

BETRÄGE ZUR IRANISTIK

Gegründet von Georges Redard, herausgegeben von Nicholas Sims-Williams

Band 34

Topics in Iranian Linguistics

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WIESBADEN 2011
DR. LUDWIG REICHERT VERLAG

Printed with the financial support
of *Mondes iraniens et indiens* (UMR 7528, CNRS, Paris)

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation
in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten
sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

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ISBN: 978-3-89500-826-9

www.reichert-verlag.de

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Gedruckt auf säurefreiem Papier (alterungsbeständig pH7 -, neutral)

Printed in Germany

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A Glance at the Deixis of Nominal Demonstratives in Iranian Taleshi*

Daniel Paul

1. Introduction

Taleshi is a Northwest Iranian language consisting of a dialect continuum which stretches from the Republic of Azerbaijan south to an area close to the city of Rasht on the Caspian coast in Iran. The continuum is traditionally divided into three major dialect groups:¹ northern (including the dialects of Azerbaijan, and Anbarani in the north of Iran), central (including Asalemi) and southern (including Masali). Asalemi and Masali have been described in grammatical sketches by YARSHATER (1996) and NAWATA (1982) respectively.

All examples are based on fieldwork conducted during March 2006 and April to June 2007 in the Talesh region. Sentence elicitation lists, wordlists and texts were recorded from mother-tongue speakers in Anbaran-e Ardabil, Asalem and Masal. The lists and texts were transcribed in situ, again with the help of local mother-tongue speakers. Altogether sixty-seven texts were recorded in the Talesh area, totalling 295 minutes in length. In addition to folktales and personal anecdotes, the Pear Story film (CHAFE 1980) was used to elicit a narrative describing the film's action in twelve locations, including Anbaran-e Ardabil, Asalem and Masal. In each case respondents watched the film twice, then told what they had seen from memory.² Selected texts will form part of the author's PhD dissertation.

This paper explores the nominal demonstrative system employed in both Asalemi and Masali.³ It begins by setting out a cross-linguistic typology of deictic expressions, before going on to describe how this typology may be applied to the Taleshi dialects in focus. Alongside this description, commentary is also provided on the significance of the proximate-distal distinction which the demonstrative system maintains.

Iranian Taleshi manifests a split ergative system. Ergative alignment obtains with perfective forms of transitive verbs (simple past, perfect and pluperfect); here, any 3rd person explicit subject is in the oblique case, while 3rd person objects take the direct case. A "transitive marker" attaches to the verb – in Asalemi, it agrees in number with the object, while in Masali it has fossilized. In intransitive and/or imperfective contexts, the subject is in the direct case and specific objects in the oblique case.

* My thanks to two anonymous reviewers and to John Payne and John Roberts for helping to improve this paper, and to my Taleshi respondents, who provided such useful data. All mistakes, of course, remain my own.

¹ See, for example, BAZIN (1980:68f., 189ff.) and ASATRIAN / BORJIAN (2005:53).

² See the sample text at the end of the article.

³ The phonology, morphosyntax and discourse structures of the Asalemi and Masali speech varieties are very similar, as suggested by the high scores of many Masali speakers during recorded text testing for comprehension of an Asalemi text. Those with no exposure scored an average of 65%, while for those with only one or two weeks' exposure scores rose to around 90% (PAUL 2011:319).

2. Taleshi Demonstrative and Pronominal Paradigms

The demonstrative paradigm is set out in Table 1 below. The alternate third person plural forms are Asalemi and Masali respectively. There is no gender distinction in Iranian Taleshi. Nominal demonstratives in Taleshi can occur in a noun phrase with a noun, or make up a complete noun phrase in their own right.

Table 1: The demonstrative paradigm in Asalemi and Masali

	Proximate		Distal	
	Direct case	Oblique case	Direct case	Oblique case
3S	<i>əm</i>	<i>əm-i</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a-i</i>
3P	<i>əm-e</i>	<i>əm-un</i>	<i>a-e / a-ven</i>	<i>a-mun / a-vun</i>

Table 2 presents the pronominal paradigm in Asalemi and Masali. It will readily be seen that the third person pronouns are based on the third person distal demonstrative forms.

Table 2: The direct and oblique pronominal paradigm in Asalemi and Masali

	Direct case		Oblique case	
	Masali	Asalemi	Masali	Asalemi
1S	<i>az</i>		<i>mə(n)</i>	<i>mən</i>
2S	<i>tə</i>		<i>əšt(ə)</i>	<i>əštə</i>
3S	<i>a</i>		<i>ai</i>	
1P	<i>ama</i>			
2P	<i>šəma</i>			
3P	<i>aven</i>	<i>ae</i>	<i>amun</i>	<i>avun</i>

Finally, Table 3 presents the possessive pronominal paradigm in Asalemi and Masali, together with a set of Asalemi indirect object recipient pronouns which have no precise equivalent in Masali. The alternate third person forms listed represent distal and proximate versions respectively; the use of these alternate forms is explored in Section 4.2.

Table 3: Possessive and indirect object recipient pronouns

	Masali	Asalemi	
	Possessive	Possessive	Indirect
1S	<i>cəmə(n)</i>	<i>cəmən</i>	<i>bəmən</i>
2S	<i>əštə(n)</i>	<i>əštə</i>	<i>batə</i>
3S	<i>ce / cimi</i>	<i>ca(i) / cimi</i>	<i>bai / bimi</i>
1P	<i>cama</i>		<i>bama</i>
2P	<i>šəma</i>		<i>bašəma</i>
3P	<i>ca(v)un</i>	<i>camun / cumun</i>	<i>bamun / bumun</i>

3. Categories of Deictic Expression

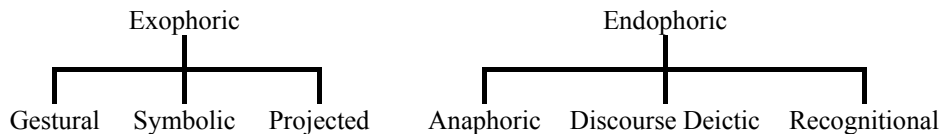
ANDERSON / KEENAN (1985:259) define deictic expressions as "those linguistic elements whose interpretation in simple sentences makes essential reference to properties of the extralinguistic context of the utterance in which they occur."

Considering a sentence such as (1), we cannot tell when the event is taking place, or who is giving birth, until we know when the sentence is uttered, and by whom. Hence the temporal adverbs *uri* "today" and *sabâ* "tomorrow" and the pronoun *ama* are deictic expressions: the adverbs are anchored to the day of the utterance, and the inclusive first person pronoun to the one uttering it and her addressee.

1. *uri u sabâ ama zand-am cama kula*
 today and tomorrow 1P.DIR bear-1P 1P.POSS young
 "Today and tomorrow we shall give birth to our young." [Masali]

Deictic expressions typically cover person, place and time (FILLMORE 1997). In addition, distinctions must be made between references to non-linguistic entities within the speech situation, on the one hand, and to entities within the surrounding discourse on the other. DIESSEL (1999:6) follows HALLIDAY / HASAN (1976:57-76) in using the notions exophoric and endophoric for entities in the surrounding situation and for other entities respectively. Figure 1 sets out DIESSEL'S categories for endophoric demonstratives, and adds sub-categories for exophoric entities too:

Figure 1: Exophoric and endophoric categories of deictic expression



The following sections explore each of these categories in turn.

3.1 Gestural and Symbolic Uses

FILLMORE (1997:62f.) explains how deictic expressions may be interpreted by knowing some aspect of the speech communication situation – exophoric usage – and distinguishes between gestural use and symbolic use. LEVINSON (1983:66) provides the following two examples to illustrate the difference:

2. a. *This finger hurts.* (gestural)
 b. *This city stinks.* (symbolic)

In (2a) "this finger" is an immediate, physical aspect of the communication situation. In (2b), on the other hand, the utterance draws on more than what is immediately visible in the surrounding situation. DIESSEL (1999:95) gives a further example to show that "exophoric demonstratives are also commonly used with reference to entities that do not have a physical existence":

3. *This is a nice feeling.*

The Taleshi demonstratives *əm* "this" and *a* "that" provide a basic semantic contrast between proximate and distal reference. Deictic Shift Theory (DUCHAN / BRUDER / HEWITT 1995) includes the foundational concept of a shifting Deictic Centre. At this centre, temporal, spatial and personal terms (such as now, here, I) are all proximate:

"Deictic Shift Theory states that in fictional narrative, readers and authors shift their deictic center from the real-world situation to an image of themselves at a location within the story world. This location is represented as a cognitive structure often containing the elements of a particular time and place within the fictional world, or even within the subjective space of a fictional character." (SEGAL 1995:15)

Hence a gestural use of the proximate demonstrative refers to objects spatially close to the point of reference. In the direct speech of example (4) both "this" and "these bags" refer to physical objects in the direct view of both speaker and addressee. The first line is a question asked by some thieves; the second and third lines constitute their addressee's response:

4. *âqâ əm cici=ə?*
 mister DEMP what=COP.3S
 "Mister, what is this?"
 [... It is gold, which I've loaded up here. ...]
tele=m dakard-a=ya əm kisa-mun dela=kâ
 gold=1s poured-PTCP=TRS DEMP bag-OBL.P in=LOC
 "I have poured the gold into these bags." [Asalemi]

The proximate/distal contrast is clear in the gestural use of the two pronouns in (5):

5. *saxsari ... əm var a var š-imun*
 tomorrow DEMP way DEMD way go-1P
 "Tomorrow we shall go in this direction (or) that direction." [Asalemi]

In contrast to these gestural usages, "this" in example (6) constitutes a symbolic usage, namely an abstract noun describing an event:

6. *cəmən nana sar-i əm âina du=a*
 1S.POSS mother head-OBL.S DEMP disaster gave=TRS
 "She brought this disaster on my mother's head." [Asalemi]

3.2 Projected Use

The projected use, BÜHLER'S "Deixis am Phantasma" (1934:121-140), is described by DIESSEL (1999:95) as "shifting the deictic center from the speaker in the current speech situation to a person in a different situation that is evoked by the ongoing discourse." In other words, this entails that the deictic terms orient around a participant in the narrative, rather than around the speaker or addressee of the (exophoric) speech situation. Both proximate (*əm*) and distal (*a*) Taleshi demonstratives may be used in this sense:

7. *ha=ni* *əm* *var-i=kâ=ni* *penu=šun=a*
 same=also DEMP side-OBL.S=LOC=also put=3P=TRS
 "that same (bread) they put on this side too." [Asalemi]
8. *a* *var-i=kâ* *i-la* *javân-a* *zua=i* *âma*
 DEMD side-OBL.S=LOC one-CL young-LNK boy=IND came.3S
 "A young boy came from that direction." [Asalemi]

In (7) the deictic centre is projected onto the narrative's chief protagonists, who are on one side of an oven. They put the bread to one side of the oven – the same side at which they themselves are located – and hence that side is referred to as *əm var* "this side". No regard is paid as to which side of the oven the bread may be located from the point of view of the participants in the speech act: the narrator and his or her addressees. In (8) the deictic centre is not projected onto a person at all, but rather onto the central locational reference point for this episode of the narrative: the tree at the base of which the main action occurs. Because the boy comes from a point distant from the tree, it is the distal demonstrative which is used to modify the word "direction". The point is that the boy, whether he be approaching the tree from the foreground or background in the imagination of speaker and hearer, is coming into the scene from a point distant from the tree, which is the deictic centre for this scene. Example (9) provides an example of the projected use with a proximate-distal contrast:

9. *damand=a* *əštân* *a* *zua* *nava=râ* *lailai* *vât-e*.
 PROG=3S self DEMD boy grandson=for lullaby say-INF
 "She was singing a lullaby for that grandson of hers."
əm *zua* *iâ* *mand-a* ... *guš* *âkard=a*
 DEMP boy here stayed-3S ear opened=TRS
 "This boy (her son) stayed here ... (and) listened." [Asalemi]

The deictic centre here is occupied by the son, who stands at the door and listens to his mother singing a lullaby for his own son, her grandson. Hence we find that the grandson is modified by the distal demonstrative, who is further from us as we observe the scene; while the son, who is relatively close, is modified by the proximate demonstrative (correlating to the proximate adverb *iâ* "here").

One final example of the projected use is shown in the following example. A boy is travelling on a bicycle, and is passed by a girl heading in the opposite direction. "That" direction means the opposite direction to that in which he is travelling, revealing that the deictic centre has been projected onto the boy himself:

10. *motavajeye* *kâla* *xânum* *ki* *b-a,* *âgardâst-a* *a* *tarâ*
 noticing girl woman COMP was-3S turned.back-3S DEMD direction
 "Paying attention to the girl as he was, he turned back in that direction." [Asalemi]

3.3 Anaphoric and Discourse-Deictic Uses

The discussion so far has focussed on uses of demonstratives which are in some way connected to the relationship between the text-external and text-internal worlds. We turn now to pure text-internal uses.

DIESEL (1999:6) follows LEVINSON (1983), FILLMORE (1997) and others in distinguishing anaphoric demonstratives from discourse deictic demonstratives. Both must be interpreted with reference to endophoric entities; that is, entities which are anchored within the text world in some way. Anaphoric demonstratives are co-referential with a noun or noun phrase in the previous discourse, whereas discourse deictic demonstratives refer to propositions or speech acts (DIESEL 1999:95).

The most common use of the proximate demonstrative *əm* "this" is in such anaphoric contexts, used co-referentially with a noun or noun phrase. Consider the following sentences, which follow each other almost consecutively in the text, and note how demonstrative pronouns are used to track the two main participants (a "baldy" and his uncle) introduced in the first sentence:

11. *i-la pis=i hes b-a ki əstan amu kəla=râ dagənəst-a=b-a ...*
 one-CL baldy=IND exist was-3S REL self uncle girl=for fallen-PTCP=AUX-3S
 "There was a baldy who had fallen for his uncle's daughter ..."

12. *vali cimi amu na-pi b-a*
 but 3S.POSS.PR uncle NEG-willing was-3S
 "but this uncle of his was not willing"

[...]

13. *əm zua ...*
 DEMP boy
 "This boy" (kept pestering his uncle,
 but his uncle was opposed to giving her in marriage.)

[...]

14. *əm pis-i har jur=i naxša kašt=a*
 DEMP baldy-OBL.S every way=IND plan drew=TRS
 "This baldy kept concocting plans" (to go and carry off the girl, but he couldn't.)

[...]

15. *âxər i ruz=i əm amu pis-i gat-a ...*
 finally one day=IND DEMP uncle baldy-OBL.S got-PTCP
 "Finally one day this uncle, having got hold of the baldy ..." [Asalemi]

The bald boy is introduced in (11) with a heavy indefinite-article-plus-clitic combination, signalling that he will be a salient participant in the narrative: it turns out that he is the hero of the story. Subsequently, explicit references to him are frequently modified by the proximate demonstrative, which is also used in the final sentence of the example to modify the uncle when he takes over the action for the next few clauses.

Demonstratives may also be used in this anaphoric sense to establish a spatial frame of reference. The following example shows how two sets of participants are introduced, before an opposition is set up between proximate and distal demonstratives. This opposition then serves as a device to keep one set of participants onstage, while the other set is dismissed for the time being:

16. "There was a lady ... who had two daughters-in-law and two sons. The boys used to get up in the morning and go out with their flock."
17. *a mâl-un=na a-š-in.*
 DEMD cattle-OBL.P=with AUG-go-IMP.3P
 "They were going with those cattle."
18. *əm vayu=ni cə a-kar-in?*
 DEMP bride=also what AUG-do-IMP.3P
 "As for these brides, what were they doing?" [Asalemi]

Example (19) presents a selection of three clauses which occur at different points of a pear-picking episode. In the first two clauses, the demonstrative *əm* "this" refers anaphorically to a referent which is already active in the hearer's mental representation. By the time of the third clause, however, there has been sufficient other activity that the pear which had fallen needs to be reactivated; hence it is referred to with a distal demonstrative *a* "that":

19. *əm xəj-un kâr=a ci-e*
 DEMP pear-OBL.P PROG=3S pick-INF
 "He is picking these pears."
 [...]
20. *i-la əm xəj-un=kâ vigənist-a hatâ rəna dela=kâ*
 one-CL DEMP pear-OBL.P=LOC fell-3S thus straw in=LOC
 "One of these pears had fallen in the straw."
 [...]
21. *a xəj-i ki vigənist-a=b-a*
 DEMD pear-RCH REL fall-PTCP=AUX-3S
 "That pear which had fallen ... [he cleaned it]." [Asalemi]

The discourse-deictic use, whereby the demonstrative refers to a proposition rather than a specific noun phrase, is demonstrated by the following examples, which come from two separate stories:

22. *dâstân-i ki ama deišti=mun=a əm ravâyat b-a ki...*
 story-RCH REL 1P.OBL saw=1P=TRS DEMP form was-3S COMP
 "The story that we saw was like this ..." [Asalemi]
23. *əm žen-un cimi=râ əm kard=a, xəsərg-i=š vât=a ...*
 DEMP woman-OBL.P 3S.POSS.PR=for DEMP did=TRS mother.in.law- said=TRS
 OBL.S=3S
 "These women did this to her, (one) said to the mother-in-law." [Asalemi]

In (22) the demonstrative refers to the form that the whole narrative will take; while in (23) the second demonstrative in the clause refers to a series of subsequent clauses which will describe the various troublesome tasks the women impose upon their mother-in-law. Both of these are cataphoric instances of the discourse-deictic use, in that they point forwards rather than backwards in the text.

3.4 Recognitional and Introductory Uses

HIMMELMANN (1996) argues for the existence of a recognitional use for demonstratives, whereby specific shared knowledge between speakers is activated, rather than any referent in the preceding discourse (anaphoric) or surrounding situation (symbolic). One example he cites is:

24. ... *it was filmed in California, those dusty kind of hills that they have out here in Stockton and all, ... so ...* (HIMMELMANN 1996:230)

Such usage is rare in Taleshi and there are no examples in the corpus. However, it is important to avoid confusing such usage with demonstratives which perform an introductory function:

25. *a vaxt-un əm kâsa-e hest b-in.*
 DEMD time-OBL.P DEMP bowl-P exist was-3P
 "In those days there were these bowls." [Asalemi]
26. *nana sar=əš pegat=a, vixâst=əš=a əm gəl âv-i=kâ*
 mother head=3S took=TRS plunged=3S=TRS DEMP boiling water-OBL.S=LOC
 "The mother took her head and plunged it into this boiling water." [Asalemi]

In these examples above, the relevant demonstratives are performing a function akin to that of the indefinite determiner: introducing a new participant or prop which has not formed part of the previous speech situation or surrounding discourse, nor is part of the knowledge shared by the narrator and his or her audience.

4. The Proximate-Distal Contrast in Demonstrative Usage

ROBERTS (2009) argues that in Persian, exophoric reference to a discourse theme or topic consistently has precedence over anaphoric reference. He cites examples such as (27):

27. *mi-gu-yad ... in man na-bud-am ke ānjā bud-am*
 IPFV-say.PRES-3SG this PN.1SG NEG-be.PAST-1SG CLM that.place be.PAST-1SG
 "He says, "... maybe it was me who was there?"" (ROBERTS 2009:253)⁴

He observes that "the use of *ānjā* 'that-place (there)' indicates that the location is distal yet the speaker (Sasha) refers to his involvement in the event with *in man nabudam* 'this wasn't me'. ... In English 'that' would be used here" (ROBERTS 2009:253).

This section explores the relationship between exophoric and anaphoric reference in Taleshi through its use of nominal demonstratives, before considering how the proximate-distal contrast is worked out in third person possessive pronouns.

⁴ Roberts' abbreviations are as follows: IPFV "imperfective", PRES "present stem", SG "singular", PN "pronoun", NEG "negative", CLM "clause linkage marker".

4.1 Nominal Demonstratives

Like Persian, Taleshi exhibits a preference for giving precedence to a proximate reference to the current discourse theme or topic over a distal, anaphoric reference. Consider the following three examples:

28. *əmsafar* *šəma* *ma-š-irun*
 later 2P.DIR PHB-go-2P
a-i *pe-ma-ger-un* *ma-r-irun*
 DEMD-OBL take-PHB-take-2P PHB-eat-2P
əm-e *š-un* *harci* *b-a* *əm* *âšmâš-e=šun* *hard=in*
 DEMP-P went-3P whatever was-3S DEMP stew-DIR.P=3P ate=TRS.P
 " "Later on, don't you go and take that and eat it."
 These went and ate whatever of this stew there was." [Asalemi]
29. *əm* *cə* *kâr=i* *b-a* *tə* *kard=a?*
 DEMP what deed=IND was-3S 2S did=TRS
 "What kind of deed was that which you did?!" [Asalemi]
30. *əm* *cici=a* *dar=əš* *iâ?*
 DEMP what=COP.3S in=3S here
 "What is that in there?" [Asalemi]

In the direct speech of the first clause in (28), the owners of the stew refer to it with the demonstrative *a*, which could potentially be interpreted anaphorically or gesturally. In the second clause, however, it becomes clear from the demonstrative *əm* in the phrase "this stew" that a gestural use is intended. A distal, anaphoric reference here would have been equally successful in denoting the referent; but Taleshi prefers the proximate reference option. In (29), the preference is again for *əm*. The baldy had told his uncle a lie, as a result of which the uncle's house burned down. Now the uncle has returned to the site of his ruined house and is accusing his nephew of telling the lie. The demonstrative refers to the lie which the nephew told some time ago, but it is not a distal, anaphoric demonstrative; rather, the uncle uses a proximate demonstrative referring to the house, the visible evidence of the wrongness of the nephew's action. In (30) a shepherd approaches the baldy, who is tied up inside a sack, and asks him what is in the sack. English would usually prefer "What is that in there?", but the shepherd uses proximate expressions (*əm* and *iâ*), literally asking "What is this in here?" although he is an observer looking on from outside the sack.

This preference, however, is not universally applied. In example (31), the hero of the story has already mentioned the king's daughter, who is far away in the king's palace. He then quotes the king's messengers, who have recently visited to tell him he must marry the princess. He uses the demonstrative *əm* "this" to refer to the princess, because she is already activated in the mental representation of the baldy's hearer within the story. Because we have a text within a text here, the demonstrative can be considered from two perspectives simultaneously. For the baldy's hearer within the text world, the usage is anaphoric: the demonstrative refers back to something he has already heard. For us, the usage is projected: the discourse centre is projected onto the text-internal speech situation.

31. *tə basi b-â-i əm šâ kəla bə-bar-i.*
 2S.DIR must SBJ-come-2S DEMP king daughter SBJ-take-2S
 "You must come and take this king's daughter (in marriage)." [Asalemi]

In example (32) an anaphoric demonstrative is again used to refer to a physical object:

32. *a tele-ye ca=râ mand-in*
 DEMD gold-DIR.P 3S.POSS.D=for remained-3P
 "Those gold pieces were left over for him." [Asalemi]

This clause forms part of the end of a story, where the hero inherits the gold which has been mentioned earlier. Given that the precise location of the gold is not significant, the narrator chooses instead to use an anaphoric demonstrative to reactivate the gold in the hearer's mental representation, thus helping to pull all the strings of the narrative together at its conclusion. Finally, example (33) illustrates how the proximate/distal distinction applies when the narrator is describing scenes from a film. In this sequence, the closing episodes of the story describe participants shown in the distance (all marked with *a*), except for one shot where some boys are shown in close-up (the penultimate line in the example) – and *ə**m* is used:

33. *a rafeq-e a səng-ə=ni ki ua vigənəst-a=b-a*
 DEMD friend-DIR.P DEMP stone-OBL.S=also REL there fell-PTCP=AUX-3S
a=šun pegat=a ... kâ=b-in âm-e
 DEMD=3P picked.up=TRS PROG=AUX-3P come-INF
 "Those friends picked up that stone which had fallen there. ...
 They were coming along."
 [...]
ki a xəjacin dâr-i=kâ virm-a ... vind=əš=a
 COMP DEMD pear.picker tree-OBL.S=LOC came.down-3S saw=3S=TRS
 "when that pear picker came down from the tree ... and saw"
hala əm-e əm xəj-a dâr-i darəst-a-n-in
 still DEMD-P DEMP tree-LNK tree-OBL.S arrived-PTCP-NEG-3P
 "these (boys) have not yet arrived at this pear tree."
 [...]
de a-e âm-in daivârd-in š-in.
 so DEMD-P came-3P passed.by-3P went-3P
 "So they came, passed by and went on." [Asalemi]

4.2 Possessive Pronouns

Table 3 (Section 2. above) set out a contrast between proximate and distal possessive pronouns. Note that the proximity or distance in question relates to the possessor, not the possessum. We explore this contrast here by setting out contrasting examples from a single Masali text, before briefly illustrating the same contrast between two Asalemi examples. In examples (34) and (35), the distal possessive pronoun *ce* refers to an entity referred to by *a* in the previous clause. In example (36) a contrast is drawn between the mouse, on "this side", and the fox and the bear on the other. Hence the bear is removed from the deictic centre, and referred to by *ce* and *a*. Example (37) again sets up a contrast between *az* "I"

and "my brother-in-law", who is absent from the scene. Again, the brother is therefore referred to with *ce*.

34. *a* *əspa* *bə-kəš-ə* *ce* *kalla* *maqz-i* *piger-ə*
 DEMD horse SBJ-kill-3S 3S.POSS.D skull brain-OBL.S SBJ.take-3S
 "He should kill that horse and take its brains." [Masali]
35. *a* *kəšt-a=m=a* *ce* *kalla* *vin-i* *â* *nu-a=m=a*
 DEMD killed-PTCP=1S=TRS 3S.POSS.D skull see-2S there put-PTCP=1S=TRS
 "I have killed him – you see his skull, I have put (it) there." [Masali]
36. *əm* *var-i* *muša* *gəla* *xumâr.* *libâs* *xumâr,*
 DEMP side-OBL.S mouse CL depressed fox depressed
xərs *badbaxt.* *ce* *asp-i=š* *a-i=ku* *jiget=a*
 bear wretched 3S.POSS.D horse-OBL.S=3S 3S-OBL.S=LOC stole=TRS
 "On this side is the mouse, depressed. The fox is depressed,
 the bear wretched. He stole the horse from him." [Masali]
37. *az* *n=imâ* *cəmən* *bərvazâ=yâ,*
 1S.DIR NEG=COP.1S.PST 1S.POSS brother-in-law=COP.3S.PST
xodâ *ce* *ka* *xarâba* *bə-kar-u*
 God 3S.POSS.D house destroyed SBJ-do-3S
 "It was not me, it was my brother-in-law! May God destroy his house." [Masali]

In the following three examples, proximate *cimi* is used instead of distal *ce*. In example (38) the nephew arrives at his own house, and his physical presence is witnessed by his uncle. Meanwhile in examples (39) and (40), the same participant referred to with *əm* is then referred to with *cimi* shortly afterwards:

38. *vaxt-i* *kə* *əštan* *ka=ku* *âras-ə,* *cimi* *amu* *vin-ə*
 when-RCH REL self house=LOC arrive-3S 3S.POSS.PR uncle see-3S
 "When he arrives at his own house, his uncle sees ..." [Masali]
39. *əm* *pisakula* *az* *gir* *bu-war-əm ...*
 DEMP baldy 1S.DIR involve SBJ-bring-1S
az=ni *bə-šū-m* *cimi* *dumla*
 1S.DIR=also SBJ-go-1S 3S.POSS.PR after
 "I should get hold of this baldy ... and also go after him." [Masali]⁵
40. *vâ* *əm-i* *ger-ən ...* *muš* *cimi* *i-la* *cem=i* *kan-ə*
 say.3S DEMP-OBL.S get-2P mouse 3S.POSS.PR a-CL eye=IND dig-3S
 "He says, 'Get him!' ... The mouse gouges out one of his eyes." [Masali]

In a couple of instances in Masali texts, *cimi* and *ce* are used consecutively for closely related referents as part of a list. We take this to be an alternation for stylistic purposes. For example:

⁵ This example also illustrates how pronouns in Asalemi take the possessive, not the oblique case, when followed by postpositions.

41. *cimi izəm-i bar-ə, ce xâl-i bar-ə*
 3S.POSS.PR timber-OBL.S take-3S 3S.POSS.D branch-OBL.S take-3S
 "He takes its timber, he takes its branches." [Masali]

Finally in this regard, the last two examples illustrate the same proximate-distal distinction in Asalemi, this time with plural possessive pronouns. In example (42) the bandits guard their own sacks so that other thieves will not come and take them. Proximate *cumun* is used to refer to them, as subjects in the immediately preceding clause. In example (43), the thief leaves his own sacks behind and steals theirs – that is, the bandits'. In this case distal *camun* is used to refer to the bandits, who are no longer at the deictic centre.

42. *əm-e damand=in negahbâni du-e ki dəzd-e n-â-n*
 DEMP-P PROG=3P guard do-INF COMP thief-P NEG-SBJ.come-3S
cumun kisa-mun nə-bar-un
 3P.POSS.PR sack-OBL.P NEG-SBJ.carry-3P
 "They were standing guard so that thieves would not come
 and take their sacks." [Asalemi]
43. *əm pis-i əştan kis-e iâ nâ=n*
 DEMP baldy-OBL.S self sack-P here put=TRS.P
camun kis-e=yəš ž=in əştan asb-i
 3P.POSS.D sack-P=3S put=TRS.P self horse-OBL.S
 "This baldy put his own sacks here; he loaded their sacks onto his horse." [Asalemi]

5. Conclusion

The demonstrative system employed by these Taleshi speech varieties has a wide range of endophoric and exophoric uses for both proximate and distal senses. Where a choice is available between anaphoric and gestural uses Taleshi, unlike English, prefers the gestural use.

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person	NEG	Negative
AUG	Augment	OBL	Oblique
AUX	Auxiliary	P	Plural
CL	Classifier	PHB	Prohibitive
COMP	Complementizer	POSS	Possessive
COP	Copula	PR	Proximate
D	Distal	PROG	Progressive
DEMD	Demonstrative (distal)	PST	Past
DEMP	Demonstrative (proximate)	PTCP	Participle
DIR	Direct	RCH	Relative clause head marker
IMP	Imperfective	REL	Relativizer
IND	Indefinite marker	S	Singular
INF	Infinitive	SBJ	Subjunctive
LNK	Linker (usually adjectival)	TRS	Transitivity marker
LOC	Location marker		

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Sample Text: The Pear Story (Asalemi dialect)

The following consists of the transcribed Asalemi Pear Story text, together with parallel English translation. The recording was made on 17 April 2007 in Asalem. The informant, Ebrahim Azmude, is a mother tongue speaker of Asalemi and was 35 years old at the time of the recording.

1. *ila merdi bumay peraş xəja dârikâ kâra xəj cie.* 2. *xəjun baci gəla gəla daraka əştan dumanakâ.* 3. *ila pârcaşani əştan gardanikâ dabasta.* 4. *əm xəjun kâra cie varde dakarde ila sabadəş nua zaminikâ kâra dakarde.* 5. *dar həm heyni ke kâba varde dakaru zambilikâ ila əm xəjunkâ viragənaşt rəna delakâ.* 6. *bumay tai âkarderâ əştan dasmâli gardanikâ âraka.*

1. A man comes, goes up a pear tree and is pear-picking. 2. He picks pears, and pours them one by one into his apron. 3. He has also tied a kerchief round his neck. 4. He is picking these pears, bringing them and pouring them – he placed a basket on the ground – he is pouring them. 5. At the same time that he was bringing and pouring into the basket, one of these pears fell on the straw. 6. He comes to empty his load, and loosens the cloth round his neck.

7. *a xəji ki vigənəstaba zamin ai tamiz âraka gərđi daraka zambili delakâ.*
 8. *hani peraş dârikâ.*
 9. *əm heynikâ ila merdani ila bəzi sarikâ guna bəz ba lâfəndəş dakarda kâba ai darâkunəste âma daivarda.* 10. *a varikâni ila javâna zuai danəšta ba ila ducarxa kələş penua ba sarikâ âma dâri bənina daivaru.* 11. *əm xəjunkâş vinda, tamaş manda virma, ilaş bumunkâ pegata ki baštanna baru vindəša ki rafeqi ke dârikâ pere motavaje nia.* 12. *sabadəş hata râst âkarda nuša ducarxana.* 13. *râ dagənəsta kâba şe, vindəša ila kəla xanəmi danəšta ducarxa, rubarukâ kâra âme.* 14. *motavajeye kəla xanəm ki ba, âgardəsta a tarâ vâ gənəsta kələ ca sarikâ vigənəsta.* 15. *motavajeye kəla xanum ba ducarxa daba sə gənəsta sabad gərd viba.* 16. *sava gərd xâli âba.* 17. *dumlakâ də se nafar ca rafiqe a varikâ kâbin âme, ae âmin savaşun bana jam âkarda dakarduşuna ha sava delakâ gulâbie nâşuna carâ ducarxa sarikâ.* 18. *ca pâni zarba vinda ba.* 19. *langân langân kâba ducarxana şe ke piştikâ ca rafeqe motavajeye ca kələ bin.* 20. *cairâşun fuza ža, manda, bardəşuna kələşun âdua bai.* 21. *ai dar ezâye camun bai pādâş dua xəjikâş.* 22. *can gəlai dua bamun.* 23. *a rafeqe a səngani ke ua vigənəstaba aşun pegata fərəşun âdua jada qəraq ke diarirâ itəfâq danəgənu.* 24. *kâbin ha xəji harde harde âme dâri bəni daivarun ki a xəja cin dârikâ virma vindəša sabade ila kamin.* 25. *aşmardəša vindəša ila kama.* 26. *deišta vindəša də se gəla xərdan kân əm xəjunkâ harde kân âme daivarun.* 27. *fəkrəş âkarda vindaša hala ime hala xəja dâri darastanin bamun bâju xəjmuna pegata yâ ne.* 28. *de ae âmin daivardin šin əm merdani manda u sabadani cai nakâ ba.*

7. He cleans that pear which had fallen to the ground and pours everything into the basket.
 8. He goes up the tree again.
 9. At this moment a man had put a rope over the head of a goat – it was a pregnant goat – and was leading it. He came and passed by. 10. From that direction also a young boy sat astride a bicycle, a hat on his head, came to pass under the tree. 11. He saw some of these pears, got greedy, dismounted, and took one of them to eat it for himself when he saw that the guy who was up the tree is not paying attention. 12. He picked up the basket like this and put it on the bicycle. 13. He set off and was going along. He saw that a young lady sat astride a bicycle was coming to meet him. 14. Paying attention to the girl as he was, he turned back in that direction, the wind blew, and the hat fell off his head. 15. Paying attention to the girl as he was, the bicycle hit a stone, fell, and the whole basket spilt. 16. The whole basket emptied. 17. Then two or three people, his friends, were coming from that direction, they came, gathered up the basket for him, poured into that basket, and put the pears on top of the bicycle for him. 18. His leg was wounded too. 19. He was going along limping with the bicycle when behind his friends noticed his hat. 20. They whistled for him, he stopped, they took the hat and handed it over to him. 21. In exchange, he gave him some of the pears as a reward. 22. He gave some to them. 23. Those friends picked up that stone which had fallen there and threw it to the side of the road so that the same thing would not happen to another. 24. They were eating those same pears and coming to pass under the tree when that pear-picker came down from the tree and saw that one of the baskets is missing. 25. He counted, and saw that one is missing. 26. He looked and saw that two or three children are eating some of these pears, and are coming to pass by. 27. He thought, saw that they have not yet arrived at the pear tree – should he say to them "Have you taken my pears or not?" 28. Anyway, they came, passed by and went, and this man was left with the basket in front of him.

Table of Contents

Editors' Preface	7
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Part I. Historical and Comparative Iranian Syntax

Definite Articles in Bactrian SALOUMEH GHOLAMI	11
Differential Object Marking in Bactrian NICHOLAS SIMS-WILLIAMS	23
The Emergence and Development of the Sogdian Perfect ANTJE WENDTLAND	39
Pronouns as Verbs, Verbs as Pronouns: Demonstratives and the Copula in Iranian AGNES KORN	53
Counterfactual Mood in Iranian ARSENIY VYDRIN	71

Part II. The Morpho-Syntax of Lesser-known Iranian Languages

A Glance at the Deixis of Nominal Demonstratives in Iranian Taleshi DANIEL PAUL	89
Valence Sensitivity in Pamirian Past-tense Inflection: A Realizational Analysis GREGORY STUMP, ANDREW HIPPISEY	103
Participle-Converbs in Iron Ossetic: Syntactic and Semantic Properties OLEG BELYAEV, ARSENIY VYDRIN	117
On Negation, Negative Concord, and Negative Imperatives in Digor Ossetic DAVID ERSCHLER, VITALY VOLK	135

Part III. Linguistics of Modern Persian

Reducing the Number of Farsi Epenthetic Consonants NAVID NADERI, MARC VAN OOSTENDORP	153
On Direct Objects in Persian: The Case of the Non- <i>râ</i> -Marked DOs SHADI GANJAVI	167
Finite Control in Persian MOHAMMADREZA PIROOZ	183
Bilingual Speech of Highly Proficient Persian-French Speakers FARZANEH DERAVID, JEAN-YVES DOMMERGUES	197
List of Contributors	213