

Different Functions of Pronominal Enclitics in Persian

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In this paper we talk about different functions of pronominal enclitics in Persian. These enclitics include (-am, -at, -aš, -emān, -etān, -ešān). They have various distributions. They could be added to nouns, prepositions and verbs. Traditionally it was supposed that these enclitics act as pronouns and they are the bound form of full personal pronouns. In this paper we try to show that only one of their functions is to act as a pronoun, and they have three other functions, not properly discussed in Persian linguistics literature. First, they can mark object agreement in Persian transitive clauses. Object agreement marking in this language is optional, opposed to subject marking. Second, they can mark subject agreement in a group of Persian complex verbs called "enclitic complex verbs" and third, they act as resumptive pronouns. When they act as pronouns, they are exchangeable with nouns and full pronouns, when used as object agreement, they can co-occur with full objective pronouns or instead of them, indicating the optional nature of object agreement in this language. In this second function, they are not acting as pronouns and different criteria, including binding and dependant marking are used to support this claim. When acting as a subject marker, they are used obligatorily and are not exchangeable with nouns or full pronouns, showing the obligatory nature of subject agreement in Persian. The last function of these pronominal enclitics is to act as resumptive pronouns. They are used in Persian relative clauses and left dislocation from genitive structure and prepositional phrases. This paper discusses the distribution of resumptive pronouns in Persian and uses Keenan and Comrie's (1977) Accessibility Hierarchy to discuss the optionality and obligatoriness of these pronouns in Persian. It is concluded that resumptive pronouns are obligatory in left dislocation from genitive structure and prepositional phrases in Persian. They are also needed when the head of relative clause is indirect object or prepositional object. But they are optional if the head of the relative clause is direct object and banned if the head is subject. These findings are in line with the functional explanations of Hawkins (1999, 2004).

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