).

On the other hand, when the nominal expression that merges with the verb is a quantity-denoting element, i.e., a NumP, they narrow down the meaning of the predicate by asserting the existence of a set of individuals that can potentially serve as the theme, with the number of the members either specified exactly (cf. example (6) and (25)) or approximately (cf. (7), (10) and (18)), but without identifying the specific members. This also explains why questions like "How many x?" are valid in response to sentences containing them (cf. Section 3.1). Unlike the cases in which the direct object is a property-denoting nominal (NP), when the direct object is a NumP, the existence of a set of individuals is asserted, whose members could potentially mark the end point of a given event. We would therefore expect sentences that contain NumP direct objects to be bounded/telic, and hence compatible with frame adverbials. As we saw in example (25), this is indeed the case.[16]

As we saw in Section 3.3, the "smaller" the nominal direct object, the better its chance of allowing compound noun formation with a verb, i.e., only bare nouns and full NPs would allow this (cf. examples (27), (29) and (30)). Direct objects that are either NumP or a DP would not, as illustrated by (28), (31) and (32), suggesting that the computational system is sensitive to the differences between them.[17]

If the proposal laid out here is on the right track, certain predictions would emerge. For instance, if indeed some of the non-*râ*-DOs are structurally NumPs while others are NPs, we would expect them not to appear in a coordination construction, since conjunctions like "and" can only conjoin elements of the same type. As the data in (39) suggests this is indeed the case.

(39) a.   *nushin*   ***ketâb-e***   ***qese***   *-o*   ***majale***   *xund-∅*
           PN   book-EZ   story   -and   magazine   read-3SG
           "Nooshin story-book-read and magazine-read."
      b.   *nushin*   ***ye(k)***   ***ketâb***   *-o*   ***do-tâ***   ***majale***   *xund-∅*
           PN   a/one   book   -and   two-CL   magazine   read-3SG
           "Nooshin read a book and two magazines."
      c. *   *nushin*   ***ye(k)***   ***ketâb***   *-o*   ***sher***   *xund-∅*
           PN   a/one   book   -and   poem   read-3SG
           "Nooshin read a book and poems."
      d. *   *nushin*   ***ketâb-e***   ***qese***   *-o*   ***do-tâ***   ***majale***   *xund-∅*
           PN   book-EZ   story   -and   two-CL   magazine   read-3SG
   "Nooshin read story books and two magazines."

---

[16]   Also see VERKUYL 1993 for a discussion of how an object that represents a specified quantity (or cardinality) forces a bounded interpretation.

[17]   The reader is also referred to MEGERDOOMIAN 2008, who argues that NumP and DP behave similarly with respect to aspect and stand in contrast to bare and/or modified nominal direct objects.

As is indicated by these sentences, non-*râ*-DOs that are of the same type can appear in a coordination construction. As the acceptability of (39a) and (39b) suggests, a bare noun and a noun modified by an adjective as well as two NumPs can be coordinated felicitously. The unacceptability of (39c) and (39d), on the other hand, suggests that bare nouns and NPs cannot be coordinated with NumPs, further highlighting the fact that they are different.

5. Conclusion

This paper shows that Persian non-*râ*-DOs do not form a natural class, contrary to the widely held belief in the literature. I argue that a syntactic classification which considers the internal structure of the nominal expressions that appear in the direct object position would provide an explanation for not just the differences noted in the literature between -*râ*-DOs and their non-*râ*-marked counterparts, but also the diversity that exists among the latter. It was argued that while the latter all miss a DP projection, some can be NPs, i.e., property denoting element, while others can be NumP, i.e., quantity-denoting elements. Therefore the picture that emerges as a result of such analysis would be as in (40):

(40)   **Direct Objects**

              DP   **NumP**   **NP**

          ⏟*-râ*-marked⏟   ⏟non-*râ*-marked⏟
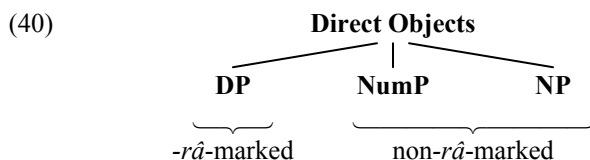
which could a priori account for the fact that non-*râ*-marked direct object do not form a natural class, compared to a classification that is based on the interpretive dichotomy of definite/indefinite or specific/nonspecific, as we saw in (2).

Abbreviations

CL	Classifier	NEG	Negation	RÂ	*-râ*-Morpheme
DO	Direct Object	PL	Plural	SG	Singular
DUR	Durative	PN	Name	SUBJ	Subjunctive
EZ	Ezafe Morpheme				

References

BORER, Hagit 2005a: *Structuring Sense Volume 1: In Name Only*. New York: Oxford University Press.

—— 2005b: *Structuring Sense Volume 2: The Normal Course of Events*. New York: Oxford University Press.

BROWNING, Marguerite, and Ezat KARIMI 1994: "Scrambling to Object Position in Persian." In: Norbert CORVER, Henk van RIEMSDIJK (eds.): *Studies on Scrambling: Movement and Non-Movement Approaches to Free Word-Order Phenomena*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 61-100.

DANON, Gabi 2006: "Caseless Nominals and the Projection of DP." In: *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 24, pp. 977-1008.

DAYAL, Veneeta 2003: "A Semantics for Pseudo Incorporation." Rutgers University (ms.). http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~dayal/

DIESING, Molly 1992: *Indefinites*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

GANJAVI, Shadi 2007: *Direct Objects in Persian*. Doctoral Dissertation: University of Southern California.

GEBHARDT, Lewis (2009): *Numeral Classifiers and the Structure of DP*. Doctoral Dissertation: Northwestern University.

GHOMESHI, Jila 1996: *Projection and Inflection: A Study of Persian Phrase Structure*. Doctoral Dissertation: University of Toronto.

―― 1997a: "Non-Projecting Nouns and the Ezafe Construction in Persian." In: *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 15, pp. 729-788.

―― 1997b: "Topics in Persian VPs." In: *Lingua* 102, pp. 133-167.

―― 2003: "Plural Marking, Indefiniteness, and the Noun Phrase." In: *Studia Linguistica* 57 (2), pp. 47-74.

GHOMESHI, Jila, and Diane MASSAM 1994: "Lexical/Syntactic Relations without Projection." In: *Linguistics Analysis* 24, pp. 175-212.

KAHNEMUYIPOUR, Arsalan 2009: *The Syntax of Sentential Stress*. New York: Oxford University Press.

KARIMI, Simin 1989: *Aspects of Persian Syntax, Specificity, and the Theory of Grammar*. Doctoral dissertation: University of Washington.

―― 1990: "Obliqueness, Specificity, and Discourse Functions: Râ in Persian." In: *Linguistic Analysis* 20, pp. 139-191.

―― 1996: "Case and Specificity: Persian *Râ* Revisited." In: *Linguistic Analysis* 26, pp. 174-194.

―― 2003a. "On Object Positions, Specificity and Scrambling in Persian." In: KARIMI 2003b, pp. 91-124.

―― (ed.) 2003b: *Word Order and Scrambling*. Oxford: Blackwell.

―― 2005: *A Minimalist Approach to Scrambling: Evidence from Persian*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

LONGOBARDI, Giuseppe 1994: "Proper Names and the Theory of N-Movement in Syntax and Logical Form." In: *Linguistic Inquiry* 25, pp. 609-665.

MEGERDOOMIAN, Karine 2008: "Parallel Nominal and Verbal Projections." In: Robert FREIDIN, Carlos P. OTERO, Maria Luisa ZUBIZARRETA (eds.): *Foundational Issues in Linguistic Theory*. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 73-104.

MITHUN, Marianne 1984: "The Evolution of Noun Incorporation." In: *Language* 60, pp. 847-895.

RITTER, Elizabeth 1991: "Two Functional Categories in Noun Phrases: Evidence from Modern Hebrew." In: Susan ROTHSTEIN (ed.): *Syntax and Semantics 25: Perspectives on Phrase Structure*. New York: Academic Press.

―― 1995: "On the Syntactic Category of Pronouns and Agreement." In: *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 13, pp. 405-443.

SAMIIAN, Vida 1983: *Structure of Phrasal Categories in Persian: An X-Bar Analysis*. Doctoral Dissertation: University of California, Los Angeles.

STOWELL, Tim 1989: "Subjects, Specifiers and X-bar Theory." In: Mark BALTIN, Anthony KROCH (eds.): *Alternative Concepts of Phrase Structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 232-262.

SZABOLCSI, Anna 1987: "Functional Categories in the Noun Phrase." In: István KENESEI (ed.): *Approaches to Hungarian, Volume 2*. Szeged: JATE, pp. 167-189.

VERKUYL, Henk K. 1993: *A Theory of Aspectuality: The Interaction between Temporal and Atemporal Structure*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Table of Contents

Part III. Linguistics of Modern Persian