Chapter 35
Persian Morphology
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1. Introduction

1.1. Classification and history
Persian, natively known as Farsi or Parsi, is the national language of Iran and of Tajikistan (where it is called Tajik Persian or Tajik, Tajiki). It is also widely used in Afghanistan, where it is officially called Dari and the spoken standard of the capital Kabul is known as Kaboli. There is a considerable diaspora (perhaps 7 million), especially in Western Europe and North America. The total number of native speakers may be about 70 million, to which should be added several million whose mother tongue is not Persian but who regularly use a variety of Persian in writing or as a contact vernacular. Speakers of the most widespread and prestigious variety, Persian of Iran (or Standard Persian, a term used especially in reference to the spoken standard of Tehran), comprise most of the national population of some 70 million, with literacy estimated at 72 percent. This is the variety described here.

New Persian, as this language is known from a historical perspective, is a member of the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family and a lineal descendant of Old Persian (OP; the language of the Achaemenid kings, 550–331 B.C.E.) and Middle Persian (MP; extending at least two centuries after the Arab Muslim conquest of Iran in 650 C.E.). OP was a typical inflected language, systemically cognate with its contemporaries Classical Greek and Sanskrit. By the late MP period, however, the language had undergone a radical reduction of inflectional morphology and was close to the analytical structure characteristic of New Persian. The lexical morphology, though reduced in number and variety of forms, expanded in scope and flexibility. The influence of Arabic (which supplied a new writing system) was almost entirely confined to the lexicon; the static inventory of loanwords is estimated at 50 percent, with a frequency of up to 25 percent. The basic morphology and syntax of later MP, however, has survived virtually intact in New Persian.

The expansion of the Persian empires and the eastern dynasties of the medieval Islamic ecumene spread Persian far beyond its home, the southwestern Iranian province of Parsâ (Greek Persis, New Persian Pars, now known in its arabicized form as Fars). As the language of high culture in the western part of the Mongol empire and among the Ottoman Turks and Mughals of India, Persian has played an active role in the linguistic and cultural history of the region, and has not remained unaffected by its
neighbors. Two broad trends may be identified. From the 11th century a prestigious literary language was established ("Classical Persian"), which provided a model and catalyst for the evolution of literary languages among the Turks and Indians, and acted as a normative brake on further change in Persian itself. During the same period, conversely, the social sphere of spoken Persian was constantly challenged by other vernaculars, notably Turkish, varieties of which were spoken both by the ruling dynasties and by large groups of the nomadic pastoralists among the population. (Even today, as much as half the population of Iran has a non-Persian mother tongue.) In Tajik this process has resulted in a wholesale Turkicization of several important dialect groups and a palpable influence on the literary language based on them. In Standard Persian, Turkish influences are more subtle, and characterize the vernacular rather than the written language.

During the early decades of the 20th century, writers in Iran broke away from the more conservative aspects of the prevailing literary style and adopted some features of the vernacular morphology and syntax. Increasing influences from the West introduced much new vocabulary, but hardly affected Persian morphology. A language purism movement and some relexification during the 1930s and 1940s (aimed primarily at replacing Arabisms) was also successful in reviving some neglected native lexical morphology. Tajik, having developed largely separately from Persian of Iran from ca. 1500 to 1980, is now actively imitating Iranian usage in some writings. Persian of Afghanistan, though diverging considerably from that of Iran in speech, has always hewed close to it in its written standard; nevertheless, there are a number of lexical and syntactic shibboleths in literary Dari.

1.2. Prosody, phonotactics, and morphophonology

It is impossible to treat Persian morphology separately from questions of phonology and orthography. Phonological and morphological principles are embedded in, and sometimes disguised by, the defective Arabic writing system, but no one has devised a system of transcription that will adequately represent the interlocking demands of Persian morphophonemics, prosody, and orthography. For Persian phonology in general, the reader is referred to Windfuhr's (1997) essay. In what follows, the three "short" Persian vowels are transcribed as a, e, o, and the three "long" vowels as a, i, u; y represents the semi-vowel []. Persian b in the word-final sequence -sb, as in əšb 'horse', əšəb 'glue' (where it is synchronically an unaspirated allophone of p) is retained. Arabic consonantal orthography will occasionally be transliterated in uppercase italics (A for alef, ʔ for hamze, Š for dhal, ‘ for ‘ayn, G for ˈayn, W for vaw).

Syllable structure is a predictable CV, CVC, CVCC; in any sequence the consonant immediately preceding a vowel begins a new syllable. This holds too for diphthongs, thus kek 'when?' (CVC), tovr 'manner' (CVCC). This may be at odds with morphological structure, as in ʃast-am 'my thumb', prosodically ʃəst-əm. The semivowel variants w and v are to an
extent in complementary distribution: \( w \) does not occur initially, and \( v \) occurs finally only after \( a, i \), and after \( o \) only in Arabic loans in an original -\( \text{iw} \) (\( \text{mamlov} \) ‘full’, \( \text{mamlov-e} \) ‘full of’).

Consonant clusters, restricted to word-medial and final position, consist of two or (across syllable boundaries) three consonants: \( \text{nazd} \) ‘near’, \( \text{naq\text{-}band} \) ‘painter’. Clusters in native Persian morphs generally include at least one continuant; those in Arabic loanwords are not so constrained (e.g., \( \text{qotb} \) ‘pole’, \( \text{rabt} \) ‘bond’). Initial consonant clusters (a feature of earlier stages of the language) are not tolerated; historically they have been reduced or resolved by introduction of prothetic or epenthetic vowels, as \( \text{iran\text{-}sahr} \) ‘the Iranian world’ < \( \text{aryan} \text{x\text{-}sahr} \) ‘the realm of the Aryans’, \( \text{sepahan} \), \( \text{esfahan} \) ‘Isfahan’ < \( \text{spada\text{-}army} \). Modern loanwords are similarly treated: \( \text{pelatin} \) ‘platinum’, \( \text{estudyo} \) ‘studio’.

Stress is predictable and non-phonemic. It falls on the final syllable of nouns and noun phrases, and on the initial or non-final syllable of verb phrases (3.4). In general, (morphological and lexical) suffixes take stress (grammatical), enclitics and postpositions do not. Some segmentally homophonous strings may thus have their morphosyntactic status signaled by stress: \( \text{mardi} \) ‘manhood’, but \( \text{mard-i} \) ‘a man’ or ‘you are a man’; \( \text{baz-k\text{-}n\text{\text{on}}} \) ‘opener’, but \( \text{báz kon} \) ‘open!’

It will also be obvious that the morphology cannot be meaningfully discussed without incidental appeal to syntax. In New Persian, not only is today’s morphology yesterday’s syntax, but today’s syntax keeps a firm hold on morphological categories and relations.

### 1.3. Orthography

The Arabic consonantal alphabet has often been viewed as ill-adapted to the needs of New Persian. However, in Iran there has never been a serious movement to reform or replace Arabic script, and during the one thousand years of its use it has evolved into a flexible and precise vehicle for literary Persian, posing no greater problems to users than that other great morphographic bugbear, English in Latin script.

The retention of Arabic orthography (including the redundant consonants and diacritical devices such as \( \text{tan\text{\text{in}}} \)) has contributed to an intuitive recognition of Arabic loanwords and lexical classes (from characteristic Arabic morphological patterns, initial formatives \( \text{mu}, \text{ma}, \text{ta} \), and final formative -\( \text{at} \)) by Persian speakers of even modest education.

Apart from the nine phonetically redundant characters of Arabic, in several common Turkish borrowings there is still vacillation in spelling between \( G \) and \( Q \) (which nowadays represent the same post-velar fricative in Tehran Persian) and between zero and vocalic \( a \) and \( W \): thus the most commonly-occurring currency unit may be written as \( \text{tuman} \) (\( \text{TWMAN} \)), \( \text{to\text{-}man} \) (\( \text{TMAN} \)) or \( \text{tuman} \) (\( \text{TWMN} \)). However, some recent innovations have tended to standardize orthography and orthoepy and facilitate reading. The \( \text{ezafe} \) (see 2.1) is indicated by means of an independent letter \( Y \) (in modern poetry and children’s literature, and increasingly in general prose) after a “silent \( h \)” (where formerly it was usually unmarked). The short
vowel diacritics, however, are still rarely used. Most prefixes (esp. verbal *mi-*), the plural suffix *-ha* and the postposition *-ra* are routinely written separately from stems, and longer words are often broken up into component morphemes. The frequent termination *-ai* (whether the transition between vowels is perceived as a glottal stop or a palatal glide, and whatever the stress pattern) is written *AYY* (formerly, more often *AY*).

2. **Nominals**

Persian morphology is palpably divided into a nominal and a verbal system, with regular strategies for distinguishing between homophonous elements of the two systems. However, among primitive substantives there are few characteristic stems, and the division between the categories of noun and adjective is conceptually weak. This is illustrated in the lexical compounds *pir(-e) mārd* ‘old man’ and *pir(-e) zān* ‘old woman’. *pir* is most frequently an adjective, but may function as a noun, ‘elder; (sufi) sheikh’; *mārd* and *zān* are common nouns, but may function quasi-adjectivally (2.2.2). The normal NP type (head noun preceding modifier) would be *mārd-e pir, zān-e pir*, but these rarely occur. Do we therefore have a regular *ezaf* NP (2.1) with the usual lexical categories reversed (‘male/female elder’), or—since the “optional” *ezaf* enclitic here may well be an intrusion—a determinative compound (‘old-man, old-woman’) of the archaic type *now-ruz* (4.4.1, #8)?

2.1. **The ezaf construction**

An appreciation of the characteristic structure of the Persian noun phrase, the *ezaf* (‘annexation, suppletion’), is of fundamental importance to an understanding of nominal morphology and its micro-syntax. Essentially, the *ezaf* comprises a head noun linked to a following modifier by the un-stressed enclitic *-e* (*-ye after a vowel*).

2.1.1. **Adjectival ezaf**

The modifier may be an adjective describing the head, as *hava-ye xub* ‘nice weather’, an adverb as in *ruz-e bād* ‘the day after’, a second *ezaf* phrase, or an adverbial (typically, prepositional) phrase representing a reduced relative clause (*sahrīānda-ha-ye az xarej* bar gašte ‘citizens returning from abroad’).

2.1.2. **Nominal ezaf**

Here the modifier is a substantive in a qualifying (typically, “possessive”) or appositional relationship with the head: *pedar-e man* ‘my father’ (father-of me), *dar-e xane* ‘the door of the house’, *xolase-ye dastan* ‘the gist of the tale’, *ruz-e žom’e* ‘[the day] Friday’. Other underlying relations so expressed include purpose (*quašq-e čay-xori* ‘tea[-drinking] spoon’), source or material (*tast-e sang* ‘stone cliff’), nominalized VPs with an infinitive or other action noun (*koštan-e došman* ‘killing the enemy’, *šekar-e palang* ‘leopard hunt[ing]’). Historically, personal names were so linked in a patronymic phrase (*Rostam-e Zal* ‘Rustam [son] of Zal’), and multiple names, including
modern given-name and surname groups, are usually linked by *ezafe*: *Omar-e Xayyam, Iraj-e Pezeškdzad*.

Colloquially, the *ezafe* syllable is frequently dropped in rapid speech where the resulting string would not be ambiguous; this omission is to varying degrees lexicalized in frequently-occurring expressions (4.4.1, #7; 4.4.2, #6). Orthographically, this syllable is only seen when written with *Y* after vowels.

### 2.2. The noun

#### 2.2.1. Stem forms

Persian nouns are found with most of the available phonotactic and syllabic configurations. There appear to be no word-initial elements that are characteristic of nouns without being of necessity formatives, and only two such word-final elements.

One of these (which is additionally adjectival-adverbial and a formative, 4.3.1, #2) is -e (earlier, and still in Eastern Persian, -a), as in *xane* ‘house’, *piše* ‘profession’, *barname* ‘program’, *kise* ‘purse’, *mentaże* ‘zone’. This class (numbering more than a thousand common words spanning most semantic fields) comprises both native Persian and Arabic vocabulary. It is further characterized by a productive morphophonemic alternation: final -e > -eg- before the suffixes -an(e) and -i, e.g., *bače* ‘child’ → *bačegi* ‘childhood’, *bačegan* ‘children’, *bačegane* ‘childish, childlike, children’s’. This alternation (a relic of a word-final velar in MP) applies also to -e as a nominal formative, and to Arabic loanwords as well as Persian words, under the appropriate conditions: *afsordegi* ‘dejection’ (*afsorde*, past participle of *afsordan* ‘to depress’), *xebregan* ‘experts’ (*xebre* ‘expert’ < Ar. *xibr* ‘expertise’).

The other ending is -at, which characterizes exclusively Arabic loanwords originating in the feminine ending (e.g., *gouvat* ‘strength’, *esterahat* ‘rest’) and differentiated from those incorporated into Persian in the form *a* > -e (as *kise*, *xebre*) by a rationale and a process that need not concern us here. The point from a morphological perspective is that MP final -t had changed to -d before the massive incorporation of Arabic vocabulary; the large number of -at loans (over 800 by the 12th century), which were not subject to this rule, have thus been identified *en bloc* as a class of *Fremdwörter*. This no doubt reinforced, and was reinforced by, the lexical classes (learned words, abstracta) and stylistic register (literary) into which they were initially assimilated. In modern Persian there are at least 650 common nominals in -at.

#### 2.2.2. Gender

Gender is not marked. Sex may be distinguished lexically: *morq* ‘fowl (of either sex), hen’, *xorus* ‘rooster’, or by selective use of a qualifier: *gav-e nar* ‘bull’, *made-gav* ‘cow’ (*gav* ‘bovine of either sex’); *narre-div* ‘male demon’.

1. The “intrusive” velar (now generalized and interpreted as euphonic) originates in the MP ending -ag of this class of native nominals. Final velars after *a* and *i* were lost soon after the Arab conquest; see Windfuhr 1997: 686–87; Perry 1991: 13, 190–91.

šir-e made ‘lioness’. Whether the qualifier follows or precedes the head is governed by choice or convention. The word for ‘male’ is nar following the noun, but usually nāre (NRH) before it. For humans the qualifiers are mard ‘man’ and zan ‘woman’, following the noun in ezafe: polis-e zan ‘police-woman’. Lexicalized Arabic feminine forms (characterized by the suffix -e) also occur: elahe ‘goddess’, zaife ‘woman’ (i.e., member of the weaker sex: cf. the adjective zaf ‘weak’).

### 2.2.3. Number

Nouns have two numbers, singular and plural. The singular is given by the unmarked stem. Plurals are marked by the suffixes -ha and -an, of which -ha is universally applicable: čiz-ha ‘things’, doxter-ha ‘girls’, ma’ni-ha ‘ideas’. Specialized both lexically and stylistically, -an denotes humans (doxter-an ‘girls’, nevisandežan ‘writers’; for -g-, see 2.2.1) in formal language: higher animals and some other entities by convention (asban ‘horses’, deraxtan ‘trees’, soxanan ‘words’, axtaran and setaregan ‘stars’) in more elevated writing and poetry; and parts of the body occurring in pairs (laban ‘lips’, časman ‘eyes’, etc.; a relic of the older dual number) in poetry.

Nouns in -a and -u interpose a euphonic y before -an: danayan ‘sages’, danešjuyan ‘students’, with a few exceptions. In these, -an is added directly, optionally reducing the stem-final vowel to -ov-: banu-an or banovan ‘ladies’, bazu-an or bazovan ‘(fore)arms’. Words in -ow form either -owan or -ovan: peyrow-an, peyrovan ‘followers’. The word nia ‘ancestor’ anomalously forms a plural niakan. In some fixed phrases, sal ‘year’ forms salian: salian-e dāraz ‘long years’.

A number of Arabic forms of the plural occur, which are appropriate to the formal register and to varying degrees lexicalized. Participles denoting human males may take the suffix -in: mo’alleman ‘teachers’ (in addition to mo’alleman and mo’allemha). The stem suffix -at is widely used to pluralize Arabic feminine nouns in -e, as well as action nouns and even some Persian and Turkish words: lahje ‘dialect’, pl. lahajat (additionally reflecting an Arabic morphophonemic alternation); tazahor-at ‘demonstrations’; deh-at ‘villages, countryside’; ilat ‘tribes’. A few hybrid collectives are encountered: ruźnamejat ‘newspapers, the press’ < ruźname ‘(daily) newspaper’; sabżijat ‘vegetables, greens’ < sabzi ‘vegetable, salad’ < sabz ‘green’, via an archaized and Arabicized *ruźnamag, *Sabzīg.

The modified-stem plurals of Arabic (“broken plural”)—applied in a few instances to native Persian words—are frequently used in a collective or transferred sense: atraf ‘environs, neighborhood’ (sg. taref ‘side, direction’); banader ‘ports; the Persian Gulf littoral’ (Pers. bandar ‘harbor’). Some have been lexicalized as singulars: arbab ‘landlord, boss’ (pl. arbab-ha ‘bosses’; < Ar. rabb ‘lord’).

Different plurals may be lexically specialized. Thus harf ‘word, remark, statement; letter (of the alphabet)’ → harf-ha ‘remarks, what someone says/said’, horuf ‘letters (of the alphabet)’; sar ‘head’ → sar-ha ‘heads’, sar-an ‘chiefs, leaders’.

The plural suffixes are normally affixed to the noun, before determiners or other grammatical adjuncts; for lexicalized syntagms, see 4.4.
2.2.4. Definiteness and specificity

There are no dedicated definite or indefinite articles in Persian. The categories of definite ~ indefinite and specific ~ non-specific are interdependent with case relations, which are expressed chiefly by syntactic means and exhibit overlapping patterns. Table 1 summarizes the basic possibilities (illustrating the stress patterns): the first line of each category represents the written standard, subsequent lines give other, including colloquial, variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Direct Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sg.</td>
<td>Pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Non-specific</td>
<td>namé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'a letter; letters' (not belonging to the class, e.g., 'book')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Indefinite</td>
<td>namé-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yek namé(-i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'a letter, some letter or other; (some) letters'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Specific</td>
<td>namé-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yek namé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'a (certain) letter; (certain) letters (that I know of)' [first mention]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Definite</td>
<td>(in) namé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(in) name-hé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'the letter; the letters (in question)'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The stem form of the noun alone has two meanings. In subject position, according to context it designates either a definite (4): ketab inja nist ‘the book isn’t here’ (ketab-ha inja nistand ‘the books are not here’), or a non-specific (generic) referent (1): inja ketab nist ‘there are no books here’. The latter is the form (and sense) used after numerals: se ketab daran ‘I have three books’. (Class membership is the issue, and number has already been marked; non-specific name-ha is marked for emphasis of quantity or variety, as name-ha minevisad ‘he writes all kinds of/lots of letters’). In contrast with (4), the object marker is not used.

The definite, or defined, noun (4), connoting old information, obligatorily takes a plural marker and the direct object marker -ra. It may optionally be reinforced with the demonstrative adjectives in ‘this, these’ or an ‘that, those’. In colloquial Persian there is a definite marker, stressed -é (-ýé after -i, -hé after other vowels), which may be appended to a singular: pesar-é umad ‘the boy (in question) came’, tutule-hé mord ‘the puppy died’. A noun is also definite if it is modified by another noun or a pronominal in a nominal ezafe: xane-ye arbab-ra xarab kardand ‘they demolished the landlord’s house’, esm-e u-ra našenaxtand ‘they didn’t recognize his name’. 

Table 1. Definite and specific NPs
An indefinite (non-selective) noun (2) takes enclitic -i or is prefaced by
the numeral yek (colloquially often reduced to ye) functioning as an indef-
inite article; both devices may be combined (esp. in the plural), but as a di-
rect object this category does not take the postposition -ra: čiz-i nāgoftand
‘they didn’t say anything’. A specific noun (3) constitutes information
known to the speaker but introduced for the first time to the listener (in
contrast with a definite noun, the identity of which is known to both).
This category is distinguished by use of -i or yek, but additionally marked
by -ra: so‘al-i-ra daram az šoma ‘I have a question to ask you’.
The enclitic -i generally falls at the end of an ezafe unit: xiaban-e šoluq-
o por-jam‘iyat-i ‘a noisy, crowded street’; in literary usage, however, it is of-
ten attached to the head noun, in which case the ezafe particle is dropped:
omr-i deraz ‘a long life’.

2.2.5. The postposition -ra
The primary function of -ra (spoken variants -ro/-ra, -o/-a) in standard Per-
sian is to mark a definite or specific NP as the direct object of a sentence.
Semantically definite NPs include proper nouns, those modified by demon-
strative or personal pronominals, and those so denoted by the enclitic -é or
the context (table 1). It is placed after all other suffixes, enclitics and mod-
ifiers: yek raft-qa-i-ra didam ‘I saw some friends’, maššin-e xub-č-š-ra foruxt ‘he
sold his good car’. When two or more nouns form the object of the same
verb, -ra is placed once at the end of the string: medad-o qal-š-eš-ra kaqaz-ra
vel kard ‘he dropped the pencil, pen, and paper’. The postposition can be
placed at the end of quite long and complex modifiers, such as partitive and
other prepositional phrases, provided the focal NP of the modifier is defi-
nite: taxallof az avam-e moqarrarat-e nezam-ra jayez nemi-danad ‘he does
not permit himself any infraction of military rules and regulations’.
An earlier and probably fundamental function of -ra was that of focus,
in which the NP so marked could have a status other than that of object:
it would be individuated or otherwise highlighted in the sentence. Some
such usages survive in modern Persian. Thus in elevated style -ra may
mark a substantive as dative in the possessive idiom: u-ra doxtar-i bud ‘she
had a daughter’. Dative and other predicative relations are seen in frozen
forms such as xoda-ra šokr ‘thank God’, qaza-ra ‘by chance’, and in (collo-
quial) bače-ha-ro če kar konam? ‘what should I do about the children?’
Though the verb is intransitive, the phrase bače-ha-ro constitutes the ob-
ject of any eventual action to be taken. Some expressions of time (both
punctual and of completed duration) are marked with -ra: zohr-ra nam-o
piaz xord ‘at noon she ate bread and onions’; tamam-e šab-ra naxabidam ‘I
didn’t sleep the whole night’.

2.2.6. The vocative
In spoken Persian, the vocative is indicated by intonation, i.e., a higher
tone and primary stress on the first syllable of the title or name: áqa ‘sir!’,
fate-jun ‘Fatemeh dear!’ Exclamatory particles, which may be used alone or
preposed with a term of address, are ahay, aya, ey. The last is also the usual
vocative particle in literary Persian: ey pesar ‘O son!’ Solemn address is
marked by a suffix -a/ya, seen in a few frozen forms: ālāhazrat-a ‘(your) majesty!’, xōla-ya ‘O God’.

2.3. Adjectives

Adjectives may be used as attributes, predicates and adverbs. In no case do they vary for number, or show agreement with any other properties of the head, unless themselves substantivized: golha-ye qāšāng ‘lovely flowers’, in gol-ha qāšāng ‘and these flowers are lovely’, aks-ha-ye šoma qāšāng dar amade ‘your pictures have turned out lovely’; but kuček-ha-yeš behtar-ast ‘the small ones are better’ (lit., the smalls-of-it). A marginal exception is afforded by a pedantic affectation of Arabic grammar in formal style (now confined to a few fixed expressions), whereby attributive adjectives of Arabic origin agree with “feminine” or plural nouns (whether etymologically Arabic or not): xanom-e mohtārāme ‘Dear Madam’, omur-e xarej ‘foreign affairs’.

Attributive adjectives normally follow their head, in ezafe construction (2.1.1). Some common adjectives when used affectively may precede the head, without the ezafe particle: bičare pesar-am ‘my poor boy!’, xub ja-i oftade-i ‘a fine place you’ve gotten into’ (appreciative or ironic). An adverbial modifying an adjective precedes it: xeyli xub ‘very good’, mas’ale-ye besyar mohemm-i or mas’ale-ši besyar mohemm ‘a very important matter’. For emphasis of a predicative NP, an expressive adverb may be fronted, outside the ezafe phrase: xeyli bače-ye xubi-st ‘he’s a very good kid’, ajab lebas-e zešt ast ‘what an obscene outfit!’ (ajab ‘strange, wonder[ful]’); similar is the clefted relative construction in tanha čiz-i ke did mar-e morde-i bud ‘the only thing (that) he saw was a dead snake’.

2.3.1. Characteristic morphology

Verbal participles (4.3.3) and adjectives derived by prefixation (4.2) and suffixation (4.3.2) comprise the only morphologically distinct class of native adjectives. Arabic collocations supply many adjectives: fowq ol-’ade ‘extraordinary’, sabeq oz-zekr and mošaron ‘eleyh ‘aforementioned’, zu hāyeyn ‘amphibious, amphibian’.

2.3.2. Comparison of adjectives

The comparative degree is obtained by suffixing -tār: bozorg-tar ‘bigger’, kalā-ha-ye arzan-tar ‘cheaper goods’. The standard of comparison is usually introduced by az ‘from’, either preceding or following the comparative: an doxtar az in (yeki) kuček-tar ast ‘that girl is smaller than this (one)’, man zud-tar az šoma amadam ‘I came earlier than you’. The comparative of xub ‘good’ is usually behtar ‘better’; of besyar (xeyli, ziad) ‘much, many’, it is bištār. However, xub-tar and ziad-tar also occur. A short form biš is used adverbially: biš az piš ‘more than before’. Qualifying adverbs may precede the comparative: xeyli behtar az an ‘much better than that’, be-maratb kam-tar ‘considerably fewer/less’ (lit., by multiples). In comparing VPs or clauses rather than NPs, the conjunction ta introduces the standard: bištār pul be-man dad ta be-u ‘he gave more money to me than to him’.

The superlative is obtained by suffixing -tarin: bozorg-tarin ‘biggest, greatest’. As an attribute, this is most often preposed to the head noun,
without *ezafe*: *behtar* kafe-ye šahr ‘the best café in town’; *zerangtar* pesaran ‘the smartest boys’. It may be substantivized and followed by a partitive *ezafe*: *zerangtar*-e pesaran ‘the smartest (one) of the boys’. The superlative is expressed predicatively as a universal comparative: *in gaza az hame xošnazarast* ‘this dish is the tastiest’ (lit., tastier than all).

‘The -est possible’ or, adverbially, ‘as ____ as possible’ is expressed by the phrase *har che*-tār ‘whatever is -er’: *maqale-i har che kutahtar* ‘as short an article as possible’, *har che zudtar beya* ‘come as soon as possible’. If the relevant adjective has been incorporated in a nominal idiom, the all-purpose phrase *har che tamantar* is used: *be-zudi-ye har che tamantar* ‘with the greatest (lit., most complete) promptness’.

2.4. Adverbs

Adverbs are primarily identical with, or derived from, nouns or adjectives. They may be modified like adjectives (*zudtār biya* ‘come soonest’ [lit., sooner], and also function, with or without modification, as prepositions and conjunctions (see below). The only morphologically unique class of adverbs consists of a few dozen mainly manner and sentence adverbs, the Arabic “*tanwin* accusative” loans ending in -an (orthographically, in final Ą): e.g., *rasman* ‘officially’ (cf. the loanword *rasm* ‘custom, formality’), *nesbatan* ‘relatively’, *vaqe’an* ‘really, actually’. This -an is productive, forming adverbs even from Persian nouns, as *janan* ‘whole-hearted’. (Etymologically of the same class is *hala* ‘now’, though disguised by a spelling-pronunciation.)

2.4.1. Nominal adverbs

Adverbs of time and place are frequently expressed by original nouns, which in a punctual or stative sense are not normally governed by a preposition: *šab umadand* ‘they came at night’, *pain raft* ‘he went down(stairs)’. Noun-adverbs combine readily with demonstratives: *in-ja* ‘here’ (this place), *an-vaqt* ‘then’ (that time), and with prepositions and/or the *ezafe*, many forming the basis for secondary prepositions (2.7.2): *fehrest-raj bala be-pain xand* ‘he read the list from top to bottom; he read down the list’. The plural connotes approximation or iteration: *ba’d-ha* ‘afterwards, later’ (cf. *ba’d* ‘then, next’), *bala-ha bayad bašad* ‘it must be upstairs somewhere’.

Several adverbs of time or place (esp. some semantically complex ones) are derivatives or compounds of earlier forms: *nazdik* ‘near’ (nazd ‘near’, now archaic, + adjectival suffix), *diruz* ‘yesterday’ (< dī ‘yesterday’), *pasfarad* ‘the day after tomorrow’, *parišab* ‘the night before last’, *parsal* ‘last year’, *pirarsal* ‘the year before last’, *piramun* ‘round about, in the vicinity’. A comparatively recent borrowing (from a Mongolian word meaning ‘bridle’), *jelow* ‘ahead, before, in front’, is widely used in various idioms: *jelow-tār* ‘further ahead’, *az—jelow-giri kardan* ‘to anticipate, prevent something’ (lit., make fore-taking from; cf. 5.2.2, #5). Other nominal adverbial idioms are: *ruz-e ba’d* ‘(on) the next day’, *hamin hala/al’iin* ‘right now, just now’ (lit., this very now; cf. 2.5.4), *az hala be-ba’d* ‘from now on’, *dast-e rast/cap
2.4.2. Adjectival adverbs

Adverbs identical with, or originating in, adjectives are mostly of manner: 
*tanha* ‘only’, *dast-e jami* collectively, together’, *tond* ‘quickly, rashly, impetuously’, *ahaste* (formal register), *yavaš* (colloquial) ‘slowly, softly’, *boland* ‘aloud, loud(ly); e.g., če *xub avaz mixan* ‘how well she sings!’ A common extension of the base adjective, however, is to use the appropriate quality noun (4.3.1, #1) with the preposition *be*:

*be-xubi avaz mixan* ‘she sings well’. A common adverbial periphrasis uses *towr* ‘manner, way’ or a synonym such as *tarz*: *be-towr-e mehr az ma pazinai kardan* ‘they received us kindly’ (lit., in a kind manner).

Intensifying adverbs, which qualify adjectives or other adverbs, are the quantifying adjectives (and pronominals) *xeyli, besyar, ziad* ‘very, much, many’: *xeyli tond harf miz* ‘he speaks very fast/rapidly’, *xeyli xub* ‘very good, very well, all right’. *Besyar* tends to be literary in usage, *xeyli* more colloquial; *ziad* may have the connotation ‘too (much)’: *ziad harf mizan* ‘he talks a lot/too much’. In a negative sentence—like the quantifiers *an-qadr* and *can-dan* ‘so (much)’—it generally connotes ‘[not] so/too/that (much)’, i.e., is euphemistic for the opposite polarity: *film ziad/anqadr/candan jaleb nabud* ‘the movie wasn’t all that interesting’.

2.4.3. Other adverbs

The sentential adverb *šayad* ‘maybe, perhaps’ derives from a defective modal auxiliary verb *šayest* ‘to be fitting’ (3.5.3): *šayad emruz nemi-ayad* ‘maybe he won’t come today’.

A number of sentential and other adverbs originate in Arabic collocations (apart from the *tanwin* accusatives): *albatte* ‘of course’, *hatta-l-emkan, hatta-l-maqdur* ‘as far as possible’, *ala-l-xosus* ‘especially’.

The adjective *díger* (díjé) ‘other’, and the particle *ke* (see 2.8.6) may in colloquial Persian follow an utterance, or the first constituent of an utterance, as indignant asseveratives: *ma ke in kar-ra n*  *k*  *adi* ‘we weren’t the ones who did it’*, *manzel budam dije ‘I was at home, wasn’t I?’

2.5. Pronominals

2.5.1. Personal pronouns: General

There are two series of personal pronouns, an independent and an enclitic series, as shown in table 2 (colloquial reflexes in parenthesis):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Personal pronouns</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 u, vey</td>
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<td>4 an (un)</td>
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‘on the right/left (hand, side)’, *zir-o zabar kardan* ‘to turn upside down’ (lit., make below-and-above).
There is no systematic gender distinction in third person pronouns: \( u \) and its high-style variant \( vey \), and their plural \( isan \), are marked (+ human), but denote persons of either sex. The forms \( an \) and \( anha \) denote non-humans in literary Persian, but may be used to indicate humans in the spoken language. The enclitics \(-a\), \(-esan \) refer to humans of either sex and non-humans. In spoken Persian \( isan \) is reserved for polite reference to a third person singular, \( anha \) for more than one person or thing.

In the second person, the singular in either series is reserved for informal or familiar address to one person (relative, friend, social inferior), and the plural for formal or polite address to one person and either formal or informal address to more than one. Plural use is unambiguously indicated in colloquial usage by addition of the plural suffix, as \( somaha \).

First person plural forms may colloquially denote the singular, ‘I’, out of modesty; in the independent series, plurality is again indicated in colloquial by the plural suffix.

**2.5.2. Independent personal pronouns**

Syntactically, the independent pronouns behave like nouns. They may be objects of verbs and prepositions, and occur as the second constituent of a nominal \( ezafe \): \( u-ra didim ‘we saw him/her’ \), \( az ma rad\(d \)odand ‘they passed by us’\), \( an-ra be-man n\(a\)d\(a\)d ‘he didn’t give it to me’ \), \( xane-ye man ‘my house’ \). In formal Persian the object form \( man-ra \) is often written (and always pronounced as) \( mana \); a common colloquial reflex is \( man-o \). In literary Persian, a euphonic \( d \) may intervene between the preposition \( be- \) and a pronoun beginning with a vowel: \( be-u \) or \( bedu ‘to him/her’ \), \( bedan ‘to it’ \), \( bed\(i\)s\(a\)n ‘to them’ \). As NP heads, the independent pronouns are normally juxtaposed in apposition to the qualifier: \( ma do\(n\)a\(f\)ar ‘we two persons’\), \( soma iraniha ‘you Iranians’ \); the first person singular may take an \( ezafe \), as in \( man-e bi\(c\)are ‘poor me’ \).

Possession is expressed predicatively by substitution of the dummy \( mal \) (lit., property) for the head noun in \( ezafe \) construction with an independent pronoun: \( in xane man-e man ast ‘this house is mine’ \), \( mal-e u ko\(j\)a-st ‘where’s his?’

The first person may be expressed in formal language by a self-abasing polite periphrasis, as \( bande \) (lit., slave) or \( ha\(q\)ir (lit., lowly) ‘your humble servant’, and the second person (pl.) by an other-enhancing periphrasis, as \( jenab-e ali or sarkar ‘your excellency’ \).

The universal personal pronoun, ‘one’, is commonly expressed by \( adam \) ‘person’ with a 3sg. verb: \( adam intowr r\(a\)ftar n\(em\)\(i\)\(kon\)\(ad \)‘one doesn’t behave like that’. Unidentified ‘they’ or ‘people’ in general is expressed by 3pl. verb inflection alone (3.3).

**2.5.3. Pronominal enclitics**

Enclitics are buffered by \(-y- \) after a back vowel (\( jel\(o\)-ye\(š \) ‘in front of him/her/it’, \( ketab\(h\)ā-yet\(a\)n ‘your books’); in colloquial speech, both this and the following vowel are generally elided (\( jel\(o\)-\(š \), \( ketab\(h\)ā-tun \)). After a substantive ending in \(-e \) (historically, \(-a\)), the enclitic is introduced orthographically by \( a \) and the two vowels merge into \([á] \) (\( xan\(a\)-\(š \), \( xun\(a\)-\(š \) ‘his/her house’).
The pronominal enclitic has the following positions and functions, the first two being common to the modern written language and other registers, the remainder more or less specialized as noted.

1. Attached to a NP (including a “secondary preposition,” 2.3.2), it is generally equivalent to a possessive or partitive ezafe as used with the corresponding independent pronoun: pá-yeš ‘his/her/its foot/leg’ (~pa-ye u, pa-ye an); pedar-etan-ra didim ‘we saw your father’ (~pedar-e šoma-ra didim); barázeman ‘for us’ (~bara-ye ma); ba’zı-ešan ‘some of them’ (~ba’zı-e anha).

2. Attached to a transitive verb (the finite form of simplex verb, the preverbal element of a compound), an enclitic assumes the function of direct object, equivalent to an independent pronoun + ra: senid-am-at ‘I heard you’ (~to-ra šenidam), bar-eš dašt ‘he picked it up’. In modern literary Persian, the independent forms are normally preferred. In Classical Persian (esp. verse), and modern colloquial Persian, the enclitic as direct object may be attached to other constituents of the clause: man-at beguyam ‘I’ll tell you’, be-iran-at borde ‘he took you to Iran’.

3. In Classical and colloquial, the enclitic may function as an indirect object or situational patient (cf. this use of -ra in 2.2.5): bogu biad tu ‘tell him to come in’ (= be-u bogu . . .); če-t-e? ‘what’s the matter with you?’ (i.e., če-at hast). In a few common impersonal idioms (also in written Persian) a personal enclitic in this “ethic dative” function is attached to a preverbal element, as in #2, of a verb expressing the modality of a physical or mental experience (šodan ‘to become’, amadan ‘to come’, budan ‘to be’, raftan ‘to go’; cf. 5.2):
   a. sard-at hast? ‘are you cold?’; garm-am šod ‘I’m hot’ (it became hot for me).
   b. xoš-am miyad ‘I like it’ (it comes pleasant to me); az an bad-eš amad ‘he disliked it’ (the cause of the experience is introduced by the preposition az ‘from’).
   c. yad-eman míst ‘we don’t remember’ (memory to-us is not); yad-am amad ‘(now) I remember’ (memory came . . .), mahı yad-ešan raft ‘they forgot the fish’.

4. In colloquial, the third person enclitic may also function as a (redundant) subject marker: goft-eš ke . . . ‘he said . . .’; anma meymun-é, u dust-eš dašt-eš ‘but the ape, he loved her’ (the first -eš, attached to the meaningful element of the verbal complex, represents the object—dust-eš dašt ‘he loved her’ would be complete in itself; the second -eš, attached to the auxiliary, resumes the subject already expressed by u and latent in dašt).

5. Colloquially, the enclitics may be objects of prepositions, which is not countenanced in written Persian: be-š goftam ke . . . ‘I told him . . .’ (= be-u goftam); az-am na-gereft ‘she didn’t take (it) from me’; this may trigger an intrusive/h/, as in be-h-etun či đad? ‘what did he give you?’
2.5.4. Reflexive pronouns

There are three reflexive pronouns, the substantives xod (spelled XWD) and the archaizing xiştan (XYSTN) ‘(one)self’, and the possessive xiš (XYŠ; < xwēš ‘kin’) ‘his, her, its, of oneself’. They are applicable to all persons. Xiš is confined to the literary language, and used only in a possessive ezafe: ba rād-e xiš-rā koştān ‘I killed my brother’. Xod as such is also found chiefly in formal Persian; informal and colloquial usage prefers to combine it with the pertinent personal enclitic (xod-a, xod-at, etc.). It has three uses.

1. As an emphatic adjunct to a noun or pronoun, it may either follow the head: Ḥoseyn xod (Ḥoseyn xodeš) ‘H. himself’, ẓoma xod (ẓoma xoletan) ‘you yourself’, or precede it in ezafe construction: xod-e Ḥoseyn, xod-e ẓoma; xoletan.

2. As a reflexive pronoun: xod-rā koştān (xošēšan-ra/xošēsun-o koştān) ‘they killed themselves’, ba xod goftim ‘we said to ourselves’. Xod as such is also found chiefly in formal Persian; informal and colloquial usage prefers to combine it with the pertinent personal enclitic (xod-a, xod-at, etc.). It has three uses.

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3. As a possessive, in reference to the subject of its own clause: angōštar-e xod-rā anadxtam ‘I threw away my ring’. In this use, xod in third person reference serves (in common with the independent personal pronouns) to specify referents that would be ambiguous if referenced with -eš/-es an. Compare:

ketab-e xod-rā foruxt ‘he sold his (own) book’;
ketab-e u-rā foruxt ‘he (A) sold his (B’s) book’;
ketab-eš-rā foruxt ‘he sold his (own) book’, or ‘he (A) sold his (B’s) book’.

2.5.5. Coordinate and reciprocal pronouns

‘Other’ is the adjective digar: doxtar-e digar ‘the other girl’, čiz-e digar-i or čiz-i digar ‘another thing, something else’. (‘Another’ in the sense ‘additional’ is expressed by the adverbial baz ham ‘again’: baz ham yek qahve biar ‘bring another coffee’.) ‘The one . . . the other’ is an . . . in (colloquial, an yeki . . . in yeki). Yekdigar ‘one another’ or hamdigar ‘each other’ are used as in English: yekdigar-ra mišenasand ‘they know each other’, az hamdigar mitarand ‘they are afraid of one another’. Particularly in prepositional phrases, and in spoken Persian, ham alone may be used: dar moqabel-e ham nešāstand ‘they sat facing each other’, az negaranīha-ye ham xabar darand ‘they are aware of each other’s problems’, pošt-e sar-e ham ‘in single file’ (back of the head of each other).

2.5.6. Demonstrative pronouns

Persian has a two-term deictic system, the basic forms being in ‘this’ and an ‘that’. As adjectives these are preposed and invariable: in pēsar ‘this boy’, an xane-ha ‘those houses’. As pronouns they may take plural suffixes: in-an ‘these (people)’, in-ha ‘these (things/people)’; anan, anha are similarly distributed. The colloquial language uses only inha (ina) and anha (una), and for singular reference usually in yeki ‘this one’ or an/un yeki ‘that one’.

These are fairly weak demonstratives; anha is regularly used for the pronoun ‘they’, and as adjectives in and, especially, an may function as little more than definite articles: an mard-i-ke diruz amad ‘the man who came
yesterday'. Thus they readily attract emphasis by means of the prefix ham-:
manzur-am hamin-ast ‘this is what I mean’. Properly emphatic uses include
hamin emruz ‘this very day’, haman gorg-e sefid ‘that very same white wolf’.
Demonstratives form several common adverbs, similarly capable of em-
phasis: in-ja ‘here’, haminja ‘right here’, haman vaqt ‘just then, at that very
time’.

Similarly compounded are the adjective-adverbs čand-in, čand-an ‘as/so
(much)’ and čonin (čenin) and čonan (čenan) (< čun in, etc., ‘like this’): čonin
pahlavan-i ‘such a champion’, čonan goft ‘he spoke thus’; these may be re-
inforced with an (ančenin, ančenan). The emphatic ham-čonin, ham-čonan
‘thus; likewise’ function as adverbs: pesar-ra hamčonin gušmal dad ‘he pun-
ished the boy as well’.

2.5.7. Interrogatives
The common interrogative pronouns are ke (ki) ‘who?’ (pl. ki-an, ki-ha:
kiha amadand? ‘who(-all) came?’); če (či) ‘what?’ (pl. če-ha); kodam (pl.
kodam-ha) ‘which?’ The last two are also (preposed) adjectives: in če mardi-
st? ‘what man is this?’; kodam ruz mi-aid? ‘which day are you coming?’
As a singular pronoun, kodam yek/-yeki ‘which one?’ is the preferred form.

Interrogative adverbs are koja ‘where’ (< ku ‘where’ + ja ‘place’); also a
noun, as in koja-ra didi ‘where (what place) did you see?’ dar koja-ha budid
‘whereabouts have you been?’ (in what places . . .); key ‘when?’ (which
may be modified by prepositions: az key inja hastid? ‘since when have you
been here?’); ta key mi-manid? ‘until when will you be staying?’; čera ‘why?’

Common compounds functioning as adverb-nouns are: če vaqt ‘when?’,
če-towr ‘how?’ (what manner), če-qadr ‘how much?’ (for such quantifiers,
see 2.6.3).

2.5.8. Indefinite pronouns
The main simple pronoun-adjectives are yek ‘one’, hič ‘any(thing)’; ‘no,
one, nothing’, har ‘each’, hame ‘every’; these in combination with the in-
definite enclitic -i and various nouns (notably kas and šasx ‘person’, čiz
‘thing’) form a variety of indefinite and universal qualifiers. Thus yek-i,
(yek) kas-i, (yek) šasx-i ‘someone’, (yek) čiz-i ‘something’, (yek) ja-i ‘some-
where’, (yek) vaqt-i ‘sometime’; these phrases may be negated (except those
involving yek), to mean ‘no one’, etc.: kasi na-y-amad ‘nobody came’.

1. Used in negative and interrogative sentences, hič as a pronoun does
not usually take any modifier, though -i may be added colloquially:
hič (hič-i) nemī-danad ‘he knows nothing’; hič goftīd? ‘did you say
something/anything?’ As an adjective it is preposed and takes the
stress in the NP: hič-kas nist ‘there’s no one there/it’s nobody’. It
tends to be emphatic in affirmative (and some negative and inter-
rogative) contexts: ja-i narafti? ‘didn’t you go anywhere?’; hič ja-i
narafti? ‘didn’t you go anywhere (at all)?’ With yek and kodam ‘each’
it means ‘none’ of a specified set: hič-yek(-i) (az anha) nayamad ‘none
(of them) came’; hič kodam az ma-ra našenæxt ‘he didn’t recognize
any of us’. It is also an adverb: hič anja naraftam ‘I never went there/
didn’t go there at all’, hič xub nist ‘it’s no good at all’. ‘Never’ in reference strictly to time is hič-vaqt (less formal than hargez).  
2. The distributive adjective har governs a singular, and in combination with ke ‘who’, če ‘what’ and some common nouns means ‘whoever, whatever’, etc.: har ruz ‘each day, every day’; har ke in-ra goft divane bud ‘whoever said that was crazy’; har če bašad xub ast ‘whatever it is/there is, it’s good’ (here with the subjunctive, as befits a non-referential clause); similarly, har vaqt ‘any/each/every time, whenever’, har ja ‘everywhere, wherever’; har yeki ‘each one’, har do ‘both’, har se ‘all three’.  
3. The pronoun hame by itself usually means ‘everyone, all (persons)’, and is construed as plural: hame raftand ‘Everyone went; they all left’, hame-ra košt ‘he killed them all’. As an adjective it is construed with the ezafe or a pronominal enclitic, in the sense ‘all of’, and is singular or plural in accordance with its head noun: hame-ye alam ‘the whole world’, hame-ye zan-ha ‘all women; all (of) the women’, hame-ye šoma, hame-yetan (hamá-tum) ‘all of you’. It may also follow the head noun: šoma hame mi-danid ‘you all know’, as also adverbially in the sense ‘completely’: nan hame talaf`sod ‘the bread was all wasted’. Colloquially, it is often replaced by tamam ‘complete(ly)’, with the same syntax: tamam-e donya ‘the whole world’.  
4. ‘Some, certain’ is most commonly expressed by ba’zi and the more literary báxi, which originate in Ar. ba’d and MP barx ‘some’ with the indefinite enclitic -i. As adjectives they precede the head (singular or plural, according as it is a collective or a count noun): barxi mardom ‘some people’, ba’zi mard-ha ‘some men’. As a pronoun it may itself take the plural suffix -ha: ba’zi(-ha) miguyand ‘some say’. (Xéyli ‘much, many’ likewise originates in Ar. xayl ‘troop’ and uses the same syntax; see further under 2.6.3).  
5. To avoid specifying irrelevant or prolix details, the Arabic loan folan, felan ‘such-and-such’ (pronoun and adjective) and its derivative folani, felani ‘so-and-so’ (pronoun) are useful: folan šahr ‘such-and-such a city’, zan-e folani ‘so-and-so’s wife’.  

2.5.9. Relative pronouns  
There are no dedicated relative pronouns in Persian. General relative clauses are introduced by the complementizer ke ‘that’, and if necessary the argument is resumed by a pronominal copy (independent or enclitic) of the antecedent: zan-i ke u-ra didam ‘the woman (whom) I saw’.  

2.6. Numerals and expressions of quantity  

2.6.1. Cardinal numbers  
Other numbers are sef ‘zero’, melyun or milyun ‘million’, korur ‘crore’ (500,000; Indo-Persian usage). Compound numbers are construed from highest to lowest with the connective enclitic -o. They are written in eastern Arabic numerals (called arqam-e hendi ‘Indian numerals’) from left to right.
Numbers precede the enumerated item, which is normally in the singular, without ezafe: *haft-sad safhe* 'seven hundred pages'. In counting discrete objects, one of several nouns may intervene as numeratives (originally, classifiers); the most common are *ta* (lit., 'fold'), used for non-humans in literary Persian, but applied also to humans in colloquial: *se ta pi* 'three screws', *punz-dar ta polis* 'fifteen policemen'; *nafar* 'person' and *tan* 'body', for persons: *haft nafar dañśju* 'seven students'; and *dane* (dune) 'grain', generally applied to one item: *yek dane ketab* 'one book', *ye dune polis* 'one policeman'. These are optional in modern written Persian, but very frequent in colloquial. They are obligatory when the enumerated item is not mentioned: *dand ta darid?* 'How many do you have?'—*se ta* 'three'.

Enumerated items are occasionally found in the plural, as referring to a well-known or previously indicated collectivity: *haft tanan* 'the seven sages' (a cemetery shrine). Numbers themselves may be pluralized when indicating orders of magnitude: *sad-ha nafar* 'hundreds of people'; note also *hezaran hezar* 'thousands upon thousands'.

The same effect is achieved in the formal register by use of the multipli-cative adjectival suffix, *-gane*: *anaser-e čahar-gane* 'the four (lit., fourfold) elements'.

The numeral phrase may be treated syntactically like any other NP; as the object, it does not take *-ra* unless defined by an appropriate qualifier (2.2.5): *panj ta sandevič-e zabar xarid* 'he bought five tongue sandwiches'; *in do ta-ra nemi-šenasam* 'I don’t know these two'; *az in se taš xoš-am nemi-ayad* 'I don’t like these three' (see 2.5.3, #3; the partitive enclitic *-[ye]š* 'of it' refers to a contextual collectivity).

### 2.6.2. Ordinals

Ordinal adjectives are formed by suffixing *-om* to the cardinal, and are postposed with ezafe: *dars-e čaharom* 'the fourth lesson, lesson four'; *ruz-e yazdahom-e ziarat-e ma* '(on) the eleventh day of our pilgrimage'. Some anomalies: *yekom* is normally used only with compounds (*bist-o yekom* 'twenty-first') and some specialized terms such as military ranks; it is replaced generally by the Arabic loan *avval* or, in formal usage, the Persian
noxost, naxost ‘first’. ‘Last, final’ is axar. ‘Second’ and ‘third’ have variant forms: dovom, doyyom; sevvom, seyyom. These ordinals may function adverbially: avval, nahar bo-xorim ‘first(ly), let’s eat lunch’.

A second series of ordinal adjectives is formed by addition of -in to the word in -om. These are preposed, without ezafe, and designate that item which is so far the latest in the series or is otherwise salient or unique in a series, e.g., an anniversary: sadomin sal-e vafat-e anhazrat ‘the hundredth anniversary of his death’; cf. avvalin daf’e/noxostin bar ‘the first time (of all)’, axaran salha-ye xanedan ‘the last (final) years of the dynasty’. (In morphology, syntax and semantics, this series recalls the superlative form: 2.3.2).

An ordinal pronoun may be formed by suffixing stressed -i to the ordinal in -om: avvali ‘the first one’, dovomi, axari, etc.

In more formal registers, an Arabic adjectival form may be used for the first few ordinals (in addition to avval): sani ‘second’, sales ‘third’. In their tanwin form (2.4) these may be used adverbially: saniy ‘secondly’.

2.6.3. Other quantifiers and expressions of quantity

A number of interrogative and indefinite adjectives and pronouns show structural affinities with numerals. Such are cand ‘how much/many; some, a few’; cand (ta) eks gereftid? ‘how many pictures did you take?’; cand naftar amandand ‘a few people came’. Che-qadr ‘how much?’ is for mass nouns: cheqadr nam? ‘how much bread?’; (ham-in-qadr ‘this much’, an-qadr ‘that much, so much’, xeyli, besyar, ziad ‘a lot, much, many, greatly’ all precede the noun quantified without ezafe, as do nouns of quantity such as meqdar ‘quantity, amount’, nablq ‘sum’, qete ‘piece’, and nouns of type (classifiers) such as towr, jur and now’ in contexts of enumeration or contrast: se qudre xun ‘three drops of blood’, in jur šarab ‘this kind of wine’, te now’ kala ‘what sort of goods?’; but now’e bašar ‘the human species’.

Fractions are expressed using the ordinals: se ḍaharam ‘three quarters’. An Arabic form is also used for the simpler fractions: se rob’ ‘three quarters’, do sols ‘two thirds’. ‘Half’ is nim (se-vor nimm ‘three-and-a-half’), which as an attributive is preposed without ezafe (nim sa’at ‘half an hour’), or the Arabic loan nesf, preposed with ezafe (nesf-e raz ‘half the day, a half day’). Both are more often used as nouns (nim in the derived form nime) in a partitive construction, e.g., nime-i az šab ‘half the night’ (contrast nim-šab ‘at midnight’); nesf-i az an ‘(a) half of it’.

Distributives simply juxtapose the numerals: do do ‘two by two, in twos’; in the case of yek, the indefinite enclitic is added: yeki yeki ‘ singly, one at a time’.

2.7. Prepositions

Prepositions are the principal means of expressing case relations in Persian. Early New Persian also used ambipositions (be-xak bar ‘upon the earth’, be-dež andar ‘inside the fortress’). Many compound prepositions have been derived from nouns and adverbs.
2.7.1. Primary prepositions

Persian has only eight primary (six etymologically primitive) prepositions in general use. These are be ‘at, to, in, by’ (dative, locative, directional, instrumental); dar ‘in(to)’; az ‘from, through, along’; ba ‘with’ (comitative, instrumental, concessive); ta ‘up to, until’; čun ‘like, as’; joz ‘except’ (historically, be-joz-e, < Ar. juz ‘part’); and bara(-ye) ‘for’ which, while structurally it belongs with the secondary (derived) prepositions, is an opaque unit and used very freely in a variety of idioms. Marginally productive is bar ‘(up)on, over, against’, which appears chiefly in the literary language, in compounds and fixed idioms: če bar sare u gozašt? ‘what happened to him?’ (lit., passed upon his head), bar an irad gereftand ‘they objected to it’.

The Classical and literary bi ‘without’ is no longer active as a preposition, though it is a productive prefix (see 4.2).

The preposition be (historically, ba; orthographically, BH) is frequently joined to the following word in writing (B-). It characteristically introduces the indirect object: be-u goftam ‘I told him, said to him’, an-ra be-ma dadand ‘they gave it to us’. As a locative it is used figuratively, in abstract expressions and idioms: be-ja ‘appropriate’ (‘in place’), be-nazar-e man ‘in my view’, be-farsi ‘in Persian’. As a directional it is used in both material and figurative contexts: be-iran ‘to Iran’, u-ra be-marg mahkum kardand ‘they sentenced him to death’. As the vaguest and most neutral of prepositions, it is often omitted colloquially (xane ‘at home, (to) home’, Tehran raft ‘he went to Tehran’) and may be joined suppletively to other prepositions or adverbs (see below).

Dar is widely used as a material and figurative locative and directional: dar bank ‘in/at the bank’, dar in surat ‘in this case’, dar zahmat oftad ‘he got into trouble’. Examples of idiomatic uses of the other prepositions in this group are: az panjare birun parit ‘he jumped out of/through the window’; ba otobus raftim ‘we went by bus’, ba in hame, nemiarzad ‘for/despite all this, it isn’t worth it’; ta (be-)deh ziad fasele nadarad ‘it isn’t far to the village’, ta nimi-šab kar kardim ‘we worked until midnight’ (ta is also a conjunction: see 2.8.5); šahri čun behešt ‘a city like paradise’, rais čun namayande-ye kargaran amade bud ‘the manager had come as representative of the workers’ (for čun as a conjunction, see 2.8.4); joz man-o soma, hame hazer budand ‘everyone was there except you and me’. Basically benefactive, bara-ye is often used colloquially as a dative: in-o bara-ye ma dadan(d)/ferestadan(d) ‘they gave/sent it to us’, and with an infinitive or other action noun to express purpose: bara-ye šena raftam ‘I went swimming/to a swim/to swim’.

2.7.2. Derived prepositions

Persian has a variety of prepositional phrases made up of nouns, NPs and adverbs (many borrowed from Arabic) in ezafe construction with their object and/or in combination with simple prepositions. Common examples are piš ‘before’, combining as follows: (dar) piš-e xane-ye xod istad ‘he stopped in front of his house’, piš-e doktor raftam ‘I went to see the doctor’, kar-e šoma piš-e ostad aržeš nadarad ‘your work is worthless in the professor’s
eyes’ (place and its metaphors); piš az zohr (~qabl az zohr) ‘before noon’ (time). Similar to the former structure are: tu-ye (colloquially, tu) ‘in(to), inside’, (dar) mian-e ‘between, among’, (dar) pošt-e ‘behind, in back of’, dar moqabel-e ‘facing, vis-à-vis’, jelow-ye (jelow-e) ‘in front of, ahead of’ (see also 2.4.1), mesl-e ‘like, similar to’, be-vasile-ye and tavasot-e ‘by means of’; and to the latter: pas az/ba’id az ‘after’ (time), birun az ‘outside (of)’, raje ‘about, concerning’, nesbat be- ‘in relation to, with regard to’, bana bar ‘according to’.

These elements may decompose into an adverbial and a simple preposition. Thus hamrah ‘companion’ (noun), ‘together’ (adverb) may give: hamrah-e man bia ‘come along with me’ and ba padshah hamrah budand ‘they accompanied the king’. Directionals (especially az) may combine with nouns and adverbs to specify the kind of motion: az zir-e miz dair ‘it ran out from under the table’ (or ‘under the table’, i.e., from one side to the other; contrast dar zir-e miz raf ‘it went underneath the table’—and stayed there); az bala-ye kuh parvaz kardand ‘they flew over the mountain’; bar faraz-e pol taxt ‘he charged across the bridge’.

2.8. Conjunctions

Conjunctions may be classed morphologically as simple or complex, and syntactically as universal (coordinating conjunctions which may connect NPs as well as VPs and sentences), reciprocating, and sentence subordinating. A few simple conjunctions are morphologically identical with prepositions, but most are derived from compound adverb-prepositions.

2.8.1. Universal conjunctions

va/-o (after a back vowel, -vo) ‘and’ has two sources, the MP enclitic -o/-vo for linking nominals, and the Arabic proclitic wa-, a universal conjunction. In modern Persian, only va is used between sentences, whereas in colloquial -o/-vo may also link clauses and sentences: ma-vo šoma ‘we and you’, raf/o raft ‘he went on and on’.

The versatile ham ‘also, even, as for’ (which as an adverb follows the focal NP) may function as a conjunction. As an enclitic to the subject it coordinates sentences after a change of subject: moallem vared šod, bačeha-ham pa šodand ‘the teacher came in and the children stood up’.

2.8.2. Reciprocating conjunctions

As a reciprocal, ham . . . ham ‘both . . . and’ may introduce NPs, VPs or sentences: ham alef ham be ‘both A and B’; ham mi-xandidand, ham gerye mi-kardand ‘they were both laughing and crying’.

The disjunctive ya ‘or’ is often supplemented by va as a NP link, and by in-ke (see 2.8.6) as a VP or sentence link; in both it is frequently expressed reciprocally as ya . . . va-ya/ya inke . . . ‘either . . . or . . .’: ya man (va) ya to ‘either you or I’; ya beravad ya (inke) naravad, farq nemi-konad ‘let him either go or not go, it makes no difference’. ‘Whether . . . or . . .’ is also če . . . če . . . and xah . . . xah . . . (with subjunctive; 3.4.2).

The yes/no VP and sentence interrogative is introduced by aya for single clauses (in formal Persian): aya mi-danid? ‘do you know?’; with ya as
reciprocator: aya mi-xarid ya mi-forušid? ‘are you buying or selling?’ (also for indirect questions, as nemī-danīm aya . . . ‘we don’t know whether . . .’).

The negative counterpart of these reciprocals is na . . . (va) na . . . (cf. 3.4.3) ‘neither . . . nor . . .’: na man mī-danīm, (va) na to [mī-danī] ‘neither I know nor do you’.

The rhetorical adversative balke ‘and even; but (rather)’ (< Ar. bal ‘nay, rather’) intensifies a constituent directly, contradicts a negative or reciprocates a negative adverbial such as na faqat, na tanha ‘not only’: xošgel nist, balke ziba-st) ‘she’s not pretty, but beautiful’; na tanha xošgel, balke bahuš ‘not only pretty, but smart (too)’.

2.8.3. Sentence coordinating
Apart from va ‘and’, there are several adversative conjunctions (all of Arabic origin) meaning ‘but, however’: valī, (valīken, ammā: geran-ast, valī mī-arzad ‘it’s expensive, but it’s worth it’.

2.8.4. Sentence subordinating
Simple and optionally complex conjunctions which usually introduce a clause following the main clause include the causal zīrā(-ke), cē and cūn(-ke) ‘since, because’ (for cūn as a preposition, see 2.7.1); the adversative mābūda (ke) ‘lest’ (with subjunctive); ta and ke ‘so that’ (purpose; see below).

Those which normally introduce an initial (or parenthetical) clause include a variety of conditional and concessive conjunctions: āgār, ‘if’, āgār-cē ‘even if, although’, har-čand (ke) ‘however much, although, even if’, har-gah ‘whenever, if’, čonan-cē ‘in case, if’, magar (inke) ‘unless’.

2.8.5. The conjunction ta
This polyvalent subordinator (not identical with the enumerative ta, 2.6.1) may be characterized as follows. Introducing an initial clause, it may be:

1. Temporal, ‘as long as’; with indicative (even if unrealized): ta pedar-ān inja mī-manād, mēn-hān mī-manām ‘As long as my father stays here, I shall stay too’.
2. Temporal-concessive, ‘until, unless’; with negative present subjunctive: ta xošam na-bīnām, bavār nemī-konām ‘I will not believe it until I see it myself’. Here the sense of ta is ‘so long as . . . not’.
3. Temporal, ‘by the time that’ (see 3.7.1, #1b).
4. Temporal, ‘as soon as’; with simple past, even with future reference: ta u-ra didid, be-mān xabar (be-)dehid ‘as soon as you see him, let me know’.
5. Comparative, ‘than’ (see 2.3.2).

Introducing a subsequent clause, it may be:

6. Temporal, ‘until’; with simple past for accomplished events, present subjunctive for present or future reference: sābr konīd ta be-y-ayām ‘wait until I come’.
7. Final, ‘in order that’; with present subjunctive: be-šahr raftam ta gušt be-xaran ‘I went to town to buy meat’ (cf. ke, 2.8.6, #2).
2.8.6. The conjunction *ke*

The basis of most compound conjunctions is the general complementizer (or subordinizer) *ke* ‘that’. As a simple conjunction in its own right, *ke* introduces the following types of (subsequent) clause:

1. Relative clauses (see 2.5.9).
2. Purpose clauses (with present subjunctive; *ke* is often omitted): *raftam (ke) gušt be-xaram* ‘I went to buy meat’ (cf. *ta*, above).
3. Causal: *bo-row birun, ke sobh šod* ‘go out, for it is morning’.
4. Temporal; a completed action interrupts, or impinges on, a progressive or potential action or state: *hanuz vared našode-budim ke ma-ra did* ‘we had not yet entered when he saw us’.
5. Sentential complements: *xub šod, ke javab nadadid* ‘it was a good thing that you didn’t reply’ (subject); *nemi-danestan ke šoma pezšk hastid* ‘I didn’t know you were a doctor’ (object; concerning the present tense, see #6 below). After modals, (3.5.3) it requires the subjunctive.
6. As a subset of the above, direct and indirect discourse: *goft ke “man nemi-ayam”* ‘he said, “I’m not coming”’; *goft ke nemi-ayad* ‘he said (that) he wasn’t coming’. In indirect discourse (and other sentential complements involving perception or cogitation) Persian does not adhere to a sequence-of-tense rule; verbs within the discourse clause may change person, but they retain the tense used (or potentially used) in actual speech.

As the second constituent of an initial clause, *ke* may replace a temporal or other context-appropriate conjunction. Thus, *hava ke garm šod, birun raftim* may mean, according to the context, ‘when the weather warmed up/although the weather warmed up/because . . . , we went outside’. (This device should not be confused with the asseverative adverbial use of *ke*, 2.4.3.)

*As* a preposed sentential subject may be introduced by *in-ke (an-ke)* ‘the fact that’: *inke javab na-adadid hatta behtar-ast* ‘the fact that you didn’t reply is even better’.

2.8.7. *ke* in compound conjunctions

There are three structures in which *ke* combines with prepositions and adverbs to form conjunctions introducing an initial circumstantial clause: (1) juxtaposition, (2) on the model of the restricted relative clause, (3) on the model of *in-ke (an-ke)*, with an anticipatory demonstrative. For example:

1. *Hamin-ke* ‘as soon as’, *čonan-ke* ‘just as’, *az* *bas ke* ‘so much that’ (*čonanke* is, of course, *čun an, ke* ‘like that, that . . . ’, and might be classed with 3). These are consecutive or comparative in nature, based on manner adverbials. A few such consecutives may be split between clauses, as *owqat-eš čonan/an-qadr talx šod ke na-tavanest harf be-zanad* ‘he became so angry that he couldn’t speak’.
2. *Vaqt-i-ke, hangam-i-ke, mowqe’-i-ke* ‘when’ (lit, the time/moment that; the contraction *vaqt* is common in colloquial). These may be
modified by the prepositions az ‘from’ and ta ‘up to’: az mowqite’-ke rasid ‘since he arrived’, ta vaqite ke raftand ‘until they left’; be-qadri-ke ‘as much as’.

3. Az in-ke ‘because’, pas/ba’d az inke ‘after’, piš/qabl az inke ‘before’ with subjunctive, even with past reference: piš az inke harekat konad namaz xand ‘before setting out he performed the prayer’; be-ja-ye-inke ‘instead of’, bedun-e inke ‘without’ (with subjunctive); be-mahz-e inke ‘by the mere fact that’.

3. The verb

Persian verbal morphology is extremely regular. Each verb has two stems and three persons (sg. and pl.) encoded in seven terminations (i.e., only the 3sg. ending differs in past/present tenses), from which are formed a comprehensive range of typically Indo-European voices, moods and tenses. Verbs are either simple or compound. These deceptively systematic structures conceal some overlapping functions and fluid nuances.

3.1. Stem morphology

Every verb has two stems, Stem I (traditionally known as the “present stem”) and Stem II (the “past stem”). Stem II ends in a dental, -t or -d, and is the base for the infinitive and “short infinitive,” the past tenses and past/passive participle. The infinitive (the lexical citation form) is obtained by adding -an to Stem II (as did-an ‘to see’, raft-an ‘to go’). Stem I of the majority of verbs (most, but not all, of those whose Stem II ends in -id) is obtained by deletion of -id: e.g., xaridan ‘to buy’, Stem II xarid-, Stem I xar-. This class has been increasing over the past millennium or more, as providing a basis for formation of new verbs and regularization of “irregular” verbs. Stem I in upward of 150 verbs (so-called “irregular” verbs, a class that has been decreasing owing to obsolescence and regularization) is not entirely predictable from Stem II, though there are patterns of correspondence, as follows. (Stem I forms are historically prior, but the morphological patterns resulting from their assimilation to Stem II/infinitives make it synchronically preferable to predict Stem I from Stem II.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem II</th>
<th>Stem I</th>
<th>Examples and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>-in-</td>
<td>afiran/afiran- ‘to create’; didan/bin- ‘to see’ is the only Persian verb to use exclusively a different lexical stem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>-av-</td>
<td>šenidan/šenax- ‘to hear’; zero ending šenow. There are earlier and dialect forms šenudan and šenoftan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-od-</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>oftadan/oft- ‘to fall’ (aftidan/aft in Eastern dialects), nehudan/neh- ‘to put’. Exceptions, where -ad- is not part of the stem: dadan/deh- ‘to give’, zadan/zad- ‘to give birth’ (variant of zaidan), setadan/setan- ‘to take’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. For a fuller classified list of these verbs, see Boyle 1966: 31–36; an alphabetical list is given in Lambton 1960: 251–54.
Stem II Stem I Examples and Notes

4. -ud- -a- azmudan/azma- ‘to test’, sotudan/seta- ‘to praise’ (regressive vowel harmony; cf. also sorudan/sara- ‘to sing’). Exceptions: dorudan/derav- (derow) ‘to reap’, also regularized as deravidan; gonudan/gonav- ‘to sleep’; budan ‘to be’ (MP bov-; see 3.5.1).


6. -ord- -ar- seyordan/separ- ‘to entrust’, šomordan/šomar- ‘to count’. Irregular are bordan/bar- ‘to carry’ (but cf. the nom. derivative bar ‘burden’); mordan/mur- ‘to die’ (but mor- in Eastern dialects).

7. -nd- -n- kandan/kon- ‘to dig’, randan/ran- ‘to drive’ (in origin a causative, < rav-andan ‘cause to go’; 5.1.2).


9. -est- -ə- bayestan/ba(y)- ‘must’, danestan/don- ‘to know’ (savoir). In these, -s- is not part of the root.

10. -Vst- -Vh- jastan/jah- ‘to leap’, xastan/xah- (XWA)- ‘to want’. In this class -s- is part of the root. “Exceptions” are many and varied: astan/ara- ‘to adorn’, bastan/band- ‘to tie’, jostan/ju- ‘to seek’, šekstani/šekan- ‘to break’, xastan (XA)-xiz- ‘to rise’, rostani/ru(y)- ‘to grow’, zistan/zi- ‘to live’, geristan/gery- ‘to weep’, gosestan, gosastan/ gosel- ‘to snap’ (also goselidan), nešastan/nešin- ‘to sit’ (colloq./šin-), nešastan/nešan- ‘to seat, place’ (a causative of the preceding; also nešandani, nešanidan), negaristan/negar- ‘to look’.

11. -št- -r- duštan/dar- ‘to have’, keštan, kaštan/kar- ‘to sow, plant’. Exceptions: afrastan/afras- ‘to raise’, reštan/ris- ‘to spin’ (also risidan), koštan/kos- ‘to kill’, gaštan/gard- ‘to turn’ (also gardidan), heštan/heš- ‘to leave’.


13. -ad/-od- Three common verbs with short vowels in Stem I: amadan/a- ‘to come’, zadari/zan- ‘to strike’, šodari/sav- (zero ending, šow-) ‘to become’.

3.2. Elements of conjugation: Suffixes

From one or other of these stems are formed all the tenses and other forms of the Persian verb by means of affixes. Base forms (all regular) produced by suffixes on Stem II are:

1. The infinitive, -ən (3.1). This is exclusively an action noun, and does not participate in tense formation in modern Persian (see 4.1).
2. The “short infinitive,” -š: a true non-finite verb form, used only in forming the periphrastic future tense (3.7.5) and in impersonal modal constructions (3.5.3).
3. The preterit, or simple past tense, with the personal endings below (3.3.1).
4. The past/pasive participle, -e: dide ‘having seen, (having been) seen’, šode ‘(having) become’. A verbal adjective, used in formation of compound tenses and passive constructions (see below and 4.1).

From Stem I are formed:
5. The present/active participles -ande and -an (4.1). Neither is used in tense formation.
6. The present indicative, subjunctive and imperative (3.5).
7. With zero ending, an anomalous present tense form of tavnestan/ tavan ‘to be able’, used in impersonal constructions (3.5.3).

### 3.3. Personal endings

The six personal inflectional endings of simple verbs are the same for past and present tenses, with the exception of the third person singular:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Personal endings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 -am, -yam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 -i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 -ad, -yad (-e) (present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A euphonic -y- is heard (and written) after (present) stems ending in -a- and -u-: mi-gu-y-am ‘I say’, mi-a-y-ad ‘he is coming’; it is generally dropped in colloquial (mi-ad). Other colloquial reflexes are a loss of the final dental of the suffix in third person endings, plus a raising of the vowel (a > e) in 3sg. of present tenses, and -in in 2pl.: mi-kon-e ‘he does’, (un-a) goft ‘they said’, na-xor-in ‘don’t eat’. Standard paradigms are:

xordam, xordi, xord, xordim, xordid, xord 'I ate', etc.

mixoram, mixori, mixor, mixorim, mixorid, mixorad 'I eat', etc.

Personal endings suffice to indicate the person; independent pronouns connote emphasis or contrast in written Persian, but are more freely used in the spoken language: to inja bais, man raftam ‘you stay here; I’m off’. Plural forms may refer to singular persons in polite usage (cf. 2.5.1). Third person plural may stand for people in general: mi-guyand (mi-gan) ke ...’ they/ people say...

### 3.3.1. Base tenses

1. Stem II forms the simple past (preterit, narrative past) without any prefix: raft-an ‘I went’, budam ‘I was’, etc. The simple past expresses the accomplishment of an action in the past: xane raft ‘she went home’. It may also express a performative action, or one ideally accomplished by virtue of irrevocable intent: hamintowr rahta šodi ‘you are hereby freed’; amad ‘here he is’ (even though the person sighted may not yet have reached the speaker); xub, man ke raftam diže ‘OK,
I’m off, then’. It is also used in temporal or conditional clauses to indicate that an action will be completed by the time the action in the main clause takes place: agar/vaqtī anad, be-man xābar be-deh ‘if/when he comes, let me know’.

2. Stem I alone formed the general present tense (rov-am, etc.) in early New Persian, but this form no longer occurs except for gnomic statements and subjunctives in elevated written style, and in the special cases of daštān ‘to have’ (3.5.2) and auxiliary xast (3.7.5). It may also occur as the subjunctive of phrasal verbs (5.2).

3.4. Prefixes and simple tenses
Grammatical prefixes on the verb are mi-, be- and na-. As stress is progressive in the nominal system, so it is regressive in the verbal system: the first syllable of a finite verb form (hence, any prefix or preverb) will normally take primary stress. In a compound tense form incorporating a nominal constituent (such as a past participle), the latter may take primary stress and the prefix a secondary stress (though negative na- overrides this, and takes primary stress even non-initially): mi-guyand ‘they say’, mi-gofté-and ‘they used to say’, ná-gofté-budim ‘we hadn’t said’, bar ná-gaše-am ‘I didn’t go back’.

3.4.1. The prefix mi-
Originating in a durative marker, ham-, the modern prefix mi- exhibits different functions with each stem and in different contexts.

1. + Stem II  
   a. (Past) progressive: karvan ke az kotal mi-gozašt, rahzanam hamle bordand ‘as the caravan was crossing the pass, the robbers attacked’.
   b. (Past) habitual: har sal be Iran mosaferat mi-kardand ‘they traveled/used to travel to Iran every year’.
   c. Counterfactual conditional: agar mi-danestam, nemi-raftam ‘if I knew, I wouldn’t go’, or ‘had I known, I wouldn’t have gone’. Note the same tense in both clauses, and for both present-future and past-future focus (but cf. 3.7.2).

   Related to this function are its use in unfulfilled wishes: kaš(ke) mi-danestam ‘if only I knew/had known, I wish I knew’; and (in colloquial) after the modal bayest ‘must’, for unfulfilled obligation: ma bayest/na-bayest in kar-ra mi-kardim ‘we should/shouldn’t have done this’ (cf. 3.7.1).

2. + Stem I  
   a. General present: abrišom az kerm-e abrišom be-dast mi-ayad ‘silk is produced (lit., comes to hand) from the silkworm’.
   b. Progressive present: fe’lān kar mikonam ‘at present I’m working’.
   c. Habitual present: šabha zud mi-xabim ‘at night we go to bed early’.
   d. Future: ḡarda be-madrāse nemi-ravan ‘I’m not going/will not be going to school tomorrow’ (cf. 3.7.5).

In short, this form corresponds to every nuance of the present indicative, which may be made more explicit through adverbial cues.
3.4.2. The prefix be-: Imperative and subjunctive

In early New Persian, be- could be prefixed to both stems and various tense forms; it is now confined to Stem I, marking the imperatives and present subjunctive.

1. The imperative is formed on Stem I + ो (singular), + -id (plural): be-zan, be-zanid 'strike!' The singular form is used only to familiars and social inferiors; the plural may be used additionally to address one person in polite usage. In complex verbs with the preverbs bar or dar, be- is generally omitted: bar gaird 'turn back!' Before other preverbs or in complex verbs with a nominal semantic element, it may be omitted in written or formal Persian: harf zan/be-zan 'speak!' Before a verb-initial syllable containing the back vowels ə or u, be- is often raised to bo-, or even bu-: bo-row, but be-ravid 'go!'; bo-gu, bo-gu-id (bu-gu-) 'say!' Before a front vowel or a palatal consonant, it tends toward bi-: bi-bin 'see!', bi-gir 'take!' (This does not affect the orthography.)

2. The present subjunctive of simple verbs prefixes be- to all persons: be-gir 'that I (should) take', etc. It is used, whether under subject agreement or not, in sentential complements of verbs expressing command, desire, hope, fear, and other irreal modalities, usually introduced by the complementizer ke: fardm ke be-ravid 'he ordered them to go', omid-var-am (ke) u-ra be-binam 'I hope to see her'. Other uses include those of precative and prohibitive (but cf. 3.5.1 for frozen forms): morde-surf jasad-et-o be-bar-e (~be-barad) 'may the undertaker carry off your corpse'; xoda nakonad . . . 'God forbid . . .'. Occurrence of the prefix be- is subject to the same conditions as in the imperative, e.g., nemi-tavanim dar aim 'we cannot come in'. (There are two tenses of the subjunctive in each voice; for the past subjunctive, see 3.7.1, #2.)

3.4.3. The prefix na-

The verbal negative prefix supplements mi-, but supersedes be-: na-tarsidam 'I wasn’t afraid', na-mi-tarsam 'I am not afraid', na-tars (~na-be-tars) 'don’t be afraid'. It is always the first constituent of compound tenses: na-yamade-budam 'I had not come'; but it follows any nonverbal constituent of a complex verb: bar na-gaste-and 'they have not returned', tasdil na-sod 'it was not confirmed'. In Standard Persian pronunciation, na- is raised to ne- before mi-.

An earlier prohibitive prefix ma- (cf. ma-bad, 3.5.1) is occasionally met with as a literary and poetical form: ma-xand 'laugh not!'

3.5. Defective, irregular and impersonal verbs

3.5.1. To be

The verb budan/baš- 'to be' has in the present tense three series of forms unrelated to the stems, one independent, its negative, and one enclitic; the latter series is used as an auxiliary in forming compound tenses of other verbs.
The negative series is formed by analogy with hastam ‘I am’, etc.: nistam, nisti, nist, . . . ‘I am not’, etc.; this is not used in tense formation.

The (unstressed) enclitic forms are preferred for the copula: irani-am ‘I am (an) Iranian’, koja-i ‘where are you?’ 3sg. -ast (orthographically ST) elides with a preceding -a or -u: koja-st ‘where is it?’, mal-e u-st ‘it is his’; colloquially, this is realized as koja-s, but danešju-e ‘he’s a student’. The independent series is semantically existential or emphatic: qanda hast ‘there is (some) sugar’, qanda hast ‘there is (some) lump sugar’ (as distinct from granulated sugar, šekar); aqa handa ‘is the master at home?’ However, it is often used as a copula, e.g., to avoid a clash of identical vowels: irani-im > irani hasti ‘we are Iranian(s)’. The 3sg. form ast (AST) occurs, written separately from the predicate.

Earlier forms bov-am, bov-i, bov-ad, etc., and a negative nay-am, na‘i, nist, etc., occur in poetry. Frozen precative and prohibitive forms from the stem bov- are bud (<bovad), bado and mabud, mabada: e.g., har-ce bada bad ‘whatever will be will be’ (lit., let be whatever might be); mitasam mabada farkaš bekonad ‘I fear (lest) he might forget’ (cf. 2.8.4, 3.4.3).

All other tenses of budan (including another present tense, baš-am, etc., and the past bud-am, etc.) are formed regularly on one of the stems. However, the prefix mi- (3.4.1) is not used with Stem I to form the past progressive/habitual tenses (*mi-bud-am, etc.); it may occur optionally to form the (homomorphic) conditional tense: agar (mi-)budam ‘if I were/had been’, etc.

The regular Stem I form bašam, etc., functions as present subjunctive and imperative: bašad ‘so be it’, saket baš, -bašid ‘be silent’. The prefix be- (3.4.2) is not used.

A present indicative form mi-bašam, etc., is used in formal language to replace either of the usual forms for stylistic reasons, e.g., to avoid repetitions of -ast or after a long predicate: in aqa, ke modir-e bonyad mi-bašad, ham-sahri-ye-soma-st ‘this gentleman, who is the director of the institute, comes from the same city as you’.

There is no pluperfect indicative or subjunctive, or compound past tenses (3.7.2–4).

### 3.5.2. The verb daštan ‘to have’

The simple verb daštan/dar- ‘to have’ does not use the prefixes mi- or be- (except for mi- in conditional clauses; cf. mi-bud, 3.5.1). The present tense is daram, etc., the only past tense is daštam, and the present subjunctive is replaced by the perfect subjunctive, dašte-bašam, etc.: anvaŋt pul daštam; hala hič nadaram ‘At that time I had/used to have money; now I don’t have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Enclitic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 hastam</td>
<td>hastim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 hasti</td>
<td>hastid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 hast</td>
<td>hastand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
any'; *bayad pul dašt-e-bašid* ‘you have to have money’. This applies also to a few verbal idioms (compound verbs) in which *dašt* transparently retains its base meaning ‘to have’: *tašrif na-dar* and ‘he is not here’ (lit., they do not have the conferral of honor—a polite periphrasis); *tašrif dašt-e-bašid* ‘please wait here’.

However, when *dašt* forms part of a compound verb which no longer reflects the base meaning, it uses the usual verb forms: *an-ra bar mi-daram* ‘I’ll pick it up’; *sal-ha anha-ra negah mi-dašt* ‘he kept them for years’; *negah-dar* ‘hold (it)!’ (negah-/negah-dašt ‘to keep, hold’). In the case of the common verb *dust dašt* ‘to like, love’ (< ‘to hold to be a friend’), use of *mi*- is optional: *dust-e* *daram*/*mi-daram* ‘I like him/her/it’; *mi-xaham ke dust-am* (be-*)dar* ‘I want you to love me’.

Unaugmented *dašt* also features in an impersonal existential idiom: *čay darad, nan nedar* ‘there is tea, there’s no bread’ (past tense *dašt*; equivalent to *hast/nist*). For the construction *darad mikon* and, see 3.7.6.

### 3.5.3. Modal auxiliaries and impersonal verbs

As noted, personal modal expressions require a subjunctive inflected for person in the dependent clause. A negated modal proposition generally requires the negative prefix on the modal. Impersonal modal expressions (‘one cannot, it is not done’ and the like) replace the subjunctive with a “short infinitive” (3.2). The three common modal auxiliaries in Standard Persian use the following forms and constructions:

1. **Tavanestan/tavan** ‘to be able’ is a regularly inflected verb in personal expressions: *nemi-tavanam beravam* ‘I cannot go’, etc. Impersonally, the present tense is reduced to a bare Stem I with the prefix *mi*: *mi-tavan raft* ‘one can go’; in the past tenses, the form used corresponds to 3sg: *na-tavanest raft* ‘it was impossible to go’, *nemi-tavanest raft* ‘one wouldn’t be able to go’.

2. **Bayestan/ba(y)** ‘to have to, ought to; must’ is defective, having only unaugmented 3sg. *bayad* for present and the 3sg. forms *bayest, mi-bayest* for past reference, whether personal or impersonal: *bayad beravam* ‘I must go’, *bayad raft* ‘one must go’ (contextually often = ‘we must go’); *bayest raft* ‘we ought to go, it’s time to go’ (past form with present reference, adding a nuance of polite tentativity). An older (*mi*)-*bayest raftte bašam* ‘I must have gone; ought to have gone’ has been effectively split into *bayad raftte bašam* ‘I must have gone’ (with past subjunctive, for presumption) and *bayest mi-rafttam* ‘I ought to have gone’ (with conditional, expressing unfulfilled obligation). The archaic conditional *bayesti* may substitute here for (*mi*)-*bayest*.

The adverb *šayad* ‘perhaps’ (2.4.3) derives from a morphologically parallel verb *šayest* ‘to be being’, and can still be found with a dependent subjunctive in older or more formal writing; in Standard Persian it has been fully grammaticalized and is usually raised into a higher clause with an indicative verb.
3. Šodan/šav- ‘to become; to be feasible’ provides in itself impersonal idioms particularly frequent in colloquial: mi-šavad (miše) ‘it can be done’, nemi-šavad (nemỉše) ‘it’s impossible’, šod ‘it’s done, that’s it’, nemi-šod ‘it wouldn’t be feasible’. With a dependent short infinitive, only the present tense is usual, with the same general sense as (ne-) mi-tavan: mi-šavad goft ‘one might say’, nemi-šavad tanam kard ‘it can’t be finished’.

For quasi-impersonal verbs involving personal enclitics, see 2.5.3, #3.

3.6. Vernacular reflexes

In spoken Persian, several of the more common verbs undergo alterations or contractions in one or both stems, apart from general phonemic correspondences and elision of buffer vowels as already noted.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infin.</th>
<th>Stem I</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Meaning, Paradigms and Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>avardan</td>
<td>avar-</td>
<td>ar-</td>
<td>‘to bring’: mi-aram, etc.; also found in literary Persian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xastan</td>
<td>xah-</td>
<td>xa-, x-</td>
<td>‘to want’: mi-xam, mixi, mixad, mixaim, mixin, mixan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dadan</td>
<td>deh-</td>
<td>d-</td>
<td>‘to give’: mi-dam, midi, midim, midin, midan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raftan</td>
<td>rav-</td>
<td>r-</td>
<td>‘to go’: mi-ram, miiri, mire . . . imper. na-rin, but: na-row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goftan</td>
<td>gu(y)-</td>
<td>g-</td>
<td>‘to say’: mi-gam, migi, mige . . . but: bo-gu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nešastan</td>
<td>nešin-</td>
<td>Šin-</td>
<td>‘to sit’: mi-šinam, etc.; be-šin ‘sit down!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šodan</td>
<td>šav-</td>
<td>š-</td>
<td>‘to become’: mi-šam, etc.; nemi-še ‘it won’t work’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šostan</td>
<td>šu(y)-</td>
<td>šur-</td>
<td>‘to wash’: mi-šuram, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two verbs have alterations in both stems:

tavanestan > tunes(t); tav-an- ‘to be able’: mi-tunessam ‘I could’, mi-tunam ‘I can’
gozaštan > zašt(); gozar > zar- (GZA) ‘to let’: na-zaštan ‘they didn’t allow (it)’; be-zar be-ram ‘let me go’

3.7. Compound tenses

Of the four tenses of the indicative formed on the past participle (3.7.1–4) it may be noted that the enclitic auxiliary is often omitted, especially if there is more than one verb of the same tense in a sentence: ostad makan . . . kam harf mi-zade va agar sohbatba az čand jomle tajavoz mi-karde bištar dar bare-ye kar-e xodaš bude-ast ‘Master Makan . . . spoke little, and if the conversation did extend beyond a few phrases it was mostly about his work’; . . . ğade hâm be-u fohî dade-ast baz delgir našode ‘. . . his grandmother would then shout at him, but he remained unmoved’.

Two of these tenses, the durative perfect (3.7.3) and the double compound past tense (3.7.4), occur infrequently, but are well attested in both

4. For a generative approach to these forms, see Cowan and Yarmohammadi 1978.
formal and informal Persian. Their functions include reporting an event in what has been called an epistemic, indirective or mediative mode, i.e., the speaker quotes from hearsay or infers indirectly what has or had happened. This “viewpoint” function is shared by the perfect (3.5.1), in addition to its ordinary resultative role.5

3.7.1. Perfect tense

1. **Indicative**: this is formed on the past participle followed by the enclitic series of the verb ‘to be’: xaride-am, xaride-i, xaride-ast, xaride-im, xaride-id, xaride-and ‘I (have) bought’, etc. Stress falls on the final of the participle: xaride-am (>xaridê:am), etc. Negative: nā-xaride-am, etc. The perfect expresses (a) an action completed in the past with implications for the present (resultative): mehmanha am xaride-a:st ‘the guests have (already) arrived/are here’; (b) (a statement about) an action accomplished in a past period considered as closed: in karvansara-ra šah abbas bana xaride-ast ‘this caravanserai was built by Shah Abbas’ (lit., S.A. has built . . .); (c) report or inference that a past action not witnessed has been completed: xaride-bam ‘presumably he stayed until morning’. Related to this, perhaps, is (d) presumption that an action in future time will have been completed before another projected action: ta u harakat konad man xaride-am ‘by the time he sets out I will have gone’.

2. **Perfect subjunctive**: pptc. + pres. sbjv. of budan ‘to be’: xaride-bašam, etc. This is semantically and syntactically parallel to the present subjunctive, in that it expresses the unrealized or ideal state resulting from a completed action: xaride-bašam ‘he must have arrived by now’, xoda nakonad (ke) xaride-bašam ‘I hope (lit., may God not make) he hasn’t caught cold’.

3.7.2. Past perfect (pluperfect)

Past participle + past tense of ‘to be’: xaride-budam, xaride-budi, etc. This tense indicates an action completed in the past previous to an action or state noted, i.e., it is the past of the perfect in functions (a) and (d), though in the latter case indicating a real, not a presumed, action: ta anvaq u-ra na xaride-budam ‘up until then I had not seen him’; ta pezešk amad beradar-am bihuš xaride-budi ‘by the time the doctor came, my brother had lost consciousness’. It also occurs in counterfactual conditional sentences (either protasis or apodosis or, rarely, both) relating to the past: agar u-ra xaride-budam nem i-šenaxtam ‘if I had seen him, I would not have recognized him’. (If the context is unambiguous, the past durative may be used in both clauses [cf. 3.5.1]; however, the first reading of agar u-ra miri-didam . . . is ‘if I saw him . . .’.)

3.7.3. Durative perfect (compound imperfect)

Formed from mi- + pptc. + enclitic series of ‘to be’: mi-xaride-am, etc. This combines the forms of the imperfect and perfect tenses, and the second

5. For discussion and exemplification of these semantic phenomena, see Lazard 1985, 1996; Windfuhr 1982.
values (b) of each as noted above (3.4.1, 3.7.1): i.e., it indicates a past action considered in its duration that was accomplished in a period viewed as closed: ajad-e ma dar ġarha mi-ziste-and ‘our ancestors lived/used to live in caves’. In epistemic mode (c) the quotative or inferential use includes a durative aspect: al’an u-ra dide-and ke be-xane-ye beradar-aš mi-rafte-ast ‘they saw him just now on his way to his brother’s house’ (i.e., so they told me).

3.7.4. Double compound past tense
Past participle + perfect of ‘to be’: xaride-bude-amin. Like the pluperfect, this tense refers to an action already completed in past time, with the additional dimension noted in (b): qabl az amadan-e qaznavian qalaman-e tork be-iran na-y-amade-bude-and ‘before the advent of the Ghaznavids, Turkish slave-troops had not reached Iran’. In epistemic mode (c) it indicates a hearsay report or inference set in the remoter past: sobh goftand ke qaši şode . . . nagu ke hava-y bad u-ra mariz karde-bude-ast? ‘next day they said he had fainted . . . could it be that the unhealthy air had made him ill?’

3.7.5. Periphrastic future
The future tense is formed from the present tense of xastan ‘to want’, without the prefix mi-, followed by the short infinitive:

xaham xarid, xahi xarid, xahad xarid, xahim xarid, xahid xarid, xahand xarid—‘I shall buy’, etc.

In compound verbs, the preverbal element precedes the auxiliary: bar xaham gaşt ‘I shall return’. The negative prefix is attached to the auxiliary: nxaham amad ‘I will not come’. This tense is rarely used in informal spoken Persian; the present tense, in context or with adverbial cues, generally suffices to indicate future time.

3.7.6. Progressive construction with daštan
With appropriate contextual cues, the regular present and imperfect tenses are sufficient to convey a view of the action while it is in progress: al’an rah mi-ravé‘ now he is walking’, rah mi-raft ke yek-daf’e tarzid ‘he was walking (along) when suddenly he slipped’. The progressive nature of an action may be emphasized by using the appropriate tense (present or past) of daštan ‘to have’ followed by the equivalent tense (present indicative or imperfect) and person of the main verb: baba darad al’an mi-ayad ‘Dad is coming now’ (lit., dad has now he-comes), daštam kar mi-kardam ‘I was working’. This construction does not admit negation.

There is also a progressive perfect form of this construction (cf. 3.7.3), which adds to the focus on a completed action viewed in its duration an epistemic connotation such as inference or second-hand report: e’lamiyé . . . nešan dad ke tir . . . dašt be-taraf-e sotun-e faqarat-e homayuni mi-rafte-ast ‘the communiqué . . . showed that the bullet . . . was heading for the Shah’s spinal column’ (note the elision of the copula in dašt[-ast]).

These “tenses” are not fully grammaticalized, since auxiliary and main verb occupy independent clauses. They are considered colloquial by most grammarians, but are well attested in informal written Persian (e.g., newspapers) as well as speech.
3.8. Passive voice

A passive conjugation for each of the tenses is formed from the past participle followed by the appropriate tense of šodan/sav- ‘to become’. In formal Persian gaštan/gard- or gardidan ‘to turn (into), become’ may be substituted. The negative prefix is applied to the inflected form of šodan. Examples:

Present: košte mišavam ‘I am (being) killed, I will be killed’, etc.
Present subjunctive: nemmi-xahand košte (be-)šavand ‘they do not want to be killed’; mi-xahand (ke) košte našavad ‘they wish him not to be killed’
Imperative: farifte našow/našavid ‘do not be deceived’
Preterit: xaride našod ‘it was not bought, it did not get bought’
Imperfect: šoste mišod ‘it was being washed; it was (habitually) washed’
Perfect: farifte šode-im/gašte-im ‘we have been deceived’
Past subjunctive: bayad foruxte šode-bašad ‘it must have been sold’
Past perfect: dade šode-bud ‘it had been given’
Progressive perfect: be-aa seporde mišode(-ast) ‘it was being entrusted to him’
Double compound past: gofte šode-bude(-ast) ‘it had been said’
Periphrastic future: gofte xahad šod ‘it will be said’
Progressive construction: darim xafe mišavim ‘we are being suffocated’;
\textit{daštim xafe mišodim} ‘we were (in the process of) being suffocated’

The passive is generally avoided in Persian when an active sentence expresses the meaning adequately. A third person plural verb is often equivalent to an English agentless passive, i.e., when the agent is unknown, presumed, or not pertinent: ma-ra gereftand va zendani kardand ‘they (persons not specified) caught us and imprisoned us’, i.e., ‘we were caught and imprisoned’. The passive is not often used with an expressed animate agent; other devices in Persian (e.g., a variation in word order) perform the function of foregrounding the patient: maď-ra zág gazid ‘the man was bitten by the dog’. When needed, the agent is introduced by an adverbial phrase such as be-dast-e ‘by the hand of’ or tavassat-e ‘by intermediacy of’:
\textit{in barmane be-vasile-ye hey‘at-e modiriye satxe šode(-ast)} ‘this program was (presumably) made by (lit., by means of) the board of directors’.

4. Lexical derivation and composition: Nominals

The nominal system of Persian is quite rich in derivational affixes. In course of time some have lost productivity, but remain numerous and transparently characteristic of a lexical or semantic class. Some obsolete formatives have recently been revived. Derivational devices, so far as possible, will be classed as “productive” or “characteristic.”

Compound nouns, including lexicalized \textit{ezafe} and other phrases, take plural suffixes on the terminal component: \textit{gol-e sorx-ha} ‘roses’ (but \textit{gol-haye sorx} ‘red flowers’).
4.1. Deverbal nominals

Apart from the conjugational forms noted above (3.2), verb stems and inflected forms (esp. imperatives) may generate nouns and adjectives. Stem I tends to produce activity nouns or those with an abstract or in-progress meaning, and Stem II may generate patient, product or more concrete nouns: thus bazi ‘game’ (baxt I ‘to play’), baft ‘texture’ (baftan II ‘to weave’); saxt-eman ‘organization’, saxt-eman ‘building, edifice’ (saxtan/sax- ‘to make, build’). Multiple stems, in imperative and/or prohibitive juxtaposition or as copulative compounds, produce expressive words: keš-makes (lit., pull-don’t pull) and gir-o dar (take-and-hold) ‘struggle, conflict’; amad-o raft (come-and-go) ‘traffic’; goft-o gu (say, Stems II and I) ‘conversation’.

Productive formations:

1. Stem II + -a: the infinitive, used only as an action noun; it displays all the properties of a noun, including pluralization: kaf-zadan-ha-ra našenid ‘he did not hear the applause’ (kaf zadan lit., to strike palm), az xandan xos-am miyad ‘I like reading’.

2. Infinitive + -i: derives from transitive verbs a gerundive, a passive participle expressing obligation or potential, as ab-e xordan-i ‘potable water’ (xordan ‘to eat, drink’), didan-i-ha-ye esfahan ‘the sights of Isfahan’ (didan ‘to see’); from a few intransitive verbs, an active participle of intention or inception is formed: man raftan-i-am ‘I’m off, I’ll be going’.

3. Stem II + -e: a verbal adjective, of intransitive verbs a past active, and of transitive verbs a passive participle: name-ha-ye raside ‘letters (that have) arrived’, guš-e kubide ‘minced meat’. It is readily substantivized: gozašte-ha gozašte ‘let bygones be bygones’ (lit., things having passed [are] past); nevšte-ha-yaš-ra gom kardan ‘they lost his writings (lit., written-s)’.

4. Stem I + -nde: agent noun and agentive of a simplex or complex verb. These “active participles” are readily substantivized, and some function exclusively as nouns: nevisande ‘writer’ (pl. nevisandešun, nevisande-ha); haf-te ayande ‘next week’ (lit., ‘coming week’), dar ayande ‘in future’; entexab kon-nde ‘voter’ (entexab ‘selection, election’; cf. 5.2.5). Those derived from transitive verbs may incorporate the object in a lexical unit: ran-ande-ye taksi ‘taxi driver’ (randan ‘to drive’, causative < raftan).

5. Stem I + -es: action noun (simplex and compound), e.g., amuz-es ‘education’ (amuxtan ‘to learn’), niki-deh-es ‘generosity, charity’ (‘good-giving’). This may evolve into an instance noun, as rav-es ‘way, method’ (raftan ‘to go’), gu-y-es ‘dialect’; or a product noun, as xor-es (xoreš) ‘stew’ (xordan ‘to eat’).

Characteristic suffixes:

6. Stem II + -ar: originally an agentive, it now includes action and patient nouns, as xarid-ar ‘purchaser’, gereft-ar ‘captive’, did-ar ‘visit’.
7. Stem I + -ak: a few product or patient nouns, as xor-ak ‘food’, puş-ak ‘clothing’ (puşidan ‘to cover, wear’).
8. Stem I + -an: this archaic active participle occurs mainly as a manner adverb, especially from verbs of motion, as davan ‘running, at a run’; it may be reduplicated to express intensity or progressivity, and functions in serial with the main verb as an indicator of Aktionsart: lang-an lang-an az u joda mišod ‘he limped away from her’ (langidan ‘to limp, go lame’). The form has also provided some common adjectives, as asan ‘easy’ (<asudan ‘to rest’), arzan ‘cheap’ (<arzidan ‘to be worth’).
9. Stem I + -a: a few adjective-nouns, as dan-a ‘wise; sage’ (danestan ‘to know’), tavan ‘mighty’ (tavanestan ‘to be able’), ziba ‘beautiful’ (zibidan ‘to adorn’).

4.2. Prefixes and preformatives

Most prefixes generate adjectives and related nouns; many are identical with simple or compound prepositions. Productive are:

1. na- ‘non-, un-’, the nominal negative (the verbal one being na-): na-dan ‘ignorant’ (Stem I ‘to know’ = savoir); na-senas ‘unknown; stranger’ Stem I ‘to know’ = connaître; na-pak ‘impure’; na-mard ‘unmanly; coward’. This type may incorporate an underlying argument as specifier: namak-na-senas ‘ungrateful’ (salt-not-acknowledging). Note the agentive sense of -senas, as distinct from the patient sense in na-senas above; since here it is the negative of namak-senas ‘grateful’ (a compound-verb agentive: 4.4.1, #3).
2. ham- ‘same; co-’: ham-aqide ‘like-minded’ (aqide ‘belief’), ham-saye ‘neighbor’ (saye ‘shadow, shade’).
3. abar- ‘above; super-’ (a recent coinage, reviving a MP adverb-preposition): abar-qodrat ‘superpower’.
4. dara-ye ‘having’ (< Stem I daştan/dar- ‘to have, hold’): an ad-hoc formative, often bureaucratic, as in dara-ye gozard-name-ye irani ‘Iranian passport-holding/-holder’.
5. geýr-e ‘other than, non-’: geýr-e irani ‘non-Iranian’, geýr-e rasmí ‘unofficial’.

These last two Arabic loans in ezafe construction only modify existing adjectives.

Characteristic are:

7. ba- ‘with’ (functional preposition): ba-namak ‘witty, cute’ (namak ‘salt’).
8. bi- ‘without, -less’ (no longer functional as a preposition): bi-bak ‘ruthless’ (bak ‘fear’), bi-namak ‘insipid’.
9. qabel-e ‘receptive of; -able’ (Ar.; virtually superseded by the Pers. suffix -pazir, 4.3.3): qabel-e tavajjoh ‘remarkable, interesting’ (tavajjoh ‘attention’).
10. por- ‘full’; por-zahmat ‘laborious’, por-ru ‘cheeky, forward’ (ru ‘face’)
11. kam- ‘little’ (quantity): kam-yab ‘scarce’ (Stem I of yaftan ‘to find’), kam-ru ‘shy’.
13 zabar ‘over’. zabar-dast ‘dominant, proficient; one in command’.
14. ahl-e ‘native, belonging to, apt for’ (Ar., ‘people of’); ahl-e elm ‘scholar(ly)’ (elm ‘learning’), ahl-e behesht ‘the blessed’ (behesht ‘paradise’); as an idiom, ahl-e X nist ‘he’s not capable of/suitable for X’.
15. saheb- ‘master of; characterized by’ (Ar.): saheb-e’tebar ‘creditable, of good standing’ (e’tebar ‘authority, confidence, validity’).

For the prefixes ad- and su’, see 4.4.1, #7.

4.3. Suffixes

Suffixation is the principal means of nominal derivation in Persian, though productive suffixes are now relatively few. The most productive (-i and -e) each generate both nouns and adjectives.

4.3.1. Suffixes forming nouns

Productive suffixes comprise:

1. -i forms abstract nouns of quality from adjectives and type nouns, and of activity from agentives; these may evolve into related product nouns, locatives, etc.: dur-i ‘distance’ (dur ‘far’), šīrin-i ‘sweetness; sweets, candy’, soxan-ran-i ‘oration, lecture’ (word-driv-ing), ketab-forus-i ‘bookselling; bookstore’. It may be applied to most kinds of derivatives, compounds and collocations (4.4.1): zān-o sōwhar-i ‘matrimony’ (husband-and-wife + -i), se-sal-e-gi ‘the age of three’ (three-year-old-hood; after a Persian word, and some Arabic loans, in -e, this suffix is realized as -gi [2.2.1]). In the case of an adjective already ending in -i (4.3.2, #1), a pseudo-agentive -gar (see #5) is interposed: buda-i-gar ‘Buddhism’, vāhsī-gar ‘savagery’ (vāhsī ‘wild’). This is by far the most productive suffix in this class.

2. -e is a common noun and adjective ending as well as a formative (< MP -ak, -ag; 2.2.1). Added to generic or abstract nouns, adjectives or numerals it produces a specific, concrete or metaphorical instance (from Stem I of verbs, an instance noun): dast-e ‘handle; bunch’ (dast ‘hand’), sefid-e ‘white’ (of an egg, or eye), haft-e ‘week’ (haft ‘seven’), zamin-e ‘background, field’ (zamin ‘ground’), guš-e ‘corner’ (guš ‘ear, lap’), čarp-ye ‘cot’ (čarp-pa ‘quadruped’), xand-e ‘laugh(ter)’ (xandidan ‘to laugh’), angız-e ‘stimulus, motive’ (angıztan ‘to rouse, stir’). With entity nouns it produces diminutives: doxtar-e ‘lassie’. The homophonous Arabic loan ending-cum-formative -e (< -a[t]) is also marginally productive in Persian, derivng feminine nouns independently of
the Arabic lexicon: valede ‘mother’ (fem. ‘parent’), hamele ‘pregnant’ (fem. ‘bearing’).

3. -ak forms diminutives and, as a variant of #2, figurative instances of nouns and adjectives: doxtar-ak ‘lassie’, arus-ak ‘doll’ (arus ‘bride’), češm-ak ‘wink’ (češm ‘eye’).


5. -gar, -kar form agent nouns and agentives from nouns and verb stems: ahan-gar ‘blacksmith’ (ahan ‘iron’), amuz-gar ‘teacher’ (amuxtan ‘to learn, teach’), mohafeze-kar ‘conservative’ (mohafeze ‘conservation’).

6. -či (from Turkish, very productive) forms nouns of occupation or profession from entity and action nouns: qahve-či ‘coffee-seller’, šekar-či ‘hunter’.

7. -abad ‘fertile, prosperous’ forms village, town and city toponyms, generally from personal names or titles: Hoseyn-abad, Lenin-abad.

8. -estan forms names of territories, countries and other enclaves, from the collective name of the inhabitants: Afgh-en-estan ‘land of the Afghans’, kudak-estan ‘kindergarten’ (kudak ‘child’).

9. -iyat (Ar. abstract formative) generates quality nouns from adjectives and type nouns, often independently of the Arabic lexicon and including non-Arabic words: aqall-iyat ‘minority’ (Ar. aqall ‘less’), xar-iyat ‘stupidity’ (Pers. xar ‘donkey’), iran-iyat ‘Iranian-ness’ (where it is not structurally a suffix; superseded by irani-gar-i, see 4.3.1, #1). This suffix has passed its productive peak; cf. #13 below.6

Characteristic suffixes:

10. -u forms diminutives, often affective, from animate/human nouns: pesar-u ‘kid’, yar-u ‘fellow, guy’ (yar ‘companion, helper’) (cf. 4.3.2, #4).

11. -ban ‘master’ (obsolete as a noun) forms nouns of occupation and a few instrumentives: baš-ban ‘gardener’, dež-ban ‘castelan’, bad-ban ‘sail’ (bad ‘wind’).

12. -dan forms nouns of container: namak-dan ‘salt-shaker’, ab-dan ‘vesica’ (ab ‘water’).

13. -ive (Ar. collective formative, a doublet of #9): forms collectives, physiological and bureaucratic-legal terms: qajar-ive ‘the Qajar dynasty’, zojaǐye ‘crystaline lens’ (zoj ‘glass’), jahiz-ive ‘dowry’ (jahiz ‘camel-saddle; trousseau’).

4.3.2. Suffixes forming adjectives

Productive suffixes:

1. -i (originating in both MP –ik and Arabic –iyy) is the most productive and widely applicable suffix. It generates relative adjectives and associated nouns from nouns (including derivatives, compounds and


Derivatives from numerals may be used adverbially: *do dast-i* ‘two-handed’; *do-dasti be-zan* ‘strike with both hands’; *bist kilometr-i-ye Hamadan* ‘twenty km. from Hamadan’ (with ezafe).

- e added to numerical and some interrogative and impersonal collocations, forms relative adjectives and associated nouns: *dah sal-e* ‘ten-year-old’, *do-čarx-e* ‘bicycle’ (*čarx* ‘wheel’), *če kar-e* ‘of what profession?’

3. -ane forms (literary) adjectives referring to non-human nominals from adjectives that usually refer to humans: thus *ketab-e danešmand-ane* ‘a scholarly book’ (< *danešmand* ‘scholar, scholarly’); *mard-e aql ‘an intelligent man’, but *kar-e aql-ane* ‘an intelligent act’. Adjectives in -ane are frequently found as manner or sentential adverbs (2.3.1): *bi-adab-ane raftar kardand* ‘they behaved discourteously’; *xošbaxt-ane* ‘fortunately’ (*xošbaxt* ‘fortunate’ + human), *badbaxt-ane* ‘unfortunately’.

4. -u in colloquial Persian forms from nouns or verb stems an adjective denoting a physical or moral characteristic: *axm-u* ‘surly, morose’ (*axm* ‘frown, scowl’); *tars-u* ‘cowardly’ (*tarsidan* ‘to be afraid’).

5. -aki (mostly in colloquial) derives expressive adjectives and adverbs from nouns, adjectives and adverbs: *dozd-aki* ‘furtive(ly)’ (*dozd* ‘thief’); *yavaš-aki* ‘slow and easy, gently’ (*yavaš* ‘slowly, gently’). The base word may be reduplicated: *ras(t)-ras(t)-aki* ‘dead sure, honestly and truly’ (*ras* ‘right, straight, true’).

Characteristic suffixes:

6. -in, -ine (a) denote the material from which something is made: *zar(ri)n* ‘gold(en)’, *čub-in* ‘wooden’, *pašm-in* ‘woolen, cashmere’ (*pašm* ‘wool’). This function has been assumed by -i (*tala-i* ‘gold[en]’ and *čub-i* ‘wooden’ in modern Persian), and some common members of the class have shifted in meaning: *sang-in* ‘heavy’ (*sang* ‘stone’), *šīr-in* ‘sweet’ (*šīr* ‘milk’).

(b) added to some numerical adjectives and place adverbs, generate adjectives of relative time or place: *bar-in* ‘upper, topmost’ (*bar* ‘up[on]’), *avval-in, naxost-in* ‘first’, *pišin* ‘former’ (*piš* ‘before’), *nov-in* ‘modern’ (*now* ‘new’), *dir-ine* ‘ancient, long-standing’ (*dir* ‘late’); cf. 2.3.2 and 2.6.2.


8. -var, -var ‘fit for, possessing’: *nam-var* ‘famous’ (*nam* ‘name’), *omid-var* ‘hopeful’.
9. -nak and -gin form adjectives from nouns often denoting unpleasant qualities and states: dard-nak ‘painful’ (dard ‘pain’), ġam-gin ‘sad’ (ġam ‘grief’).

In Classical literature rarer adjectival suffixes such as -vaš, -sa(n) and -fam are met.

4.3.3. Verb stem suffixes

A position intermediate between that of suffixal and compound adjective is occupied by several verb stems attached to underlying subjects or objects, as in bad-avard, xane-zad and agentives (4.4.1). These stem forms are frequently used to coin neologisms:
- alud (-alu) ‘polluted, stained (with)’ (Stem II aludan/ala ‘to pollute’): xab-alud ‘sleepy’; paše-alu ‘woolly, furry’.
- amiz ‘mingling (with)’ (Stem I amixtan ‘to mix’): mosalemat-amiz ‘peaceful’.
- angiz ‘arousing’ (Stem I angixtan ‘to excite, stimulate’): fetne-angiz ‘trouble-making, provocative’.
- avar ‘bringing’ (Stem I avardan ‘to bring’): ta’ajob-avar ‘surprising’
- pazir (PAZ-) ‘accepting’ (Stem I pazioftan ‘to receive, accept’): eslah napazir ‘incorrigible’.

Similar to these formatives are a patronymic suffix, -zad ‘born (of)’ (Stem II zadan/za ‘to give birth [to]’: Amīr-zad; and a suffix –xar, xare (XWA-) xor, xore ‘eating’ (Stem I, with variant, of xordan ‘to eat’): gušt-xar ‘carnivorous; carnivore’ (gušt ‘meat’), šir-xore ‘suckling, nursing (infant)’ (šir ‘milk’).

4.4. Nominal compounds

Except for copulative compounds, Persian compounds are of two types: “determinative,” in which the result of the compound is of the same semantic category as the head noun (an ‘alehouse’ is a type of house, as is mey-xane ‘wine-house’); and “possessive,” where the result of the compound is an attribute of, or possessed by, a third party (a ‘blockhead’ is not a head, but a person having, figuratively, a block for a head, as kalle-puk ‘hollow-head’ describes one who has a figuratively empty head). The former are typically nouns, the latter typically adjectives (but subject to substantivization), as xar-guš ‘hare’, lit., ‘donkey-ear’. Productivity of these structures varies.

4.4.1. Compound nouns

1. Copulative compounds, in which the components (synonymous or complementary) are of equal weight: ab-o hava ‘weather, climate’ (air-and-water); marz-o bum ‘territory’ (frontier-and-land). This includes some colloquial compounds incorporating echoic nonsense elements: jak-o janevar ‘wild beasts’ (?-and-animal), and the productive echoic repetition of a word, substituting m- for the first consonant: pul-mul ‘money and suchlike’. See also 5.1.
2. Juxtaposition of modifying noun and head noun (the converse of the nominal 
*ezaf* NP): *ruz-name* ‘(daily) newspaper; diary’ (‘day’ + ‘document, letter’), *gav-ahān* ‘ploughshare’ (‘ox’ + ‘iron’), *palaye-gah* ‘refinery’ (purification-place).

3. Noun + Stem I: derives (a) from simple or compound transitive verbs, an agent noun or agentive: *sox-an-gu* ‘spokesperson’ (word-say[er]), *peyg-am-ba* ‘messenger’ (*bordan* ‘to carry’), *ma-raz-dar* ‘border guard’ (*daštan* ‘to have, hold, keep’), *sis baz-kon* ‘bottle-opener’ (*baz kardan* ‘to open’); a very productive device (cf. 4.4.3).

(b) From intransitive (and sometimes transitive) verbs, for which the noun is an underlying argument other than the object, a locative, instrumentive or product noun: *qal-am-row* ‘jurisdiction’ (*pen* + ‘to go’, i.e., where one’s writ runs), *piade-row* ‘sidewalk’ (*piade* ‘pedestrian; on foot’), *dast-nevis* ‘manuscript’ (i.e., written by hand; *neveštan*), *mir-za* ‘prince’ (born of an amir; *za[i]dan* ‘to give birth’).

4. Noun + Stem II or past participle: from transitive verbs, a patient noun, and from intransitives generally an agentive. Stem II formations are mostly represented by patronymics in -*zad* (4.3.3) and names such as *Xoda-dad* ‘God-given’. Participial formations include *mar-ga* ‘snakebite victim’ (*ga* ‘to bite’), *ja-hande* ‘experienced, widely-traveled’ (one who has seen the world, a “resultative agentive”).

5. Adverb + verb stem (both stems occur in active or passive senses, forming nouns of action, instance, product, and instrument): *boland-gu* ‘loudspeaker’ (*high* + Stem I *goft* ‘to say’), *pas-andaz* ‘savings’ (‘after’ + Stem I *andaxtan* ‘to throw’), *piš-kaš* (‘keš’) ‘present, tribute’ (Stem I *kašidan* ‘to drag, bring’); *piš-raft* ‘progress’ (Stem II *raftan* ‘to go’), *dar-amad* ‘income’ (‘in’ + Stem II *amadan* ‘to come’).

6. Juxtaposition of head and modifier, as in nominal *ezaf* phrases, but without the syllable of *ezaf*: *madar-zan* ‘mother-in-law’ (*mother-wife*), *saheb-xane* ‘landlord’ (*owner-house*), *ja-lebas* ‘coat-hanger’ (place-clothes). Most of these originate in regular *ezaf* phrases.

7. Lexicalized *ezaf* phrases of both kinds, nouns modified by prepositional phrases and other collocations: *sib(-e) zāmini* ‘potato’ (earth apple), *taxt-e xab* ‘bed’ (board of sleep), *toxm-e mor* ‘egg’ (seed of bird); *e’temaed be-nafs* ‘self-reliance’ (reliance on self). We may include here two Arabic collocational calques in which the first element has evolved into a virtual prefix, i.e., may combine in a Persian *ezaf* with Arabic or Persian nouns beyond the Arabic models (cf. 4.2, #5–6):

*adam* (‘DM’) ‘absence, lack’: *adam-e movafeqat* ‘disagreement’; *adam-e ašnai* ‘ignorance’ (Pers. ašna-i ‘familiarity, acquaintance’).

*su* ‘evil’: *su’-e zann* ‘suspicion’ (*zann* ‘opinion’), *su’(-e) estefāde* ‘misuse, abuse’ (*estefāde* ‘use’).

8. Adjective + noun (determinative; the converse of an adjectival *ezaf*): a few frozen forms, e.g., *now-ruz* ‘New (Year’s) Day’, *?pir-zan* ‘old woman’ (see 2).
4.4.2. Compound adjectives

1. Noun modifier and noun: mah-ru ‘moon-faced’ (i.e., beautiful), šir-del ‘lion-hearted’.
2. Adjective and noun (possessive; the converse of the adjectival ezafe NP): xoš-axlaq ‘good-natured’, siah-baxt ‘unlucky’ (black-fortune), farsi-zaban ‘Persian-speaking’ (zaban ‘tongue, language’).
3. Numeral and noun: hašt-pa ‘octopus’, se-guš, se-guše ‘triangular; triangle’.
5. Repetition of a noun, with or without a preposition or connective syllable: rah-rah ‘striped’ (rah ‘road’), jur be-jur ‘of all kinds’, bar-a-bar ‘equal, opposite’ (breast-to-breast), sar-a-sar ‘end-to-end, thorough’.
6. Lexicalized ezafe NPs, nouns with prepositional phrases (possessive): kal-e por-bad ‘haughty, pretentious’ (head full of wind), xane be-duš ‘nomadic; nomad’, sar ta pa ‘full-length, complete(ly)’ (head-to-foot).

5. Lexical derivation and composition: Verbs

5.1. Stem derivatives

5.1.1. Denominal verbs

A few dozen verbs have been derived from Persian and borrowed Arabic substantives by treating the noun as Stem I and adding -id-a[n] to form a regular infinitive (Stem II in -id), e.g., nam-id-a[n] ‘to name’, ghar-at-id-a[n] ‘to plunder’; some were formed on Arabic action nouns which were not in themselves lexical loans in Persian, e.g., bal’idan ‘to swallow’. This strategy was established in late Middle Persian, but is no longer productive.

5.1.2. Causative verbs

These are formed on Stem I by suffixing -an-, to form a new Stem I, which is supplied with a Stem II in -(i)d; thus rasid-an (residan) ‘to arrive’, ras-anidan, ras-and-an ‘to convey, send, deliver’; bar gard-an(i)d-an ‘to turn back, return’ (transitive), < bar gašt-and- ‘to come/go back, return’. The variants are generally in free distribution, though the shorter -and-an occurs more frequently. The grammatical object is the same as that of the base verb: an matlab-ra be-man fahm-and-and ‘they explained the topic to me’.

All such verbs are transitive, but in some the causative sense has been attenuated or specialized: kašid-an ‘to pull, draw, stretch’, kašand-an ‘to drag’ (intensive), ‘to draw out, drag on’ (figurative). The device is no longer very productive (except in Tajik Persian).

5.2. Verbal compounds

Persian compound, or phrasal, verbs are simplex verbs preceded by a modifier. They are both lexical and syntactic units, and may be transitive or intransitive. Modifiers may be opaque particles, adverbs, deverbal or other nominals, and their share of the semantic load ranges from near zero to near 100 percent. The simplex verbs, which correspondingly range
in perceived function from the independently meaningful to desemanti-
cized auxiliaries, are drawn from a limited pool denoting kinetic and so-
ciodynamic actions (e.g., kardan ‘to do/make’, sodan ‘to become’, dadan ‘to
give,’ yaftan ‘to find, receive’, daštan ‘to hold’, amadan ‘to come’, raftan ‘to
go,’ avardan ‘to bring’, bordan ‘to carry away, remove’, zadan ‘to strike’, xor-
dan ‘to incur’). In addition to the senses suggested by their lexical mean-
ings, such verbs may add typical nuances to compound verbs: e.g., zadan
appears in verbs of communication (harf zadan ‘to speak’, telefon zadan ‘to
phone’). Syntactic analysis both of phrasal verbs and of their participation
in broader VPs and sentences has been varied and controversial.7

In the present subjunctive and imperative, compound verbs of the pre-
verb type (5.2.1) normally dispense with the prefix be-, and other types do
so frequently, especially in literary Persian.

5.2.1. Verbs with preverbs or adverbs

The non-verbal constituents of this type occupy a continuum between
true preverbs (former adverbs and nouns that no longer function indepen-
dently, and are more or less opaque) and transparent adverbs that may
function also as prepositions, etc. The meanings of the former group are
more figurative, those of the latter group more literal. The nature and syn-
tax of verbal arguments may determine idiomatic readings. The semantic
load tends to be quite evenly distributed between particle and verb. They
constitute a closed category in modern Standard Persian.

1. With preverb: bar amadan ‘to emerge, elapse; cope’; bar (var) daštan
   ‘to pick up’; ashab-et-o var dar ‘pick up your things’; var raftan ‘to
   fiddle, fidget’ (bar ~ var ‘up(on)’); cf. baz below); dar raftan ‘to go off
   (gun), escape, leak’; dar gozastan ‘to pass away, die’ (dar ‘door’; < az
dar ‘out the door’; sense of completion).

2. With archaic adverb/particle of limited application other than com-
pound verbs: foru bordan ‘to swallow’ (foru[d] ‘down’; cf. forud-gah
‘airfield’); fara xandan ‘to summon, recall’ (fara[z] ‘up; forth’ + ‘to
call’).

3. With (productive) adverb/particle in specialized variants: baz (va) kar-
dan ‘to open’ (baz, predicative adj., ‘open’); baz (va) daštan ‘to detain,
prevent’; va daštan also ‘to set up; to oblige, persuade’; va istadan ‘to
stop’ (intrans.) (baz ~ va, adverb, ‘back’; sense of delay, repetition). Baz
and va are often considered synonymous variants, va being the
colloquial reflex; however, each also occurs in mutually exclusive us-
ages, and va in literary idioms to the exclusion of baz. The same is
true, to a lesser extent, of bar and var.

4. With (productive) adverb/particle/prepositional phrase: pa sodan ‘to
stand up’ (< bar pa ‘to [one’s] feet’); dar amadan ‘to come in, enter’
(dar ‘in’); birun raftan ‘to go out, exit’ (birun ‘out(side)’); piš amadan
‘to occur’ piš ‘before, forward’; be-kar bordan ‘to use’ (kar ‘work’); az
dast dadan ‘to lose’ (dast ‘hand’).

7. See, for example, Windfuhr 1979: 113–26 (survey); Telelgdi 1951.
5.2.2. Verbs with verb stems or derivatives
This class may be subdivided into five degrees, as follows.

1. With simplex verb stem: *gir avardan* ‘to obtain’ (Stem I of *gereft* ‘to seize’); a small, closed category, reminiscent of serial verbs in Turkish and other languages. Structurally different is the verb with prepositional phrase containing a verb stem, e.g., *be-foru raftan* ‘to sell’ (intrans.; lit., go to sale, i.e., to be in demand).

2. With multiple verb stem: *nist-o nabud kandar* ‘to annihilate’ (neg. Stem I + neg. Stem II ‘to be’); *jost-o juk k* ‘to look for, search’ (both stems of *jostan* ‘to seek’, which now usually means ‘to find’ in colloquial).

3. With compound verb stem: *va-dar k* ‘to persuade,-oblige, force’ (Stem I of *va dašt* ‘ditto’); *bar-xord k* ‘to encounter, come into contact (with)’ (Stem II of *bar xordan* ‘to meet, bump into’). Like the next two degrees, such structures are double-derivatives or modalizations of existing verbs; they tend to duplicate the base meaning and/or expand it metaphorically, and to replace the base form in the lexicon—a growing class.

4. With simple action noun/quality noun (for these forms, see 4.1, 4.3.1): *kuskeš k* ‘to try’ (*kušidan* ‘to try’); *xaheš k* ‘to request’ (*xastan* ‘to ask’).

5. With compound action noun/quality noun: *del-tangi k* ‘to be saddened, depressed’ (< adj. *del-tang* ‘tight-hearted’; see 4.4.2, #6); *bar-raši k* ‘to investigate, study’; *va-koneš k* ‘to react’. Both the latter are neologisms: *bar rasidan* ‘to investigate’ once existed, but *va-baz kardan* ‘to open’ is not the source of *va-koneš*; rather one must postulate a *va kardan* ‘to act back’. As in the case of the previous category, the action nouns predate the doubly-derived verbs, and may select different auxiliaries, e.g., *va-koneš nešan dadan/daštan* ‘to show/have a reaction’. These two are growing categories, semantically parallel to verbs with Arabic action nouns (5.2.5).

5.2.3. Verbs with tangible nouns
These compounds arise from various underlying structures: in *ru k* ‘to face’, the noun *ru* ‘face’ is the underlying object (to direct one’s face somewhere); in *qofl* (*qolf*) *k* ‘to lock, bolt’, *qofl* ‘lock’ is the instrument (to close a door by means of a lock). Regardless of the analysis, compounds with transitive meaning will take a direct object. Other examples: *tan k* ‘to don (clothes)’ (*tan* ‘body’); *sax zadān* ‘to gore’ (*sax* ‘horn’). This and similar verbs (*lagad zadān* ‘to kick, stomp’, *moš zadān* ‘to punch’) exemplify the ability of some compound verbs to decompose into NP + simplex verb in order to incorporate further adverbal modification: *boz sax-e mohkam-i zad* ‘the goat administered a hefty blow with his horn/tammed his horn in’ (lit., struck a firm horn).

5.2.4. Verbs with adjectives
Verbs in which an adjective is followed by *šodan* ‘to become’ or an equivalent (*gašt*an, *gardidan*) are usually inchoatives, and those where one is
followed by *kardan* ‘to do, make’ or an equivalent (*namudan, saxtan*) are causatives. Many such occur in correlative pairs: *bozorg* š. ‘to grow up’ (*bozorg* ‘big’), *bozorg* k. ‘to rear, bring up’; *taman* š. ‘to be completed, finish, end’ (*taman* ‘complete’), *taman* k. ‘to complete, finish (trans.)’; *savar* š. ‘to mount (a horse, etc.), board (a vehicle)’, *savar* k. ‘to mount, board (trans.)’. This last commonly decomposes and attracts a nominal *ezafe* phrase to complete the argument: *ma savar-e taksi šodim* ‘we took a cab’ (similar are, e.g., *rah-separ* š. ‘to set out (for)’; in stative mode, *šodan* is replaced by the appropriate form of ‘to be’: *savar-e kešti hastim* ‘we are aboard ship’).

### 5.2.5. Verbs with Arabic action nouns and participles

There is in principle no distinction between native and incorporated Arabic vocabulary in verb composition, and several of the foregoing examples have included Arabic loanwords. In practice, the sheer volume of Arabic words so used, and the palpable morphological distinctions between action noun and active and passive participles in Arabic make this the most salient and overtly systematic category of Persian compound verbs.

Composition with an Arabic *nomen actionis* effectively superseded denominal derivation in -idan, and has closed the already small category of primitive verbs. In some cases the base meaning of the Arabic verb was synonymous with an existing Persian verb, but the newcomer was used in a specialized or metaphorical sense: *qat* k. ‘to cut off, interrupt’ (*Ar. qat* ‘cutting’; cf. Pers. *bor* [š]idan ‘to cut’). Both transitive and intransitive verbs may be formed with the desemanticized auxiliary *kardan*, a mere vehicle for inflection: *fekr* k. ‘to think’, *sohbat* k. ‘to speak, talk, converse’ (*Ar. šuhiba* ‘accompanying, associating with’). Other auxiliaries assume some of the semantic load: *nesbat* dadan ‘to attribute, relate’ (lit., give attribution), *tamas* gereftan ‘to contact’ (take contact). Impersonal idioms (functioning in 3sg. only) include *etefaq oftad* ‘it happened’ (incidence fell), *emkan* darad ‘it is possible’ (it has, i.e., there is a possibility; cf. 3.5.2).

The preverbal element may be an Arabicate phrase or *ezafe* NP, or a (Persian) prepositional phrase: *qat-e am(m) k.* ‘to massacre’ (lit., make general murder); *be-etnam rasan dan* ‘to complete, accomplish’ (lit., bring to completion; Persian synonym *be-payan rasan dan*).

Arabic participles are treated like adjectives (5.2.4); the majority of such compound verbs are inchoatives with *šodan* and (often correlative) causatives with *kardan*: *razi* š. ‘to be pleased’, *razi* k. ‘to satisfy, please’, *moqim* š. ‘to settle, take up residence’ (active participles); *mahrnum* š. ‘to be deprived’, *mahrnum* k. ‘to deprive’, *mošaraf* š. ‘to be honoured’ (passive participles). Cognate action nouns and participles with auxiliaries chosen according to semantics may furnish synonyms, as *tasnim* gereftan (lit., take decision) and *mosammam* š. (lit., become determined) ‘to determine, decide’.
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