
The specificity marker *-e* in spoken Persian with indefinite noun phrases

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Persian has two indefinite markers, the prenominal *ye(k)* and the suffixed *-i*. Both forms express particular kinds of indefiniteness as does their combination: Indefinites with *-i* express a non-uniqueness or anti-definite implication and behave similar to English *any*. *Ye(k)*, on the other hand, expresses an at-issue existence implication and behaves similar to English *a(n)*. The combination *ye(k) NP-i* expresses an anti-singleton implication and behaves similar to English *some* or *other* (Jasbi, 2016). The marker *-e* can be combined with *ye(k)*, as in (1), but not with (solitary) *-i*, as in (2). While the Differential Object Marker *-ra/ro* is also compatible with a non-specific reading, its combination with the marker *-e* allows only for a specific interpretation, as in (3).

- (1) *Ye(k) pesar-e-(i) inja kar mikone.*
A boy-E-(i) here work do.3SG.
'A/some (specific) boy works here.'
- (2) **Pesar-e-i inja kar mikone.*
boy-E-i here work do.3SG.
'*Any (specific) boy works here.'
- (3) *Man mikham shoro konam ye(k) ketab-e-i-ro bekhunam.*
I want.1SG begin do.1SG a book-E-i-DOM read.1SG.
'I want to start reading a book.'

Based on these and further observations, we argue that *-e* is a specificity marker, while DOM in Persian has a different pragmatic function.

References: Browne, W. (1970). More on Definiteness Markers: Interrogatives in Persian. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 3(1), 359-363. • Ghomeshi, J. (2003). -Plural Marking, Indefiniteness and the Noun Phrase. *Studia Linguistica*, 57(2), 47-74. • Jasbi, M. (2016). Three Types of Indefiniteness in Persian: Simple, Complex and Antidefinite. *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory*, 26, pp. 244–263. Ithaca, NY: CLC Publications. • Karimi, S. (1999). Specificity Effect: Evidence from Persian. *Linguistic Review*, 125-141.