

The Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute of Iranian Studies

in collaboration with

The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and
the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago

present

Virtual Lecture Series on Persian Language Pedagogy: New Trends and Innovations

Conveners

Azita H. Taleghani

Pouneh Shabani-Jadidi

Saturday, 8 April 2023
12:00 PM Eastern Time

Leaky Grammars and Language Pedagogy

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Abstract:

Language pedagogy typically involves explicitly presenting grammatical generalizations and examples that motivate them. For example, an English teacher may say that “the” is used with familiar nouns like “the cat in the hat” and “a” with unfamiliar ones like “a cat in the neighbourhood”. Similarly, a teacher of Persian might say that the plural marker “ha” appears on plural and familiar nouns but not unfamiliar ones. Learners are expected to use these generalizations to comprehend or produce utterances in novel contexts. Such grammatical generalizations give learners an advantage over pure self-discovery. However, this approach is as good as the generalizations themselves. Since grammatical generalizations leak, this approach often introduces misconceptions and leads to errors due to the leaky nature of the generalization. We focus on definiteness and pluralization in Persian and present several “leaky generalizations” that may have affected Persian language pedagogy. We suggest that a closer dialogue between theoretical linguistics and language pedagogy would reduce errors introduced by leaky generalizations and likely improve language learning in the classroom.

Bio:

Masoud Jasbi is Assistant Professor of linguistics at UC Davis. His main areas of research include language acquisition, semantics, pragmatics, psycholinguistics, computational and experimental methods in linguistics.

Zoom Registration



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