


## Temporal Frames of Reference in Persian

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### Abstract

The current article studies the temporal Frames of Reference in Persian. What is most manifest in this field is the theoretical dissention. This article has reviewed the main approaches and frameworks in the field. The relationship between space and time domains is attested, yet despite many examples of mapping time in terms of space being found, it does not mean that the relationship between these two domains is unidirectional, since instances of describing space in terms of time can also be found. For related theoretical concepts such as Moving Ego & Moving Time models, A & B-Series and Deictic, Sequential & Extrinsic FoRs, examples were mentioned from Persian language. A poll was conducted which led to the conclusion that for Persian speakers the dominant temporal usage of “Jelo-tar” is in the meaning of “sooner”. Some points were mentioned regarding the use of spatial FoRs in the temporal domain and a critical approach to the study of temporal metaphors was also presented.

**Keywords:** Temporal Frames of Reference, Space-time relationship, Persian Language, Metaphor, Decrease and deletion

### Extended Abstract

#### 1. Introduction

Space and time are fundamental in human cognition, and cognitive linguistics has always paid special attention to these two domains and their relationship. Among the most important concepts in this field is the Frame of Reference (FoR), which is the coordinate system based on which spatial or temporal position of an object is determined. This study examines the topics related to temporal reference in Persian. There is no previous literature in this field, and all the previous studies in Persian are in the more traditional frameworks, such as conceptual metaphors and the unidirectional mapping of space onto time.

In this paper, we will investigate how the relationship between space and time is formulated in Persian and what the roles of deletion, decreasing, and redundancy are in comprehending the temporal Frames of Reference (t-FoRs).

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## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Most studies of spatial FoRs (s-FoRs) have been separate from time and even when mapping from space to time was in question, the attention has mostly been drawn to movement and less to static FoRs. Nevertheless, despite the fact that only one decade has passed since the beginning of the studies in this field, there is so much dissention.

There are three main issues concerning time:

- 1- How far space properties can be mapped onto time.
- 2- How varied temporal concepts are.
- 3- How time's directionality can be assessed.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

In this part, each of the topics proposed in the field is critically introduced and some examples are also provided for them from Persian.

First, examples are given for the main four properties of time usually enumerated: being extended, linear, directed and transient. Among these, the first three examples are related to space, and only the last one is exclusively temporal. Examples are also given for A- and B- Series and the two main patterns of temporal description: Moving-Time and Moving-Ego.

It is shown that among the three main approaches regarding the relationship between space and time, at least the one considering them separate does not work in Persian, since there are numerous instances of their interaction in this language. Yet, although studies show that this relationship is not symmetrical, it is not unidirectional, as there are also instances of expressing space in terms of time.

Among the three main spatial axes, top-down and left-right axes do not have a significant temporal role in Persian, and only the front-back axis has temporal usage too. Some examples are given and then the problem of "front" is addressed: One of the main issues in this field is the temporal interpretation of "front" in languages. The best way to determine it is by asking the speakers of the language to answer a question such as the following: "The meeting originally scheduled for next Monday has been moved forward two days. On what day will it take place?" A survey found out that almost 88% of participants believe it to be on Saturday, which makes "Jelo-tar" in Persian mean "sooner" in its temporal sense, which is itself aligned with Moving-Time pattern and B-series.

Concerning the three Levinsonian s-FoRs, it must be said that there is much disagreement among scholars, but one point is worth mentioning: for the Relative FoR to exist there is no need for the relevant information to be explicitly present in the sentence, since the speaker may consider them redundant and therefore reduce them from the sentence.

Then, Evan's framework for t-FoRs is introduced, which has three coordinates parallel with those in s-FoRs: target event, reference point, and origo; and three types: deictic, sequential, and extrinsic.

It has been suggested that there is no real distinction between processing literal and figurative language; for example, empirical data shows that a prevalent metaphor is processed faster than its literal paraphrase; yet, cognitive linguists maintain the traditional distinction between literal and figurative language on the cognitive level. The question is simply "why?" The same can also be asked about the traditional distinction between metaphor and metonymy, which is again maintained in cognitive linguistics too. Finding examples for the conceptual metaphors in the domain of time in Persian is not difficult, as has been done in many other studies, but the question is that what theoretical achievement it leads to.

#### **4. Conclusions**

In the article, different examples from Persian were provided for the topics in the time field: it was shown that the four properties of time are also relevant in Persian, for A- & B- Series and also Moving-Time & Moving-Ego patterns examples were given. The three t-FoRs proposed by Evans were also introduced. This study showed that the most obvious issue in the time field is the utmost theoretical disagreement among theoreticians and scholars. The unit for coding temporal reference is sentence and the most important criterion for distinguishing a temporal and spatial reading of the same structure is that in the temporal reading, changing perspective is more plausible. Regarding the relationship between space and time, it was shown that although the relationship exists and is not symmetrical, it is not unidirectional. The only spatial axis playing a role in time is front-back and "front" was shown to have the temporal meaning of "sooner" in Persian. The other issue is distinguishing literal and figurative language, which despite empirical data against it is maintained by cognitive linguists. Concerning the role of deletion and reducing, this point was mentioned that for the Relative FoR to exist there is no need for the needed information to be explicit in the sentence, since they may be redundant and therefore reduced from the sentence.

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