

Morphological Definiteness of Nouns in Neyshabouri Dialect

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

There are some categories for which nouns may be specified, either morphologically or syntactically. They include case, number, class or gender, and definiteness (schachter and Shopen, 2007: 277). Definiteness is a semantic category corresponding the most closely to the central function of grammatical *identifiability* - that is, the expression of whether or not a referent is familiar or already established in the discourse (Lyons1999:278). In this article, we try to review morphological facets of definiteness in Neyshabouri dialect as a Persian dialect to see if it is possible to define it based on the criteria introduced by Lyons (1999) on definiteness. There are other uses of definiteness which do not relate to identifiability - one of them is uniqueness. Based on Abbon (2006, 392) “semantically Identifiability and uniqueness are features of definiteness”. By Identifiability, we mean how the reference of a noun is identifiable to both speaker and listener, and by uniqueness, we mean that there is just one entity satisfying the description used.

Different languages have various strategies to mark the definiteness of nouns. In this article, we try to extract the morphological strategies of definiteness in the mentioned dialect. By now there is no single research related to definiteness in Neyshaburi dialect, but there are some researches related to definiteness and indefiniteness in persian, like Sadeghi & Arzhang(1358), Ahmadi & Anvari (1374), Mahootian(1378), Lazard (1384), Abdolmaleki (1385), Ghatre (1385), and Rasekh mahand (1388).

Theoretical Background

Definiteness is a category of noun phrase. There is considerable variation between languages in the use of grammatical category of definiteness. Lyons (1999:278) gives examples of variation that is found between languages. Lambrecht (1994: 38) assumes that the semantic concept of identifiability underlying grammatical definiteness is probably universal. Definiteness can be encoded using a wide range of lexical, syntactic and morphological devices. Lyons(1999) classifies definiteness encoding broadly into two categories: 'simple' and 'complex'. 'Simple' definiteness encoding occurs when the

definite and indefinite noun phrases are marked with some type of article which are either affixes or free-form determiners (see Lyons 1999:47-106). Languages which marked the definiteness are in minority. Most of languages don't mark definiteness and indefiniteness but those who do can mark this category either syntactically or morphologically or both (Ibid: 49). Those who mark it morphologically behaves in three possibility 1- they can have marker for definiteness 2- they can have marker for indefiniteness 3- they can have marker for both definiteness and indefiniteness. But it should be noted that the languages which morphologically mark definiteness removing definite marker may lead to indefiniteness in nouns (plank, 2003: 376) . But the question is what types of definite noun phrase do languages have? which means in what ways languages in the world mark definiteness. Lyons (1999 : 17- 26) defines 5 types of noun phrases which includes Demonstratives, Proper nouns , Possessives, Personal pronouns and Universal quantifiers.

Analysis

Neyshaburi dialect adopts six strategies to show definiteness. The first strategy is lacking indefiniteness marker in a noun which is used as subject or indirect object. It encodes definiteness of that noun. The second strategy is using demonstrative adjectives before the noun. The third one is using ordinal numbers before the noun. The fourth strategy is utilizing [r] as a morpheme which marks direct object. This morpheme, which is the contracted form of the separate word {ra} in standard Persian, attaches to the noun as a clitic, and make a noun definite.

<i>xefti-r</i>	<i>bedar</i>	<i>ku</i>
necklace.obj (definite)	Out	Do .(you)

Take off the necklace.

The fifth strategy, along with all the ways which mark the definiteness, is that Neyshaburi has an overt morpheme [a] which attaches to the nouns as a clitic and make them definite.

<i>xefti-a</i>	<i>berad</i>	<i>berifta</i>
necklace. definite	lost	has become

The necklace has been lost.

The sixth strategy is using possessive and genitive markers which attach to the nouns as clitics.

Some attached possessive adjectives are :-*om* (my) –*et* (your) –*ma*(our) –*ta* (your).

<i>xefti-om</i>	<i>berad</i>	<i>berifta</i>
necklace. my. Definite	lost	has become

My necklace has been lost.

Genitive marker is the morpheme –e.

<i>xefti-e</i>	<i>mehri</i>	<i>berad</i>	<i>berifta</i>
necklace. of. definite	proper N.	lost	has become

Mehri's necklace has been lost.

conclusion

According to what was said, it is concluded that Neyshaburi dialect encode the category of definiteness morphologically by six strategies. Of what Lyons(1999) stated about the morphological definiteness, this dialect has definiteness of proper nouns, demonstratives, possessive and personal pronouns. Moreover the noun in this dialect can also be marked for definiteness by lacking a marker of indefiniteness while the noun has the role of subject of the sentence or indirect object of it. The clitics /r/, /a/ and /e/ are also used as definiteness markers in this dialect. So we can claim that definiteness in this article is justifiable by Lyon's views.

Key words: definiteness, noun phrase, noun, Neyshaburi dialect, Lyons(1999)

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