

Beyond definiteness: exploring epistemic and relational accounts of e-marked formulations in Persian interactions

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Formal Persian language lacks a definite article, but in informal colloquial conversations, the particle ‘*e*’ can be suffixed to the nominals to denote definiteness. This particle has been insufficiently described in the literature and even this insufficient description is solely based on constructed examples. The empirical investigation that underlies the present study examines the ‘*e*’-marked nominal formulations in the context of making references to persons, animals, and objects in naturally occurring conversations to identify its multifaceted functions. Using conversation analysis as a method, it is demonstrated throughout the paper that the enclitic *e* marks a noun or nominal group to denote both speaker and recipient’s (assumed) equal epistemic access to the referent, although the speaker may need some interactional work with the recipient to share his epistemic access with them. Furthermore, through this marked way of reference formulations, the speakers do more than simply referring by orienting to some measure of relational separation with the referent and thereby some degree of connection with the recipient. Overall, the analyses reveal delicate moments of interactional work in terms of epistemic and relational functions of the *e*-marked formulations of the referents, and as such contribute to the research on the pragmatic and interactional view of definiteness in light of epistemics and relating of reference making.