Differences between oral and written narratives in Persian in the encoding of S2 references

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Background

Discourse studies – translation studies

Correct transfer from source language to target language of discourse features (e.g. deictic markers, participant introduction and reference, coherence markers, clause linking devices).

Participant reference in Balochi folktales
Research question

The present study investigates whether there is a difference between oral and written Persian narratives for reference to activated participants in the role of S2 (to be defined).
Method

- participant tracking presented in Dooley and Levinsohn (2001)
- applied to Persian by Roberts (2009)
- and to Sistani Balochi by Barjasteh Delforooz (2010)

- The subject is assigned a code (S1–S4)
Subject tracking S1

S1 The subject was the subject of the previous sentence:

Peter came home early. He went to bed shortly after 10 o’clock.
Subject tracking S2

S2 The subject was the addressee of the previous sentence:

Peter said to Harry: Why are you late?

Harry answered: I got stuck in a traffic jam.

Peter looked at his watch and realized that Harry was probably telling the truth.
Subject tracking S3

S3 The subject had another role than subject or addressee in the previous sentence:

Peter saw Harry’s dog in the street. Harry had obviously let him loose for some reason.
Subject tracking S4

S4 The subject did not have any role in the previous sentence or is expanded/reduced from the previous sentence.

Peter was having his dinner. All of a sudden Anne entered the room.

All the children were playing. Anne suddenly started crying.
Default encoding

The most common encoding.

Levinsohn (2011) finds two common patterns (African languages):

S1 minimal encoding, S2–S4 full NP
S1–S3 minimal encoding, S4 full NP
Marked encoding

- non-default or MARKED encoding
- Can either be lighter or heavier than the default encoding
- Used for certain discourse pragmatic purposes
- Not dealt with in this study
The king’s wife came, went into the women’s quarters, called her son and said: Dear son…
The son answered: Can’t I see her?
Ø said: Of course you can.
U ham taʻārof=e inhārā radd kard, goft: Man meyl nadāram, šomā befarmāyid injā, harče meyl dāšte bāšid, barāyetān ḥāzer konam. *Inhā (S2 PRON) goftand: Četowri ḥāzer koni?*

But he rejected their offer and said: I don’t feel like it, you come here, I will prepare for you whatever you like. They said: How would you prepare it?
Roberts (2009: 349) for Persian

Ø as default encoding for S2 in the spoken text (Sāšā va asb=e jāduyi)
N as default encoding for S2 in the written text (Māhi siāh=e kučulu)

in the ... spoken text the referential strategy relies more on context for maintaining referential identity and is less specific than in the written text
Roberts’ conclusions raise some questions.

- Is Ø really the default encoding of S2 in oral texts? (Roberts finds 16 Ø and 14 N).
- Are written narratives a homogeneous genre? If not:
  - What type of written narrative is Māhi siāh=e kučulu?
  - What other types can be identified?
- Is N the default encoding of S2 in all types of written texts?
Material

Oral narratives (folktales)
Reduced to writing from oral accounts

Literary texts (short stories)
Published during the last 30 years
Oral narratives

- Three narratives from *Afsānehā 1*. Collected and published by Šobḫi. Tehran 1324.
- Three narratives from *Čehel qešše*. Collected and published by Manuchehr Karimzāde. Tehran 1376.
Literary texts

- 10 short stories by the following writers: Jalāl Āle Aḥmad, Farxonde Āqāyi, Esmāʿil Faṣiḥ, Ebrāhim Golestan, Hushang Golshiri, Jamāl Mirṣādeqi, Zoyā Pirzād, Moniru Ravānipur, Gholāmḥosein Sāʿedi, Goli Taraqqi
Oral narratives reduced to writing

- Insertions or deletions?

Čehel qeṣṣe states that it has done some changes and demonstrates with examples. Insertion of speech orienters and heavier encoding for S2 than the oral version is not found in these examples.
S2 encoding in oral texts

Three narratives from *Afsānehā 1*.

S2 N: 37 (15 outside conversation – resumption of story)
S2 PRON: 2
S2 Ø: 46

Default seems to be Ø.

Ø is particularly common in fast conversation.
Ø in fast conversation

Namadi āmad jelowš ke: Xānom, kojā miravi?

Goft (S2 Ø): ‘Arusi.

Goft (S2 Ø): Marā ham bebar.

Goft (S2 Ø): Vā! Torā bā in rixt bebaram….

Namadi came before her: My lady, where are you going?
Ø said: To a wedding.
Ø said: Take me too
Ø said: What? Should I take you when you look like this…
پدر گفت: یک دام خریدیده‌ای؟
گفت: این دام عادی نیست…
پدر (S2 N) هم تمام‌م‌ه‌ی جامعهٔ خبر را کرد.

آقا گفت: گفتچی برایم یک که لیست‌هایی را داشت…
آقا گفت: این دام عادی نیست…
پدر دعوت کرد تمام‌الهی خانواده‌های خود را.
Resumption of story

It may be better not to count S at the point of resumption of story as S2 and just regard the addressee within a dialogue as S2. Also based on findings in Balochi (cf. Maryam Nourzaei’s presentation).

Suggested new definition of S2:
The subject was the addressee of previous speech to which the subject is now responding.

Suggested new definition of S3:
The subject had another role than subject in the previous sentence and is not responding as addressee of the previous sentence.

(Addressee at the point of resumption would be classified as S3.)
A different picture

In the four stories from *Qeṣṣe-ye mā hamin bud*:
61 S2, all N (whether inside conversation or at the point of resumption)

In the three narratives from *Čehel qeṣṣe*:
104 S2, all N (whether inside conversation or at the point of resumption)
rāh az mardi porsid: čerā injā hame rafteand tu lāk=e xeodešān o inqadr sar dar garibān and?

The road asked a man: why have all (the people) here isolated themselves and are so depressed?

**mard** goft: alān čand ruz ast doxtar=e pādešāh divāne šode va har kāri mikonand xub nemišavad. šāh ham hokm karde mardom ğoşşedār beşavand.

The man said: The king’s daughter has lost her mind since a few days back and whatever is done she does not get well. As for the king, he has ordered people to mourn.

**rāh** porsid: čerā barāš ḵakim nemiāvarand?

The road asked: Why don’t they bring a doctor for her?

**mard** javāb dād: xodā pedaratrā biāmorzad! ko𝑗ā=ye kār i? digar tu in šahr ḵakim peydā nemišavad.

The man answered: Goodness gracious! Are you totally unaware of what is going on? There are no doctors in this town any longer.
Persian oral narrative

Default (at least in traditional tales reduced to writing): N

Possibly a feature of oral texts reduced to writing. Cf. Roberts who found Ø as the default encoding here.

Further research: In order to establish the default in the oral version rather than the version reduced to writing, oral narrations should be recorded and analysed.
10 literary texts

Patterns for default:
S2 Ø and no speech introducer (three texts)
S2 Ø with speech introducer (three texts)
S2 Ø with an even distribution between occurrences with and without speech introducer (two texts)
S2 N with speech introducer (one text)
No dialogue whatsoever (one text)
(a dialogue between a mother and her daughter, from Šab-e boland, by Moniru Ravānipur).

mādar, daro beband. Mother, close the door.
hameye darā baste as, begir bexvāb. All the days are closed, go to sleep.
mizanadeš mādar? ‘amu ebrāhim mizanadeš? Is he beating her, mother? Is Uncle Ebrahim beating her?
na maryami dāre nāzeš mikone, ḥālā begir bexvāb.
No dear Maryam, he is caressing her, go to sleep now.
fardā șobh miād bāzi? miād daryā? Will she come to play tomorrow morning? Will she come to the sea?
āre, xvodam miram donbāleš, age bexvābi miram donbāleš. Yes, I will go and fetch her myself, if you go to sleep (now), I will go and fetch her.
(a dialogue between the narrator and a drunkard, from *Vāgon=e siāh*, by Gholāmḥoseyn Sā‘edi)

*Goftam:* *hatman miām.* I said: I am coming for sure.

*Goft:* *nāmardi age nayāi.* He said: you are not honest if you don’t come.

*Goftam:* *jān musiu, miām.* I said: dear sir, I am coming.

*Bāz rāh oftādam ke dobāre dād zad:* *ḥatman miāi?* I started walking again when he shouted a second time: Are you coming for sure?

*Goftam:* *āre ke miām* I said: of course I am coming.

*Porsid:* *kojā miāi?* He asked: Where are you coming?
(a dialogue between two friends, from Ṭa‘m=e gas=e xormālu, by Zoyā Pirzād)

Žān...goft: Nemidunam ki az hame bištar ta‘ajjob karde…
Jean… said: I don’t know who was the most surprised…
Morad goft: Gamunam Šahāb. Morad said: I believe Shahab.
Žān goft: Ťeflak Šahāb. Jean said: Poor Shahab.
Conclusions for literary texts

Ø encoding of S2, with or without a speech introducer, is the most common strategy.

N encoding of S2 is the default in one story (less refined literary language?)

New trends in literature, to break the default rules of participant reference.
Dialogue with more than 2 interlocutors – Ø encoding

(Riāḥi, his friend Maḥbubi, and his wife talking, from Čerā sāket bemānam?, by Farxonde Āqāyi)

Riāḥi...goft: Pas čerā hamčin mikoni? Riahi…said: Then why do you do like this? (Riāḥi to Maḥbubi)

- Čayiatrā boxv'or sar=e āqā=ye Maḥbubirā dard āvordi. (Wife to Riāḥi) Drink you tea. You have talked too much to Mr. Mahbubi.

- Na xānom bezgārid ḥarfaštārā bezanad. Širin ta‘rif mikonad. (Maḥbubi to Wife) No, my lady, let him say what is on his mind. What he tells is pleasant.

- Didi goftam dexālat nakon... (Riāḥi to Wife) There you go, didn’t I tell you not to interfere

- Hāl=e xānom vālede xub ast? (Wife to Maḥbubi) Is Mrs. Valeden alright?
Conclusions

1. The default encoding of S2 in oral narrations reduced to writing is N (Roberts finds Ø for oral narratives) In fact, the default encoding of S2 in the oral version may be Ø. Further studies needed. (Balochi oral folktales have S2 minimum encoding.)

2. The default encoding of S2 in literary texts is Ø. (Roberts finds N, based on Māhi siāh=ē kučulu, which could be regarded as an oral narration reduced to writing.)

This paper does not deal with non-default encoding.
Thank you for your attention!
References