

Morpho-semantic Aspects of “hâ” in Persian from a Typological Perspective

Fatemeh Bahrami*

Assistant Professor of Linguistics, Shahid Beheshti University-Tehran, Iran.

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Number is a grammatical concept, whose singular/plural distinction has been mentioned in many Persian grammar books; but less attention has been paid to various semantic functions of plurality. So it is often interpreted as referring to more than one entity. The present article is an attempt to investigate morpho-semantic aspects of “hâ” as one of the most frequent plural-making morphemes, particularly with the aim of examining two questions hereunder:

What are the morpho-semantic functions of “hâ” plural-marker in Persian?

To what extent does Persian number system follow from the range of cross-linguistic varieties?

Assessment of data (collected from written texts, grammar books and author’s intuition) according to Acquaviva’s framework (2008) clarifies that Persian follows from typological semantic functions and plural-making with “hâ” represents different interpretations in relation to basic lexical meaning of nouns it attaches to. In sum, plurality in Persian conceptualizes one or more functions as follows:

- referring to more than one entity;
- representing imperfect aspect;
- expressing cohesion;
- representing blurred perceptual boundary;
- reflecting concrete reading of abstract and spatio-temporal nouns;
- affirming instantiation, quantitative and qualitative abundance of the referent;
- indicating distributive-dispersal interpretation of mass nouns, similarity; and
- highlighting emphasis on the referent.

It is worth mentioning that some aforementioned functions such as representing aspect, quantitative abundance, emphasizing and approximate temporal extension have not been introduced in the Acquaviva’s framework and they can just be found in Persian. Nevertheless, it is also possible to explain these by extending the conceptual modules of the framework.

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* Corresponding Author : E-mail: f_bahrami@sbu.ac.ir