

# A Learner's Grammar of Dari

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# Preface & Disclaimer

This is a preliminary draft—a ‘beta version’ if you like. The position that enabled me to work on this grammar (more or less) full time is coming to an end, and I have decided to release what I have rather than wait for the opportunity to complete it to my own satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> Everything that I’ve included here is, to the best of my knowledge, correct. There are, however, three chapters that I have left out entirely (addressing if-then sentences, questions, and relative clauses), because I haven’t had time to address the topics properly.

Nevertheless, there are certain to be deficiencies in the chapters that I *have* included. I am very interested in your feedback in matters small and large. In particular, I would value feedback in any of the following areas:

- What explanations are difficult or unclear?
- What topics would you expected to be explained, which are not explained?
- What topics are given a short treatment, that you think should be given a longer treatment?
- Are there any example sentences you wish had been included?
- Are there any example sentences that are too complex, or difficult to figure out from the translations alone?
- Are there places where I assume more knowledge of grammar than most people have?
- Particularly for non-native English speakers: are there any places where I assume knowledge of English grammar that a non-native speaker wouldn’t have?
- Are you aware of any regional dialect variations that should be included?
- And of course: are there any mistakes?

Your feedback for these or any other issues would be very much appreciated. You can get in touch with me through IAM, or with the email address below.

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May 24, 2016

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Hamidullah Muradi (Hamid) very generously checked the written and transcribed Dari, and found many errors. I am grateful for his input. Those errors have been corrected in this edition.

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<sup>1</sup>This is of course an easier decision in the 21st century, when ‘publishing’ means sending around a PDF file, rather than ordering 20,000 copies from the printer.

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# Abbreviations

1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
EZ	Ezafa
INF	Infinitive
MI	Continuous
NEG	Negative
PL	Plural
PTCP	Participle
SG	Singular
SUBJ	Subjunctive

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 The Scope of this Book

When I was growing up in America, watching cartoons, many of the commercials were for breakfast cereal. The advertisers knew that they had to entice kids with the color, shape, and flavor of the cereal, but they also had to include a nod to healthy eating. So, the last two seconds of every cereal commercial would include this sentence: “Lazer-Shooting-Sugar-and-Dye-Puffs are part of *this balanced breakfast*.” This was accompanied by a picture of an *actual* healthy breakfast: milk, juice, toast, fruit, eggs, etc. My interpretation, even as a child, was that the only way one could legally associate Lazer-Shooting-Sugar-and-Dye-Puffs with anything healthy, was for the cereal to be placed *next to* a meal that was in fact healthy.

I offer this book in the same spirit.

This is a book about Dari grammar. It is not a curriculum for a language course. This book will not answer the question, “What should I do during my lessons?” That is, however, a very important question to ask. The curriculum advocated by IAM for the last ten years or so has been based upon the Growing Participator Approach (GPA).<sup>1</sup> The GPA will give you hour-by-hour plans for your language lessons, based on the idea that you are becoming an increasingly competent member of a language community (a ‘growing participator’). The GPA is not an approach to learning Dari; it is an approach to learning any language. As you can imagine then, the structure of lessons in the GPA is not built around grammatical lessons, but instead builds on the learner’s gradually increasing ability to interact in the real world.

The advantages offered by the GPA are tremendous. In the first place, it accurately identifies the weakest link of any language learning program: you. Many people have learned a language only once, as children. Relatively few people have successfully learned a language as an adult. The consequence? You’re not a very good language learner. But you can develop those skills. The GPA provides a context in which you can grow. You’ll be developing your own language-learning skills—which will serve you well after you complete your time of formal language instruction.

The GPA also places an appropriate emphasis on language learning in natural contexts. The last forty of fifty years of research into language learning research have shown the need for language learning to be communicative and natural. You may have once had an experience similar to mine, when after three years of ‘learning German’, I met my first German speaker and was unable to say or understand a single thing. That is the failing of traditional classroom approaches, which emphasize learning grammatical rules, repetition, and practice within highly controlled (and contrived) contexts. By contrast, in an ideal GPA program, you would develop your own intuitions about Dari grammar, without so much as hearing terms like ‘past continuous’ or ‘perfect subjunctive’.

And yet. Some people really do thrive on explicit instruction on grammar. And there is research to suggest that the best language learning programs allocate around 25% of the time to studying the language itself, of which studying grammar is one part.<sup>2</sup> That’s where this book comes in. It focuses on the more ‘mechanical’ aspects of language-learning: pronunciation, word order, verbs, sentence structure, etc. Some people will be able to figure these things out directly from talking to people, but many more people will profit from some simple explanations. This book is a guide to help you through the tricky parts; it’s not a complete curriculum. My goal is to provide hand-holds, rather than hand-holding.

So I confess freely that I’m withholding information. I know how to tell time in Dari, but I haven’t included it in this book. Why? Because figuring it out for yourself is something that you need to be able to do. At some point you’ll learn the numbers. At some point after that you’ll need to talk about a schedule with your teacher.

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<sup>1</sup>You can take seminars in the Growing Participator Approach; they are offered all over the world. You can also make an excellent start by looking through the materials that have been made freely available online: <http://tinyurl.com/growingparticipation>

<sup>2</sup>Nation (2007). Other ‘language-focused’ learning activities would be things like drilling vocabulary, working on pronunciation, learning to read and write, and those sorts of things.



You'll gesture at the clock—or maybe draw a clock on a sheet of paper—and work it out between yourselves. Later on you'll hear an expression that sounds like 'ten minutes till five' and follow it up by confirming that it means '4:50'. And so forth. That's the warp and woof of language learning.

Accordingly, I have not included a list of vocabulary.<sup>3</sup> Your vocabulary list should be determined by what comes up in your language lessons, rather than by what words some linguist thinks might be helpful for week 10 or whatever. So, for instance, Chapter 17 makes a point of *not* enumerating the dozen or so ways that a Dari speaker could say, 'We ought to...'; Chapter 7—which is about prepositions—does not have a list of prepositions. You should pick these things up from your friends and teachers.

This book is in some sense a replacement for the 'Glassman book' (Glassman, 2000), a book written in the 1970s (and subsequently revised) that has served as the basis for LCP's grammar instruction even after its adoption of the Growing Participator Approach. Four decades of continuous use testifies to the usefulness of the Glassman book. It remains a valuable source of example sentences, and also of cultural knowledge. The Glassman consists of twenty-five lessons, which fit nicely into the six months that IAM has traditionally allocated for dedicated language study. Some people will naturally yearn for such a structured language curriculum, and will wonder why this book defers to the Growing Participator Approach for the content of lessons. The reason, following on from the discussion above, is that there is a danger in the Glassman approach: the danger is that you will learn to *speak* Dari, but you will not learn how to *learn* Dari. A structured curriculum feels good for the first six months, but on the first day of the seventh month the floor falls out from under you. Too many people finish the Long Course without the skills to continue their language learning. As a language coach, I assure you that this is the rule rather than the exception. If you don't leave the Long Course with the ability to plan and conduct your subsequent language study, you're going to be frustrated with your subsequent progress in Dari.

## 1.2 Organization

You are *not* intended to go through this book chapter-by-chapter. Instead, the book is laid out thematically. Different topics are covered in different chapters. If the chapter on the future comes before the subjunctive, that does not mean that you should learn the future first in your lessons. Your language lessons should expose you to new grammar in a natural and organic way—that is to say, your language lessons should not be arranged according to grammatical topic!<sup>4</sup>

You might want to read straight through if you've already got a decent knowledge of spoken Dari and are trying to brush up your grammar.

Where appropriate, the chapter ends with a few practice drills, sentences that you should try to say in Dari. All of the example sentences are silly (e.g., 'The dinosaur will be slaughtered on Wednesday.'). That's because you shouldn't take grammar drills too seriously. Focused study of the grammar of a language, and even drilling grammatical constructions, is part of a balanced language learning program. But, your previous experience in learning a language has probably lead you to overemphasize the importance of grammar drills. You can use the silly examples to get a foothold into the grammar, but the real practice needs to happen in the real world.

## 1.3 Variation in Dari

If you wanted to choose a word to capture the revolution in our understanding of language in the 20th century, that word would be *variation*. Language is variable. Within a country: there are different dialects from region to region. Within a city: there are different dialects between different social classes. And even within the individual, people don't always say things the same way: they speak differently in different contexts, depending on the audience, depending on how they want to be perceived. And there's plenty of random variation as well. And this is to say nothing of the variation between formal and informal Dari (discussed in the next section), the variation that comes about because many people are speaking Dari as a second language, and so forth.

An important thing to keep in mind is that there is no 'basic' or 'pure' form of Dari. Some people will say that 'literary Dari' is the *real* form of the language (e.g., Thackston, 1993); other people will say that 'street Dari' is the *real* form of the language (e.g., Glassman, 2000, p. 1). Both are wrong. Both varieties simply *exist*. They're used in different contexts. Learning street Dari won't help you to understand the evening news;

<sup>3</sup>Quite the opposite, in fact: I've tried to illustrate grammatical points with everyday words—[seb] «سبب» 'apple' has often been convenient—and with proper names.

<sup>4</sup>It is amusing to read books that, for instance, introduce masculine nouns several chapters before feminine nouns. If you're studying a dead language, this might make sense. If you're studying a language in order to use it in real life, you're not going to go around speaking in masculine nouns for weeks before learning the feminine ones. (Not that Dari has a gender distinction.)

learning literary Dari won't help you to talk about the news with someone afterwards. If you want the full experience of the culture, you need to expect to learn both.

What does this all mean for you, as a learner of Dari? It means that you can expect to hear different things from different people. Expect to find differences in the way people speak. Expect villagers to speak differently from city-dwellers. And—though this is painful—expect to learn words in your lessons that won't always work on the street. Different people talk differently, and you need to accept that.<sup>5</sup>

There is no question that you will have many frustrating experiences. It may help though to frame the problem correctly. If your goal is, "I want to finish studying Dari," then the constant variation will be an annoyance. If your goal is, "I want to engage better with Afghan culture by *learning* more Dari," then getting exposure to that variation is a benefit. This is a bit like eating out internationally: if you only ever want the familiar, the diversity of an international menu is an annoyance. If you want to appreciate new flavors, however, the diversity of the menu is an exciting opportunity.

You should be intentional about getting exposure to the kind of speech that you want to understand and produce. That may mean finding opportunities to speak with people from different places or educational backgrounds. This is not necessarily a task for your first six months, but you should be intentional about it as you grow in your language ability.

What does variation mean for this book? Perhaps this much is obvious: this book doesn't contain all the variation! This is not an exhaustive resource. This is a middle-of-the-road Dari grammar. There are occasional notes about dialect variation, but these only cover the most obvious differences. It's not even the case that your own experience needs to supplement this book: no, your experience comes first, and this book fills in some cracks and puts it into order. So when you ask your language teacher for a word, and it's different from what you read here, don't be surprised. That's a normal part of learning Dari.

## 1.4 Dari as a literary language

Many people will have come to Afghanistan hoping to contribute to the country's economic development. Many people will have come to contribute to educational needs. Many will have come to work with the poorest of the poor. These noble intentions can create a blind spot when it comes to learning Dari. It is always important to bear in mind that Dari (Persian) is a literary language, with a long history and a vibrant literary tradition. You can buy the book, *A Millennium of Classical Persian Poetry*—the title is no exaggeration. Many of the major works of Persian poetry—the *Shahnamah* of Ferdousi, the *Rubayyat* of Omar Khayyum—are familiar at least by name to English speakers. The literary heritage of the language has the following implications for language learners.

**There are many words for every concept.** The wealth of Dari vocabulary is a mixed blessing—not to say a curse—for the language learner. It's not unusual for a single English word to have four or five Dari equivalents, not because the words mismatch, but because there are just a lot of words. Some will be "high" words, some will be "low" words. Some will be regional variations. Some will be formal variations. There are *lots* of words to learn.<sup>6</sup>

**Speakers respect the language.** Dari was spoken long before the current generation of speakers was born, and it will be spoken long after they are all dead. The language is bigger than the individual. Many people only ever speak informal Dari, but people with any education bring a reverence to the language. A native speaker of Dari once told me that even Dari speakers are *always* learning more Dari. People are aware of higher literary standards—even if they're not personally familiar with them—and respect those standards.<sup>7</sup>

**Teachers have ideas about how you should speak.** The fact that there is a formal standard affects the way that teachers teach. Even if the student wants to learn to speak the way normal people speak, a teacher will still have a strong bias toward the literary language. No teacher of English is going to teach her students to say, "Y'all ain't from around here," even if that is the way she usually speaks. It would be ridiculous. In the same way, teachers will bend toward the literary standard. Teachers trained by LCP have been indoctrinated in the virtues of the vernacular—more or less successfully, depending on the teacher—so to some extent this issue may be mitigated.

The point is not that you should aim to speak in a literary fashion, but rather that you should be aware of the dynamic. Otherwise, you won't understand why your teachers are correcting your speech. In the long term, one component of being a successful speaker of a language is sociolinguistic competence. Among other

<sup>5</sup>I could produce endless examples. I learned 'because' as [az xatere ke] from one teacher, and was confused when a different teacher always said [ba xatere ke] (with the same meaning). I studied in the classroom for six months with various teachers, but never learned the preposition [kate] 'with', because my teachers were all more educated people who said [hamraje].

<sup>6</sup>Just to bring this home: my own flashcards currently have two words that mean 'donkey', six words for 'dawn', three words for 'angry' (to which I could add several more), and so forth. It's not just the literary words that have multiples.

<sup>7</sup>This is just like English. People might have a sense that you can mess up *who* and *whom*, without actually knowing which is correct.

things, that means that you're able to speak appropriately to people of different educational levels, and in contexts of differing formality.

**Dari is an international language.** Dari is the name of the variety of Persian spoken in Afghanistan. In Iran the same language is called Farsi, and in Tajikistan the same language is called Tajiki. The language varies between these countries in part because of simple regional differences. Some of these differences are reflected in Afghan Dari: the Dari spoken towards Herat has more of an Iranian flavor, and the Dari spoken in the Northeast has some more Tajik elements. There are also differences in loan words: Iran brings in more French words, Tajikistan brings in more Russian words, and Afghanistan (lately) has brought in a lot of English words. The practical upshot of this is: more words! You can also be aware of these sorts of differences if you have the opportunity to visit multiple regions of Afghanistan, or interact with Persian speakers from different countries.

**People may 'help' you by speaking formally.** The fact that Dari has a literary standard informs people's ideas about what the 'real' language is. This in turn has consequences for how they'll try to help. Suppose someone says [mam merum] 'I'm going too', but you don't understand. The might correct it to [man ham merum], which is the formal way to say that sentence. You may not want to learn to say [man ham merum], but part of being a competent speaker of Dari is recognizing it when you hear it.

## 1.5 Indirect Communication

Although this book makes minimal effort to communicate cultural information, there is one principle of communication that is so universal that it is practically part of grammar. Here it is:

### (1) THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF ALL HUMAN COMMUNICATION

Sometimes you say things just to be nice.

In every culture, there are times when we do not speak the truth directly. No one gives an honest appraisal of a meal after having been a guest—"The beef was too dry, but at least the dessert was good." No one says what they think when they see a newborn—"She's ugly now, but I'm sure that'll pass." No one gives an honest review after a child's first violin recital—"Well played, aside from the notes!" This is not being dishonest, because no one expects the literal truth in those situations. If a hostess wants to know the truth about the beef, she has to ask her husband after the evening has ended.

But Westerners can get huffy when Afghans do the same thing—because Afghans might do it in different contexts. For instance, if you call a friend who is late for an appointment, she will say, "I'm on my way"—no matter whether she is on the way or not. That's the polite thing to say in that situation. If you take it as a promise and feel lied to, you're just misunderstanding the interaction.

If you ask an Afghan his/her opinion of a report you wrote, s/he will praise it, giving at most one suggestion. If you accept the praise but ignore the suggestion, you're misunderstanding the interaction. The suggestion could be quite important; it's just been padded with praise to make it more palatable.

Frustrating? Yes. Time-wasting? Yes. But remember: it's only frustrating and time-wasting because you don't understand what's going on. Once you get some experience of the culture, you'll begin to better understand how things work, and it will be a lot less frustrating.

One final note: indirect communication is not deceptive communication. But that does not mean that deception is impossible. As in any culture, Afghans can intentionally deceive people; that behavior warrants whatever moral reaction you feel is appropriate. The key is not to perceive an intent to deceive where none exists.

## 1.6 International Phonetic Alphabet

The pronunciation of Dari words is shown in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The conventions are described in Chapter 2. The IPA gives us a way to represent the pronunciation of Dari words accurately and simply, with one symbol for each sound. The symbols are all either lowercase letters, or made-up letters in a lowercase styles. In the text, phonetic text is shown in brackets, like this: [past]. That tells you that you should read that word as an IPA transcription. In examples (see below) the brackets are usually not needed.

You may be familiar with the IPA from previous experience, or it may come intuitively. There are also various resources available for study of the IPA. For instance, partway down the English Wikipedia article for the IPA,<sup>8</sup> there are charts of symbols; clicking on the symbols will take you to pages with descriptions and recordings of the sounds.

<sup>8</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Phonetic\\_Alphabet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Phonetic_Alphabet)



- There are relatively few citations in this book. I have cited sources that offer unique insights. Claims that are not cited are “common knowledge” within Persian grammar (i.e., they could be confirmed by consulting any of the grammars in the bibliography), or are generalizations based upon my own experience of Dari.
- This book is being written in concert with *A Learner’s Grammar of Southern Uzbek*. Many portions of the books are identical, since a lot of things that need to be said about language learning for both languages.

## 1.10 Acknowledgments

My deepest thanks go to Hamidullah Muradi (Hamid), of the Mazar LCP. Most or all of the sentences in this book have been checked with Hamid; many of them are his own contributions. He has been unfailingly patient as I checked obscure linguistic ideas against his Dari intuitions. He also produced many generalizations of his own, which have strengthened the book.

Mustafa, also of the Mazar LCP, also provided examples and discussion on a number of points.

Amy Baker read the entire draft and made many helpful corrections and suggestions. Thanks also to Liz Green, Stephanie Lockery, Daniel Stent, and Stephen Wilkey for providing feedback on draft chapters.

## Chapter 2

# Pronunciation

Clear and accurate pronunciation is a very important part of learning to speak Dari. You need to learn the sounds so that you can *hear* words correctly, and *say* words correctly. More generally, you want to be able to communicate without burdening people with difficult-to-understand Dari. All of us have had experiences speaking to non-native speakers of our language. Almost no one is able to remove their foreign accent completely, but many people are able to speak with a perfectly acceptable foreign accent. That is what you should aim for in your pronunciation. You should focus on correct pronunciation immediately when you begin to speak. Don't let mispronunciations set in!

This book shows the pronunciation of Dari words with one symbol for each sound. This sidesteps the problem of trying to show pronunciation with English spelling, which is a big hassle.

If you're curious, the letters are all from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which you may have seen before in dictionaries or other language courses. If you want to learn more, there are various resources available. For instance, partway down the English Wikipedia article for the IPA<sup>1</sup> there are charts of symbols; clicking on the symbols will take you to pages with descriptions and recordings of the sounds. You can also do an internet search for the 'IPA Name' given for each sound below, to get a more specific description of how that sound is made.

When possible the sounds are illustrated with English words. Do not take these illustrations too seriously, especially for the vowels. You need to develop a good Dari accent, rather than just saying Dari words with your English accent. Your teacher's pronunciation should be your guide.

There's a lot of information in this chapter, but it's not a list of things to memorize. You really just need to learn the sound that goes with each letter. You should be able to read all of the example words by the end. If you can do that, you're done. The other stuff, for instance the descriptions of where the tongue is, is just there to help you get the pronunciation right. If you don't need it, ignore it.

## 2.1 Vowels

The IPA symbols for vowel sounds are quite different from their typical realization in English, because the IPA is consistent and English spelling is a mess. You'll probably need to learn the vowel symbols all from scratch. There are three symbols for vowels that are not part of the English alphabet: [ɛ], [ʌ], and [ʊ].

i	As in English...	peep		
	Dari Examples	[id]	'eid'	عید
		[sir]	'garlic'	سیر
		[xuʃi]	'happiness'	خوشی
	IPA Name	close front unrounded vowel		
e	As in English...	made		
	Dari Examples	[seb]	'apple'	سیب
		[ne]	'no'	نه
		[se]	'three'	سه
	IPA Name	close-mid front unrounded vowel		

<sup>1</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Phonetic\\_Alphabet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Phonetic_Alphabet)

ɛ	As in English...	send		
	Dari Examples	[sɛn]	‘age’	سن
		[ɛhsʌs]	‘feeling’	احساس
		[bʌɛ]	‘yes’	بله
	IPA Name	open-mid front unrounded vowel		

a	As in English...	bad		
	Dari Examples	[asp]	‘horse’	اسب
		[sad]	‘hundred’	صد
		[zina]	‘stairs’	زینه
	IPA Name	open front unrounded vowel		

ʌ	As in English...	caught		
	Dari Examples	[ʌʃ]	‘noodles’	آش
		[bʌd]	‘wind’	باد
		[kɛtʌbhʌ]	‘books’	کتاب‌ها
	IPA Name	open-mid back unrounded vowel		

This sound does not have a direct English equivalent. For some English speakers, ‘caught’ and ‘cot’ have different vowel systems; if that is the case for you, then [ʌ] is like the vowel in ‘caught’ except that the lips are not round. Alternately (for anyone), it is like the vowel in ‘cot’, except deeper and further back in the mouth.<sup>2</sup>

u	As in English...	boot		
	Dari Examples	[u]	‘him/her/it’	او
		[sud]	‘interest/profit’	سود
		[tu]	‘you (sg.)’	تو
	IPA Name	close back rounded vowel		

o	As in English...	boat		
	Dari Examples	[o]	‘and’	و <sup>3</sup>
		[doy]	‘buttermilk’	دوغ
		[kino]	‘tangerine’	کینو
	IPA Name	close-mid back rounded vowel		

ʊ	As in English...	book		
	Dari Examples	[bʊt]	‘idol’	بت
		[pʊl]	‘bridge’	پل
		[mʊhɛm]	‘important’	مهم
	IPA Name	near-close back rounded vowel		

## 2.2 Consonants

p	As in English...	pop		
	Dari Examples	[patnʊs]	‘tray’	پٹنوس
		[tapa]	‘hill’	تپه
		[pamp]	‘pump’	پمپ
	IPA Name	voiceless bilabial plosive		

<sup>2</sup>This is certainly *not* the sound in ‘hope’. Certain expatriates pronounced [kʌkʌ] ‘father’s brother’ like ‘cocoa’, which is not correct. Do not round your lips for this sound.

<sup>3</sup>This is pronounced [o] in almost all informal, and many formal contexts, but the formal pronunciation is [wa], which your teacher may produce upon seeing this word in print.

<b>b</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	ball		
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[bʌʌ]	‘above’	بالا
		[rʊbʌb]	‘kind of stringed instrument’	رباب
		[ʌdʌb]	‘manners’	آداب
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced bilabial plosive		
<b>t</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	tap		
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[tʌ]	‘until’	تا
		[hata]	‘hill’	حتی
		[but]	‘boot/shoe’	بوت
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiceless dental plosive		
<b>d</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	damp		
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[dost]	‘friend’	دوست
		[ʌdam]	‘person’	آدم
		[bʌd]	‘wind’	باد
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced dental plosive		
<b>k</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	cat		
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[kʌh]	‘straw’	کاه
		[hakam]	‘referee’	حکم
		[kʊmak]	‘help’	کمک
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiceless velar plosive		
<b>g</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	got		
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[gala]	‘flock’	گله
		[aga(r)]	‘if’	اگر
		[barg]	‘leaf’	برگ
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced velar plosive		
<b>q</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	N/A		
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[qʌnun]	‘law’	قانون
		[ʌqʌ]	‘sir’	آقا
		[amiq]	‘deep’	عمیق
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiceless uvular plosive		

This is the first sound that is not in English. It is like a [k], but with the tongue moved further back in the mouth. The sound is called ‘uvular’ because the tongue goes all the way back and touches the uvula, the hanging ball thing at the back of your mouth.<sup>4</sup> (You can look at it in the mirror, but don’t try to touch it or you’ll gag.) Most English speakers will have a hard time with this sound. You’re most likely to confuse it with [k], so practice the pairs of words in Table 2.1 to get it right.

<b>m</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	mix		
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[mʌst]	‘yogurt’	ماست
		[hamʌm]	‘bath(house)’	حمام
		[xʌnum]	‘wife’	خانم
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced bilabial nasal		

<sup>4</sup>You’ve probably always wondered what that was for. Now you know.



Compare...	With...
[qahr] «قهر» ‘angry’ <sup>5</sup>	[kar] «کر» ‘deaf’
[farq] «فرق» ‘difference’	[dark] «درک» ‘understanding’
[qʌbeɪ] «قابل» ‘worthy’	[kʌbʊl] «کابل» ‘Kabul’
[qalam] «قلم» ‘pen’	[kal] «کل» ‘bald’

Table 2.1: Pairs of words for contrasting the sounds [k] and [q].

<b>n</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	nick	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[nʌn] ‘nan/bread’	نان
		[anʌr] ‘pomegranate’	انار
		[alman] ‘Germany’	المان
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced dental nasal	

<b>f</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	fat	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[fʌl] ‘active’	فال
		[hafta] ‘week’	هفته
		[hadaf] ‘goal’	هدف
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiceless labiodental fricative	

<b>s</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	sip	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[sandali] ‘type of heater’	صندلی
		[pesar] ‘son’	پسر
		[das] ‘sickle’	داس
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiceless dental sibilant	

<b>z</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	zip	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[zar] ‘poison’	زهر
		[ʌzʌd] ‘free’	آزاد
		[buz] ‘goat’	بز
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced dental sibilant	

<b>ʃ</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	ship	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[ʃast] ‘sixty’	شصت
		[huʃjʌr] ‘clever’	هوشیار
		[ʃaʃ] ‘six’	شش
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiceless palato-alveolar sibilant	

This is an unfamiliar letter, but a familiar sound. For the sake of clarity and consistency, the IPA practice is to write one sound with one letter. That means that the ‘sh’ sound should be written with one symbol, which is [ʃ]. It looks like a drawn out [s], which is not a bad description of the sound itself.

<b>ʒ</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	azure	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[ʒʌla] ‘dew’	ژاله
		[neʒʌd] ‘race’	نژاد
		[deʒ] ‘citadel’	دژ
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced palato-alveolar sibilant	

This also is a new letter as well, though the sound is familiar. This is the first sound in ‘Jean’ (said the French way), or the middle sound in words like ‘vision’.

<sup>5</sup>The formal pronunciation of this word is [qahr]. If your teacher uses that pronunciation, ask for the [ʌmijʌna] pronunciation so that you can focus on [k] vs. [q] instead of the [h]. Or, contrast it with [kar] «کار» ‘work’ instead.

Compare...	With...
[mʊɾ] «مرغ» ‘chicken’	[marg] «مرگ» ‘death’
[aɣʌz] «اغاز» ‘beginning’	[ʌgʌh] «آگاه» ‘aware’
[ɣalat] «غلط» ‘mistake’	[gala] «گله» ‘flock’

Table 2.2: Pairs of words for contrasting the sounds [ɣ] and [g].

<b>X</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	N/A	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[xat] ‘line’	خط
		[ʌxɛr] ‘last’	آخر
		[tʌrix] ‘history/date’	تاریخ
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiceless velar fricative	

This is a familiar letter, but a new sound.<sup>6</sup> The tongue is in almost the same position as for a [k], but instead of stopping the air completely, the air is let through in a hiss.<sup>7</sup> Try making a long [k] and then loosening up a bit. You should be consciously trying to make a non-English sound with this one. English speakers will typically replace this sound with either [h] or [k]; see Table 2.3 for contrasts between [x] and [k].

<b>Y</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	N/A	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[ɣʌr] ‘cave’	غار
		[lʌɣar] ‘skinny’	لاغر
		[bʌɣ] ‘garden’	باغ
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced velar fricative	

This is a new sound and a new letter. Just as [x] is a sort of relaxed version of [k], [ɣ] is a sort of relaxed [g].<sup>8</sup> It sounds a bit like a growl at first. This is not an English sound, so you should be making an effort with this one. Table 2.2 offers some contrasts between [ɣ] and [g], sounds that an English speaker is likely to confuse.

<b>h</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	hat	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[har] ‘every’	هر
		[lahza] ‘moment’	لحظه
		[koh] ‘mountain’	کوه
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiceless glottal fricative	

Many speakers of Dari drop [h] completely; many others will use it only occasionally. If a person is speaking formally, or reading aloud, the [h] is more likely to be pronounced. You don’t need to worry about which words have [h] and which ones don’t; you’ll learn when you start to read and write. In this book the [h] is written consistently, according to the formal pronunciation; if your dialect of spoken Dari drops [h] consistently, you can just ignore it.

<b>tʃ</b>	<i>As in English...</i>	chat	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[tʃand] ‘several/how many?’	چند
		[batʃa] ‘child’	بچه
		[murtʃ] ‘pepper’	مرچ
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiceless palato-alveolar affricate	

The [tʃ] sound works as a single sound in Dari, but from the perspective of phonetics it is two sounds, and is therefore written with two letters.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup>This is not the sound at the end of an English word like ‘ax’, but an entirely different sound.

<sup>7</sup>You may know this sound if you pronounce ‘loch’ the Scottish way, or ‘Bach’ the German way—though most English speakers just use a [k] in those words. This is also the ‘j’ sound in some dialects of Spanish.

<sup>8</sup>If it’s meaningful to you: [ɣ] is the voiced counterpart of [x].

<sup>9</sup>If you say ‘at shoe’ quickly, you’ll realize that it’s the same as saying ‘achoo’. It’s possible to write [tʃ] with a little tie to emphasize the unity of these sounds—[tʃ̯]—but it’s a bit of a hassle to type that.

Compare...	With...
[tʌrik] «تاریک» ‘dark’	[tʌrix] «تاریخ» ‘history’
[kek] «کیک» ‘cake’	[mex] «میخ» ‘nail’
[kar] «کر» ‘deaf’ <sup>10</sup>	[xar] «خر» ‘donkey’
[kuʃ] «کش» ‘killer’	[xuʃ] «خوش» ‘happy’

Table 2.3: Pairs of words for contrasting the sounds [k] and [x].

dʒ	<i>As in English...</i>	Jim	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[dʒɛn] ‘Jinn (demon)’	جن
		[badʒa] ‘o’clock’	بجه
		[hadʒ] ‘Hajj’	حج
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced palato-alveolar affricate	

This sound similarly is written with two letters, which reflects its pronunciation.

r	<i>As in English...</i>	N/A	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[rabʌb] ‘kind of stringed instrument’	رباب
		[ara] ‘saw’	اره
		[bar] ‘load’	بار
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced dental flap <sup>11</sup>	

The [r] sound of Dari is different than the *r*-sound that you use in English. If you use your original *r*-sound, your pronunciation will be wrong. Making a Dari [r] should feel like you’re making an entirely different sound, even if you still think of it as ‘r’.<sup>12</sup> All you have to do is tap your tongue lightly behind your teeth. The Dari [r] is more similar to the *r*-sound used in Spanish, Romanian, or Russian, so if all else fails you could try imitating the accent of one of those languages as a way of trying to get your tongue to behave.

w	<i>As in English...</i>	wood	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[wʌseta] ‘inside connection’	واسطه
		[hawʌ] ‘air’	هوا
		[gʌw] ‘cow’	گاو
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced labiovelar glide	

Dari doesn’t distinguish between [w] and [v]. Most places in Afghanistan, [w] is used, but you’ll hear [v] used variably in the speech of people with a Herati accent. (They’re following Iranian pronunciation.)

j	<i>As in English...</i>	yes	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[jak] ‘one’	یک
		[sʌja] ‘shade’	سایه
		[lʌj] ‘muddy’	لای
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced palatal glide	

Note that IPA uses [j] for the sound that English usually writes with ‘y’. This is strange for English speakers, but quite natural for Germans, Norwegians, Finns, and others.

l	<i>As in English...</i>	leper	
	<i>Dari Examples</i>	[lab] ‘lip’	لب
		[bʌlʌ] ‘above’	بالا
		[halʌl] ‘halal’	حلال
	<i>IPA Name</i>	voiced dental lateral approximant	

<sup>10</sup>Note that [kar] is the less polite term for ‘deaf’. The more polite term is [nʌʃɛnawʌ] «ناشنوا».

<sup>11</sup>The proper IPA symbol for a voiced dental (or alveolar) flap is [ɾ], but the IPA makes an allowance for use of the simpler letter [r] when doing so introduces no ambiguity in the transcription, which is the case for Dari.

<sup>12</sup>If you’re a speaker of American English, you produce something like [r] in the middle of a word like ‘beater’.

ʔ	As in English...	uh-oh		
	Dari Examples	[ʔatr]	‘perfume’	عطر
		[taʔadʒub]	‘surprise’	تعجب
		[manɛʔ]	‘prohibition’	منع
	IPA Name	glottal stop		

This final sound, which is not in English except in the middle of the word ‘uh-oh’, is also marginal in Dari. It is used sometimes in formal pronunciation, so it is included here for the sake of completeness. In everyday speech, for instance, the pronunciation of ‘surprise’ is [tadʒub], but if someone were speaking formally or reading aloud, it might come out as [taʔadʒub] instead. Words that have this sound come from Arabic.

## 2.3 Stress

Stress has to do with emphasis on syllables.<sup>13</sup> In English, if you *re*ject someone, they become a *ré*ject. If you *conv*ert somebody, they become a *cón*vert. If you *you* want to *prot*est something, you may attend a *pró*test. Stress can change when you add bits to the word, like how *gy*rate becomes *gyrá*tion. When people get the stress wrong, it makes it *really* hard to understand them. Fortunately, stress is completely predictable in Dari, and there are really just a few words to learn. This section makes references to grammatical categories that won’t be familiar to a beginner speaker. If you don’t catch something, you can just come back to it later.

In Dari, as in English, verbs work different from every other kind of word. We’ll begin with everything except verbs, and then talk about verbs.

### 2.3.1 Everything except verbs

The rule is: stress goes on the last syllable of the word. Examples:

- |        |              |               |           |
|--------|--------------|---------------|-----------|
| (5) a. | [ketáb]      | ‘book’        | کتاب      |
| b.     | [afɣʌnestán] | ‘Afghanistan’ | افغانستان |
| c.     | [kelí]       | ‘key’         | کلید      |
| d.     | [kampjutár]  | ‘computer’    | کامپیوتر  |
| e.     | [tarmóz]     | ‘thermos’     | ترمز      |

There are two systematic exceptions. The exceptions are two suffixes that never *ever* take stress. The first suffix is the ezafa marker, the handy little vowel that can seemingly join any two words:

- |        |                       |                                           |               |
|--------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------|
| (6) a. | [séβ-ε súrx]          | ‘red apple’ ( <i>not</i> [seb-é súrx])    | سیب سرخ       |
| b.     | [ʊtáq-ε kalán]        | ‘large room’ ( <i>not</i> [ʊtʌq-é kalán]) | اتاق کلان     |
| c.     | [ʊtáq-ε súrx-ε kalán] | ‘large red room’                          | اتاق سرخ کلان |

The second suffix is the indefinite marker, the suffix that turns ‘man’ into ‘a man.’

- |     |               |                                          |          |
|-----|---------------|------------------------------------------|----------|
| (7) | [márd-e ámad] | ‘a man came’ ( <i>not</i> [mard-é ámad]) | مردی آمد |
|-----|---------------|------------------------------------------|----------|

### 2.3.2 Verbs

For verbs with prefixes, the stress goes on the first syllable. (The prefix will either be [me], [na], or [b].) Here are some examples:

<sup>13</sup>The text of this section is lightly revised from a blog post written by the author, available at <https://www.iam-afghanistan.org/lcp/2015/11/14/stressed-out-about-stress/>.

- (8) a. [mé-r-um] ‘I’m going’ می‌روم  
 b. [mé-raft-um] ‘I was going’ می‌رفتم  
 c. [ná-raft-um] ‘I didn’t go’ نرفتم  
 d. [ná-me-r-um] ‘I’m not going’ نمی‌روم  
 e. [ná-me-raft-um] ‘I wasn’t going’ نمی‌رفتم  
 f. [mé-xaj-um bú-r-um] ‘I want to go’ می‌خواهم بروم

For verbs without prefixes, the stress goes on the last syllable of the root—i.e., not on the suffix.

- (9) a. [ráft-um] ‘I went’ رفتم  
 b. [ʌmád-um] ‘I came’ آمدم  
 c. [furúxt-um] ‘I sold’ فروختم  
 d. [fahmíd-um] ‘I knew’ فهمیدم

The only exception to this is in using the perfect (“I had gone”), where the stress goes at the end. Often the only difference between a present and a perfect is that the stress is at the end.

- (10) a. [raftém] ‘I have gone’ رفته‌ام  
 b. [raftá] ‘s/he has gone’ رفته

One further wrinkle is that participles count as non-verbs: the stress goes on the end.

- (11) a. [raftá búdu] ‘I had gone’ رفته بودم  
 b. [darwʌzá ra bastá kádá ráftu] دروازه را بسته کرده رفتم  
 ‘I closed the door and left.’

There are weird little exceptions to these rules, but this covers 99.9% of the words. You don’t need to worry about the nitty-gritty, like how [bájad] and [ʃájad] have a verb-like stress pattern because they’re originally from the verbs [bʌjəstan] ‘to have to’ and [ʃʌjəstan] ‘to be proper.’ You *may* need to worry about dialectal variation. Stress can vary somewhat from location to location in Afghanistan.

## 2.4 Tips for learning pronunciation

All of the vowels in Dari are also vowels in English, and there are only four consonant sounds that are in Dari but not in English. That means that most of the time you will be producing familiar sounds. Beware of saying Dari words in your original accent, though. You should cultivate a ‘Dari mode’ when you speak: when you are consciously trying to imitate Dari pronunciation instead of English pronunciation.

One sign that you’ve cultivated a Dari mode of speaking is that you pronounce loan words the Dari way. For instance, [ʌdras] ‘address’ is a pretty obvious loan word from English. But you don’t want to say it the English way, [ædɹés].<sup>14</sup> Similarly, make an effort to say proper names—like [obʌmʌ] ‘Obama’—in the Dari way.

Learning accurate pronunciation is tricky. The foundation of good pronunciation is being able to hear the differences in the sound. The Growing Participator Approach emphasizes listening to the point of forbidding students to speak for several weeks, which is an appropriate emphasis. Continual exposure to Dari—either through conversation, or through listening to recordings—is important for maintaining your listening ability. You are unlikely ever to speak correctly if you do not hear correctly.

The typical strategy for learning pronunciation is to mispronounce words until the teacher stops correcting the mispronunciation. Unfortunately the teacher may stop correcting the mispronunciation because s/he has given up! Usually the problem is that the student can’t hear the difference that’s being emphasized. The teacher repeats the word three times correctly, the student hears the word three times incorrectly, and so produces the word three times incorrectly.

**Student:** kʌʃuk

<sup>14</sup>See how even the phonetic letters are different to the ones we’ve learned in this chapter?

**Teacher:** nɛ, qʌʃʊq

**Student:** kʌʃʊk?

**Teacher:** qʌʃʊq

**Student:** kʌʃʊk?

**Teacher:** bʌɛ, qʌʃʊq

The teacher can't press this forever: at some point they have to give up. A more deferential teacher will pretend that you've got it; a less deferential teacher will just give up on you. What's the solution? The first thing is not to beat your head against a wall. If you're not able to hear the difference between your pronunciation and your teacher's pronunciation, make a note of the word that is confusing you. Then you can review it later, on your own. This will probably involve going back over the sounds of the word, and maybe practicing the contrast in private.

If you're able to hear the difference but it's not just coming out, it can also help just to make a private note and return to it later. The author, for instance, struggled for years to correctly pronounce [sʌdʌ] 'sound' and [sʌdʌ] 'simple'. Everyone will have his/her own mental blocks. Avoid frustrating and non-productive interactions with your teacher, but make a note about difficult words so that you can come back to them later on.

**Part I**

**Nouns**

## Chapter 3

# Nouns & Adjectives

This chapter provides information about the basics of Dari nouns and adjectives. These are fairly straightforward, and you start learning nouns at least from your first day of language. This chapter will therefore probably not have many surprises for people with even a modest experience of Dari. It may help to solidify some existing intuitions, however.

**Definition: Noun**

*A noun is a word that refers to a person, place, thing, or idea.*

**Definition: Adjective**

*An adjective is a word that describes a noun, like ‘big’, ‘scary’, or ‘intimidating.’*

### 3.1 Noun phrases

Many descriptions of Dari grammar become easier if we define the concept ‘noun phrase’. A noun phrase is anything that can be substituted for a noun in a sentence. In the sentence “I like pizza,” you can swap out ‘pizza’ for a much larger noun phrase: “I like steaming hot pizza,” or even “I like a pizza with peppers and mushrooms that’s baked in a wood-fired oven.” That means that ‘steaming hot pizza’ and ‘a pizza with peppers and mushrooms that’s baked in a wood-fired oven’ are noun phrases. In Dari things usually get added to the noun phrase, so it’s a handy concept.

**Definition: Noun phrase**

*A noun phrase is a group of words that works like a noun in the sentence.*

### 3.2 Singular and Plural

If there is one of something, then it is singular. If there is more than one of something, it is plural. In Dari, plural nouns are generally marked with the [hʌ] «ها» marker.

- (12) a. [seb] ‘apple’  
b. [seb-hʌ] ‘apples’

سیب  
سیب‌ها

**Formal Usage: Pronunciation of the plural marker**

*The formal pronunciation of the more common plural marker is always [hʌ]. It never gobbles up any preceding sounds.*



In colloquial Dari, the [h] is not pronounced, so the plural suffix becomes [ʌ]. When a word ends in [a], then the [ʌ] gobbles up the [a]:

- (13) a. [batʃa] ‘child’ بچه  
 b. [batʃ-ʌ] ‘children’ بچه‌ها

When the plural [ʌ] is added to other words ending in vowels, there can be a connecting sound like [w] or [j]. These sounds just come in automatically when two vowels come together, so you probably don’t need to think about this too much.

- (14) a. [rʌdju] ‘radio’ رادیو  
 b. [rʌdjo-wʌ] ‘radios’ رادیوها

- (15) a. [xʌrɛdʒi] ‘outsider’ خارجی  
 b. [xʌrɛdʒi-jʌ] ‘outsiders’ خارجی‌ها

The plural form of the noun is not used when you use a number; you just use the singular. This is different from English.

- (16) ma pandʒ tʌ nʌn xordum من پنج تا نان خوردم.  
 ‘I ate five (loaves of) naan.’

The word [tʌ] in the sentence above is a sort of counting word, and is discussed further in Chapter 5.

### 3.2.1 Other plural forms

For colloquial Dari, the [hʌ] suffix is really all you need. Occasionally, however, you will hear other sorts of plural forms. These are more likely to occur in formal Dari, either in spoken or written form.

Nouns for living things can take the plural marker [ʌn].<sup>1</sup>

- (17) a. [afɣʌn] ‘Afghan’ افغان  
 b. [afɣʌn-ʌn] ‘Afghans’ افغانان

This plural marker has a different pronunciation following the vowel [a], [gʌn]. In example (13) we saw that the plural of ‘child’ is [batʃʌ]. Since ‘child’ refers to a living thing, it can also be pluralized with the [ʌn] suffix, which changes to [gʌn] because it follows [a].

- (18) a. [batʃa] ‘child’ بچه  
 b. [batʃa-gʌn] ‘children’ بچه‌گان

Many Dari words are originally from Arabic, and these Arabic words often have their own plural forms. These are not at all common in the spoken language, though some people use them. Learning these is a matter of practice. It may help to know that the consonants are usually preserved in the same order between the singular and plural forms (sometimes with a doubling), but this is more helpful in reading—when you have a moment to think about such things—than in listening. A good dictionary will point you to the singular form if you look up the plural.

- (19) a. [nabi] ‘prophet’ نبی  
 b. [anbjʌ] ‘prophets’ انبیا

<sup>1</sup>As Thackston (1993, p. 58) points out, this suffix can also occur on paired body parts, and a few other nouns as well.

- (20) a. [haq] ‘right’ حق  
b. [huquq] ‘rights’ حقوق

- (21) a. [malak] ‘angel’ ملک  
b. [malɒjek] ‘angels’ ملایک

In spoken Dari, you will find Arabic plurals in fixed phrases that are about more ‘formal’ topics.

- (22) a. huquq-ε baʃar حقوق بشر  
‘human rights’  
b. saʒman-ε melal-ε mutahəd سازمان ملل متحد  
‘the United Nations Organization’

It would be wrong (and funny-sounding!) to say [haq-hɒ-je baʃar] or [saʒman-ε melal-hɒ-je mutahəd].

### 3.3 The Ezafa Marker

The ezafa marker is the greatest thing about Dari. It can be used to join up any string of nouns and adjectives into a noun phrase. The word [εzɒfa] «اضافه» is a Dari word meaning ‘extra’. It’s the traditional Persian grammatical term for this marker, and it works as well as any. The ezafa marker is abbreviated as EZ in this book.

Let’s say you want to add an adjective to a noun, to turn ‘apple’ into ‘red apple’. In Dari, the adjective comes *after* the noun, and the two words are joined together with the ezafa marker [ε]:

- (23) a. [seb] ‘apple’ سیب  
b. [surx] ‘red’ سرخ  
c. [seb-ε surx] ‘red apple’ سیب سرخ

The ezafa has a couple of different pronunciations. Following consonants, it is pronounced [ε], as in the examples above. Following vowels, a [j] or [w] is often inserted to help the pronunciation along. You probably don’t need to think about this; it would almost be harder not to insert them.

- (24) a. [ko-je kalɒn] ‘big mountain’ کوه کلان  
b. [hamkari-je mufid] ‘helpful assistance’ همکاری مفید

The pronunciation of the ezafa is slightly different after [a]. Instead of saying [ajε], the vowel shortens to [e]:

- (25) a. [batʃa] ‘child’ بچه  
b. [batʃe halim] ‘Halim’s child’ بچهٔ حلیم

#### Formal Usage: Pronunciation of the ezafa marker

*The ezafa marker does not shorten after the vowel [a], as it does in colloquial Dari. Instead of [batʃe halim], you say [batʃa-je halim].*

The ezafa marker is quite powerful. You can create phrases that are as complex as you need:

- (26) [seb-ε surx-ε rajis-ε dʒamhuri-je afɒnəstan] ‘the red apple of the president of Afghanistan’  
سیب سرخ رئیس جمهوری افغانستان

If you haven’t yet come to the ezafa marker in your lessons, you’ll need to be patient with yourself as you practice using it. As you can see, its use is quite easy to describe, but it’s another matter entirely to use it properly.

Unlike some languages, Dari doesn’t care whether an adjective is modifying a singular or a plural noun: it works the same either way. The ezafa marker comes after the plural.

- (27) a. [seb-ε sorx] ‘red apple’ سیب سرخ  
 b. [seb-Λ-jε sorx] ‘red apples’ سیب‌های سرخ  
 c. [seb-Λ-jε sorx-ε buz-Λ-jε qawi] ‘the red apples of the strong goats’ سیب‌های سرخ بزهای قوی

In a long ezafa construction, there may be a mix of nouns and adjectives. How do you tell which adjectives modify which nouns? The adjective always comes after the noun it modifies; it always modifies the noun that is closest to it. Consider the examples below. In (28a), [kalΛn] «کلان» ‘large’ has to be modifying [batja] «بچه» ‘boy’ because it follows right after it. In the same way, in (28b) it has to be modifying «سیب» [seb] ‘apple’, because that is the closest noun to it.<sup>2</sup>

- (28) a. [seb-ε batje kalΛn] ‘the big boy’s apple’ سیب بچه کلان  
 b. [seb-ε kalΛn-ε batja] ‘the boy’s big apple’ سیب کلان بچه

### 3.4 Possession

Dari has a few ways to show possession, i.e., the difference between ‘apple’ and ‘Ahmad’s apple’ or ‘my apple’. One way is just to join the possessor with the ezafa:

- (29) a. [seb-ε ahmad] ‘Ahmad’s apple’ سیب احمد  
 b. [ʃΛx-ε buz] ‘the goat’s horn’ شاخ بز  
 c. [mΛdar-ε ʃumΛ] ‘your (pl.) mother’ مادر شما

If the noun phrase is an ezafa chain, the possessor goes at the end:

- (30) a. [mΛdar-ε ʃumΛ] ‘your (pl.) mother’ مادر شما  
 b. [mΛdar-ε zebΛj-ε ʃumΛ] ‘your (pl.) beautiful mother’ مادر زیبای شما

Possession can be indicated with the word [xud] «خود» when the possessor is the same as the subject. (See §4.3 for more about the reflexive pronoun.)

- (31) ahmad ketΛb-ε xud-a xarid احمد کتاب خود را خرید.  
 ‘Ahmad bought his own book.’

There are more options when the possessor is a pronoun, like ‘my’ or ‘your’. (Pronouns are introduced in §4.2.) The most common is to add a possessor suffix; these are shown in Paradigm 3.1. As with the full pronouns, the possessor always goes at the end of a series of nouns joined with the ezafa:

- (32) [ketΛb-εm] ‘my book’ کتابم  
 (33) [ketΛb-ε xarΛb-εm] ‘my terrible book’ کتاب خرابم

A curiosity of Paradigm 3.1 is that ‘our book’ doesn’t have a special suffixed form: it just gets the full form.

#### Definition: Possessor suffix

*A possessor suffix is a suffix added to the end of a noun (or noun phrase), which indicates possession. English does not have possessor suffixes: we put a special word in front of the noun: ‘my book’. In Dari this meaning is conveyed with a suffix: [ketΛb-εm].*

<sup>2</sup>Of course, (28b) would only make sense if the boy had several apples, one of which was large.

The pronunciation of the possessive suffixes changes slightly when the word they are attached to ends in a vowel. These changes are exactly parallel to those undergone by the *ezafa* marker, as discussed in the last section (§3.3). To review those: if the word ends in [a], the vowels combine to [e]. If the word ends in [u] or [ʌ], you add a [j] (which is almost impossible not to do).

- (34) a. [batʃem] ‘my child’ بچه‌ام  
 b. [mujem] ‘my hair’ مویم  
 c. [pʌjem] ‘my leg’ پایم

	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	kɛʈʌb-ɛm	my book	کتابم
2SG	kɛʈʌb-ɛt	your (sg.) book	کتابت
3SG	kɛʈʌb-ɛʃ	his/her/its book	کتابش
1PL	kɛʈʌb-ɛ ma	our book	کتاب ما
2PL	kɛʈʌb-ɛtʌn	your (pl.) book	کتابتان
3PL	kɛʈʌb-ɛʃʌn	their book	کتابشان

Paradigm 3.1: Possession suffixes for the word ‘book’ «کتاب».

There are special emphatic pronouns, which are described fully in §4.4. These emphatic pronouns can be included in possessive structures, with a varying degree of emphasis. As you would expect, the more words you use, the greater the emphasis. A simple [kɛʈʌb-ɛʃ] «کتابش» would be the normal way to refer to ‘his book’, but if you’re contrasting it with someone else’s book, it might become [kɛʈʌb-ɛ u] «کتاب او». If you *really* want to emphasize that it’s *his* book—or if you’d said it before and the person *still* doesn’t understand—you can bring out [kɛʈʌb-ɛ xud-ɛʃ] «کتاب خودش». And the most extreme form has the full pronoun spelled out [kɛʈʌb-ɛ xud-ɛ u] «کتاب خود او».<sup>3</sup> Here is the same progression of emphasis with ‘me’:

- (35) a. [kɛʈʌb-ɛm] ‘my book’ کتابم  
 b. [kɛʈʌb-ɛ ma] ‘my book’ کتاب من  
 c. [kɛʈʌb-ɛ xud-ɛm] ‘my very own book’ کتاب خودم  
 d. [kɛʈʌb-ɛ xud-ɛ ma] ‘my very own book’ کتاب خود من

Paradigms showing more emphatic possession are given in Paradigm 3.2 and Paradigm 3.3.

	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	kɛʈʌb-ɛ xud-ɛm	my very own book	کتاب خودم
2SG	kɛʈʌb-ɛ xud-ɛt	your (sg.) very own book	کتاب خودت
3SG	kɛʈʌb-ɛ xud-ɛʃ	his/her/its very own book	کتاب خودش
1PL	kɛʈʌb-ɛ xud-ɛ ma	our very own book	کتاب خود ما
2PL	kɛʈʌb-ɛ xud-ɛtʌn	your (pl.) very own book	کتاب خودتان
3PL	kɛʈʌb-ɛ xud-ɛʃʌn	their very own book	کتاب خودشان

Paradigm 3.2: Emphatic possession of the word ‘book’ «کتاب».

### 3.4.1 Indicating actual ownership

Isn’t it just like a grammar book to slip in a distinction between ‘possession’ and ‘ownership’? But sometimes we have to distinguish the two. If you’re a guest in a home, you’re seated on a toshak: it’s ‘your toshak’. If someone came in, you could say:

- (36) bʃʌ da toʃak-ɛ ma biʃi! بیا در تشک من بنشین.  
 ‘Come sit on my toshak!’

It’s your toshak *for the moment*. If you tried to take the toshak home with you, the host might be forced to say:

<sup>3</sup>At this point, of course, it’s probably just easier to let someone else have the book.



### 3.5.2 Compound nouns

New Dari words can be formed just by putting two words together:

- (43) a. [imʌn] ‘faith’ ایمان  
 b. [sust] ‘weak’ سست  
 c. [imʌnsust] ‘weak-in-faith’ ایمان سست

Many words are formed on this pattern with the present stem of the verb in the second position. (See Chapter 8 for a refresher on what the ‘present stem’ is.) The trick is to be able to identify the present stem outside of its usual context. The two examples below use the present tense stems of the verbs [ʃɛnʌxtan] ‘to know’ «شناختن» and [parastidan] ‘to worship’ «پرستیدن».

- (44) a. [zabʌn] ‘tongue, language’ زبان  
 b. [ʃɛnʌs] ‘to know (present stem)’ شناس  
 c. [zabʌnʃɛnʌs] ‘linguist (one who knows language)’ زبان شناس

- (45) a. [but] ‘idol’ بت  
 b. [parast] ‘to worship (present stem)’ پرست  
 c. [butparast] ‘idol-worshipper’ بت پرست

Note that there is no ezafa in these words. This is not two words in a noun phrase; it’s a single new word being formed out of two roots.

### 3.5.3 The [ɛnda] suffix

The suffix [ɛnda] can be added to the present stem of the verb to create a noun (see Chapter 8 for more on ‘present stem’). The meaning is more or less the same as the English ‘-er’ suffix (i.e., ‘write’ → ‘writer’), except the resulting word can work in two ways. It can either be a noun referring to a person who does that action, or it can be an adjective. Here is how this pattern works out for the verb [kadan] «کردن» ‘to do’, which has the present stem [kun]:

- (46) [kun] ‘to do’ + [ɛnda] → [kunɛnda] ‘doer’

Of course, it is more common for [kadan] «کردن» to be used in a compound verb. Here is the pattern applied to [ʌbjʌri kadan] «آبیاری کردن» ‘to irrigate’:

- (47) ʌbjʌri kunɛnda آبپاری کننده  
 ‘irrigator’

Alternately, this form can become an adjective, in which case it follows the noun just like any other adjective. From the verb [taʃwiq kadan] «تشویق کردن» ‘to encourage’, we have:

- (48) suxan-ʌn-ɛ taʃwiq kunɛnda سخنان تشویق کننده  
 ‘encouraging words’

The same can be done with other verbs, and with other compound verbs. From the verb [nɛdʒʌt dʌdan] «نجات دادن» ‘to save’:

- (49) nɛdʒʌt dehɛnda نجات دهنده  
 ‘savior’

There are other words formed on this pattern, which you might learn without knowing their derivation. For instance, [nɛmʌjɛnda] «نماینده» ‘representative’ comes from the root [nɛmudʌn] «نمودن» ‘to do, perform’. Or again, the word [ʌfarɪnda] «آفریننده» ‘creator’ comes from the root [ʌfarɪdan] «آفریدن» ‘to do, perform’. The word [nɛwɪsɛnda] «نویسنده» ‘writer’ comes from [nɛwɛʃtan] «نوشتن», the more formal word for ‘to write’.

It's also important to note that this is not the only pattern, so you should be cautious about forming new words with it—or at least be willing to be corrected. For instance, the verb [tardʒuma kadan] «ترجمه کردن» means 'to translate'. You could guess that 'translator' would be [tardʒuma kunənda]. This is understandable, but it's not the 'right' word. Dari already has the words [mutardʒem] «مترجم» and [tardʒumʌn] «ترجمان» for 'translator'.

### 3.5.4 Other ways to form nouns

Another not-uncommon way to create a new noun is with the present stem of a verb, plus the [ɛʃ] suffix, which works a bit like the English *-tion* suffix.

- |      |    |                                      |        |
|------|----|--------------------------------------|--------|
| (50) | a. | [ʌfarin] 'to create (present stem)'  | آفرین  |
|      | b. | [ʌfarineʃ] 'creation'                | آفرینش |
| (51) | a. | [kʌh] 'to reduce (present stem)'     | کاه    |
|      | b. | [kʌheʃ] 'reduction'                  | کاهش   |
| (52) | a. | [afzʌj] 'to increase (present stem)' | افزای  |
|      | b. | [afzʌjeʃ] 'increase'                 | افزایش |

Now, [ʌfaridan] «آفریدن» 'to create', [kʌstan] «کاستن» 'to reduce', and [afzudan] «افزودن» 'to increase' are not exactly the most common verbs in Dari, but identifying these words is still a good opportunity to learn new words.

# Chapter 4

## Pronouns

This chapter covers pronouns, words like ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’, and ‘this’ that serve as stand-ins for nouns. There are different kinds of pronouns, and the labels are not very important since you can generally translate directly from the English to the Dari; I just have to put something in the section headers. We’ll start out with a discussion of grammatical person.

### 4.1 Person

‘Person’ is a grammatical idea that is necessary for understanding lots of different things about Dari. The good news is that it works just the same in Dari as it does in English. To understand person, you just need to imagine yourself speaking to someone. You are the *first person*. The person you are speaking to is the *second person*.<sup>1</sup> Everything else is the *third person*. (This would include an actual third person, but in fact anything else you refer to counts as the third person.)

Person doesn’t make a huge difference in English verbs, but you can see how it works with the verb ‘to be’:

- |      |    |                       |               |
|------|----|-----------------------|---------------|
| (53) | a. | I <b>am</b> happy.    | First Person  |
|      | b. | You <b>are</b> happy. | Second Person |
|      | c. | She <b>is</b> happy.  | Third Person  |

You can see how subject agreement works in Dari in §8.2. One thing that might throw you off with subject agreement is that possessed nouns are always going to be third person. (This works the same in English and Dari, so I’m showing you in English.)

- |      |    |                                |              |
|------|----|--------------------------------|--------------|
| (54) | a. | I <b>am</b> injured.           | First Person |
|      | b. | My hand <b>is</b> injured.     | Third Person |
|      | c. | Your father <b>is</b> injured. | Third Person |

So, for instance, even though ‘my hand’ is a part of ‘me’, grammatically it is the third person, because ‘hand’ is third person (i.e., it’s not me or you).

#### Definition: First Person

*First person refers to the speaker. In English, depending on the role it’s playing in the sentence, this could be ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘my’, or ‘mine’ (for the singular) or ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’, or ‘ours’ (for the plural).*

<sup>1</sup>True story: as a senior in high school I was in an advanced English class, which you could actually get college credit for. Should be taught by a pretty competent instructor, right? Well, one day the teacher was explaining something about first person and third person, and one of the students says, “So if there’s a ‘first person’ and a ‘third person’, what’s the second person?” She thinks about it for a moment and says, “There is no second person.” Now, this was before I got a Ph.D. in linguistics, but I *still* knew better than that, because I used to read *Choose Your Own Adventure* books, which are written entirely in the second person. I advanced several arguments in favor of the existence of the second person, not the least of which was to ask: “Why would there be a *third* person if there wasn’t a *second* person?” And she held her ground! She wouldn’t admit that there was a second person!



**Definition: Second Person**

*Second person refers to the person the speaker is speaking to. Depending on the role it's playing in the sentence, this could be 'you', 'your', or 'yours' in English.*

**Definition: Third Person**

*Third person refers to any person or thing that is neither the speaker nor the person nor the person the speaker is speaking to. In English, depending on the role it's playing in the sentence, this could be 'he', 'she', 'it', 'this', 'that', 'they', or any other word!*

## 4.2 Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to people. Dari personal pronouns are very similar to English, as can be seen in Paradigm 4.1. There are just a few differences.

- Dari doesn't have different pronouns for 'I' or 'me', as English does. Both are [ma].
- There are different forms for the singular 'you' and plural 'you' (i.e., when you are speaking to more than one person). If you're addressing a group of people [ʃumʌ] is always correct. If you're addressing one person, [ʃumʌ] is a way to show more respect. This is a bit of a cultural minefield, as discussed in §10.2.
- There is no difference between 'he', 'she', and 'it'.

Abbreviation	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma	I/me	من
2SG	tu	you (sg.)	تو
3SG	u	he/she/it	او
1PL	mʌ	we	ما
2PL	ʃumʌ	you (pl.)	شما
3PL	unʌ	they	آنها

Paradigm 4.1: Personal pronouns.

Paradigm 4.1 shows the abbreviations for the pronouns. The terms 'first person' and 'second person' may be familiar from other grammar classes.

The difference between [tu] «تو» and [ʃumʌ] «شما» is part of everyday Dari. A less common way of indicating respect is to refer to a person who is present with the plural [inʌ] «اینها» and to a person who is absent with the plural [unʌ] «آنها» (Glassman, 2000, p. 23). (These are actually demonstrative pronouns, as discussed in the next section.) This is not common in contemporary Dari.

### 4.2.1 Leaving out the pronoun

Now that you know about pronouns: don't use them! Dari verbs always agree with the subject (§8.2), so it is generally clear who the subject is. Subject pronouns can be—and generally are—dropped. The following sentences are equivalent.

- (55) a. ma bʌzʌr merum. من بازار می‌روم.  
       'I'm going to the bazaar.'
- b. bʌzʌr merum. بازار می‌روم.  
       'I'm going to the bazaar.'

Indeed, Roberts claims that dropping the subject pronoun is actually the default thing to do (Roberts, 2009, Chapter 7). Since this is not something we do (often) in English, English speakers are likely to over-use

pronouns. This is distracting to Dari speakers in a way that is not easy to explain.<sup>2</sup> To develop the habit, you might want to avoid using subject pronouns altogether, except when you want to introduce the subject, or emphasize it somehow, as in the mini-dialogue below.

- (56) a. *ʃekʌjat kadi?* شکایت کردی؟  
       ‘Did you complain?’  
       b. *ne, ma ʃekʌjat nakadum.* نه، من شکایت نکردم.  
       ‘No, I didn’t complain.’

### 4.3 The reflexive pronoun

A reflexive pronoun refers back to the subject of the sentence. This is equivalent to the English ‘himself’, ‘herself’, or ‘itself’. In Dari all of these are captured with [xud] «خود». Your English intuitions should line up quite well with Dari usage.

- (57) *ahmad xud-a zad.* احمد خود را زد.  
       ‘Ahmad hit himself.’

The reflexive can be the direct object, as above, or the object of a preposition, as below.

- (58) *ahmad hamraʒe xud gap mezana.* احمد همراه خود گپ می‌زند.  
       ‘Ahmad is talking to himself.’

The reflexive pronoun can also be used to show possession, provided that the possessor is the subject (see §3.4 for more about possession in other instances).

- (59) *ahmad pedar-e xud-a zad.* احمد پدر خود را زد.  
       ‘Ahmad hit his own father.’

It may go without saying, but the reflexive pronoun is required when you want to refer back to the subject. The sentence below cannot mean “Ahmad hit himself”; the [u] «او» has to be interpreted as referring to a different person.

- (60) *ahmad u-ra zad.* احمد او را زد.  
       ‘Ahmad hit him.’

#### **Definition: Reflexive pronoun**

*A reflexive pronoun is a pronoun that refers back to the subject of the sentence. In the English, “John laughed at himself,” ‘himself’ is a reflexive pronoun: it refers to John, the subject of the sentence.*

### 4.4 Emphatic personal pronouns

Sometimes you want to emphasize a pronoun. In Dari, this is done with a variety of constructions involving [xud] «خود», the reflexive pronoun.<sup>3</sup> The simplest way is to put [xud] «خود» before the subject, joining them with the *ezafe* marker (§3.3).

<sup>2</sup>The nearest analogy would be the weirdness that would result if someone refused to use pronouns at all: Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin. Abraham Lincoln taught himself to read. Many people thought Abraham Lincoln would be a failure, but Abraham Lincoln proved them wrong. Abraham Lincoln became the sixteenth president of the United States. Abraham Lincoln was assassinated shortly after Abraham Lincoln’s re-election when John Wilkes Booth shot Abraham Lincoln in the head. Had enough?

<sup>3</sup>As you’ll notice, lots of the English versions of these sentences use the English reflexive pronouns. Whether this is a coincidence or not, it can help you learn the forms.

- (61) a. *ma raftum.* من رفتم.  
       ‘I went.’  
       b. *xud-ε ma raftum.* خود من رفتم.  
       ‘I myself went.’

- (62) a. *ahmad uftad.* احمد افتاد.  
       ‘Ahmad fell.’  
       b. *xud-ε ahmad uftad.* خود احمد افتاد.  
       ‘Ahmad himself fell.’

The subject can also be shortened to a possessive suffix (§3.4), as if you were using a pronoun.

- (63) *xud-εʃ amad.* خودش آمد.  
       ‘He himself came.’  
       (64) *xud-et bja!* خودت بیا!  
       ‘You come yourself!’

One tricky thing—given what we learned about the reflexive pronoun in the previous section—is that when [xud] «خود» takes a possessive suffix, it no longer has to refer to the subject. In the sentence below, the subject is [ma] «من» ‘I’, but the book belongs to someone else.

- (65) *ma ketab-ε xud-εʃ-a didom.* من کتاب خودش را دیدم.  
       ‘I saw his very own book.’  
       (66) *ahmad ketab-ε xud-em-a awurd.* احمد کتاب خودم را آورد.  
       ‘Ahmad bought my own book.’

The nuclear option for emphasizing a pronoun involves using a personal pronoun followed by the possessed form of [xud] «خود», as in (67c) below. The sentences in (67) are given in increasing order of emphasis. The more words you use, the more emphatic it gets.

- (67) a. *ma raftum.* من رفتم.  
       ‘I went.’  
       b. *xud-εm raftum.* خودم رفتم.  
       ‘I myself went.’  
       c. *xud-ε ma raftum.* خود من رفتم.  
       ‘I myself went.’  
       d. *ma xud-εm raftum.* من خودم رفتم.  
       ‘I my very own self went.’

## 4.5 Demonstrative Pronouns

There are also pronouns for point to things, parallel to English ‘this’ and ‘that’, ‘these’ and ‘those’. These are shown in Paradigm 4.2. Demonstrative pronouns are used both to point to things (“Give me *that*!”) and to talk about ideas in the abstract (“*That*’s a bad idea!”) These work just as they do in English, with the exception that Dari seems to favor ‘this’ in situations where English would use ‘that’ (cf. Roberts, 2009, p. 253).

**Formal Usage: Pronunciation of ‘that’**

*The formal pronunciation of ‘that’ is [ʌn] «آن», which is different from the formal pronunciation of ‘he/she/it’, which is [u] «و». These are both pronounced colloquially as [u].*

IPA	English	Dari
i	this	این
u	that	آن
inʌ	these	اینها
unʌ	those	آن‌ها

Paradigm 4.2: Demonstrative pronouns.

These pronouns are also used—as they are in English—at the beginning of a noun phrase: ‘this apple’ as opposed to ‘that apple’.

- (68) a. [i seb] ‘this apple’ این سیب  
 b. [u seb] ‘that apple’ آن سیب

Unlike in English, the singular form of the demonstrative pronoun is used, no matter whether the noun is singular or plural.

- (69) a. [i seb-hʌ] ‘these apples’ این سیب‌ها  
 b. [u seb-hʌ] ‘those apples’ آن سیب‌ها

The demonstrative pronoun always comes first, no matter how long the noun phrase:

- (70) a. [i seb-ɛ sorx] ‘this red apple’ این سیب سرخ  
 b. [u seb-ɛ sorx] ‘that red apple’ آن سیب سرخ

**4.5.1 Emphatic pronouns**

Dari also has emphatic pronouns, shown in Paradigm 4.3. There are no plural forms for these. These are equivalents to English phrase like ‘this very’ or ‘that very’, although they are used more frequently in Dari than those phrases seem to be in English. If you’re interested in grammar, these words are formed by sticking the word [ham] «هم» ‘also’ onto the demonstrative pronouns.

IPA	English	Dari
hami	this very	همین
hamu	that very	همان

Paradigm 4.3: Emphatic demonstrative pronouns.

## Chapter 5

# Numbers

Dari numbers are quite straightforward. Once you have the basic vocabulary, putting the numbers together is easy, with just a few patterns. You should be able to pick them up with standard language-learning techniques. If you're planning your own lessons, you'll want to spread the numbers out over several days, since related numbers sound similar, as they do in English or any other language: [haft] «هفت» 'seven' sounds like [haftad] «هفتاد» 'seventy'. Eventually that will be a helpful mnemonic, but at first it's just frustrating.

### 5.1 The numbers

These are the single digit numbers:

sefr	0	۰	صفر
jak	1	۱	یک
du	2	۲	دو
seh	3	۳	سه
tʃAr	4	۴	چهار
pandʒ / pajndʒ / pajn	5	۵	پنج
ʃaʃ	6	۶	شش
haft	7	۷	هفت
haft	8	۸	هشت
noh	9	۹	نه

The numbers 10 through 19 tend to have similar sounds to their single-digit counterparts, but are not fully predictable. All end in [dah] «ده» 'ten'. If you're learning to read the numbers at the same time, you might be surprised to see that Dari numbers are written left-to-right (like Western numbers), instead of right-to-left (like Dari words).

dah	10	۱۰	ده
jaʒdah	11	۱۱	یازده
duwaʒdah	12	۱۲	دوازده
sezdah	13	۱۳	سیزده
tʃardah	14	۱۴	چهارده
panʒdah	15	۱۵	پانزده
ʃanzdah	16	۱۶	شانزده
haftah / habdah	17	۱۷	هفده
haʒdah	18	۱۸	هجده
nozdah	19	۱۹	نوزده

After the teens, the number become regular. All are equivalent of 'twenty-and-one', 'forty-and-six' etc. For instance, for the twenties we start with [bist] «بیست» 'twenty':

- (71) a. [bist] 'twenty' بیست  
 b. [bistojak] 'twenty-one' بیست و یک  
 c. [bistodu] 'twenty-two' بیست و دو  
 d. [bistonoh] 'twenty-nine' بیست و نه

bist	20	۲۰	بیست
si	30	۳۰	سی
tʃɛl	40	۴۰	چهل
pindʒʌ	50	۵۰	پنجاه
ʃast	60	۶۰	شصت
haftʌd	70	۷۰	هفتاد
haʃtʌd	80	۸۰	هشتاد
nawad	90	۹۰	نود
sad	100	۱۰۰	صد

Larger numbers are similarly made by placing the larger numbers first, and separating the numbers with [o] «و» ‘and’. When giving numbers with ‘one hundred’, it is necessary to say [jak sad] rather than just [sad]:

(72) [jak sad o si o pajndʒ] ‘one hundred thirty five’ یک صد و سی و پنج

Even larger numbers follow the same pattern. (There are two options for ‘billion’.)

hazʌr	1,000	۱۰۰۰	هزار
miljun	1,000,000	۱۰۰۰۰۰۰	میلیون
biljun	1,000,000,000	۱۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰	بیلیون
miljard	1,000,000,000	۱۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰	میلیارد

(73) [se hazʌr o tʃʌr sad] ‘three thousand four hundred’ سه هزار و چهار صد

### 5.1.1 Miscellaneous topics

- For numbers like 150, 250, 350, etc., it is more common to say, e.g., [jak o nim sad] ‘one and a half hundred’ instead of [jak sad o pindʒʌ] ‘one hundred and fifty’
- The special number [lak] «لک» is 100,000. This is used only for money. For instance, [pajndʒ lak afɣʌni] ‘five hundred thousand Afghanis’.

## 5.2 Ordinal numbers (first, second, etc.)

Ordinal numbers are words like ‘first’ and ‘fiftieth’—words for indicating rank, or order in a sequence. The word for ‘first’ is [awal] «اول». Thereafter, every ordinal number is simply the number plus [ʊm]. Examples:

- (74) a. [bistʊm] ‘twentieth’ بیستم  
 b. [bistojakʊm] ‘twenty-first’ بیست و یکم  
 c. [bistoduʊm] ‘twenty-second’ بیست و دوم  
 d. [bistonohʊm] ‘twenty-ninth’ بیست و نهم  
 e. [jak sad o si o pajndʒʊm] ‘one hundred thirty fifth’ یک صد و سی و پنجم  
 f. [se hazʌr o tʃʌr sadʊm] ‘three thousand four hundredth’ سه هزار و چهار صدم

Note that [awal] «اول» is used only for ‘first’—something like ‘twenty-first’ is just [bistojakʊm].

These ordinal numbers are used as adjectives, and appear after the noun like any other adjective.

- (75) a. dars-ɛ sewʊm درس سوم  
 ‘the third lesson’  
 b. motar-ɛ awal-ɛ dʊnʒʌ موتر اول دنیا  
 ‘the world’s first car’

A second variety of the ordinal numbers is formed by adding [in] to the normal ordinal. In this case, the number goes before the noun.<sup>1</sup>

- (77) a. sɛwomin dars سومین درس  
           'the third lesson'  
       b. awalin motar-ɛ dɒnjɒ اولین موتر دنیا  
           'the world's first car'

### 5.3 The counting marker

When speaking about countable things, it is necessary to use [tɒ] «تا» or [dɒna] «دانه» after the number, with the choice between the two variants being somewhat random.<sup>2</sup> This is an easy rule to state, but will probably require some practice to master.

- (78) a. ma se tɒ seb xordum. من سه تا سیب خوردم.  
           'I ate three apples.'  
       b. u tʃɒr dɒna nɒn xarid. او چهار داده نان خرید.  
           'She bought four naan.'

You can also see in the above examples that the plural marker is not used when you have a number. Instead of 'three apples', Dari has the equivalent of 'three apple'.

The counters are not used in time expressions, or with weights and measures (Thackston, 1993, p. 80):

- (79) a. ma bare ʃaʃ mɒh ɛntɛzɒr kafidum. من برای شش ماه انتظار کشیدم.  
           'I waited for six months.'  
       b. du kilo guʃt-ɛ gɒw bɛxaren! دو کیلو گوشت گاو بخرید!  
           'Buy two kilos of beef!'

Depending on the dialect, humans may be counted with the word [nafar] «نفر» instead of [tɒ] «تا» or [dɒna] «دانه» (Glassman, 2000, p. 97; Thackston, 1993, p. 79). This word also just means 'person'. The sentences below are all equivalent.

- (80) a. pajndʒ nafar ɒmad. پنج نفر آمد.  
           'Five people came.'  
       b. pajndʒ dɒna nafar ɒmad. پنج دانه نفر آمد.  
           'Five people came.'  
       c. pajndʒ tɒ nafar ɒmad. پنج تا نفر آمد.  
           'Five people came.'

There's actually a whole world of obscure vocabulary to explore here. For everyday use, [tɒ] and [dɒna] will work fine, but you might find the following expression in literature.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Thackston (1993, pp. 81–82) says that the ordinal numbers ending in [omin] refer to a changeable or incidental order, whereas those ending in [om] are more fixed. In the example below, the claim is that 'the fourth lesson' is more changeable than 'the third lesson'.

- (76) dar dars-ɛ sɛwom, tʃaharomin dars-a xandem. در درس سوم، چهارمین درس را خواندیم.  
           'In the third lesson, we read the fourth lesson.'

It is not at all clear that this distinction is important to Afghan Persian.

<sup>2</sup>Thackston (1993, p. 79), writing about Iranian Persian, says that [tɒ] is used for larger items, [dɒna] for smaller items. This does not seem to be the case in Afghan Persian. Glassman (2000, p. 97) suggests that when humans and animals are counted, [tɒ] is used, but that they are otherwise interchangeable.

<sup>3</sup>We have these in English too, Wikipedia suggests 'five head of cattle' and 'ten stem of roses'.

- (81) a. [jak bʌb awli] ‘one courtyard’      یک باب حولی  
b. [jak arʌda bʌjsɛkɛl] ‘one bicycle’      یک اراده بایسکل  
c. [jak farwand tajʌra] ‘one airplane’      یک فروند طیاره  
d. [jak ras gaw] ‘one cow’      یک راس گاو  
e. [jak naxl dɛraxt-ɛ xormʌ] ‘one date palm’      یک نخل درخت خرما  
f. [jak nafar ʃʊtur] ‘one camel’      یک نفر شتر



## Chapter 6

# The Object Marker

One of the more difficult things about Dari is learning to use the object marker [ra] «را». The object marker is *sometimes* used after the direct object of the verb. The trick is know when to use it and when not to use it. A traditional way to describe is to say that the object marker is used whenever the direct object is ‘definite’ or ‘specific’. Understanding what these terms will occupy us for most of the chapter!

Before we do that, a quick note on the term ‘object marker’: although a more accurate label for it would be the ‘specific direct object marker’, that is a bit of a mouthful. In this book we use the term ‘object marker’ as a convenience, understanding that it’s not used to mark every object, just specific direct objects.

Let’s review the term ‘direct object’. The direct object is the noun (or noun phrase) that receives the action of the verb. In the example below, ‘Halim’ is the direct object because Halim is the one who got hit.

- (82) ahmad halim-a zad.  
‘Ahmad hit Halim.’

احمد حليم را زد.

### Definition: Direct object

*The direct object is the noun phrase that receives the action of a verb, or is affected by the action of a verb. In the sentence, “Bob hit Mike,” ‘Mike’ is the direct object, because Mike is the one that got hit.*

That’s pretty much all there is to direct objects, although there are two other things worth mentioning. First, sentences sometimes have an ‘indirect object’. In the example below, ‘apple’ is the direct object, and ‘Halim’ is the indirect object. The indirect object never receives the object marker. The apple is the thing that’s being passed around, so it is the direct object.

- (83) ahmad seb-a ba halim dad.  
‘Ahmad gave the apple to Halim.’

احمد سيب را به حليم داد.

The second thing is that not every sentence has a direct object. In some sentences, like (84a) below, there’s just the subject and the verb. In others, like (84b), there is a prepositional phrase instead of a direct object. Since ‘Halim’ has a preposition before it, it is *not* a direct object. Nouns in prepositional phrases *never* take the object marker.

- (84) a. ahmad entezar kafid.  
‘Ahmad waited.’  
b. ahmad hamrah-e halim gap zad.  
‘Ahmad talked with Halim.’

احمد انتظار كشيد.

احمد همراه حليم گپ زد.

The object marker is only ever placed after a direct object. But it is not placed after *every* direct object, only in certain situations. Let’s begin to think about this by taking a look at the two sentences below.

- (85) a. ma seb me-xor-um  
‘I’m eating an apple.’ (or) ‘I’m eating apples.’  
b. ma seb-a me-xor-um

من سيب مي خورم.

من سيب را مي خورم.



### 6.3 When to use it

The correct usage of the object marker is one of the trickier elements of Dari grammar, so we need to think carefully about when to use it. Here's the bad news: brilliant, linguistically trained native speakers of Persian—and many others—have puzzled over the object marker for decades, and have not agreed on a description of *exactly* when it should be used and when it should not be used.<sup>2</sup> Here's the good news: we do have a *reasonably* simple description of when it should be used, even if we have to explain it using some new ideas. In addition, there are a lot of cases where it *has* to be used, and you can memorize those if you wish.

#### 6.3.1 The object marker marks things the hearer can identify

To understand when to use the object marker, we're going to have to think a bit about how language works. You know all this stuff because you need it to be able to speak English correctly, but you don't know it explicitly. So hang on for a bit, and prepare to stretch your mind.

Lots of times when we use nouns (or noun phrases), we're speaking generally, instead of about particular things. Here are some examples of non-specific uses of the word 'book'.

- (90) a. **A book** is a great way to relax.  
 b. I love to read **good books**.  
 c. My brother knows a lot about **books of poetry**.

Notice how, even though a book is a physical thing, these statements are not about specific books. They're about books in general. More specifically, (90a) is about 'a book' in the abstract, (90b) is about books that are good, in general; and (90c) is about 'books of poetry' in general. Compare these to the following sentences, where are statements about *specific* books.

- (91) a. **That book on the table** was written by Tolstoy.  
 b. Give me **the book**!  
 c. Alan Paton wrote **his first book** while on a trip.

Example (91a) is about a particular book lying on the table—perhaps the speaker is even pointing to it while she speaks. Example (91b) is a command about a specific book. If you said that to someone right now, they would be confused and say, "Which book?" They would know you were talking about a specific book, but it's confusing because they don't know which one. In example (91c), 'his first book' refers to a specific book, Alan Paton's first book, *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

The example about Alan Paton's first book highlights an important point. We're not just talking about physical objects, or things you can point to. "Alan Paton's first book" refers to a specific book, but it doesn't refer to a particular physical object; these days it could refer to an electronic text, or maybe even the text of the novel in the abstract. Take a look at these following sentences and make sure that you understand this point.

- (92) a. I deleted **your book** from my Kindle.  
 b. Lots of people like *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, but I can't stand **the book**.  
 c. **The book that I'm going to write in five years' time** is going to be a thriller.

Example (92a) is really about an electronic file, nothing concrete. What the speaker in (92b) is talking about is the book itself, but not a particular copy of it: he can't stand the book itself. And example (92c) should really knock your socks off: a specific book doesn't even have to be real. If I talk about 'the book that I'm going to write in five years' time', I'm talking about a specific book, even though it isn't even a real book.<sup>3</sup>

Is your mind stretched out yet? Here is the pay-off: in Dari, direct objects are marked with the object if they refer to *a specific thing that the hearer can identify*. Otherwise, they don't get the object marker. I'm going to express that several ways below.

<sup>2</sup>The discussion in this section relies on several linguistic publications (Karimi, 2003, 2005; Mace, 2003; Roberts, 2009; Shokouhi & Kipka, 2003; Thackston, 1993); most of what I describe here is based upon Roberts (2009). These publications are all based on analyses of Iranian Persian, so I have confirmed their claims with Afghan informants. Throughout the chapter I cite the works when I owe a particular observation to that source, but I do not claim to be giving an accurate summary of the author's claims, which are often quite technical. My goal in this chapter is to strike a compromise between accuracy and clarity. For instance, although it seems to me that Roberts's use of 'referentiality' and 'identifiability' is more accurate, I find that Karimi's term 'specificity' fits better into 'plain' English.

<sup>3</sup>Which book? The one I wrote last year? No. The one I'll write in ten years? No. The one I that I will write five years from now.

- The object marker is the speaker’s way to saying to the hearer, “you know what I’m talking about.” For instance, “I’m eating the apple [ra]—*you know which apple I’m talking about.*”<sup>4</sup>
- When the hearer hears the object marker, he thinks, “Oh, I should know what she’s talking about.” If the speaker hears the Dari equivalent of “I deleted your book [ra] from my Kindle,” then the hearer thinks, “Oh, I should know what book she’s talking about.” If he doesn’t, he gets confused and says, “Wait, which book of mine are you talking about?”

Reflect for a moment about the importance of the object marker. If you mess up the verb agreement, you get something that sounds like, “Ahmad like bananas” instead of “Ahmad likes bananas.” That’s awkward, but if you mess up the object marker, it’s really confusing. Consider the difference below:

- (93) a. ahmad kela-ra xuf dʌft احمد کیله را خوش داشت.  
       ‘Ahmad liked the banana.’  
       b. ahmad kela xuf dʌft احمد کیله خوش داشت.  
       ‘Ahmad liked bananas.’

Without the object marker, it’s a totally different sentence. If you’re passing on Ahmad’s thanks for the gift of a banana, you’d want to say (93a). If you say (93b) instead, the speaker is going to think that Ahmad used to like bananas, but doesn’t anymore—and conclude from that that the banana was an unwelcome present.

This section has explained when the object marker is used. Probably it didn’t all make sense the first time round. I recommend that you re-read this section once or twice over the next few days, to rehearse the concepts.

### 6.3.2 More on “things the hearer can identify”

We need to sharpen the concept of “things the hearer can identify” to understand the full use of the object marker. In the previous section, we noted that ‘his first book’ in the sentence below described a specific book. Since it is also the direct object of the sentence, its Dari equivalent would be marked with the object marker.

- (94) Alan Paton wrote **his first book** [ra] while on a trip.

Note that ‘his first book’ describes a specific book, even if the hearer doesn’t happen to know which the book is. Was it *Too Late the Phalarope*? *Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful*? *Hofmeyr*? It’s not important for the speaker to know; the important thing is that ‘his first book’ refers to one specific book. Perhaps then it would be more accurate to say that the object marker marks objects that the hearer *could* identify, given time and the opportunity. Here’s another example of that:

- (95) John criticized **the tallest member of parliament** [ra].

Even if the hearer doesn’t happen to know who the tallest member of parliament is, she could figure it out if she wanted. It’s also important to note that context can provide the listener with the necessary context. Here’s an example of that:

- (96) tʌlɛbʌ ba jak milibas hamla kadan. motarwan-a kuʃtan. طالبان به یک میلی‌بس حمله کرد. موتروان را کشتند.  
       ‘The Taliban attacked a bus. They killed the driver.’

The use of the object marker on ‘the driver’ is appropriate because the speaker understands automatically who ‘the driver’ is: the driver of the bus. The speaker’s background knowledge about buses—the fact that they only have one driver—makes ‘the driver’ a specific reference. If you were to swap out ‘the driver’ for some other type of person, it no longer works:

- (97) tʌlɛbʌ ba jak milibas hamla kadan. mualeṁ-a kuʃtan. طالبان به یک میلی‌بس حمله کرد. معلم را کشتند.  
       ‘The Taliban attacked a bus. They killed the teacher.’ (Wait, what teacher!?)

<sup>4</sup>Of course, it doesn’t sound so hostile in Dari!

### 6.3.3 Objects that always take the object marker

Strictly speaking, there is no new information in this section. The object marker is used after a noun phrase that refers to a specific thing that the hearer can identify. That's it.

There are some types of noun phrases, however, that the hearer will *always* be able to identify. If you learn these, you'll be well on your way to learning to use the object marker correctly. These types of noun phrases therefore *always* get the [ra] «را» marker when they occur as the direct object.<sup>5</sup> (For the sake of simplicity, I'm going to stop writing "when they occur as the direct object" in this section. If a noun phrase is not a direct object, it will never take the object marker. So when I write, "Pronouns always get the object marker," understand, "Pronouns always get the object marker *when they occur as the direct object*.")

**Pronouns always get the object marker.** This is because when you use a pronoun, it's because the other person knows what you are talking about. Every time a pronoun occurs as a direct object, it gets the object marker. Every time. Here are examples with demonstrative pronouns ('this' and 'that').

- (98) a. ahmad i-ra zad. احمد اين را زد.  
'Ahmad hit this.'
- b. ahmad u-ra zad. احمد آن را زد.  
'Ahmad hit that.'

Here are examples with personal pronouns ('me', 'you', 'him', 'her'...):

- (99) a. ahmad ma-ra zad. احمد مرا زد.  
'Ahmad hit me.'
- b. ahmad tu-ra zad. احمد تو را زد.  
'Ahmad hit you (sg.).'
- c. ahmad u-ra zad. احمد او را زد.  
'Ahmad hit him/her/it.'
- d. ahmad ma-ra zad. احمد ما را زد.  
'Ahmad hit us.'
- e. ahmad ŋuma-ra zad. احمد شما را زد.  
'Ahmad hit you (pl.).'
- f. ahmad una-ra zad. احمد آنها را زد.  
'Ahmad hit them.'

Whether or not you think of [xud] «خود» as a pronoun, it works the same way: it always gets the object marker.

- (100) ahmad xud-a zad. احمد خود را زد.  
'Ahmad hit himself.'

**Noun phrases with 'this' or 'that' always get the object marker.** This makes sense, because it's always as if you're pointing to something with your finger.

- (101) a. ahmad i ketab-a xarid. احمد اين كتاب را خريد.  
'Ahmad bought this book.'
- b. ahmad u nazar-a rad kad. احمد آن نظر را رد كرد.  
'Ahmad rejected that idea.'

<sup>5</sup>Just to clarify the logic of this section: the strategy is to describe the use of the object marker in relation to other parts of Dari that you're not likely to get wrong. For instance, pronouns always take the object marker. It's *possible* to misuse a pronoun, but that's not a likely mistake for a new learner of Dari. So, we can use your ability to use pronouns appropriately to get some bootstrap knowledge about the object marker.

**Nouns called ‘the best’, ‘the most’, ‘the worst’, ‘the first’, ‘the last’ etc., always get the object marker.** This is because these items are always identifiable by the speaker (at least in principle; see the discussion above in §6.3.2).

- (102) a. ahmad qimattarin ketab-a xarid. احمد قيمتترين كتاب را خريد.  
           ‘Ahmad bought the most expensive book.’  
       b. ahmad behtarin seb-a gereft. احمد بهترين سيب را گرفت.  
           ‘Ahmad took the best apple.’  
       c. ahmad axarin seb-a gereft. احمد آخريين سيب را گرفت.  
           ‘Ahmad took the last apple.’

**Proper nouns always get the object marker.** Since names refer to specific people, names get the object marker.

- (103) ahmad halim-a zad احمد حليم را زد.  
           ‘Ahmad hit Halim.’

**Possessed nouns always get the object marker.** If a noun is possessed by something (i.e., not just ‘apple’ but ‘Ahmad’s apple’), then that noun always gets the object marker. This is true no matter what the possessor is: name, pronoun, common noun, pronominal suffix, or whatever.

- (104) a. halim seb-ε ahmad-a xord حليم سيب احمد را خورد.  
           ‘Halim ate Ahmad’s apple.’  
       b. halim seb-ε ma-ra xord حليم سيب احمد را خورد.  
           ‘Halim ate my’s apple.’  
       c. halim seb-ε buz-a xord حليم سيب بز را خورد.  
           ‘Halim ate the goat’s apple.’  
       d. ma ketab-εʃ-a xandum من كتابش را خواندم.  
           ‘I read his book.’

It may help here to distinguish between possessed nouns (§3.4), and object suffixes (§8.4.1), because they can sound identical. In (105a) below, the [εʃ] is part of a possessive construction: [seb-ε xarab-εʃ] ‘his rotten apple’. Thus, it received the object marker, because possessed nouns always get the object marker when they’re direct objects. But in (105b), the [εʃ] is a object suffix, and object markers never take the object marker.

- (105) a. halim seb-ε xarab-εʃ-a xord حليم سيب خرابش را خورد.  
           ‘Halim ate his rotten apple.’  
       b. halim xarab-εʃ kad. حليم خرابش کرد.  
           ‘Halim ruined it.’

The only point here is that you don’t want to form a generalization along the lines of, “If a noun ends in [εʃ], always (or never) use the object marker,” because that won’t hold up.

**Expressions with things like ‘all of’, ‘most of’, and ‘one of’ always get the object marker.** If you’re talking about ‘all of them’ then it must be clear what you’re talking about. It may be less obvious that expressions like ‘most of’ and ‘one of’ are specific references, but apparently they’re specific enough for speakers of Dari!

- (106) a. ma hama-ra kuʃtum من همه را کشتم.  
           ‘I killed them all.’  
       b. ma hame ketab-a xandum من همه کتاب را خواندم.  
           ‘I read all of the book.’  
       c. ma hame ketab-ha-ra xandum من همه کتابها را خواندم.

- 'I read all of the books.'
- d. *ma beʃtar-e az i ketāb-hā-ra xāndom*      من بیشتری از این کتاب‌ها را خواندم.  
'I read most of the books.'
- e. *ma jaki az ketāb-hā-ra xāndom*      من یکی از کتاب‌ها را خواندم.  
'I read one of the books.'

**Expressions like 'each other' or 'one another' always get the object marker.** These expressions indicate relationships among a group, which is specific.

- (107) a. *unā hamdigar-a kuʃtan.*      آنها همدیگر را کشتند.  
'They killed each other.'
- b. *unā jakdigar-a busidan.*      آنها یکدیگر را بوسیدند.  
'They kissed each other.'

### 6.3.4 Some tricky cases

This section covers three tricky uses of the object marker. If you're learning this material for the first time, it's fine to skip these and come back to them later. It's more important to learn the generalization rather than to focus on these cases, which are sort of exceptional.

The first tricky case is when the speaker is talking about something specific, but doesn't want to say anything more. In this case the noun is introduced with [jak] 'one', and also takes the object marker.

- (108) *ma jak ketāb-a xaridom.*      من یک کتاب را خریدم.  
'I bought a certain book.'

Why doesn't the speaker say anything more about the book? It could be that it's not important to the story, or he doesn't want to admit what book he bought, or for any other reason. The tricky thing is that the object marker is used, even though the hearer doesn't know which book it is. It's as if the speaker introduces 'a book' and then immediately refers to it: "There was a book and I bought it."

The second tricky situation is when we're talking about 'no one' or 'nothing'. The difficult thing here is that when the direct object is something concrete, you include the object marker, but not if it's something abstract. Here are examples with concrete nouns.<sup>6</sup>

- (109) a. *ma ʧair az padar o mādar hetʃ kase-ra naɖarum*      من غیر از پدر و مادر هیچ کسی را ندارم.  
'Apart from my mother and father I don't have anybody.'<sup>7</sup>
- b. *ma hetʃ seb-a naxordom*      من هیچ سیب را نخوردم.  
'I didn't eat any apples.'<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, if the noun is abstract, the object marker is not used:

- (110) a. *ma hetʃ kār-e namekunum*      من هیچ کاری نمی‌کنم.  
'I don't do any work.'
- b. *unā hetʃ pēlān-e dʒur nakadan*      آنها هیچ پلانی جور نکردند.  
'They didn't make any plan.'

The third tricky situation when we speak generically, that is, when we talk about things in general.<sup>9</sup> The examples below are about how vinegar curdles milk *in general*, and how wolves kill sheep *in general*.

<sup>6</sup>In example (109), it is better to use the object marker, though it also seems possible to leave it out.

<sup>7</sup>This example is from Roberts (2009, p. 170)

<sup>8</sup>This example is a little complicated because [hetʃ] can also be interpreted as an adverb. This sentence can then also mean, "I didn't eat the apple at all."

<sup>9</sup>These examples follow Roberts (2009, p. 187).

- (111) a. *serka fir-a mebura.* سرکه شیر را می‌برد.  
           ‘Vinegar curdles milk.’
- b. *gurg-Λ gosfand-Λ-ra mekufjan.* گرگ‌ها گوسفندها را می‌کشند.  
           ‘Wolves kill sheep.’

These examples are about milk and sheep in general. We’re not talking about specific milk and sheep, but about the ideal forms of milk and sheep. It’s a bit of a philosophical discussion how these examples differ from the ones, e.g., in (85), but you can be fully assured that the difference is there!

On the other hand, since the sentences in (111) have the object marker, they can also be interpreted as being about specific things. “Hey, what curdled this milk?” “Vinegar curdled the milk.” “What’s going on the meadow?” “Wolves are killing the sheep.”

Confused? What a wonderful segue to the next section, which has some concrete suggestions for learning how to use the object marker properly.

## 6.4 How to learn this stuff

The most important thing for you to learn is how to use the object marker correctly when you speak or write Dari. At some point your language will get good enough that the presence or absence of the object marker will help your listening and reading, but that is a long-term prospect. At the early stages you can ignore the object marker and still understand what people are saying to you. It’s much better at the beginning to focus on correctly *producing* the object marker.

Since English doesn’t have anything like an object marker, you’re likely to underuse it rather than overuse it. The problem, of course, is that you’ve never had to think about whether the hearer could identify the direct object of your sentence: you have to build those intuitions from scratch. A good first step, then, would be to review the situations in §6.3.3 where the object marker is *always* used. If you can get those down, you’ll be a good bit of the way there.

Developing intuitions about the object marker in other contexts will be more difficult. As always, good language learning depends on good listening. In the case of the object marker, your best bet will be to listen to recorded stories, and check to see if you understand why the object marker is or isn’t used in a particular context. You can try to go back and forth with your language teacher about the proper use of the object marker outside of the context of a story, but that will be difficult: proper use of the object marker depends on the context, and the context will be constantly changing. Soon you’ll be acting out the Dari version of “Who’s on first?” At the very least you’ll need to set up careful little scenarios for your sentences.<sup>10</sup>

It’s also necessary to practice production. It is rare to find a teacher who will consistently and helpfully point out grammatical mistakes; it is rarer still to find a student who can profit from such correction. If you can get useful feedback from your teacher, and if you can apply that feedback, then you’re all set. An alternate approach is to write out a short story in advance of your lesson, and then correct it with the teacher. A third approach—and this will be humiliating—is to record yourself speaking in a lesson, and then listen to the recording with your teacher to go over your use of the object marker.

Finally, it’s worth noting that if you choose only verbs that take prepositional phrases, and when that’s not possible, make strategic use of the passive voice—these things are discussed in Chapter 8—then you can avoid direct objects altogether. In that case you would never have to use the object marker at all. This suggestion is only slightly tongue-in-cheek. A component of communicative competence is ‘strategic competence’, which means in part that you are able to work smoothly around your limitations. That doesn’t mean you should give up immediately, of course!

<sup>10</sup>Examples: “I walk into a bookstore and I’m looking for a book, but I’m not sure what book I want. What do I say?” “I walk into a bookstore and I’m looking for a book, and I know which book, but I don’t want to say the name of it right away. What do I say?” “I walk into a bookstore and want to tell the owner to sell me the book we had talked about yesterday. What do I say?” And so forth. If that sounds like a fun language lesson, you may want to consider a career in linguistics.



## Chapter 7

# Prepositions

Dari prepositions work much the same way that English prepositions do. Rather than a formal definition of a preposition, then, it might be helpful to look at some examples:

- (112) a. We played soccer [in the park].  
b. I gave an apple [to Mary].  
c. Frank took advice [from Sally].  
d. He drove [from Kabul] [to Kandahar] [in ten minutes].

In these examples, the prepositions are ‘in’, ‘to’, ‘from’, and then (in the same sentence) ‘from’, ‘to’, and ‘in’. A preposition is always followed by a noun phrase.<sup>1</sup> (See §3.1 for the meaning of ‘noun phrase’.) In grammar the noun phrase is called ‘the object of the preposition’, but the term isn’t important last long as you know that, e.g., in example (112a) above, ‘the park’ goes with ‘in’.

### **Definition: Prepositional phrase**

*A prepositional phrase is a preposition followed by a noun phrase. ‘Under the big hairy dog’ is a prepositional phrase. ‘Under’ is the preposition and ‘the big hairy dog’ is the noun phrase.*

As you can see, prepositions can be used to express a variety of things:

- Location, e.g., ‘in the park’
- Direction, e.g., ‘to the park’
- Relative position, e.g., ‘between the trees’
- Purpose, e.g., ‘for Mary’
- Manner, e.g., ‘without hesitation’
- (And many more, depending how picky you want to be)

Prepositions are not very difficult if you think about them in the right way. If you think of them the wrong way, however, prepositions can be a nightmare. Here are some tips to keep you sane.

**Do not memorize the meanings of prepositions.** The Haim dictionary defines [ba] «با» as “to, at, by, with, in, against”. Writing all that out on the back of a flashcard is a good way to waste time and drive yourself crazy. The best way to get a start on prepositions is using a Total Physical Response method. For instance, your teacher could give you a plastic apple and tell you to place it on the table, under the table, next to the table, close to the table, far from the table, etc. That way, you learn how the prepositions correspond to reality, rather than how they correspond to English. You’ll pick up further usages from stories, as described below.

**Do not expect Dari prepositions to correspond one-to-one with English prepositions, because they don’t.** Just as you can’t define a Dari preposition with English prepositions, you can’t go the other way and translate English prepositions into Dari. This is where it is very important to learn Dari naturally, rather than trying to translate from English to Dari.

<sup>1</sup>Well, *almost* always. Don’t worry about that for the moment; we’ll come back to it in §7.4.

(113) a. ma [bare ahmad] seb dādum.  
          'I gave Ahmad an apple.'  
          من برای احمد سیب دادم.

b. ma [bare ahmad] guftum ke mijajum.  
          'I told Ahmad that I'm coming.'  
          من برای احمد گفتم که می‌آیم.

**Generalize *slowly*.** There's a lot of arbitrariness with prepositions. From you above you might have guessed that [bare] «برای» is used when you're describing who benefits from or receives an action. That's more or less correct, and it will help you to guess correctly sometimes. But that doesn't mean you should always use it. When you're helping someone, you don't use [bare] «برای» but [hamraʒe] «همراه». Why? Just because.

Example (114) also illustrates how poorly English and Dari prepositions line up. A literal translation of the sentence is 'I helped with Ahmad', which in English sounds like Ahmad was a baby you were taking care of: quite a different meaning.

Then there are the nouns masquerading as prepositions. We've seen a few of these tricksters already. The phrase [hamraʃe ahmad] is (at some abstract level), two nouns joined together by the ezafa. [hamraʃ] is a word that means 'companion'—so it sort of makes sense that it's come to mean 'with'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Careful with this one. When [ruje] is said quickly, it comes out as [ruj], and in that case you just have to believe that deep down it's really two syllables.

## 7.2 Abbreviated forms of prepositional phrases

You can shorten a prepositional phrase by changing the object of the preposition into a possessive suffix, if it's one of the noun-prepositions. This is just like using a pronoun. (For possessive suffixes, see §3.4.) Here are two examples from sentences we've already seen.

- (117) a. *ma bare ahmad seb dādum.* من برای احمد سیب دادم.  
           'I gave Ahmad an apple.'  
       b. *ma bareʃ seb dādum.* من برایش سیب دادم.  
           'I gave him an apple.'
- (118) a. *ma hamraʃe ahmad komak kadum.* من همراه احمد کمک کردم.  
           'I helped Ahmad.'  
       b. *ma hamraʃeʃ komak kadum.* من همراهش کمک کردم.  
           'I helped him.'

You cannot do this with a proper preposition. You always have to use the full noun phrase in that case. Put differently, if a preposition ends in [ε], you can shorten it by using the possessive suffix as the object of the preposition.

## 7.3 Multiple prepositions at once

A curious fact about Dari is that sometimes you can have multiple prepositions at once, without changing the meaning. All of the following sentences are equivalent.

- (119) a. *ma ʃair-ε seb mewa xuʃ nadarum.* من غیر سیب میوه خوش ندارم.  
           'Apart from apples, I don't like fruit.'  
       b. *ma ʃair az seb mewa xuʃ nadarum.* من غیر از سیب میوه خوش ندارم.  
           'Apart from apples, I don't like fruit.'  
       c. *ma da ʃair az seb mewa xuʃ nadarum.* من دز غیر از سیب میوه خوش ندارم.  
           'Apart from apples, I don't like fruit.'

Another set of examples:

- (120) a. *ketāb-a ru-ʃe mez bānen.* کتاب را روی میز بانید.  
           'Place the book on the table.'  
       b. *ketāb-a da ru-ʃe mez bānen.* کتاب را در روی میز بانید.  
           'Place the book on the table.'

People's inclination to do this seems to vary by region, and may also be a matter of personal style. Your best bet is to imitate the usage of your peers.

## 7.4 Connections to other topics

Prepositions are important in their own right, but there are important connections to other grammatical topics as well. One handy fact is that a prepositional phrase is never followed by the object marker (see Chapter 6). Put differently, the object of a preposition is never given the object marker.

Another important thing about prepositional phrases is that verbs often have to be used with certain prepositions. This is discussed in §8.4.

Finally, there are some verbs that are formed with a preposition plus a normal verb. These work like the compound verbs described in §8.3, but the meanings are less predictable.

- (121) a. bar  $\Delta$ madum  
          'I left.' برآمدم.
- b. bar mij $\Delta$ jum  
          'I'm leaving.' بر می‌آیم.

The meaning doesn't make much sense to Dari speakers either. So, sometimes these get interpreted as a single verb [bar $\Delta$ madan], rather than as a compound verb. As you can see below, this doesn't make a difference in the past tense, but in the present tense the MI suffix goes at the very front.

- (122) a. bar $\Delta$ madum  
          'I left.' برآمدم.
- b. mebar $\Delta$ jum  
          'I'm leaving.' می‌برآیم.

## **Part II**

# **Verbs**

## Chapter 8

# How Dari verbs work

This chapter provides a big-picture view of how Dari verbs work. Or, less ambitiously, it's a dumping ground of useful information about Dari verbs. If you have a working knowledge of Dari, this chapter can help you to systematize your knowledge and pin down some loose ends. If you're new to Dari, it would not be a good idea to read this straight through.

If you're going through the Growing Participator Approach, you can use the following as a rough guide for when to study each section of this chapter. Learning about how every verb has two stems (§8.1) will become important in Phase 2, and probably around that time as well it would be helpful to know about compound verbs (§8.3), and how verbs can take direct objects, prepositions, or both (§8.4). The subject agreement system (§8.2) is quite basic; you'll almost certainly have figured it out before picking up this book. You can safely delay learning about the active and passive (§8.6) until Phase 3, and your anxiety about meaning and usage (§8.7) will probably rise at about that time as well.

### 8.1 Every Dari verb has two stems

Every Dari verb has two different stems, a present stem and a past stem. This means that a verb with the same meaning will occur in one of two forms, depending on the tense of the verb. The examples below both use the same verb meaning 'to carry,' but they have different stems because the sentences have different tenses (here, the present and the past continuous).

(123) Illustration of the two stems for the verb 'to carry'

- |    |                           |                |
|----|---------------------------|----------------|
| a. | ma aw me- <b>bar</b> -um  | من آب می‌برم.  |
|    | 'I am carrying water.'    |                |
| b. | ma aw me- <b>burd</b> -um | من آب می‌بردم. |
|    | 'I carried water.'        |                |

Here is another example with the verb meaning 'to sell.'

(124) Illustration of the two stems for the verb 'to sell'

- |    |                              |                    |
|----|------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. | ma seb me- <b>foru</b> f-em  | ما سیب می‌فروشیم.  |
|    | 'We are selling apples.'     |                    |
| b. | ma seb me- <b>foruxt</b> -em | ما سیب می‌فروختیم. |
|    | 'We were selling apples.'    |                    |

When you learn a new verb, you need to learn both the present tense stem and the past tense stem. You can't usually predict one from the other. There are a few consistent patterns, which can help you to learn new verbs, but you still need to memorize both stems.<sup>1</sup> In the examples above, the only difference between the verbs is which stem appears ([bar] or [burd], or [foru] or [foruxt]). There is more to it than that usually. In later chapters we will see that different tenses are made with either the present stem or the past stem, plus different prefixes and suffixes. Recognizing a stem as present or past is only a *part* of identifying the tense of the verb.

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<sup>1</sup>One pattern, for instance, is that past stems that end in [xt] often have present stems that are the same except that the end in [z]. For instance, «ساخت» [saxt] and «ساز» [saz] for 'to make', and «انداخت» [andaxt] and «انداز» [andaz] for 'to pour.' These are not absolute, however. For instance, the past stem for 'to sell' is «فروخت» [foruxt], but the present stem is «فروش» [foru].

If every verb has two stems, what do you look up in the dictionary? In Dari dictionaries, verbs are listed in the *infinitive*. The infinitive is perfectly consistent: it is formed from the past stem plus [an]. To get the infinitive of ‘to carry’, for instance, we add [an] onto the end of the past tense stem, [bord]: [burdan] «بردن». To get the infinitive for ‘to sell’, add [an] to the past stem, [foruxt]: [furuxtān] «فروختن». There are no exceptions to this rule.<sup>2</sup> If you are reading and see the form «برد», you look for the form «بردن». A good dictionary will also include entries for the present stem. For instance, if you read «می‌فروشیم» there ought to be an entry for «فروش», which will point you to the entry «فروختن».

## 8.2 Subject agreement

In Dari, the ending of the verb agrees with the subject of the sentence. (Understanding this requires that you understand the difference between ‘first person’, ‘second person’, and ‘third person’, which are introduced in §4.1.) Subject agreement is not a big part of English, but it’s there:

- (125) a. I **look** nice.  
 b. You **look** nice.  
 c. She **looks** nice. (not “She look nice”!)

In Dari, the endings in the verb endings change a little more than that. The paradigms for the verb ‘to come’ are shown in Paradigm 8.1 for the present tense, and Paradigm 8.2 for the past tense. Remember from the last section that every Dari verb has two stems. The present tense stem for ‘to come’ is seen in Paradigm 8.1; it is [ʌj].<sup>3</sup> The past tense stem, [ʌmad], is seen in Paradigm 8.2.

The verb endings are pretty much the same between the past and the present, with the exception of the ‘he/she/it’ ending. In the past tense, there is no ending; in the present tense, it is [a].

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma mijʌjum	I am coming	من می‌آیم
2SG	tu mijʌji	you (sg.) are coming	تو می‌آیی
3SG	u mijʌja	he/she/it is coming	او می‌آید
1PL	ma mijʌjem	we are coming	ما می‌آییم
2PL	ʃoma mijʌjen	you (pl.) are coming	شما می‌آیید
3PL	una mijʌjan	they are coming	آنها می‌آیند

Paradigm 8.1: Subject agreement in the present tense for the verb ‘to come’.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma ʌmadum	I came	من آمدم
2SG	tu ʌmadi	you (sg.) came	تو آمدی
3SG	u ʌmad	he/she/it came	او آمد
1PL	ma ʌmadem	we came	ما آمدیم
2PL	ʃoma ʌmaden	you (pl.) came	شما آمدید
3PL	una ʌmadan	they came	آنها آمدند

Paradigm 8.2: Subject agreement in the past tense for the verb ‘to go’.

It’s quite likely that by the time you pick up this book you will have encountered these verb endings. These are not conceptually difficult, but it important for you to internalize them. For a ‘mechanical’ pattern like this one, repeating paradigms might be the best way to go. You want to be in a place where the correct verb ending comes out naturally, just because it sounds right that way.

## 8.3 Compound verbs

Compound verbs are one of the easiest things to learn about Dari. They’re very powerful, and they make learning the language a lot easier. What is a compound verb? It’s a verb made up of two parts, a noun or

<sup>2</sup>There’s more to infinitives than just the fact that they’re listed in the dictionary. See Chapter 20 for more.

<sup>3</sup>Technically, it’s probably [ʌ], with the [j] getting stuck in there to make things easier to pronounce. You don’t need to worry about that, though.

### Definition: Light verb

(126)

a.	ma kʌr me-kun-um ‘I am working.’ (Lit. ‘I am doing work.’)	من کار می‌کنم.
b.	ma xaw me-kun-um ‘I am sleeping.’ (Lit. ‘I am doing sleep.’)	من خواب می‌کنم.
c.	ma estɛraat me-kun-um ‘I am resting.’ (Lit. ‘I am doing rest.’)	من استراحت می‌کنم.
d.	ma bʌzi me-kun-um ‘I am playing.’ (Lit. ‘I am doing play.’)	من بازی می‌کنم.

(127) a. ma kār kad-um  
'I worked.' (Lit. 'I did work.')

b. ma xaw kad-um  
'I slept.' (Lit. 'I did sleep.')

c. ma ešterāt kad-um  
'I rested.' (Lit. 'I did rest.')

d. ma bāzi kad-um  
'I played.' (Lit. 'I did play.')

As the literal translations in the examples above show, you need to be a little flexible in thinking about the meaning. Don't get bogged down asking yourself questions like, "Is sleep really something you *do*?" The 'light verb' contributes little or no meaning. The examples above all use the verb [kadan] 'to do', which is indeed the most common light verb. Other verbs get used as well, however. The next most common light verb is probably [ɗaɗan] «دادن» 'to give'. The 'literal' translation can make even less sense with this verb. For example, a verb meaning 'to move, transport' is [ɛtɛqal ɗaɗan]:

Sometimes it makes more sense. For instance, [zadan] «زدن» ‘to hit’ is used in the verbs meaning ‘to slap’ and ‘to punch’. In that case, the light verb ‘to hit’ may serve as a mnemonic to help you remember the meanings of words.

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<sup>4</sup>This is a slight exaggeration, but only a slight one!





### 8.4.1 Object suffixes

When the direct object is a pronoun, it's possible for it to become an object suffix, which is like a possessive suffix attached to a verb. These suffixes are identical in pronunciation to the possessive suffixes (which are introduced in §3.4) even though they play a very different role in the sentence.

To see how this works, take a look at the sentences below. (135a) is a regular sentence. In (135b), the direct object ([seb] «سیب», along with the object marker [a]) has been replaced by a pronoun ([u] «آن»). If the direct object can be a pronoun, then that pronoun can be shortened further to an object suffix: this is what we see in (135c). The object suffix—in this case [ɛʃ]—comes at the end of the verb.

- (135) a. ma seb-a xordum. من سیب را خوردم.  
           'I ate the apple.'  
       b. ma u-ra xordum. من آن را خوردم.  
           'I ate it.'  
       c. ma xordum-ɛʃ. من خوردمش.  
           'I ate it.'

The object suffix works just like the possessive suffix, in that it has to match the person and number of the object. Above 'it' is a third person singular, so it takes [ɛʃ]. If the object were 'you', then you would use the second person singular suffix:<sup>5</sup>

- (136) didum-et. دیدمت.  
           'I saw you.'

With compound verbs (§8.3), the object suffix can either go on the light verb or on the other part, as seen in (137c) and (137d) below.

- (137) a. ma sanduq-a ɛnteqal dɒd-um من صندوق را انتقال دادم.  
           'I moved the sanduq.'  
       b. ma u-ra ɛnteqal dɒd-um من آن را انتقال دادم.  
           'I moved it.'  
       c. ma ɛnteqal-ɛʃ dɒd-um من انتقالش دادم.  
           'I moved it.'  
       d. ma ɛnteqal dɒd-um-ɛʃ من انتقال دادمش.  
           'I moved it.'

Since object suffixes aren't part of English grammar, you're likely to forget to use them. Listen for them in other people's speech, and imitate their style.

## 8.5 Double Negatives

Dari requires double negatives. In the examples below, we have both the word [hetʃ] «هیچ» 'none' and the negative prefix on the verb. The literal translation would be, 'I didn't eat no apples', which of course sounds funny to English ears.

- (138) ma hetʃ seb na-xord-um من هیچ را نخوردم.  
           'I didn't eat any apples.'  
       (139) ma hetʃ kɒr-e na-me-kun-um من هیچ کاری نمی‌کنم.  
           'I don't do any work.'

<sup>5</sup>See §8.2 or Chapter 4 of you need help on first person singular, second person singular, etc. It's not just jargon; it's important for understanding the grammar.

- (140) un<sub>Λ</sub> hetʃ pɛl<sub>Λ</sub>n-e dʒur na-kad-an  
 ‘They didn’t make any plan.’

آنها هیچ پلانی جور نکردند.

## 8.6 Active & Passive

As in English, Dari has active and passive verbs. Those terms might be familiar from school; if not, consider the two examples:

- (141) a. I finished the work.  
 b. The work was finished.

The first is an active sentence; the second is a passive sentence. Active sentences emphasize the person who is acting (above, ‘I’); passive sentences emphasize the thing that is affected (above, ‘the work’).

- (142) a. ma k<sub>Λ</sub>r-a xal<sub>Λ</sub>s kad-um  
 ‘I finished the work.’  
 b. k<sub>Λ</sub>r xal<sub>Λ</sub>s ʃud  
 ‘The work was finished.’

من کار را خلاص کردم.

کار خلاص شد.

As you can see, the difference is that we swap out the verb [kadan] ‘to do’ with the verb [ʃudan] ‘to become.’ If we start with the verb [xal<sub>Λ</sub>s kadan], the passive verb is [xal<sub>Λ</sub>s ʃudan]. Since [k<sub>Λ</sub>r] is now the subject, the verb agrees with it (i.e., it has the third person singular ending). Since most verbs involve [kadan] ‘to do’, most verbs are made passive in this way. There are three other patterns as well, though.

Verbs with the light verb [zadan] ‘to hit’ are *sometimes* made passive by swapping out [xordan] for [zadan].

- (143) a. ma nasim-a seli zad-um  
 ‘I slapped Nasim.’  
 b. nasim seli xurd  
 ‘Nasim was slapped.’

من نسیم را سیلی زدم.

نسیم بیلی خورد.

Verbs formed with the verb [d<sub>Λ</sub>dan] ‘to give’ are *sometimes* made passive by swapping out [d<sub>Λ</sub>dan] for [gɛrɛftan].

- (144) a. ma bux<sub>Λ</sub>ri-ra dar d<sub>Λ</sub>d-um  
 ‘I lit the bukhari.’  
 b. bux<sub>Λ</sub>ri dar gɛrɛft  
 ‘The bukhari lit (caught).’

من بخاری را در دادم.

بخاری در گرفت.

Other light verbs can be swapped out as well, but these are the most common ones.

There is one pattern remaining. For verbs where there is no pattern of swapping out the light verbs, you make a passive with the participle plus [ʃudan]. For now, it’s sufficient to say that the participle is the infinitive, minus [n]. For the verb [guftan] ‘to say’, the participle is [gufta].<sup>6</sup> So, the passive of [guftan] is [gufta ʃudan].

- (145) a. ahmad mega ke nasim tambal as  
 ‘Ahmed says that Nasim is lazy.’  
 b. gufta meʃa ke nasim tambal as  
 ‘It is said that Nasim is lazy.’

احمد می‌گوید که نسیم تنبل است.

گفته می‌شود که نسیم تنبل است.

This pattern even extends to compound verbs that use [d<sub>Λ</sub>dan] ‘to give’ and [zadan] ‘to hit’. Below there is an example where the passive of [pas d<sub>Λ</sub>dan] ‘to give back’ is [pas d<sub>Λ</sub>da ʃudan] instead of [pas gɛrɛftan].

<sup>6</sup>For more information about participles, see Chapter 21.



These differences are very difficult to explain; they may be impossible to explain in a helpful way. It may even be that a mature student of Dari should work with a few generalizations, and then hard-earned knowledge of a lot of exceptions. Here is another example. Recently I was discussing with my chaokidar why the gas to our stove was weak. I said,

- (150) *ma tʃaɾʃanɐ ura pʊr kadum.* من چهارشنبه او را پر کردم.  
 ‘I filled it on Thursday.’

He corrected me—or at least echoed my statement—with,

- (151) *...pʊrɐʃ kada buden* ...پرش کرده بودید.  
 ‘...you had filled it.’

Both in terms of grammar and meaning, both ways of saying this are correct. No ambiguity is possible with either phrasing. Yet, the native speaker clearly prefers the past perfect in this context. This is purely a matter of *usage*.

The challenge in mastering usage is that there won’t be a simple explanation of which tense is used in exactly which context. It’s matter of style, just like a speaker of English knows that both of the following expressions are grammatical, but the second one sounds a little more natural.

- (152) a. John likes to do the dishes.  
 b. John likes doing the dishes.

To throw a further spanner into the works, use of one tense instead of another depends on cultural knowledge. The examples below are in English, but it works the same way in Dari.

- (153) a. Have you eaten lunch?  
 b. Have you gone on the Hajj?

A moment’s reflection will show you that these questions, which are grammatically identical, are asking about very different time spans. “Have you eaten lunch?” has to mean, “Have you eaten lunch *today*?” On the other hand, “Have you gone on the Hajj?” has to mean, “Have you gone on the Hajj *ever*?” That is because having lunch is a daily activity, whereas going on the Hajj is a once-in-a-lifetime activity. So culture comes into proper use of tense as well. Someone who doesn’t know what the Hajj is might interpret the question as being about today.<sup>9</sup>

How will you ever learn the proper context in which to use the various tenses? The only solution is to flood your brain with Dari language and culture input, and to let the intuitions develop naturally over time. This may seem to be the counsel of despair, but it’s really just one more example of how a grammar book cannot be a substitute for time spent in the language!

<sup>9</sup>And you can imagine how this might vary place to place. Perhaps people who live in Mecca go on the Hajj every year; in that situation the question might mean, “Have you gone on the Hajj *yet this year*?”

# Is & Was

## 9.1 Form

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma xub astum	I am good	من خوب استم
2SG	tu xub asti	you (sg.) are good	تو خوب استی
3SG	u xub ast	he/she/it is good	او خوب است
1PL	ma xub astem	we are good	ما خوب استیم
2PL	ʃum xub asten	you (pl.) are good	شما خوب استید
3PL	una xub astan	they are good	آنها خوب استند

(154) a. u seb ast  
          ‘That’s an apple.’  
       b. u zardalu st  
          ‘That’s an apricot.’  
       c. u qurbani st  
          ‘That’s a sacrifice.’  
       d. u seb az u st  
          ‘That’s his/her apple.’  
       e. ma az amrika stom  
          ‘I’m from America.’

(155)    a. nΛn tajár ast                                      نان تيار است.  
               ‘The food is ready.’  
               b. nΛn tajará st                                  نان تبیاره است.  
               ‘The food is an airplane.’

Sometimes instead of [ast], speakers say [hast] «هست». (If you're learning a dialect of Dari where the [h] is routinely dropped, like Kabuli Dari, then you can ignore this bit.) The use of this variant is not easily defined, so you might just think about the suggestions below, and then see if they line up with what you hear people saying. Thackston describes several contexts in which this occurs (Thackston, 1993, pp. 28, 208). Two of these seem important for Dari. The first usage of [hast] is to say that *there* is something.

- (156) tʃʌj hast چای هست.  
'There is tea.'

Somewhat less commonly, [hast] is used to give special emphasis.

- (157) a. ma mard astum من مرد استم.  
'I am a man.'  
b. ma hard hastum من مرد هستم.  
'I *am* a man.'

Alternately, one educated speaker has suggested that, as a matter of grammatical correctness in formal Dari, [hast] is used for living things (i.e., people and animals). In that case, it would be correct to use [hast] for 'man' above, but not for 'tea'.

Dari has a special word for the negative forms (i.e., 'isn't'): [nest] «نیست», as shown in Paradigm 9.2.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma xub nestom	I am not good	من خوب نیستم
2SG	tu xub nesti	you (sg.) are not good	تو خوب نیستی
3SG	u xub nest	he/she/it is not good	او خوب نیست
1PL	ma xub nestem	we are not good	ما خوب نیستیم
2PL	ʃoma xub nesten	you (pl.) are not good	شما خوب نیستید
3PL	una xub nestan	they are not good	آنها خوب نیستند

Paradigm 9.2: The negative present tense forms of 'to be'.

### 9.1.2 Past tense ('was')

The past tense is perfectly regular. The past stem of 'to be' is [bud] «بود». Given that and a working knowledge of how verb agreement works, you should be all set. The positive past forms are given in Paradigm 9.3, and the negative forms are given in Paradigm 9.4.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma xub budom	I was good	من خوب بودم
2SG	tu xub budi	you (sg.) were good	تو خوب بودی
3SG	u xub bud	he/she/it was good	او خوب بود
1PL	ma xub budem	we were good	ما خوب بودیم
2PL	ʃoma xub buden	you (pl.) were good	شما خوب بودید
3PL	una xub budan	they were good	آنها خوب بودند

Paradigm 9.3: The (positive) past tense forms of 'to be'.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma xub nabudom	I was not good	من خوب نبودم
2SG	tu xub nabudi	you (sg.) were not good	تو خوب نبودی
3SG	u xub nabud	he/she/it was not good	او خوب نبود
1PL	ma xub nabudem	we were not good	ما خوب نبودیم
2PL	ʃoma xub nabuden	you (pl.) were not good	شما خوب نبودید
3PL	una xub nabudan	they were not good	آنها خوب نبودند

Paradigm 9.4: The negative past tense forms of 'to be'.





## Chapter 10

# Commands

### Go!

There are two types of commands in Dari. The first is the polite form, the second is... not impolite exactly, but more familiar and less formal. Explaining the different forms is simple. Saying when to use them is probably not possible.

### 10.1 Form

#### 10.1.1 Informal

Grammar Formula—Positive	
<b>Formula</b>	(SUBJ +) PRESENT STEM
<b>Spoken Example</b>	bu- ro SUBJ -go
<b>Written Example</b>	برو be-raw SUBJ-go

In the diagram above, the SUBJ prefix is shown in parentheses to show that it is sometimes left out. Aside from some irregular forms (discussed below), it is typically included in spoken Dari; in written Dari it is more common to see it left out.

Grammar Formula—Negative	
<b>Formula</b>	NEG + PRESENT STEM
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- ro NEG -go
<b>Written Example</b>	نرو na-raw NEG-go

There are a number of irregular command forms, which are described in §10.1.3. As always, it's only the most frequent verbs that have irregular forms.

## 10.1.2 Formal

Grammar Formula—Positive	
<b>Formula</b>	SUBJ + PRESENT STEM + 2PL PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	bʊ- r -en SUBJ go 2PL
<b>Written Example</b>	بروید bɛ-raw-ed SUBJ-go-2PL

Grammar Formula—Negative	
<b>Formula</b>	NEG + PRESENT STEM + 2PL PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- r -en NEG go 2PL
<b>Written Example</b>	بروید na-raw-ed NEG-go-2PL

You may notice that the form of the formal command is identical to the present subjunctive, as described in Chapter 17. That's not a coincidence. Dari's use of the subjunctive for a command is perhaps similar to how we would ask very politely in English, "Would you shut the door?" or simply (in a certain tone of voice) "If you would shut the door..."

## 10.1.3 Irregular forms

In colloquial Dari, there are a few verbs that have irregular informal command forms.

- (160) 'do!' [ko] کن  
 'become!' [ʃo] شو  
 'go!' [buro] برو

As discussed in Chapter 9, the present stem of 'to be' is really [bʌʃ] «باش». Given that, the command forms of 'to be' below are regular, but you'll probably need to pay special attention to them.

- (161) 'be!' (formal) [bʌʃen] باشید  
 'be!' (informal) [bʌʃ] باش

The verb 'to have', which admittedly is not used as a command form very often, also has exceptional forms.<sup>1</sup>

- (162) 'have!' (formal) [dʌʃta bʌʃen] داشته باشید  
 'have!' (informal) [dʌʃta bʌʃ] داشته باش

<sup>1</sup>In a literary context, [bedar] «بدار» and [bedared] «بدارید» might also be encountered.

## 10.2 Usage

The big question is when to use the informal commands and when to use the formal commands. The broader issue here is the difference between [tu] «تو» and [ʃumʌ] «شما». The former is the more familiar form of ‘you.’ The latter is used for addressing multiple people, and also when you want to show respect to someone (or to speak more formally). If you’re on [tu] «تو» terms with someone, the informal command may be appropriate. If you’re using [ʃumʌ] «شما», the formal command may be more appropriate. Here are some things to consider.

- Use of informal commands can be a way to talk down to people. If, like many foreigners, you are ostentatiously rich and powerful, you may want to consider carefully whether you use the informal style when speaking to employees.
- On the other hand, the informal command can also show familiarity. If someone uses [tu] «تو» with you, perhaps you should reciprocate.
- Context can be a guide. You may typically use [ʃumʌ] «شما» as a matter of habit, but slip in an informal command if you’re making a joke, for instance.
- Some situations are inherently informal. If you’re shopping in the bazaar, you’re not going to hear a lot of formal commands.
- Use informal commands freely with children. Use formal commands with older people.

It’s important to know as well that some people always use [ʃumʌ] «شما» (and therefore the formal commands), and therefore may not want to teach [tu] «تو». You should take your teacher’s opinion into account when making decisions about which form to use.

## 10.3 Practice

1. Shut the door! (plural)
2. Answer my question! (singular)
3. Give the dinosaur his food! (singular)
4. Record these sentences! (plural)
5. Bring me that chair! (plural)

Suggested answers can be found on pg. 98.

# Chapter 11

# Simple Present

*I'm going*

The simple present is the usual tense for speaking about the present or the future.

## 11.1 Form

Grammar Formula—Positive	
<b>Formula</b>	PRESENT STEM
<b>Spoken Example</b>	me- r -um MI go 1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	می‌روم me-raw-am MI-go-1SG

The present is formed with the MI prefix. This prefix doesn't really have a consistent meaning, so it is identified here just as MI.<sup>1</sup> An example sentence is below; a full paradigm is given in Paradigm 11.1.

- (163) un<sub>A</sub> bazar me-r-an                      آن‌ها بازار می‌روند.  
‘They are going to the bazaar.’

Recall from §8.1 that the present stem of a verb is different from the past stem (which looks like the infinitive), and has to be learned separately. There is no way, for instance, to tell that the present tense stem of the verb «رَفَتَنَ» [raftan] is [r].

<sup>1</sup>Some people will analyze MI as indicating continuous activity since it's used in the simple present and the past continuous (e.g., Glassman, 2000, p. 131; Thackston, 1993, p. 41), but it's also used in the past subjunctive without a necessarily continuous meaning.

<b>Formula</b>	NEGATIVE + MI + PRESENT STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- me- r -um NEG MI go 1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	فىروم na-me-raw-am NEG-MI-go-1SG

(164) unΛ bAZAR na-me-r-an                                  آن‌ها بازار نمی‌روند.  
‘They are not going to the bazaar.’

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma miɟaɟum	I am coming	من میایم
2SG	tu miɟaɟi	you (sg.) are coming	تو میایی
3SG	u miɟaɟa	he/she/it is coming	او میاید
1PL	ma miɟaɟem	we are coming	ما میایم
2PL	ɟuma miɟaɟen	you (pl.) are coming	شما میایید
3PL	una miɟaɟan	they are coming	آنها میایند

Paradigm 11.1: The present tense for the verb ‘to come’.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma namijAjum	I am not coming	من نمیایم
2SG	tu namijAji	you (sg.) are not coming	تو نمیایی
3SG	u namijAja	he/she/it is not coming	او نمیاید
1PL	ma namijAjem	we are not coming	ما نمیایم
2PL	ʃuma namijAjen	you (pl.) are not coming	شما نمیاید
3PL	una namijAjan	they are not coming	آنها نمیایند

Paradigm 11.2: The negative present tense for the verb 'to come'.

The MI prefix is generally pronounced consistently—either as [me] or [mi], depending on where you are in the country. A consistent exception is with verbs whose present stems start with [a], in which case the vowels get smooshed together into [ɛ]:

- (165) a. [me-and<sub>ΛZ</sub>-um] → [mend<sub>ΛZ</sub>um] 'I am pouring'  
 b. [me-aft<sub>um</sub>] → [mɛftum] 'I am falling'

## 11.2 Meaning

The present tense is used to express an ongoing activity in the present, to express repetitive actions, and to talk about the future. This is basically identical to English usage, which makes this a short chapter. The two examples below show the possible interpretations of the present.

(166) *ma mazar merom.* من مازار می‌روم.  
'I'm going to Mazar.'

- a. I am on my way to Mazar at this very moment.
- b. I'm going to Mazar at some point in the future.

(167) *ma seb meforuʃom.* من سیب می‌فروشم.  
'I'm selling apples.'

- a. I'm in the process of selling apples at this very moment.
- b. I sell apples [for a living].

## 11.3 Practice

Produce the following sentences in Dari.

1. A dinosaur is eating my mother.
2. Goats are falling from the sky.
3. I'm going to attack the lion on Friday.
4. The shopkeeper doesn't have any elephants.
5. The cow doesn't bite old men.

Suggested answers can be found on pg. 98.

## Chapter 12

# Simple Past

### *I went*

The simple past is the usual tense for speaking about events in the past.

### 12.1 Form

Grammar Formula—Positive	
<b>Formula</b>	PAST STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	raft -um go 1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	رفتم raft-am go-1SG

Recall from §8.1 that verbs have two stems, past and present, that have to be learned separately. If you're following the GPA approach, you started encountering past stems when you moved out of the “here-and-now” phase and into simple stories.

As discussed in §8.2, the verb agrees with the subject. The agreement markers work just as they do for the present tense, with one wrinkle: for the 3SG (he/she/it) there is no personal ending, just the plain past stem. (See §8.2 for more.)

(168) u darwāza-ra basta kad.  
'He shut the door.'

او دروازه را بسته کرد.

The positive and negative forms differ only in the presence of the NEG prefix. A full paradigm is given for positive forms in Paradigm 12.1, and for the negative forms in Paradigm 12.2. The latter paradigm illustrates a little variation in the NEG prefix. When a past stem ends in a vowel, the [a] in the negative prefix goes away in colloquial Dari; in formal Dari it's preserved by inserting [j].

- (169) a. Colloquial: [na-ʌmad-um] → [nʌmadum]  
b. Formal: [na-ʌmad-um] → [najʌmadum]

**Grammar Formula—Negative**

<b>Formula</b>	NEGATIVE + PAST STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- raft -um NEG go 1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	نرفتم na-raft-am NEG-go-1SG

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma ʌmadum	I came	من آمدم
2SG	tu ʌmadi	you (sg.) came	تو آمدی
3SG	u ʌmad	he/she/it came	او آمد
1PL	maʌmadem	we came	ما آمدیم
2PL	ʃumʌ ʌmaden	you (pl.) came	شما آمدید
3PL	unʌ ʌmadan	they came	آنها آمدند

Paradigm 12.1: The simple past tense for the verb ‘to come’.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma nʌmadum	I came	من نیامدم
2SG	tu nʌmadi	you (sg.) came	تو نیامدی
3SG	u nʌmad	he/she/it came	او نیامد
1PL	ma nʌmadem	we came	ما نیامدیم
2PL	ʃumʌ nʌmaden	you (pl.) came	شما نیامدید
3PL	unʌ nʌmadan	they came	آنها نیامدند

Paradigm 12.2: The negative simple tense for the verb ‘to come’.

## 12.2 Meaning

The simple past is used for events that took place in the past, and past events can be described using the simple past. Present events should not be indicated with the simple past, nor should repetitive events, nor events that might have happened in the past but you’re not certain. Describing future events with the past is right out.

There’s really not much more to say. The only real difference in usage is that the simple past is used in some contexts that it wouldn’t be in English, for instance in newspaper headlines, and in some proverbs.

## 12.3 Practice

1. Aziz said he was ready.
2. Harun shut the door.
3. Latifa asked a question.
4. Ahmad went to Kabul.
5. Ghaiur cooked the food.

Suggested answers can be found on pg. 99.



## Chapter 13

# Past Continuous

### *I was going*

The past continuous is used to describe past events that were ongoing or repetitive. The hardest thing about the past continuous is probably its name. This tense is just the Dari equivalent to the English: “We were going.” The usage is either very close or identical to English usage.

### 13.1 Form

Grammar Formula—Positive	
<b>Formula</b>	MI + PAST STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	me- raft -um MI go 1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	می رفتم me-raft-am MI-go-1SG

As you can see, the form of the past continuous is sort of in between the simple past and the present. You can think of it as the simple past with the MI prefix stuck on the front of it, or as a present but with the past stem instead of the present stem.<sup>1</sup> As you can see below, the negative works the usual way, with the NEG prefix stuck to the beginning of the word.

Grammar Formula—Negative	
<b>Formula</b>	NEG + MI + PAST STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- me- raft -um NEG MI go 1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	نمی رفتم na-me-raft-am NEG-MI-go-1SG

We’ll see in Chapter 18 that the form of the past continuous is identical to the form of the past subjunctive.

<sup>1</sup>The fact that both the present and the past continuous have the MI prefix is one reason to think that MI makes the verb continuous. This doesn’t really hold up in the whole language, but it might be a helpful to think that way for the moment.

The typical way to talk about an past event in Dari is with the simple past (Chapter 12), as we see below.

- Dari also has the equivalent of, “He was shutting the door.” But as in English, you don’t usually just say that. It’s more common to use the past continuous when you’re setting the scene for some other action:

- The past continuous can also be used to show that an event was ongoing or continuous.

1. I was working in Kabul in the time of the dinosaurs.
2. Did you (pl.) used to eat dinosaur in England?
3. She always tried to go to school, but it never happened.
4. Ahmad was still talking when I left.
5. Hamid was working in the field.

Suggested answers can be found on pg. 99.

# Chapter 14

## Future

### *I will go*

There are a couple of interesting things about the future tense in Dari. The first is that future events are generally not described with the future tense! It's far more common to use the simple present to talk about the future (as it is in English: "I'm going to Kabul", etc.; see Chapter 11 for the simple present). So you may go quite a while before hearing an actual future tense. The other interesting thing about the future is there are considerable differences between the colloquial and formal forms. There are always differences of pronunciation between formal and informal Dari, but these changes are more than usual; in addition, the meaning is somewhat different as well. As a result, in this chapter the formal and colloquial variants are treated completely separately. If you're focusing on the spoken language, feel free to ignore the written forms for now.

### 14.1 Colloquial (Spoken)

#### 14.1.1 Form

Grammar Formula—Positive (two options)	
<b>Formula</b>	[XAT] PAST STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	xat raft -um will go 1SG
<b>Formula</b>	[XAT] SUBJ + PRESENT STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	xat bu- r -um will SUBJ go 1SG

The way to form the future in spoken Dari is to place the word [xat] right before the verb, which is in the simple past or subjunctive (Glassman, 2000, p. 261).

- (173) a. ma xat raftum.  
'I will go.'  
b. ma xat burum.  
'I will go.'

If the verb is a compound verb, the [xat] is (typically) placed right before the light verb:

- (174) a. ma kar xat kadum.  
'I will work.'  
b. ma kar xat kunum.  
'I will work.'

A paradigm for the colloquial future is given in Paradigm 14.1.

Subject	IPA	English
1SG	ma xat amadum	I will come
2SG	tu xat amadi	you (sg.) will come
3SG	u xat amad	he/she/it will come
1PL	ma xat amadem	we will come
2PL	sum xat amaden	you (pl.) will come
3PL	una xat amadan	they will come

Paradigm 14.1: Colloquial future forms of the verb ‘to come’.

In fact, there’s a good deal of flexibility in where to put the [xat]. A safe set is to place it right before the light verb, but you can see some flexibility below.

- (175) a. fardΛ xat tfawki-ra juftum.  
           ‘Tomorrow I will wash the chairs.’  
       b. fardΛ xat tfawki-ra bujujum.  
           ‘Tomorrow I will wash the chairs.’

Going even further, it seems that any of the sentences below are acceptable Dari versions of, “Tomorrow I will wash the chair for Ahmad.”

- (176) a. ma xat fardΛ bare ahmad tfawki-ra juftum.  
       b. ma fardΛ xat bare ahmad tfawki-ra juftum.  
       c. ma fardΛ bare ahmad xat tfawki-ra juftum.  
       d. ma fardΛ bare ahmad tfawki-ra xat juftum.

In spite of the freedom you have here, you’re never going to go wrong placing the [xat] right before the main verb of the sentence, as in (176d)—or right before the light verb if it’s a compound verb. It’s probably best to practice using [xat] in that position, though you should be prepared to understand it in any position.

For the negative, you again have options. You can place the NEG prefix before the [xat], or you can place it directly onto the verb (or light verb in a compound verb). The preferred option is to place NEG on the [xat].<sup>1</sup>

#### Grammar Formula—Negative (two options)

<b>Formula</b>	NEG-[XAT] PAST STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- xat raft -um NEG will go 1SG

<b>Formula</b>	NEG-[XAT] PAST STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	xat na- raft -um will NEG go 1SG

A paradigm for the negative form of the colloquial future is given in Paradigm 14.2.

### 14.1.2 Meaning

The future is used to talk about events that take place in the future—except of course that it’s much more common to use the simple present to talk about the future! In colloquial Dari, there is a slight difference between using the simple present to talk about the future, and a [xat] form. The following examples are from Glassman (2000, p. 261). Example (177a), a simple present, is strongly confident. Examples (177b) and (177c) are less confident—90-95%, according to the people I’ve spoken with.

<sup>1</sup>The grammar formula shows options using the past tense variant, but this is not necessary. Strictly speaking there are four options for the negative future: placing [xat] in one of two places, and using either the simple past or subjunctive.

Subject	IPA	English
1SG	ma naχat ʌmadum	I will not come
2SG	tu naχat ʌmadi	you (sg.) will not come
3SG	u naχat ʌmad	he/she/it will not come
1PL	ma naχat ʌmadem	we will not come
2PL	ʃuma naχat ʌmaden	you (pl.) will not come
3PL	una naχat ʌmadan	they will not come

Paradigm 14.2: Negative colloquial future forms of the verb ‘to come’.

- (177) a. fardʌ mijʌʃum.  
‘I will come tomorrow.’  
b. fardʌ χat ʌmadum.  
‘I might come tomorrow.’  
c. fardʌ χat burum.  
‘I might come tomorrow.’

It should be noted, though, that both (177b) and (177c) are ‘stronger’ than if you were to use [ʌjad] «شاید» ‘perhaps’ with the subjunctive (as discussed in Chapter 17).

## 14.2 Formal (Written)

The formal version of the future is quite consistent. Both the form and the meaning are more straightforward than the colloquial version of the future.

### 14.2.1 Form

The written form of the future is quite different, as shown below.<sup>2</sup> A full paradigm is given in Paradigm 14.3.

Grammar Formula—Positive	
<b>Formula</b>	[XWAH + PERSONAL ENDING] [PAST STEM]
<b>Written Example</b>	خواهم رفت raft xwah-am go will-1SG

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	man xwaham ʌmad	I will come	من خواهم آمد
2SG	tu xwahi ʌmad	you (sg.) will come	تو خواهی آمد
3SG	u xwahad ʌmad	he/she/it will come	او خواهد آمد
1PL	ma xwahem ʌmad	we will come	ما خواهیم آمد
2PL	ʃuma xwahed ʌmad	you (pl.) will come	شما خواهید آمد
3PL	anhʌ xwahand ʌmad	they will come	آنها خواهند آمد

Paradigm 14.3: Formal future forms of the verb ‘to come’.

The formula above doesn’t show how compound verbs work (see §8.3 for more on compound verbs). The [xwah]-part goes between the light verb and the other part:

- (178) ma kaɾ xwaham kard. من کار خواهم کرد.  
‘I will work.’

If there are a lot of verbs in a row—like from a passive—the [xwah]-part goes before the last one:

<sup>2</sup>The word [xwah] is the present stem of [xwastan] «خواستن» ‘to want’. The connection? Your guess is as good as mine.

(179) hamalāt-ε doʃman aqab zada xwāhad ʃud  
 ‘An enemy attack will be beaten back.’

حملات دشمن عقب زده خواهد شد

For negatives, the NEG is stuck onto the [xwāh]-part. A full paradigm for negative forms is given in Paradigm 14.4.

Grammar Formula—Negative	
<b>Formula</b>	[NEG XWĀH + PERSONAL ENDING] [PAST STEM]
<b>Written Example</b>	نخواهم رفت raft na-xwāh-am go NEG-will-1SG

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	man naxwāham āmad	I will not come	من نخواهم آمد
2SG	tu naxwāhi āmad	you (sg.) will not come	تو نخواهی آمد
3SG	u naxwāhad āmad	he/she/it will not come	او نخواهد آمد
1PL	ma naxwāhem āmad	we will not come	ما نخواهیم آمد
2PL	ʃuma naxwāhed āmad	you (pl.) will not come	شما نخواهید آمد
3PL	anhā naxwāhand āmad	they will not come	آنها نخواهند آمد

Paradigm 14.4: Negative formal future forms of the verb ‘to come’.

### 14.2.2 Meaning

In formal Dari, the future simply refers to future events. The shades of meaning in the colloquial version are not part of formal Dari.

## 14.3 Practice

Many of these sentences could be expressed very well in the present continuous tense, but for our purposes here, please produce these sentences with the [xāt] construction that was presented in this chapter.

1. I will eat a rock next week.
2. The dinosaur will be slaughtered on Wednesday.
3. The skin of the drum will harden next month.
4. Next year the little goat will kick the big goat.
5. In ten years, I will go to France.

Suggested answers can be found on pg. 100.

## Chapter 15

# Present Perfect

### *I have gone*

The present perfect is used to talk about events that are complete in the present—the term ‘perfect’ is used in the sense of ‘complete’. This works much as it does in English. In the example below, the action of shutting the door is complete.

(180) darwaza-ra basta kadém.  
‘I have shut the door.’

دروازه بسته کرده ام.

The meaning and usage of the perfect is discussed in further detail below.

## 15.1 Form

### 15.1.1 Spoken

The spoken form of the present perfect works a bit differently from the other tenses. In the first place, the stress always goes on the last syllable. This is different to the way that all other verbs work (see §2.3). In fact, stress is all that distinguishes many present perfects from the corresponding simple pasts. Compare the paradigm for the present perfects in Paradigm 15.1 with their simple past forms. Aside from stress, there are the following differences:

- The 1SG and 1PL forms (‘I’ and ‘we’) are identical. The ending is [ém] in both cases.
- The 3SG (‘he/she/it’) ends in [á] (instead of having no ending).

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma raftém	I have gone	من رفته ام
2SG	tu raftí	you (sg.) have gone	تو رفته ای
3SG	u raftá	he has gone	او رفته (است)
1PL	ma raftém	we have gone	ما رفته ایم
2PL	šuma raftén	you (pl.) have gone	شما رفته اید
3PL	una raftán	they have gone	آنها رفته اند

Paradigm 15.1: Colloquial present perfect forms of the verb ‘to go’. (Note that the written forms are quite different.)

### 15.1.2 Formal

The formal forms are a bit more straightforward. The present perfect in that case is the participle plus a personal ending. According to your preference, you can think of the participle as the past stem plus [a], or as the infinitive minus the [n]; it works out to the same thing.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See Chapter 21 for more on participles. There’s nothing that’s really relevant to the current chapter there, however.

(181) a. u rafta  
'He has gone.'  
او رفته.

b. u rafta ast  
'He *has* gone.'  
او رفته است.

For the negative, the NEG marker goes right at the beginning.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma rafta am	I have gone	من رفته ام
2SG	tu rafta i	you (sg.) have gone	تو رفته ای
3SG	u rafta (as)	he has gone	او رفته (است)
1PL	ma rafta em	we have gone	ما رفته ایم
2PL	ʃumΛ rafta ed	you (pl.) have gone	شما رفته اید
3PL	unΛ rafta and	they have gone	آنها رفته اند

Paradigm 15.2: Formal present perfect forms of the verb 'to go'.

## 15.2 Meaning

The important thing is to distinguish the simple past and the present perfect. Consider the sentences below. Both the Dari and the English translations work much the same way.



- (182) a. darwλza-ra basta kadom. دروازه بسته کردم.  
 'I shut the door.'
- b. darwλza-ra basta kadém. دروازه بسته کرده ام.  
 'I have shut the door.'

What's the difference between two sentences? Before we answer that, consider that even if you can't answer that question, you can at least observe that the English sentences are different. If you use a present perfect in Dari when you would use one in English, that's at least a start.

So what is the difference? Grammatically (182a) is a simple past, and (182b) is a present perfect. If I said to you, "I shut the door," then all I am saying is that at some point I shut the door. I'm not taking responsibility for whether the door is still shut. On the other hand, if I say, "I have shut the door," then there is a strong implication that the door is still shut—perhaps I've just come from there, and there's no one else who could have opened it.

Since perfect means 'complete', these are all obviously actions that have taken place in the past. But when you use a perfect, you're giving the listener an extra clue: this happened in the past, it is still finished (or not), and that's relevant to our discussion.

In §8.7, I contrasted the meaning of the following sentences, both of which are in the perfect.

- (183) a. ma tʃʌʃt xordém. من چاشت خورده ام.  
 'I have eaten lunch.'
- b. ma hadʒ raftém. من حج رفته ام.  
 'I have gone on the Hajj.'

Both refer to 'completed' actions. But if I say that I've eaten lunch, you naturally interpret it as referring to today. If I say I've gone on the Hajj—which is generally a once-in-a-lifetime thing—then it's only understood that I went at some time in the past—maybe even decades ago.

Of course, you can also use the perfect to talk about things that have *not* happened.

- (184) a. darwλza-ra basta nakadém. دروازه بسته نکرده ام.  
 'I have not shut the door.'
- b. ma tʃʌʃt naxordém. من چاشت نخورده ام.  
 'I have not eaten lunch.'
- c. ma hadʒ naraftém. من حج نرفته ام.  
 'I have not gone on the Hajj.'

### 15.3 Practice

1. I have slaughtered the dinosaur.
2. Qadim has shut the door.
3. Have you ever seen a goat?
4. The work still isn't finished.
5. The bomb hasn't exploded yet.

Suggested answers can be found on pg. 100.

# Chapter 16

## Past Perfect

### *I had gone*

The past perfect is used to say that in the past, something had already been completed. The present perfect is described in Chapter 15; if you haven't disentangled the distinction between the simple past and the present perfect, it will probably be necessary to re-read Chapter 15.

The past perfect is also used in English, and the meaning is the same. You're talking about the past, and saying that some action had already been completed.

(185) darwaza-ra basta kada budum.  
'I had shut the door.'

دروازه بسته کرده بودم.

### 16.1 Form

The form of the past perfect is quite straightforward, and is the same in formal and informal Dari (unlike the present perfect). It is the participle plus the inflected form of 'was' (the past stem of [budan] «بودن»). A full paradigm is shown in Paradigm 16.1.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma rafta budum	I had gone	من رفته بودم
2SG	tu rafta budi	you (sg.) had gone	تو رفته بودی
3SG	u rafta bud	he/she/it had gone	او رفته بود
1PL	ma rafta budem	we had gone	ما رفته بودیم
2PL	šum rafta buden	you (pl.) had gone	شما رفته بودید
3PL	un rafta budan	they had gone	آنها رفته بودند

Paradigm 16.1: Past perfect forms of the verb 'to go'.

#### Grammar Formula—Positive

<b>Formula</b>	[PAST STEM + A] [BUD + PERSONAL ENDING]
<b>Spoken Example</b>	raft-a bud-um go-PTCP was-1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	بودم رفته bud-am raft-a was-1SG go-PTCP

For the negative, the NEG marker goes on participle part, not the [budan] «بودن» part. A paradigm is given in Paradigm 16.2.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma narafta budum	I had not gone	من نرفته بودم
2SG	tu narafta budi	you (sg.) had not gone	تو نرفته بودی
3SG	u narafta bud	he/she/it had not gone	او نرفته بود
1PL	ma narafta budem	we had not gone	ما نرفته بودیم
2PL	sum narafta buden	you (pl.) had not gone	شما نرفته بودید
3PL	un narafta budan	they had not gone	آنها نرفته بودند

Paradigm 16.2: Negative past perfect forms of the verb ‘to go’.

### Grammar Formula—Negative

<b>Formula</b>	[NEG + PAST STEM + A] [BUD + PERSONAL ENDING]
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- raft -a bud -um NEG- go -PTCP was -1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	بودم نرفته bud-am na-raft-a was-1SG NEG-go-PTCP

## 16.2 Meaning

To understand the meaning of the past perfect, you first need to be comfortable with the idea of the present perfect, which is discussed in Chapter 15. The present perfect is used for talking about actions that are completed in the present time. The past perfect is for talking about events that were complete at some point in the past. The past perfect comes out naturally when you’re talking about the past.<sup>1</sup>

(186) Jim came by my office but I didn’t realize it. He tried to come in, but **I had locked the door**.

In the example above, I’m saying that the door was locked when Jim tried to come in. (I’m not saying that the door is currently locked—maybe this is a story that took place years ago.) That’s the meaning of the past perfect. At the time the story was taking place, some action was completed. Or, in the case of the negative, the action hadn’t be completed.

(187) Jim came by my office and surprised me. He came right in, because **I hadn’t locked the door**.

## 16.3 Practice

1. When I arrived, he had already eaten the pumpkin.
2. The magician had already turned into a frog.
3. I was full before lunch.
4. Had you (sg.) seen Kabul before?
5. She still hadn’t finished it when we arrived.

Suggested answers can be found on pg. 100.

<sup>1</sup>The past perfect has the same meaning in English and Dari, so we can actually just look at English examples.

## Chapter 17

# Present Subjunctive

### *That I might go*

The use of the subjunctive is one of the trickier aspects of learning Dari, because English doesn't have a tense that works in exactly the same way. Subjunctives are very important though, because they're used in all sorts of everyday types of sentences: talking about desires, if-then sentences, making commands, talking about the reason for things, and so forth.

Many Dari learners stumble on the subjunctive, substituting the simple present where a subjunctive is needed. This is not a subtle mistake. You need to invest the time to learn to use the subjunctive properly. At first, this can be simple drills where you listen to the subjunctive using some of the constructions described below, and then produce them for yourself. That will provide a foothold, but you also need to pay attention in all your subsequent production as well, so that it becomes a natural part of your speech. Very roughly, the split between the simple present and the subjunctive 90%-10%.<sup>1</sup> That is, the simple present is much more frequent, but the subjunctive should be coming up routinely in your speech.

It bears repeating: good learning begins with good listening. Since the subjunctive is used so frequently, and in so many different contexts, you'll want to pay consistent attention to develop a feel for it.<sup>2</sup> A single lesson in which you review the dozen or so uses the subjunctive described here is *not* sufficient. You'll want to consider the use of the subjunctive in your recordings; in each case you should be able to explain why it is in the subjunctive.

### 17.1 Form

Grammar Formula—Positive	
<b>Formula</b>	SUBJ + PRESENT STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	bu- r -um SUBJ go 1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	بروم bε-raw-am SUBJ-go-1SG

A paradigm for the present form of the subjunctive is given in Paradigm 17.1. Note that the paradigm shows the proper forms of the verb, but does not show complete sentences.

The pronunciation of the subjunctive prefix (SUBJ) changes slightly depending on the verb (Thackston, 1993, p. 101). The default form is [bε], as in (188a) below. When the first vowel of the stem is [u], then the subjunctive becomes [bu], as in (188b). Finally, when the stem begins with a vowel, the subjunctive is [bij], as in (188c).

<sup>1</sup>To get this back-of-the-envelope figure, I counted the number of instances of «نیست»/«است» and the number of instances of «نیاشد»/«باشد», in a frequency list of Persian words from Jon Dehdari (<http://jon.dehdari.org/>).

<sup>2</sup>Compare this to the past perfect tense, for instance (Chapter 16): past perfects don't get used a lot in any language.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma biʃʌʃum	I might come	من بیایم
2SG	tu biʃʌʃi	you (sg.) might come	تو بیایی
3SG	u biʃʌʃa	he/she/it might come	او بیاید
1PL	ma biʃʌʃem	we might come	ما بیاییم
2PL	ʃuma biʃʌʃen	you (pl.) might come	شما بیایید
3PL	una biʃʌʃan	they might come	آنها بیایند

Paradigm 17.1: Present subjunctive forms of the verb ‘to come’.

- (188) a. [bɛ-zan-en] ‘you (pl.) might hit’ بزیند  
 b. [bu-furuʃ-en] ‘you (pl.) might sell’ بفروشد  
 c. [biʃ-ʌ-jen] ‘you (pl.) might come’ بیائید

Two common verbs routinely omit the subjunctive suffix, the verbs for ‘to do’ and ‘to become’. The meaning does not change, only the form. The pairs below then should be considered equivalent. There is regional variation in which one variant is more common; practice whichever form is more common in the speech of your teacher.

- (189) a. [kun-en] ‘you (pl.) might do’ کنید  
 b. [bu-kun-en] ‘you (pl.) might do’ بکنید

- (190) a. [ʃaw-en] ‘you (pl.) might become’ شوید  
 b. [bɛ-ʃaw-en] ‘you (pl.) might become’ بشوید

Other verbs can leave out the subjunctive prefix as well, especially in written texts. If you see a present stem without a prefix, it is a subjunctive.

Finally, there are two common verbs with special subjunctive forms: ‘to be’ and ‘to have’. The verb ‘to be’ has a special stem for the subjunctive, [bʌʃ], which is used without any prefix.

- (191) a. [bʌʃ-en] ‘you (pl.) might be’ باشید  
 b. [na-bʌʃ-en] ‘you (pl.) might not be’ نباشید

The verb ‘to have’ uses a similar-looking form.<sup>3</sup>

- (192) a. [dʌʃta bʌʃ-en] ‘you (pl.) might have’ داشته باشید  
 b. [na-dʌʃta bʌʃ-en] ‘you (pl.) might not have’ نداشته باشید

Negative forms are discussed next. For ‘to have’, note that the NEG prefix goes on [dʌʃta].

Grammar Formula—Negative	
<b>Formula</b>	NEG + PRESENT STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- r -um NEG go 1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	نروم na-raw-am NEG-go-1SG

<sup>3</sup>If a formula helps, the subjunctive of ‘to have’ is the participle of ‘to have’ (Chapter 21 followed by the subjunctive of ‘to be’.

A negative subjunctive is like a regular subjunctive, but the negative prefix (NEG) replaces the SUBJ prefix. The negative versions of the examples above are below.

- (193) a. [na-zan-en] ‘you (pl.) might not hit’ نزنید  
 b. [na-fruʃ-en] ‘you (pl.) might not sell’ نفروشید  
 c. [naj-ʌ-jen] ‘you (pl.) might not come’ نیائید

The verb ‘to do’ works just as you would expect, as seen in (194a) below. The verb ‘to become’ has a special short form for the negative subjunctive.<sup>4</sup>

- (194) a. [na-kun-en] ‘you (pl.) might not do’ نکنید  
 b. [na-ʃ-en] ‘you (pl.) might not become’ نشوید

Since the SUBJ prefix is not used for the negative subjunctive, it might be tricky to identify them at first. Just remember that any time the NEG prefix is stuck onto the present stem, that’s a negative subjunctive. A paradigm for the negative form of the subjunctive is given in Paradigm 17.2.

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma najʌjum	I might not come	من نیایم
2SG	tu najʌji	you (sg.) might not come	تو نیایی
3SG	u najʌja	he/she/it might not come	او نیاید
1PL	ma najʌjem	we might not come	ما نیایم
2PL	ʃuma najʌjen	you (pl.) might not come	شما نیایید
3PL	una najʌjan	they might not come	آنها نیایند

Paradigm 17.2: Negative present subjunctive forms of the verb ‘to come’.

## 17.2 Meaning

The typical way of explaining the subjunctive is to list the types of sentences in which it appears, such as those expressing possibility, probability, necessity, and so forth. That is probably the best way to learn it for most people, so the list is below. The Dari equivalents of these sentences would all use the subjunctive. Actual Dari examples are given later in the chapter; for now, focus on understanding the *types* of sentences below.

- Desire: “I *want* this trip to be over.”
- If-clauses (conditionals): “If you hit the yak, the car will break down.”
- Possibility: “The car *might* break down.”
- Probability: “The car will *probably* break down.”
- Necessity: “The car *has to be* wrecked after that!”
- Responsibility: “She *should* get the car fixed.”
- Permission: “You’re *allowed to* go faster on this road.”
- Polite commands: “Swerve!”
- (Some) questions: “Would you like me to drive?”
- Result/Purpose: “I’m taking the wheel so you can get some sleep.”
- Supposition: “Suppose that we go on Tuesday...”

It may be helpful to observe that in many cases when English uses an infinitive (e.g., ‘to run’), Dari uses the subjunctive (see below). There is no linguistic significance to this; I include it here in case it helps you to use the subjunctive properly.

- (195) u mexʌja bədawa او می‌خواهد بدود.  
 ‘He wants to run.’

<sup>4</sup>Or, if you want the full story: [ʃaw] is the present stem for ‘to become’ in the formal language. In informal Dari, the stem is [ʃ], as in [me-ʃ-a] ‘he/she/it becomes’. It’s actually the present subjunctive that is anomalous, in that it takes the formal stem as the normal form.

### 17.2.1 Behind the scenes

Here is some extra linguistic detail for those who appreciate the big picture. The subjunctive is actually an *irrealis mood*. (Doesn't that sound exotic? It sounds like an advertisement for a hallucinogen.) It means that the subjunctive is used whenever talking about something other than the actual, real world—irrealis means 'unreal'. For instance, a *possibility* is not a real thing, it's... an idea? a hypothesis? At any rate, it's not an actual thing. So, when we talk about a possibility, we use the subjunctive, or irrealis.<sup>5</sup> In the examples below, the first two are talking about the real world—what is or isn't true in the real world—and the second two talk about a possibility. In Dari, the first two would be in the normal present, and the second two would be in the subjunctive present.

- (196) a. There is an apple on the table. [normal]  
 b. There isn't an apple on the table. [normal]  
 c. There might be an apple on the table. [subjunctive]  
 d. There might not be an apple on the table. [subjunctive]

Similarly, saying "She *should* get the car fixed" is a statement about an *obligation*, not a real world thing. Or again, a *desire* is an ideal state of affairs, not necessarily the actual one. That's why we use the subjunctive.

Speakers have choices here. Suppose that a friend calls you from a restaurant and asks you to meet her there. When you arrive, she is nowhere to be found. You realize that she has left. You could either say the sentence in (197a) or the sentence in (197b).

- (197) a. She's left. [normal]  
 b. She must have left. [subjunctive]

In (197a), you're making a statement about the real world. But in (197b), you're presenting the same conclusion as the result of a process of reasoning about what *must* have happened, so you use the subjunctive.

Thinking about the subjunctive as an irrealis mood may or may not be helpful. The list given in the last section is pretty comprehensive, and it's perfectly acceptable to memorize those sentence types, and to use the list as a guide for practice.

### 17.2.2 Examples

The sentences below all use the subjunctive. You can reflect on these sentences and try to produce your own examples. Desire and if-clauses are perhaps the most frequent uses of the subjunctive, and it is also easy to practice with those.<sup>6</sup>

**Desire** The most natural way to talk about desires is to use the verb [xʌstan] «خواستن», followed by a [ke]-clause with a verb in the subjunctive.

- (198) ma mexʌjum kʌbul burum. من می‌خواهم کابل بروم.  
 'I want to go to Kabul.'

- (199) rʌzija mexʌja anʌr buxora. راضیه می‌خواهد انار بخورد.  
 'Razia wants to eat pomegranates.'

You can also express desires with fixed phrases like [kʌʃ ke] 'would that...' and [xudʌ kuna ke] 'would to God that...':

- (200) kʌʃ ke ʃɛʌ jʌba. کاش که شفا یابد.  
 'Would that he get better.'

<sup>5</sup>Why use the term 'subjunctive' if 'irrealis' is more appropriate? 'Subjunctive' is the term widely used in Persian grammars, and I have decided not swim against the current on this occasion. The word 'subjunctive' itself refers to how it's often used in [ke] «که» or [aga] «اگر» clauses, as in the examples below.

<sup>6</sup>This list of uses of the subjunctive was taken from LCP materials, which seem to be based upon Glassman (2000, pp. 169–174).

- (201) xudΛ kuna ke hal ʃawa. خدا کند که حل شود.  
 'Would to God that it would be solved.'

It is also possible to express wishes for a third person using the subjunctive. Perhaps this is most natural when speaking of God:

- (202) xudΛ ʃumΛ-ra tasali beta. خدا شما را تسلی بدهد.  
 'May God comfort you.'

**If-clauses (conditionals)** If you're producing an if-sentence, the 'if' part of it is generally in the subjunctive.

- (203) aga ʃumΛ kaɓul buren, ma deq meʃum. اگر شما کابل بروید، من دق می‌شوم.  
 'If you go to Kabul, I will be sad.'

The 'then' part is generally in the simple present, as above. It can be a subjunctive as well, though, if it's a subjunctive kind of situation, like expressing an obligation:

- (204) aga ʃumΛ kaɓul buren, baɟad ma-ra xabar kunen. اگر شما کابل بروید، باید مرا خبر کنید.  
 'If you go to Kabul, you have to let me know.'

**Possibility & Probability** Sentences about possibilities and probabilities also use the subjunctive. Possibilities can be introduced with phrases such as [ɛmkΛn dΛra ke] or [mumken ast ke], both of which mean 'it's possible that...'. There are many such phrases, which you can pick up just as you would any other vocabulary item.

- (205) ɛmkΛn dΛra ke kaɓjΛb ʃawa. امکان دارد که کامیاب شود.  
 'It's possible that she'll succeed.'

- (206) mumken ast ke befta ممکن است که بیفتد.  
 'It's possible it'll fall.'

Conversely, impossibility can be indicated with the phrases [ɛmkΛn nadΛra ke] or [mumken nest ke], which mean 'it's not possible that...'.  
 A probability can be expressed with [ehtemΛl dΛra ke] 'it's probable that...'

- (207) ehtemΛl dΛra ke nafahman احتمال دارد که نفهمند.  
 'It's likely they won't understand.'

The word [ʃΛɟad] «شاید» 'perhaps' is also quite common. It is placed immediately before the verb.

- (208) u ʃΛɟad zang bezana او شاید زنگ بزند.  
 'Perhaps he'll call.'

Keep in mind the difference between meaning and usage. The *meaning* here is probability or possibility, but as in English, pragmatic factors come into play. A sentence like, "Perhaps that won't work" can be a polite way of saying, "That will certainly not work and you shouldn't even try!"<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Cultural tip: in Afghanistan it is generally polite to agree to a suggestion. Once on a road trip I said to my companion, "Do you think we'll make it in two hours?" He said, "Yes, perhaps two hours." But something in his answer seemed strained, so I said, "Or maybe it'll be three hours." Then he relaxed and said, "Yes, three hours," which was indeed accurate. If your priority is to get information, you may need to provide people with the opportunity to give it to you.



**Necessity & Responsibility** A common way to express necessity or responsibility is to use the word [bʌjd] «باید», which (like [(ʌjd)]) is placed immediately before the verb.

- (209) mΛ bajad i kʌr-a xaləs konim.  
‘We need to finish this work.’
- ما باید این کار را خلاص کنیم.

As in English a sentence like (209) doesn't really describe the nature of the obligation: it could mean, "We ought to finish this work." But the word [bajad] «باید» is also used for things that are actually inevitable.

- (210) kul-ε mλ bλjad bumorēm. کل ما باید بمیریم.  
'We all have to die.'

Another common way to express obligation is with the verb [madʒbur budan] «مجبور بودن».

- (211) madʒbur astum taʃre konum. مجبور استم تشرح کنم.  
'I am obligated to explain.'

Again, there are many ways to speak of obligations and requirements.

**Permission** Asking permission is usually done with the word [ʕdʒʌʒa] «اجازه». One way to use this is similar to the English phrase, ‘it is permitted’.

- (212)  $\varepsilon d_{\text{ZAZA-st ke bAZAr b\ddot{u}ren?}$  اجازست که بازار بروید؟  
 'Are you allowed to go to the bazaar?' (Lit. 'Is it permitted that you go to the bazaar?')

Dari also has expressions similar to 'to give permission' and 'to have permission'.

- (213) a.  $\varepsilon d\zeta a\zeta a \ d\lambda ren \ ke \ b\zeta a\zeta ar \ b\ddot{u}ren?$  اجازه دارید که بازار بروید؟  
 'Do you have permission to go to the bazaar?'  
 b.  $ne, \ r\ddot{a}jis-am \ ma-ra \ \varepsilon d\zeta a\zeta a \ na-d\lambda d.$  نه، رئیس مرا اجازه نداد.  
 'No, my boss didn't give me permission.'

**Commands** Using the second personal plural subjunctive is a nice way to issue a command. You can think of this on analogy with the English, “Would you shut the door?”, which is phrased as a question in the subjunctive, though it is clearly a command. Since this is for polite commands, it is natural to use [lotfan] «لطفاً» ‘please’ (lit. ‘kindly’) in these kinds of sentences.

- (214) lotfan darwāza-ra basta konen                      لطفاً دروازه را بسته کنید.  
‘Please shut the door.’

This could also be translated—more literally, if also more melodramatically—“Would that you would shut the door!” Informal commands, on the other hand, are handled differently. (You don’t say [lutfan darwāza-ra basta kuni]!) See Chapter 10 for more information.

**Some questions** In certain contexts, it is appropriate to use the subjunctive in asking questions. For instance, the subjunctive can be used in asking permission, or in making a tentative suggestion.

- (215) darw<sub>Λ</sub>rza-ra basta kunum? دروازه را بسته کنم؟  
'Shall I shut the door?'

- (216) i ketab-a be xarem?  
'Shall we buy this book?'      این کتاب را بخریم؟

**Purpose** A common use of the subjunctive is to express purpose. A regular clause is linked to the explaining clause with [ke] «*ᄒ*» ‘that’. If you translate these sentences literally, they sound old-fashioned, but make sense.

- (217) sandoq-a mahkam kadum ke nafta sanduq ra mahkam کردم که نیفتد.  
 ‘I secured the chest so that it wouldn’t fall.’ (Lit. ‘I secured the chest that it might not fall.’)
- (218) dʒɛnɛɾɒtur-a gul kadum ke awlɒdɒ xaw kɒnan. جنراتور را گل کردم که اولادها خواب کنند.  
 ‘I turned off the generator so that they children would sleep.’ (Lit. ‘I turned off the generator that the children might sleep.’)

Talking about purposes is one of the more common uses of the subjunctive. It's also easy to practice talking about the reasons that you do things.

**Supposition** When someone is asked to consider a hypothetical situation, it is typical to use the phrase [farz kunen ke] «فرض کنید که», followed by the subjunctive. The meaning here is quite similar to an if-clause; it's just that the speaker is being instructed to consider a certain circumstance.

- (219) farz kunen ke talebəɭ biɭaɭan. bəz tʃi kʊnim? فرض کنید که طالبه‌ها بیایند. باز چه کنیم؟  
 ‘Suppose that the Taliban come: then what would we do?’
- (220) farz kunen ke bimiren. ki ʃamiletʌn-a tasali meta? فرض کنید که بمیرید. کی فامیلتان را تسلی می‌دهد؟  
 ‘Suppose you die: who will comfort your family?’

## Chapter 18

# Past Subjunctive

### *I would have gone*

The past subjunctive is used when you want a subjunctive meaning in the past tense. The subjunctive is a topic unto itself, and is discussed thoroughly in Chapter 17. The only thing to learn in this chapter is the form of the past subjunctive.

#### 18.1 Form

Grammar Formula—Positive	
<b>Formula</b>	MI + PAST STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	me- raft -um MI go 1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	می رفتم me-raft-am MI-go-1SG

As you can see below, the negative works the usual way, with the NEG prefix stuck to the beginning of the word.

Grammar Formula—Negative	
<b>Formula</b>	NEG + MI + PAST STEM + PERSONAL ENDING
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- me- raft -um NEG MI go 1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	نمی رفتم na-me-raft-am NEG-MI-go-1SG

Recall that the past subjunctive is identical in form to the past continuous (Chapter 18). It should be clear from context which is intended.

## 18.2 Meaning

The meaning of the subjunctive is complex, and forms the bulk of Chapter 17. The examples in that chapter all use the present subjunctive; the past subjunctive is used when those things take place in the past.

Since the past cannot be changed—outside of science fiction—the past subjunctive is generally used for things that didn’t work out a certain way. For instance, it can be used for a wish or regret:

- (221) *kəʃ ke awal az ma pʊrʌn mekaden.* کاش که اول از من می پرسیدید.  
‘I wish you had asked me first.’

When you’re making an *if*-sentence, it works out that both the *if*-part and the *then*-part are in the past subjunctive, because neither really happened:

- (222) *aga madʒles meraftʊm, memʊrdʊm.* اگر مجلس می رفتم، می مردم.  
‘If I had gone to the meeting, I would have died.’

## 18.3 Practice

1. If the dinosaur hadn’t been eating my mother, I wouldn’t have attacked it.
2. I wish you had cooked the goat.
3. Perhaps he was going to Kabul.
4. They should have eaten the dinosaur.
5. If I had known, I would have gone to Mazar.

Suggested answers can be found on pg. 101.

## Chapter 19

## Perfect Subjunctive

*I must have gone*

As you might guess, the perfect subjunctive has the combined meaning of the perfect (Chapter 15) and the subjunctive (Chapter 17). So, before reading this chapter, it would be worth brushing up on those.

The perfect subjunctive is used when you would want to use the subjunctive, for actions that are (or would be) completed. For instance, a driver observed a little boy's sniffing and asked:

(223) elija:s sarmΛ xorda bΛja?                                      الياس سرما خورده باشد؟  
‘Has Eli caught a cold?’ (Lit. ‘Might Eli have caught a cold?’)

In this case, the verb is [sarma xordan] «سرما خوردن» ‘to catch a cold’. It was placed in the subjunctive because the speaker is either asking a polite question or making a tentative suggestion. There are many reasons that one might use the subjunctive; for completed actions, you use the perfect subjunctive.

## 19.1 Form

The form of the present subjunctive is sort of like a past perfect (Chapter 16) but with the ‘to be’ verb in the subjunctive (i.e., [bʌʃə] rather than [bʊd]). That may help you remember how to interpret this tense.

Grammar Formula—Positive	
<b>Formula</b>	[PAST STEM + A] [BASH + PERSONAL ENDING]
<b>Spoken Example</b>	raft -a      bʌʃ      -um go -PTCP   might.be -1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	باشم      رفته bʌʃ-am      raft-a might.be-1SG   go-PTCP

The negative of the perfect subjunctive is also parallel to the past perfect: the NEG bit gets stuck on the front of the content verb (the participle).

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma bʌjad rafta bʌʃum	I must have gone	من باید رفته باشم
2SG	tu bʌjad rafta bʌʃi	you (sg.) must have gone	تو باید رفته باشی
3SG	u bʌjad rafta bʌʃa	he/she/it must have gone	او باید رفته باش
1PL	mʌ bʌjad rafta bʌʃem	we must have gone	ما باید رفته باشیم
2PL	ʃumʌ bʌjad rafta bʌʃen	you (pl.) must have gone	شما باید رفته باشید
3PL	unʌ bʌjad rafta bʌʃan	they must have gone	آنها باید رفته باشند

Paradigm 19.1: Perfect subjunctive forms of the verb ‘to go’.

## Grammar Formula—Negative

<b>Formula</b>	[NEG + PAST STEM + A] [BASH + PERSONAL ENDING]
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- raft -a bʌʃ -um NEG- go -PTCP might.be -1SG
<b>Written Example</b>	باشم                      نرفته bʌʃ-am                  na-raft-a might.be-1SG NEG-go-PTCP

Subject	IPA	English	Dari
1SG	ma ɒʌjad narafta ɒʌʃum	I must not have gone	من باید رفته باشم
2SG	tu ɒʌjad narafta ɒʌʃi	you (sg.) must not have gone	تو باید نرفته باشی
3SG	u ɒʌjad narafta ɒʌʃa	he/she/it must not have gone	او باید نرفته باش
1PL	mʌ ɒʌjad narafta ɒʌʃem	we must not have gone	ما باید نرفته باشیم
2PL	ʃumʌ ɒʌjad narafta ɒʌʃen	you (pl.) must not have gone	شما باید نرفته باشید
3PL	unʌ ɒʌjad narafta ɒʌʃan	they must not have gone	آنها باید نرفته باشند

Paradigm 19.2: Negative perfect subjunctive forms of the verb 'to go'.

## 19.2 Meaning

As noted above, the perfect subjunctive is used in subjunctive situations, but when the action is completed. Any of the examples of present subjunctives in Chapter 17 could be changed into perfect subjunctives. The examples below are perhaps the most typical: where the speaker is concluding that they *might have* come, or they *must have* come.

- |       |                                                  |                       |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (224) | unΛ fʌjad ʌmada bʌfan<br>‘They might have come.’ | آنها شاید آمده باشند؟ |
| <br>  |                                                  |                       |
| (225) | unΛ bʌjad ʌmada bʌfan<br>‘They must have come.’  | آنها باید آمده باشند؟ |

As discussed in §8.7, you have options in how you speak. Suppose you arrive at a house and see the shoes of the friends you're meeting. You could just say, "They've come." That's not wrong. If, on the other hand, you used the sentence in (225), you're being a little more explicit that you're drawing a conclusion about what must have happened.

### 19.3 Practice

1. The goats must have eaten the wheat.
2. The dinosaur must have eaten the goats.
3. You (informal) must have left the door open.
4. The pressure cooker must have exploded.
5. The bullet must have hit here.

Suggested answers can be found on pg. 102.

## **Part III**

# **Other constructions**



## Chapter 20

# Infinitives

### *to go*

An infinitive is a way to use a verb as a noun. As in English, the Dari infinitive is the form of the verb you look up in the dictionary, and also the form of the verb that you would use in talking about it in everyday speech. Aside from that, however, the Dari infinitive tends to correspond more with English usage of the *-ing* suffix, as the Dari and English sentences below illustrate.

- (226) istādan bare ma muʃgel as. ایستادن برای من مشکل است.  
'Standing is difficult for me.'

### 20.1 Form

The infinitive of the verb is simply the past stem plus [an], and the negative form simply include the NEG prefix. Infinitives have the stress on the last syllable of the word, like nouns (§2.3).

Grammar Formula	
<b>Formula</b>	PAST STEM + AN
<b>Spoken Example</b>	raft-an go-INF
<b>Written Example</b>	رفت raft-an go-INF

Grammar Formula—Negative	
<b>Formula</b>	NEGATIVE + PAST STEM + AN
<b>Spoken Example</b>	na- raft -an NEG- go -INF
<b>Written Example</b>	نرفت na-raft-an NEG-go-INF

## 20.2 Meaning

Infinitives are used when discussing an activity in the abstract, as a noun.

- (227)  $\text{ʃeʃtan muʃgel nest.}$  نشستن مشکل نیست.  
 ‘Sitting isn’t difficult.’

If you want to specify the object of a verb, it can be joined to the infinitive with an *ezafa*.

- (228)  $\text{kuʃtan-ε fil muʃgel ast.}$  کشتن فیل مشکل است.  
 ‘It’s difficult to kill an elephant.’

You can add prepositional phrases as well. Note that unlike with other forms of the verb, the prepositional phrases go *after* the infinitive.

- (229)  $\text{kuʃtan-ε fil ba ʙa jak kela namomken ast.}$  کشتن فیل با یک کیله ناممکن است.  
 ‘Killing an elephant with a banana is impossible.’

- (230)  $\text{dadan-ε ʃirini ba tefl-ʙ amr-ε xair ast.}$  دادن شیرینی به طفل‌ها امر خیر است.  
 ‘Giving sweets to children is a good deed.’

If you’re speaking about a generic object, it’s possible for the object to precede the infinitive, without the *ezafa* (Thackston, 1993, p. 145). The example below is a saying, “Heating water (in general) isn’t difficult.”

- (231)  $\text{ʙa garm kadan muʃgel nest.}$  آب گرم کردن مشکل نیست.  
 ‘Heating water is not difficult.’

You can’t put the object before the infinitive if the object is specific. The difference between specific and non-specific objects is the mind-bending subject of Chapter 6, which discusses the object marker  $[\text{rʙ}]$  «را». If your object is specific (i.e., if it would get the  $[\text{rʙ}]$  «را» marker), then it must follow the infinitive; otherwise it is optional. The example below has a specific direct object. We know that because §6.3.3 says, “Noun phrases with ‘this’ or ‘that’ always get the object marker.” Therefore, it *has to* follow the infinitive. It could not precede it.

- (232)  $\text{nəwəʃtan-ε i rʙpor muʃgel ast.}$  نوشتن این راپور مشکل است.  
 ‘Writing this report is difficult.’

If the verb has no object—i.e., if it is intransitive—the subject can be joined to the infinitive with the *ezafa*.<sup>1</sup>

- (233)  $\text{raftan-ε ahmad ba kaʙul befʙjda bud.}$  رفتن احمد به کابل بی‌فایده بود.  
 ‘Ahmad’s going to Kabul was useless.’

As noted in §3.5.1, Dari nouns can be changed into adjectives by adding the  $[\text{i}]$  suffix. Since infinitives are nouns, you can do this to them as well (Thackston, 1993, p. 183).

- (234)  $\text{u namak-ε xordan-i nest.}$  آن نمک خوردنی نیست.  
 ‘That’s not edible salt.’

<sup>1</sup>This is the most exotic fact about Dari grammar, without question. Dari is a straight-up nominative-accusative system, but in interpreting nouns joined to infinitives with the *ezafa*, ergativity suddenly pops up.



## Chapter 21

# Participles

*going*

The participle is a form of the Dari verb used in various constructions, often with an idiomatic meaning.<sup>1</sup> It is not exactly a tense, because the participle is never the main verb of the sentence. You can think of the participle as a component of the perfect (Chapter 15), past perfect (Chapter 16), and perfect subjunctive (Chapter 19). The participle can also play roles in other constructions, which are introduced below.

## 21.1 Form

Grammar Formula	
<b>Formula</b>	PAST STEM + A
<b>Spoken Example</b>	raft-a go-PTCP
<b>Written Example</b>	رفتہ raft-a go-PTCP

## 21.2 Constructions that use participles

### 21.2.1 Participle followed by a verb

One way to use a participle is to place it directly before the main verb in a sentence. The meaning is that one thing happened, and then the other thing happened after it.<sup>2</sup> In the sentence below, the boy got scared and *then* ran away.

(239) batʃa tarsida (o) farar kad. بچه ترسیده (و) فرار کرد.  
'The boy got scared and (then) ran away.'

As an English speaker you may be tempted to interpret these as simultaneous events, but that it wrong. First the participle thing happened, then the main verb thing happened.

It is possible to place [o] «9» 'and' between the participle and the main verb. This does not change the meaning. (It is placed in parentheses above to show that it is optional.)

<sup>1</sup>What I call the ‘participle’, Glassman (2000) calls the ‘(unchangeable) past participle’. This is a logical label, but I do not believe a helpful one, as there is no consistent ‘past’ meaning to it, and it’s not obvious what ‘unchangeable’ means, or even what word in that phrase it is modifying. Glassman’s term has the advantage of distinguishing the participle from the present participle, but since the present participle is so rare, I don’t see much advantage there.

<sup>2</sup>This is different from English, so make sure you understand how these work. Participles can fulfill many roles in an English sentence but sequence of events is not one of them.

- (240) guldān aftida (o) ſekəst. گلدان افتاده (و) شکست.  
 ‘The vase fell and (then) broke.’

It’s possible for the participle to have a direct object, as we see below.

- (241) mādār tʃaj dam kada (o) raft. مادر چای دم کرده (و) رفت.  
 ‘Mother steeped (some) tea and left.’

Finally, the main verb of the sentence can be in any tense. The example—which is technically a command—could be a polite request for a guest to enjoy a meal before departing.

- (242) nān xorda būren. نان خورده بروید.  
 ‘Eat some food and (only then) go.’

### 21.2.2 Participle followed by ‘to go’

When the participle is followed by the verb [raftan] «رفتن» ‘to go’, the construction takes on the specific meaning ‘to keep on Xing’, where the meaning of X is provided by the participle.

- (243) koʃeʃ kada merum. کوشش کرده می‌روم.  
 ‘I keep trying.’

- (244) ʃumā duroʃ gufta meren. شما دروغ گفته می‌روید.  
 ‘You keep on lying.’

- (245) bād as i awā garm ʃuda mera. بعد از این هوا گرم شده می‌رود.  
 ‘After this the weather will keep getting hotter.’

You might notice that this use of the participle is a special case of the general pattern described in the last section: participle plus main verb. This means that every sentence in this section is ambiguous. You could interpret the sentence below (which we saw earlier) either as a sequence of events, or with a ‘kept on Xing’ meaning. Context should make clear which meaning is intended.

- (246) mādār tʃaj dam kada raft. مادر چای دم کرده رفت.  
 ‘Mother steeped (some) tea and left.’ or ‘Mother kept steeping tea.’

It’s possible for the main verb to be a past tense. For instance, if you were telling about a time you were unsuccessfully trying to fix a table, you might say:

- (247) mez aftida meraft. میز افتاده می‌رفت.  
 ‘The table kept falling.’

It is not recommended that you practice this construction with the following sentence, although it seemed like a good idea to the author when he learned about it in class.

- (248) dars xalās ʃud, leken gap zada meren. درس خلاص شد، لیکن گپ زده می‌روید.  
 ‘The lesson is over, but you keep talking.’

### 21.2.3 More ways to talk about ongoing actions

There are a number of other ways to talk about ongoing actions in Dari.<sup>3</sup> These are part of the colloquial language, and are said to be used regionally, so you can get exposure to them and then see if they come up in the speech of people you interact with.

The first construction uses the participle followed by the inflected verb [ɾɒji budan].

- (249) ma ʌmada ɾɒji stom.  
'I'm on my way.'

- (250) u gap zada ɾɒji st.  
'S/he's talking right now.'

- (251) unʌ nʌn xorda ɾɒji budan ke ʌmadum.  
'They were eating food when I came.'

A more Badakhshani expression has the participle followed by the verb [istʌd budan]:

- (252) ma nʌn xorda istʌd am.  
'I am currently eating food.'

There is a Herati expression as well (which is more common in Iran). This construction doesn't use a participle, but is included here nevertheless. The inflected present tense of the verb 'to have' is used, followed by the main verb of the sentence.

- (253) ma dʌrum mexoram.  
'I am currently eating food.'

### 21.2.4 The participle as an adjective

The participle can also be used as an adjective. Like any other adjective, it follows the noun:

- (254) pijʌl-e ʃuʃta پیالۀ شسته  
'the washed cup'

Unlike other adjectives, though, if you try to do make a 'Ahmad is X' type of sentence,<sup>4</sup> then you just get a perfect tense (Chapter 15). The meaning is basically the same, so you probably don't need to worry about it.

- (255) i tʃawki dʒur ʃuda st. این چوکی جور شده است.  
'This chair has been fixed.'

Often you'll have a choice between using an active or passive verb (§8.6). Sometimes this matters and sometimes it doesn't. For instance you get the same meaning if you use the participle of the active [xordan] «خوردن» 'xordan' or the passive [xorda ʃudan] «خورده شدن» 'to be drunk' (i.e., for a glass of water to be drunk, not for a person to be drunk!). Either participle gives the same meaning:

<sup>3</sup>Thanks to Hamidullah Muradi and Mustafa for introducing these constructions to me and for providing these examples.

<sup>4</sup>Grammatically, this is using the adjective in predicate position.

- (256) a. tʃʌj xorda 'drunk tea' چای خورده  
 b. tʃʌj xorda ʃuda 'drunk tea' چای خورده شده

On the other hand, the passive seems to be preferred in [ɛntɛxʌb kadan] «انتخاب کردن» 'to elect' [ɛntɛxʌb ʃudan] «انتخاب شدن» 'to be elected'. Some people merely prefer [ɛntɛxʌb ʃuda], and others say that [ɛntɛxʌb kada] is not even possible.

- (257) a. rahbar-ɛ ɛntɛxʌb kada 'a chosen leader' رهبر انتخاب کرده  
 b. rahbar-ɛ ɛntɛxʌb ʃuda 'a chosen leader' رهبر انتخاب شده

The prudent course seems to be to use the passive whenever possible; your experience with native speakers should guide your intuitions, though.

The final thing to note about participles as adjectives is that they can be negated (made negative) with the [nʌ] «ن». You could use the following participles to refer to finished or unfinished work, or to washed or unwashed hands.

- (258) a. [xalʌs ʃuda] 'finished' خلاص کرده  
 b. [xalʌs nʌʃuda] 'unfinished' خلاص ناکرده
- (259) a. [ʃuʃta] 'washed' شسته  
 b. [nʌʃuʃta] 'unwashed' ناشسته

### 21.3 The present participle

There is a present participle in Dari, but it is relatively rare. Its usage better matches the English participle (formed with 'ing'; e.g., 'do' → 'doing'). It is formed by adding [ʌn] to the present stem:

- (260) [kʊn] 'to do' + [ʌn] → [kʊnʌn] 'doing'

This participle is placed immediately before the main verb—like a normal participle—but instead conveys simultaneous action.

- (261) ahmad girja kʊnʌn guft... احمد گریه کنان گفت...  
 'Ahmad, crying, said...'

This form hardly ever occurs in colloquial Dari. You may be better off ignoring it so that you don't overuse it and sound awkward!

### 21.4 Practice

The practice exercises use only the 'normal' participle.

1. She keeps getting bigger.
2. I'll slaughter the cow and go.
3. I don't wear used clothing.
4. They kept on complaining.
5. The goat screamed and then died.

Suggested answers can be found on pg. 103.

**Part IV**

**Appendices**



## Appendix A

# Suggested answers for the practice exercises

Both written and spoken answers are given. The phonetic transcription is the informal spoken pronunciation, not the proper pronunciation of the Dari text. Your answers can be quite a bit different from these and still be correct. Check that your answer is correct with respect to the grammatical construction that is the focus of the chapter.

Please note that I haven't had a chance to review these suggested answers with a teacher, so it is likely that there are mistakes. If you find an error please let me know.

### Suggested answers for chapter 10

1. Shut the door! (plural)  
«دروازه را بسته کنید!»  
[darwʌza-ra basta kunen!]
2. Answer my question! (singular)  
«سوالم را جواب بده!»  
[sawʌlam-a dʒawʌb bete!]
3. Give the dinosaur his food! (singular)  
«غذای دایناسور را برایش بده!»  
[ɣɛʒʌje dʌjnʌsur-a bareʃ bete!]
4. Record these sentences! (plural)  
«این جمله‌ها را ضبط کنید!»  
[i dʒʊml-ʌ-ra zabt kunen!]
5. Bring me that chair! (plural)  
«آن چوکی را برای من بیاورید!»  
[u tʃawki ra bare ma bijʌwaren!]

### Suggested answers for chapter 11

1. A dinosaur is eating my mother.  
«دایناسور مادرم را می‌خورد.»  
[dʌjnʌsur mʌdarama mexora]
2. Goats are falling from the sky.  
«بزها از آسمان می‌افتد.»  
[bʊzhʌ az ʌsmʌn mɛfta]

3. I'm going to attack the lion on Friday.  
«من روز جمعه بالای شیر حمله می‌کنم.»  
[ma ruze juma bālā-je ʃer hamla mekunom]
4. The shopkeeper doesn't have any elephants.  
«دوکاندار هیچ فیای ندارد.»  
[dokāndar hetʃ file nadāra]
5. The cow doesn't bite old men.  
«گاو پیر مردها را نمی‌خورد.»  
[gaw pir mardhā-ra namexorad]

## Suggested answers for chapter 12

1. Aziz said he was ready.  
«عزیز گفت که تیار است.»  
[aziz guft ke tajār as.]
2. Harun shut the door.  
«هرون دروازه را بسته کرد.»  
[harun darwāza-ra basta kad.]
3. Latifa asked a question.  
«لطیفه یک سوال را پرسید.»  
[latifa jak sawāl-a pūrsān kad.]
4. Ahmad went to Kabul.  
«احمد کابل رفت.»  
[ahmad kābul raft.]
5. Ghaiur cooked the food.  
«غیور غذا را پخته کرد.»  
[ɣajur ɣezā-ra puxta kad.]

## Suggested answers for chapter 13

1. I was working in Kabul in the time of the dinosaurs.  
«در دوران دایناسورها، من در کابل کار می‌کردم.»  
[dar dawran-e dajnasur-ā, ma da kābul kar mekadom]
2. Did you (pl.) used to eat dinosaur in England?  
«در انگلستان دایناسور می‌خوردید؟»  
[da englestan dajnusar mexorden?]
3. She always tried to go to school, but it never happened.  
«او همیشه کوشش می‌کرد مکتب برود، لیکن نشد.»  
[u hameʃa koʃeʃ mekad maktab bura, leken naʃod.]
4. Ahmad was still talking when I left.  
«من که رفتم، احمد نا حالا گپ می‌زد.»  
[ma ke raftom, ahmad ta hale gap mezad.]
5. Hamid was working in the field.  
«حامد در کشت کار می‌کرد.»  
[hamed dar keʃt kar mekad.]

## Suggested answers for chapter 14

1. I will eat a rock next week.  
[man afte ʌjenda sang-e-ra xat xordum]
2. The dinosaur will be slaughtered on Wednesday.  
[dʌjnʌsur ruz-e tʃʌrʃambe halʌl xat ʃud]
3. The skin of the drum will harden next month.  
[post-e dol mʌ-je ʌjenda saxt xat ʃud]
4. Next year the little goat will kick the big goat.  
[sʌl-e ʌjenda buz-e xurd buz-e kalʌn-ra pʌj xat zad]
5. In ten years, I will go to France.  
[bʌd as da sʌl ma faransa xat raftum]

## Suggested answers for chapter 15

1. I have slaughtered the dinosaur.  
«من یک دایناسور حلال کرده ام.»  
[ma jak dʌjnʌsur halʌl kardəm]
2. Qadim has shut the door.  
«قدیم دروازه را بسته کرده است.»  
[qadim darwʌza-ra basta kadá]
3. Have you ever seen a goat?  
«شما بز را دیده اید؟»  
[ʃumʌ buz-a didéd?]
4. The work still isn't finished.  
«کار تا حالا خلاص نشده.»  
[kʌr tʌ hale xalʌs naʃuda.]
5. The bomb hasn't exploded yet.  
«بمب تا به حال انفجار نشده.»  
[bumb tʌ ba hʌl efedʒʌr naʃuda.]

## Suggested answers for chapter 16

1. When I arrived, he had already eaten the pumpkin.  
«وقتی که رسیدم، کادو را خورده بود.»  
[waxt-e ke rasidum, kadu rʌ xorda bud]
2. The magician had already turned into a frog.  
«جادوگر وقت به بقه تبدیل شده بود.»  
[dʒʌdugar waxt ba baqa tabdil ʃuda bud]
3. I was full before lunch.  
«من پیش از چاشت سیر شده بودم.»  
[man peʃ as tʃʌʃt ser ʃuda budum]
4. Had you (sg.) seen Kabul before?  
«تو کابل را دیده بودی؟»  
[tu kʌbul-a dida budi?]

5. She still hadn't finished it when we arrived.

«وقتی که رسیدیم، او خلاصش نکرده بود.»

[waxt-e ke rasidem, u xalasɛʃ nakada bud.]

## Suggested answers for chapter 17

1. I want to hit the dinosaur.

«من می‌خواهم دایناسور را بزنم.»

[ma mexɒjʊm dɒjnɒsur-a bezanʊm]

2. He tried to shut the door.

«او کوشش کرد که دروازه را بسته کند.»

[u koʃɛʃ kad ke darwɒza-ra basta kuna]

3. If you (formal) open the pressure cooker, it will explode.

«اگر دیگ بخار را باز کنید، انفجار می‌کند.»

[aga deg-ɛ buxɒr-a wɒz kʊnɛn, ɛnfɛdʒɒr mekʊna.]

4. They don't want to attack the goats.

«آنها نمی‌خواهند به بزها حمله کنند.»

[unɒ namɛxɒjan ba buz-hɒ hamla kʊnɒn.]

5. You (informal) should try to go Ghazni.

«تو باید به غزنی بروی.»

[tu bɒjad ba ɣɒzni bʊri.]

6. The government should fix this problem.

«حکومت باید این مشکل را حل کند.»

[hukumat bɒjad i muʃkel-a hal kʊna]

7. If he becomes president, I'll go to Pakistan.

«اگر او رئیس جمهور شود، من پاکستان می‌روم.»

[aga u rajis-ɛ dʒamhur ʃawa, ma pɒkɛstɒn merʊm]

8. Please shut the door.

«لطفاً دروازه را بسته کنید.»

[lʊtfan darwɒza-ra basta kʊnɛn]

9. It's possible that this won't break.

«امکان دارد که این خراب نشود.»

[ɛmkɒn dɒra ke i xarɒb nɒʃɒ]

10. I want to finish this lesson.

«من می‌خواهم این درس را خلاص کنم.»

[ma mexɒjʊm i dars-a xalas kʊnʊm]

## Suggested answers for chapter 18

1. If the dinosaur hadn't been eating my mother, I wouldn't have attacked it.

«اگر دایناسور مادرم را نمی‌خورد، من بالای آن حمله نمی‌کردم.»

[aga dɒjnɒsur mɒdar-am-a namɛxɒrd, ma bɒlɒ-ʃɛ u hamla namɛkardʊm]

2. I wish you had cooked the goat.

«کاش که بز را پخته می‌کردی.»

[kɒʃ ke buz-a puxta mekadi]

3. Perhaps he was going to Kabul.  
«شاید به کابل می‌رفت.»  
[ʃʌʒad ba kʌbʊl meraft]
4. They should have eaten the dinosaur.  
«باید دایناسور را می‌خوردند.»  
[bʌʒad dʌjnʌsur-a mexordan]
5. If I had known, I would have gone to Mazar.  
«اگر می‌فهمیدم، مزار می‌رفتم.»  
[aga mefahmidom, mazar meraftum]

## Suggested answers for chapter 19

1. The goats must have eaten the wheat.  
«بزها باید گندم را خورده باشد.»  
[buz-ʌ bʌʒad gandum-a xorda bʌʃa]
2. The dinosaur must have eaten the goats.  
«دایناسور باید بزها را خورده باشد.»  
[dʌjnʌsur bʌʒad buz-ʌ-ra xorda bʌʃa]
3. You (informal) must have left the door open.  
«تو باید دروازه را باز مانده باشی.»  
[tu bʌʒad darwʌza-ra wʌz mʌnda bʌʃi]
4. The pressure cooker must have exploded.  
«دیگ بخار باید انفجار کرده باشد.»  
[deg-e buxʌr bʌʒad ɛnfədʒʌr karda bʌʃa]
5. The bullet must have hit here.  
«مرمی باید اینجا خورده باشد.»  
[marmi bʌʒad indʒʌ xorda bʌʃa]

## Suggested answers for chapter 20

1. I like reading.  
«من خواندن را خوش دارم.»  
[ma xʌndan-a xuʃ dʌrʊm.]
2. Gambling is a sin.  
«شرط زدن گناه است.»  
[ʃart zadan ɡʊnʌh ast.]
3. She isn't familiar with playing the rubab.  
«او رباب زدن را یاد ندارد.»  
[u rabʌb zadan-a ʒʌd na-dʌrʌ.]
4. Going in is easy; getting out is hard.  
«داخل شدن آسان است، خارج شدن مشکل است.»  
[dʌxel ʃʊdan ʌsʌn ast, xʌredʒ ʃʊdan muʃɡel ast.]
5. Putting in a lot of salt has a disadvantage.  
«انداختن زیاد نمک نقص دارد.»  
[andʌxtan-e zʌd namak nuqs dʌrʌ.]

## Suggested answers for chapter 21

1. She keeps getting bigger.

«او کلان شده می‌رود.»

[u kalɒn ʃuda mera.]

2. I'll slaughter the cow and go.

«گاو را حلال کرده می‌روم.»

[gaw-a halɒl kada merum.]

3. I don't wear used clothing.

«من لباس استفاده شده نمی‌پوشم.»

[ma lɛbas-ɛ estɛfɒda ʃuda namepuʃum.]

4. They kept on complaining.

«آنها شکایت کرده می‌رفتند.»

[unɒ ʃɛkɒjɒt kada meraftan.]

5. The goat screamed and then died.

«بز چیخ زده مرد.»

[buz tʃiɣ zada mɒrd.]

# Appendix B

## Glossary

**Adjective** An adjective is a word that describes a noun, like ‘big’, ‘scary’, or ‘intimidating.’

**Agreement** In Dari, the verb agrees with the subject. That means that it has a specific ending that has to match the person of the subject.

**Direct object** The direct object is the noun phrase that receives the action of a verb, or is affected by the action of a verb. In the sentence, “Bob hit Mike,” ‘Mike’ is the direct object, because Mike is the one that got hit.

**First Person** First person refers to the speaker. In English, depending on the role it’s playing in the sentence, this could be ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘my’, or ‘mine’ (for the singular) or ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’, or ‘ours’ (for the plural).

**Light verb** A light verb is the verb part in a compound verb, i.e., a verb with two parts. Usually it does not contribute much to the meaning of the verb. In the compound verb [kar kadan] the light verb is [kadan]. [kadan] is the most common light verb.

**Negative** The negative form of a verb has the meaning ‘not’. The negative of ‘going’ is ‘not going’. The negative is mostly used with verbs, but there are some noun prefixes that have a negative meaning as well.

**Noun** A noun is a word that refers to a person, place, thing, or idea.

**Noun phrase** A noun phrase is a group of words that works like a noun in the sentence.

**Object marker** The object marker is placed after direct objects that the hearer can identify. It is pronounced [ra] after vowels, and [a] after consonants; in formal Dari it is always pronounced [ra].

**Possessor suffix** A possessor suffix is a suffix added to the end of a noun (or noun phrase), which indicates possession. English does not have possessor suffixes: we put a special word in front of the noun: ‘my book’. In Dari this meaning is conveyed with a suffix: [ketab-em].

**Prefix** A prefix is a thing you stick on to the beginning of a word. In English, ‘un-’ means ‘not’, as in ‘unhappy’ (=‘not happy’). In Dari, [be] means ‘without’. [be-namak] means ‘without salt’.

**Prepositional phrase** A prepositional phrase is a preposition followed by a noun phrase. ‘Under the big hairy dog’ is a prepositional phrase. ‘Under’ is the preposition and ‘the big hairy dog’ is the noun phrase.

**Reflexive pronoun** A reflexive pronoun is a pronoun that refers back to the subject of the sentence. In the English, “John laughed at himself,” ‘himself’ is a reflexive pronoun: it refers to John, the subject of the sentence.

**Second Person** Second person refers to the person the speaker is speaking to. Depending on the role it’s playing in the sentence, this could be ‘you’, ‘your’, or ‘yours’ in English.

**Subject** The subject is a noun phrase in a sentence. It is (approximately) what the sentence is about; or, the subject is the person (or thing) that is doing the main verb. In Dari and English, the subject of the sentence usually comes first. In the sentence, ‘Bill loves Sally’, ‘Bill’ is the subject because he is the one who is loving Sally.

**Suffix** A suffix is a thing you stick on to the ending of a word. In Dari verbs for example, subject agreement is shown with a suffix (a verb ending).

**Third Person** Third person refers to any person or thing that is neither the speaker nor the person nor the person the speaker is speaking to. In English, depending on the role it's playing in the sentence, this could be 'he', 'she', 'it', 'this', 'that', 'they', or any other word!



## Appendix C

### List of example sentences

This is a list of the English translations of the Dari example sentences. It is presented for your convenience, for looking up grammar.

If you want to say, “He keeps making mistakes,” for example, it’s probably not obvious where in the book to look for that. You can look at the following list for something similar, though. “The boy and the girl keep washing the cloth,” is a pretty similar sentence, so you can read in the book around that example.

(2) I am working.

(11c) I closed the door and left.

(16) I ate five (loaves of) naan.

(22b) human rights

(22c) the United Nations Organization

(31) Ahmad bought his own book.

(36) Come sit on my toshak!

(37) That’s my toshak!

(38) That’s Ahmad’s pen.

(39) That’s my toshak!

(47) irrigator

(48) encouraging words

(49) savior

(55b) I’m going to the bazaar.

(55c) I’m going to the bazaar.

(56b) Did you complain?

(56c) No, I didn’t complain.

- (57) Ahmad hit himself.
- (58) Ahmad is talking to himself.
- (59) Ahmad hit his own father.
- (60) Ahmad hit him.
- (61b) I went.
- (61c) I myself went.
- (62b) Ahmad fell.
- (62c) Ahmad himself fell.
- (63) He himself came.
- (64) You come yourself!
- (65) I saw his very own book.
- (66) Ahmad bought my own book.
- (67b) I went.
- (67c) I myself went.
- (67d) I myself went.
- (67e) I my very own self went.
- (75b) the third lesson
- (75c) the world's first car
- (76) In the third lesson, we read the fourth lesson.
- (77b) the third lesson
- (77c) the world's first car
- (78b) I ate three apples.
- (78c) She bought four naan.
- (79b) I waited for six months.
- (79c) Buy two kilos of beef!
- (80b) Five people came.

- (80c) Five people came.
- (80d) Five people came.
- (82) Ahmad hit Halim.
- (83) Ahmad gave the apple to Halim.
- (84b) Ahmad waited.
- (84c) Ahmad talked with Halim.
- (85b) I'm eating an apple.
- (85b) I'm eating apples.
- (85c) I'm eating the apple.
- (86b) He's hitting me.
- (86c) I'm eating the apple.
- (87) I'm eating the apple.
- (88) I'm eating the big apple.
- (89) I'm eating the big apple and the sweet orange.
- (93b) Ahmad liked the banana.
- (93c) Ahmad liked bananas.
- (96) The Taliban attacked a bus. They killed the driver.
- (98b) Ahmad hit this.
- (98c) Ahmad hit that.
- (99b) Ahmad hit me.
- (99c) Ahmad hit you (sg.).
- (99d) Ahmad hit him/her/it.
- (99e) Ahmad hit us.
- (99f) Ahmad hit you (pl.).
- (99g) Ahmad hit them.
- (100) Ahmad hit himself.

- (101b) Ahmad bought this book.
- (101c) Ahmad rejected that idea.
- (102b) Ahmad bought the most expensive book.
- (102c) Ahmad took the best apple.
- (102d) Ahmad took the last apple.
- (103) Ahmad hit Halim.
- (104b) Halim ate Ahmad's apple.
- (104c) Halim ate my's apple.
- (104d) Halim ate the goat's apple.
- (104e) I read his book.
- (105b) Halim ate his rotten apple.
- (105c) Halim ruined it.
- (106b) I killed them all.
- (106c) I read all of the book.
- (106d) I read all of the books.
- (106e) I read most of the books.
- (106f) I read one of the books.
- (107b) They killed each other.
- (107c) They kissed each other.
- (108) I bought a certain book.
- (109b) Apart from my other and father I don't have anybody.
- (109c) I didn't eat any apples.
- (110b) I don't do any work.
- (110c) They didn't make any plan.
- (111b) Vinegar curdles milk.

- (111c) Wolves kill sheep.
- (113b) I gave Ahmad an apple.
- (113c) I told Ahmad that I'm coming.
- (114) I helped Ahmad.
- (117b) I gave Ahmad an apple.
- (117c) I gave him an apple.
- (118b) I helped Ahmad.
- (118c) I helped him.
- (119b) Apart from apples, I don't like fruit.
- (119c) Apart from apples, I don't like fruit.
- (119d) Apart from apples, I don't like fruit.
- (120b) Place the book on the table.
- (120c) Place the book on the table.
- (121b) I left.
- (121c) I'm leaving.
- (122b) I left.
- (122c) I'm leaving.
- (123b) I am carrying water.
- (123c) I carried water.
- (124b) We are selling apples.
- (124c) We were selling apples.
- (126b) I am working.
- (126c) I am sleeping.
- (126d) I am resting.
- (126e) I am playing.

- (127b) I worked.
- (127c) I slept.
- (127d) I rested.
- (127e) I played.
- (128) I moved the sanduq.
- (129b) I slapped Ahmad.
- (129c) Ahmad punched me.
- (130) Ahmad punched me.
- (131) Ahmad is speaking with me.
- (132) Ahmad attacked me.
- (133) Ahmad gave me the apple.
- (135b) I ate the apple.
- (135c) I ate it.
- (135d) I ate it.
- (136) I saw you.
- (137b) I moved the sanduq.
- (137c) I moved it.
- (137d) I moved it.
- (137e) I moved it.
- (138) I didn't eat any apples.
- (139) I don't do any work.
- (140) They didn't make any plan.
- (142b) I finished the work.
- (142c) The work was finished.
- (143b) I slapped Nasim.

- (143c) Nasim was slapped.
- (144b) I lit the bukhari.
- (144c) The bukhari lit (caught).
- (145b) Ahmed says that Nasim is lazy.
- (145c) It is said that Nasim is lazy.
- (146b) I gave the apple back.
- (146c) The apple was given back.
- (147b) The soldiers beat back an enemy attack.
- (147c) An enemy attack was beaten back.
- (148) The work was finished by me.
- (150) I filled it on Thursday.
- (151) ...you had filled it.
- (154b) That's an apple.
- (154c) That's an apricot.
- (154d) That's a sacrifice.
- (154e) That's his/her apple.
- (154f) I'm from America.
- (155b) The food is ready.
- (155c) The food is an airplane.
- (156) There is tea.
- (157b) I am a man.
- (158b) He/she is a Pashtun.
- (158c) They are Pashtuns.
- (159b) The teachers are terrible.
- (159c) The cows are horrible.

- (159d) The chairs are broken.
- (159e) These are chairs.
- (163) They are going to the bazaar.
- (164) They are not going to the bazaar.
- (166a) I'm going to Mazar.
- (167a) I'm selling apples.
- (168) He shut the door.
- (170) He shut the door.
- (171) He was shutting the door when we came.
- (172) We were in the house all day. I was working. The children were playing.
- (178) I will work.
- (179) An enemy attack will be beaten back.
- (180) I have shut the door.
- (181b) He has gone.
- (182b) I shut the door.
- (182c) I have shut the door.
- (183b) I have eaten lunch.
- (183c) I have gone on the Hajj.
- (184b) I have not shut the door.
- (184c) I have not eaten lunch.
- (184d) I have not gone on the Hajj.
- (185) I had shut the door.
- (195) He wants to run.
- (198) I want to go to Kabul.
- (199) Razia wants to eat pomegranates.
- (200) Would that he get better.



- (201) Would to God that it would be solved.
- (202) May God comfort you.
- (203) If you go to Kabul, I will be sad.
- (204) If you go to Kabul, you have to let me know.
- (205) It's possible that she'll succeed.
- (206) It's possible it'll fall.
- (207) It's likely they won't understand.
- (208) Perhaps he'll call.
- (209) We need to finish this work.
- (210) We all have to die.
- (211) I am obligated to explain.
- (212) Are you allowed to go to the bazaar?
- (213b) Do you have permission to go to the bazaar?
- (213c) No, my boss didn't give me permission.
- (214) Please shut the door.
- (215) Shall I shut the door?
- (216) Shall we buy this book?
- (217) I secured the chest so that it wouldn't fall.
- (218) I turned off the generator so that they children could sleep.
- (219) Suppose that the Taliban come: then what would we do?
- (220) Suppose you die: who will comfort your family?
- (221) I wish you had asked me first.
- (222) If I had gone to the meeting, I would have died.
- (223) Might Eli have caught a cold?
- (224) They might have come.

- (225) They must have come.
- (226) Standing is difficult for me.
- (227) Sitting isn't difficult.
- (228) It's difficult to kill an elephant.
- (229) Killing an elephant with a banana is impossible.
- (230) Giving sweets to children is a good deed.
- (231) Heating water is not difficult.
- (232) Writing this report is difficult.
- (233) Ahmad's going to Kabul was useless.
- (234a) That's not edible salt.
- (235b) I like to work.
- (235c) I like work.
- (236b) I get tired after swimming.
- (236c) I get tired after swimming.
- (237) She isn't familiar with playing the tabla.
- (238b) I've come for the lesson.
- (238c) I've come to study the lesson.
- (238d) I've come to give the lesson.
- (239) The boy got scared and (then) ran away.
- (240) The vase fell and (then) broke.
- (241) Mother steeped (some) tea and left.
- (242) Eat some food and (only then) go.
- (243) I keep trying.
- (244) You keep on lying.
- (245) After this the weather will keep getting hotter.

- (247) The table kept falling.
- (248) The lesson is over, but you keep talking.
- (254) the washed cup
- (255) This chair has been fixed.
- (256b) drunk tea
- (256c) drunk tea
- (257b) a chosen leader
- (257c) a chosen leader
- (261) Ahmad, crying, said...

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