



## A Study of the Factors Influencing the Presence or Absence of “râ” in the Speech of Persian Speakers

Zahra Tarkashvand<sup>1</sup>, Belghis Rovshan,<sup>2</sup>  
Gholam Hossein Karimi Doostan<sup>3</sup>, Azar Mehri<sup>4</sup>

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### 1. Introduction

The object marker "râ" has been extensively studied in the realm of Persian speech syntax. It has been posited that this object marker serves various functions, including definiteness marking, specificity marking, topicalization, and discourse management. Given the significance of the object marker "râ" in Persian sentence structure, it has not been thoroughly explored from various semantic theoretical perspectives. As a result, this study addresses this gap by considering different semantic factors and approaches to examine the object marker "râ" in Persian speech.

The primary objective of this study is to provide a description and analysis of the factors influencing the presence or absence of "râ" in the Persian language. To achieve this, we hypothesize that the semantic attributes of the direct object, the semantic characteristics of the direct verb, and the extent to which the direct object is affected by the verb are the three principal factors influencing the usage of "râ" in Persian.

### 2. Methodology

In this descriptive-analytic research, the aim was to investigate the factors affecting the presence or absence of "râ" in the speech of standard Persian speakers. To do this, single-object sentences were constructed according to the linguistic judgments of the authors, and the semantic attributes of the object and the verb, as well as the object's affectedness by the verb, were analyzed and described using the approaches of Aissen (2003), Nass (2004), Rothstein (2008a, b), Von Heusinger (2008), and Beavers (2011). These constructed sentences were then administered to 15 Persian speakers with a mean age of 36.37 years and a mean education level of 13.93 years to verify their appropriateness in standard Persian.

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<sup>1</sup> Ph.D in General Linguistics, Department of Linguistics and Foreign Languages, Payame Noor University; [info@dr-tarkashvand.com](mailto:info@dr-tarkashvand.com)

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Department of Linguistics and Foreign Languages, Payame Noor University (corresponding author); [bl\\_rovshan@pnu.ac.ir](mailto:bl_rovshan@pnu.ac.ir)

<sup>3</sup> Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Tehran; [gh5karimi@ut.ac.ir](mailto:gh5karimi@ut.ac.ir)

<sup>4</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Speech Therapy, Tehran University of Medical Sciences; [Mehri@tums.ac.ir](mailto:Mehri@tums.ac.ir)

### 3. Results and discussion

In standard Persian, the presence or absence of "râ" is influenced not only by the animacy of the direct object but also by its definiteness. An animate and definite direct object that is fully marked accepts "râ." However, in Persian, the continuum of animacy and definiteness does not always yield consistent results, as some sentences deviate from this pattern. Generally, although the findings did not align completely with Aissen (2003), they were in line with Nass's (2004) findings, which suggest that as the degree of affectedness decreases with a decrease in entity change, "râ" is expected to be present in the sentence structure. The presence of an object affecting and affected in the syntactic structure does not consistently affect the presence or absence of "râ." Furthermore, Von Heusinger's (2008) classification does not always account for the presence or absence of "râ," as verbs like "see" can take objects with and without "râ." Beavers' (2011) classification also falls short in explaining the presence or absence of "râ." In contrast to Beavers (2011), when the object is minimally affected by the verb, the likelihood of "râ" representation increases. However, when the quantitative value approaches zero, even with object marking, the sentence is ungrammatical in the absence of "râ."

### 4. Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to describe and analyze the factors influencing the presence and absence of "râ" in Persian sentences. Our hypothesis proposed that the semantic attributes of the direct object and the verb, as well as the affectedness of the direct object by the verb, were the key factors determining the presence or absence of "râ" in the Persian language. The results revealed that these factors do not consistently influence the presence or absence of "râ" in Persian, as there are sentences that do not conform to this hypothesis. Consequently, our hypothesis cannot be conclusively supported, and exceptions to it persist.

**Keywords:** Semantics, Object Marker *râ*, Object's Semantic Features, Verb's Semantic Features, Affectedness, Standard Persian.