

A Discourse-Pragmatic Study of *in* & *ân* (this & that) in Daily Persian Conversations

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Abstract

Three types of meaning i.e., propositional, textual and interpersonal were acknowledged for language in the tradition of functional studies. In light of such approach, this study aims: 1) to describe different types of meanings of *in* (this) and *ân* (that) in Persian and, 2) to show that how basics of grammaticalization can be applied to provide a synchronic survey of the semantic variety of the aforementioned deictic expressions as discourse markers in Persian. On the basis of grammaticalization in terms of Traugott & Dasher (2002), this paper examines the different uses of these linguistic elements by looking at their propositional, textual and interpersonal meanings. The analysis indicates that *in* & *ân* are used exophorically, anaphorically and textually in their referential meaning and also used in the bridging contexts. Moreover, the investigation shows unlike *ân*, the semantic changes of *in* extends beyond the bridging contexts. So *in* (this) as a discourse marker, functions textually, subjectively and inter-subjectively. Grammaticalization of the deictic expressions supports Traugott & Dasher's clines. However, indexicalizing speaker's spatial aspects, *in* & *ân* have impersonal subjective meaning. Therefore, Traugott & Dasher's semantic cline, should be modified in way of impersonal subjective > personal subjective > inter-subjective to describe the behavior of these linguistic elements in this respect.

Keywords: Bridging contexts, Grammaticalization, Discourse markers, (inter) Subjectivity

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1. Introduction

Although studying different uses and semantic development of deictic expressions in Persian seems to be perceptible at first, it is not that much easy to convey the sheer complexity of the situation. This paper tries to study different pragmatic and semantic dimensions of these linguistic expressions on the basis of grammaticalization, which is essentially a diachronic concept. Using samples of *in* (this) and *ân* (that) in daily Persian conversations, this study aims: 1) to describe different types of their meanings and, 2) to show that how basics of grammaticalization can be applied to provide a synchronic survey of the semantic variety of the aforementioned deictic expressions as discourse markers in Persian.

2. Literature Review

Most studies pertaining to deictic expressions *in* (this) and *ân* (that) in different languages emphasize their role in expressing speaker's attitudes and feelings and also discourse management in addition to their propositional meaning (Perera & Strauss, 2015, p.36).

Persian researchers (Amid, 1963, Moeen, 1995, Sadri & Hakami, 2002, Moshkvar, 1971), adopting a traditional approach and insisting upon the concept of referentiality, commonly declared that *in* and *ân* are used to refer to near and distant respectively. However, what has been ignored in such studies was that they just paid attention to their referential meanings at sentence level and did not cover the discourse-pragmatic dimensions.

3. Methodology

The data of this study were obtained from fifteen hours of daily Persian conversations in a one-year period. From the mentioned corpus, 260 cases of using the deictic expressions *in* and *ân* were identified from different

situations and in various constructions. To conduct this research, all 260 cases were first categorized into propositional, textual, and interpersonal meanings, following Halliday (1970, 1979), Traugott (1982), and Brinton (1996). Different uses of the deictic expressions were then classified based on the classification proposed by Halliday and Hassan (1976), Lyons (1977), Fillmore (1982), Levinson (1983, 2004) and Diessel (1999) in terms of propositional meaning. After that, according to Heine (2002), items that simultaneously had a propositional meaning at the sentence level as well as discourse meanings (textual and interpersonal) were categorized into bridging contexts. Continuing to examine the types of meanings and uses of the expressions, the cases that functioned as a discourse marker were identified and were put in textual, personal and interpersonal categories based on the concepts presented. Lastly, their semantic variations were examined based on the views of Traugott and Dasher (2002), analyzed from the perspective of synchronic grammaticalization and the proposed clines of these developments were presented.

4. Results

The analysis indicates that *in* & *ân* are used exphorically, anaphorically and textually in their referential meaning and also used in the bridging contexts to function for the retrieval of linguistic information, projection, feeling and emotion expression, avoidance of unpleasant concepts and referent identification. Moreover, the investigation shows unlike *ân*, the semantic changes of *in* extends beyond the bridging contexts. So *in* as a discourse marker, textually has a function in changing the topical trends and creating a pause to formulate the upcoming discourse. It is subjectively used to designate and emphasize the upcoming discourse and to create a contrast and inter-subjectively functions in speech acts such as requesting, asking and advising. Grammaticalization of the deictic expressions supports Traugott & Dasher's clines. However, indexicalizing speaker's spatial aspects, *in* & *ân*

have impersonal subjective meaning involving the grammaticalization process. Therefore, Traugott & Dasher's semantic cline, should be modified in way of impersonal subjective > personal subjective > inter-subjective to describe the behavior of these linguistic elements in this respect. In sum, the current study used a descriptive-analytical methodology to describe the discourse-pragmatic aspects of *in* & *ân* and indicated that these linguistic elements have different types of uses which the notion of grammaticalization (e.g. Traugott and Dashar, 2002; and Brinton, 2008) provide a solid theoretical framework to describe and analyze these expressions as discourse markers in Persian. In sum, the current study used a descriptive-analytical methodology to describe the discourse-pragmatic aspects of *in* & *ân* and indicated that these linguistic elements have different types of uses which the notion of grammaticalization (e.g. Traugott and Dashar, 2002; and Brinton, 2008) provide a solid theoretical framework to describe and analyze these expressions as discourse markers in Persian.