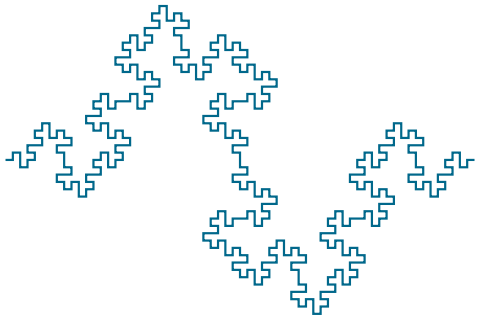
Asserted or Presupposed Existence: Evidence from Differential Object Marking in Persian

Masoud Jasbi



March 15, 2014

Road Map

- Introduction
  - DOM
  - Persian
  - Indefiniteness Markers *ye* and *i*, Object Marker *rā*
- Main Arguments
  - *ye* and *i* introduce an existential quantifier.
  - *rā* introduces an existential presupposition.
  - *rā*-marking and indefinite marking together introduce an existential quantifier and an existential presupposition.
- Scope Relations with Negation
  - Indefinites with *ye* and *i*
  - Indefinites with *rā*
  - Definites
- Concluding Remarks

Differential Object Marking (DOM)

- DOM languages do not mark grammatical objects uniformly.
- Object Marking can be obligatory, optional or ungrammatical, depending on the semantic features of the NP object.
- It is often argued that the marked objects are definite, specific, topical, or animate.

Spanish as an example

(1) a. Juan besó *(a) [María]$_{[+hum,+def]}$
John kissed A Mary

John kissed Mary.

b. Juan quiere (a) [un abogado]$_{[+hum,-def]}$
John wants A a lawyer

John wants **(a certain)** lawyer.

c. Juan destruyó (*a) [la cuidad]$_{[-hum]}$
John destroyed A the city

John destroyed the city. **[?]**

Background

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(6) [Amir]$_S$ [keik]$_{DO}$ rā be [barādar-ash]$_{IO}$ [dād-ø]$_V$
Amir cake ACC to brother-his gave-3.SG
"Amir gave the cake to his brother."

Diglossia

- There are two varieties of Persian: Formal (high variety) and Colloquial (low variety).

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- Formal Persian is used for writing, news, education, formal speech, or formal interactions.
- Colloquial Persian is used for informal conversations.

- The object marker has different forms depending on the variety.

Persian Object Marker	[+vowel] ___	[+consonant] ___
Formal Persian	*rā*	*rā*
Colloquial Persian	*ro*	*o*

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Morpheme Introduction

- In this talk I focus on three morphemes in Colloquial Persian:

1. *ye* : behaves very much like *a*(*n*) in English.
2. *i* : behaves very much like *any* in English.
3. *rā*

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- Persian indefinite markers *ye* and *i* introduce an existential quantifier.
- Persian accusative case marker *rā* introduces an existential presupposition.
- Direct objects marked with an indefinite marker and the accusative case introduce an existential quantifier and trigger an existential presupposition.

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- I show that the existential presupposition triggered by object marking is not cancelled when embedded under negation.
- I show that the existential quantifier introduced by the indefinite markers participates in the scope relations with negation.

Examples

▶ NP - *i*	Indefinite
▶ *ye* - NP - *i*	Indefinite
▶ *ye* - NP	Indefinite
▶ NP - *i* - *rā*	Presuppositional Indefinite
▶ *ye* - NP - *i* - *rā*	Presuppositional Indefinite
▶ *ye* - NP - *rā*	Presuppositional Indefinite
▶ ø - NP - ø- *rā*	Definite

NP-*i*

(7) man emruz [$_{NP}$kār]-i [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today work-*i* finish NEG-give-1.SG
"I didn't do any work today."

- ¬ [$\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge$ do(m,x)]

NP-*i*

(8) man emruz [$_{NP}$kār]-i [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today work-*i* finish NEG-give-1.SG
"I didn't do any work today."

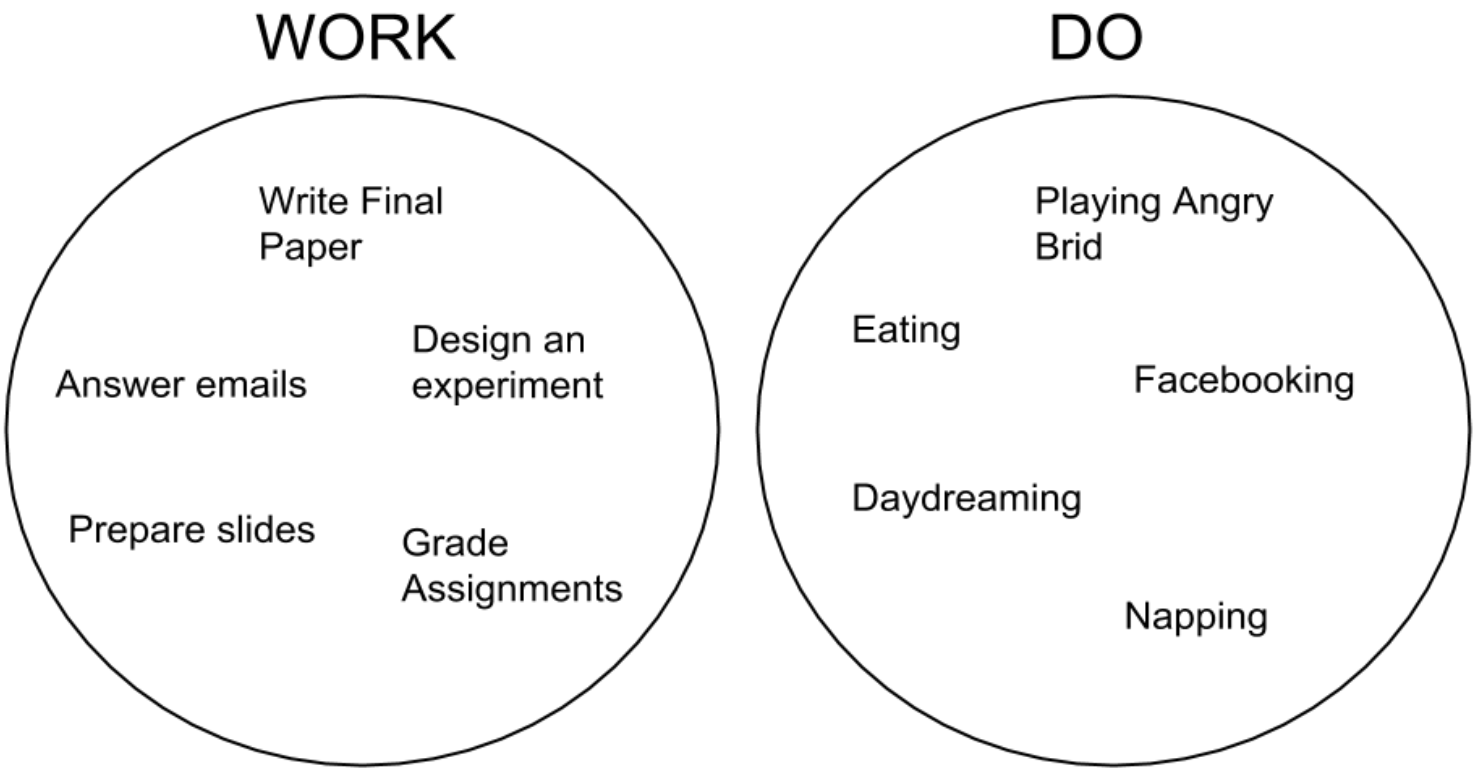
- $\neg$ [$\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge$ do(m,x)]
- $[\![\text{work}]\!] \cap [\![\text{do}]\!] = \emptyset$

NP-*i*

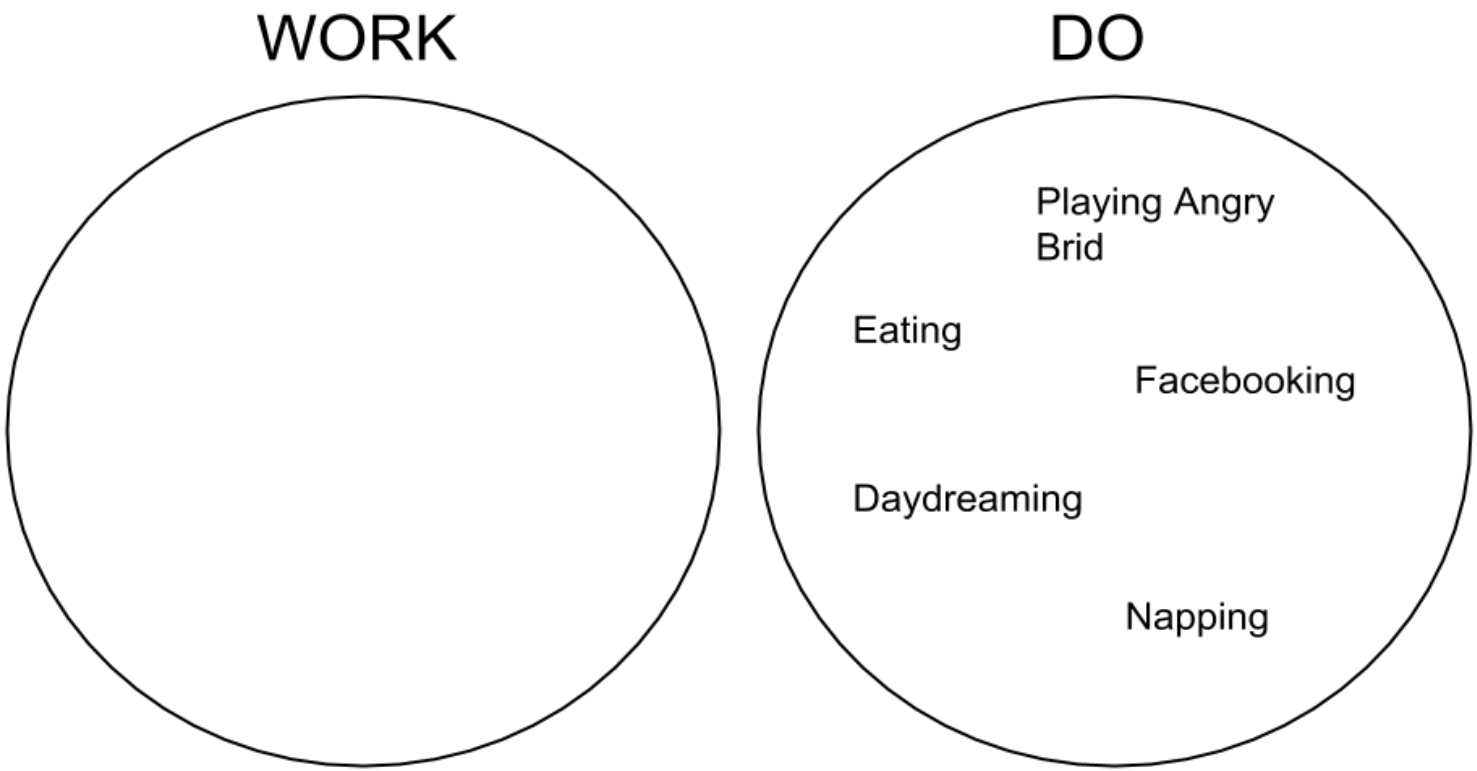
(9) man emruz [$_{NP}$kār]-i [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today work-*i* finish NEG-give-1.SG
"I didn't do any work today."

- $\neg$ [$\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge$ do(m,x)]
- $[\![\text{work}]\!] \cap [\![\text{do}]\!] = \emptyset$
- The set denoted by "work" can be empty or non-empty.

BUSY-LAZY STUDENT SCENARIO



Free Student Scenario



Free Student Scenario

(10) man emruz [kār]-i anjām na-dād-am chon kār-i
I today work-i finish NEG-give-1.SG because work-i
na-bud-ø ke anjām be-da-m
NEG-was-3.SG that finish SUBJ-give-1.SG

"I didn't do any work today because there was no work to do."

ye-NP-*i*

(11) man emruz ye-[$_{NP}$kār]-i [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today one- work-*i* finish NEG-give-1.SG
"There is some work I didn't do today."

- $\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge \neg$ do(m,x)

ye-NP-*i*

(12) man emruz ye-[$_{NP}$kār]-i [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today one- work-*i* finish NEG-give-1.SG
"There is some work I didn't do today."

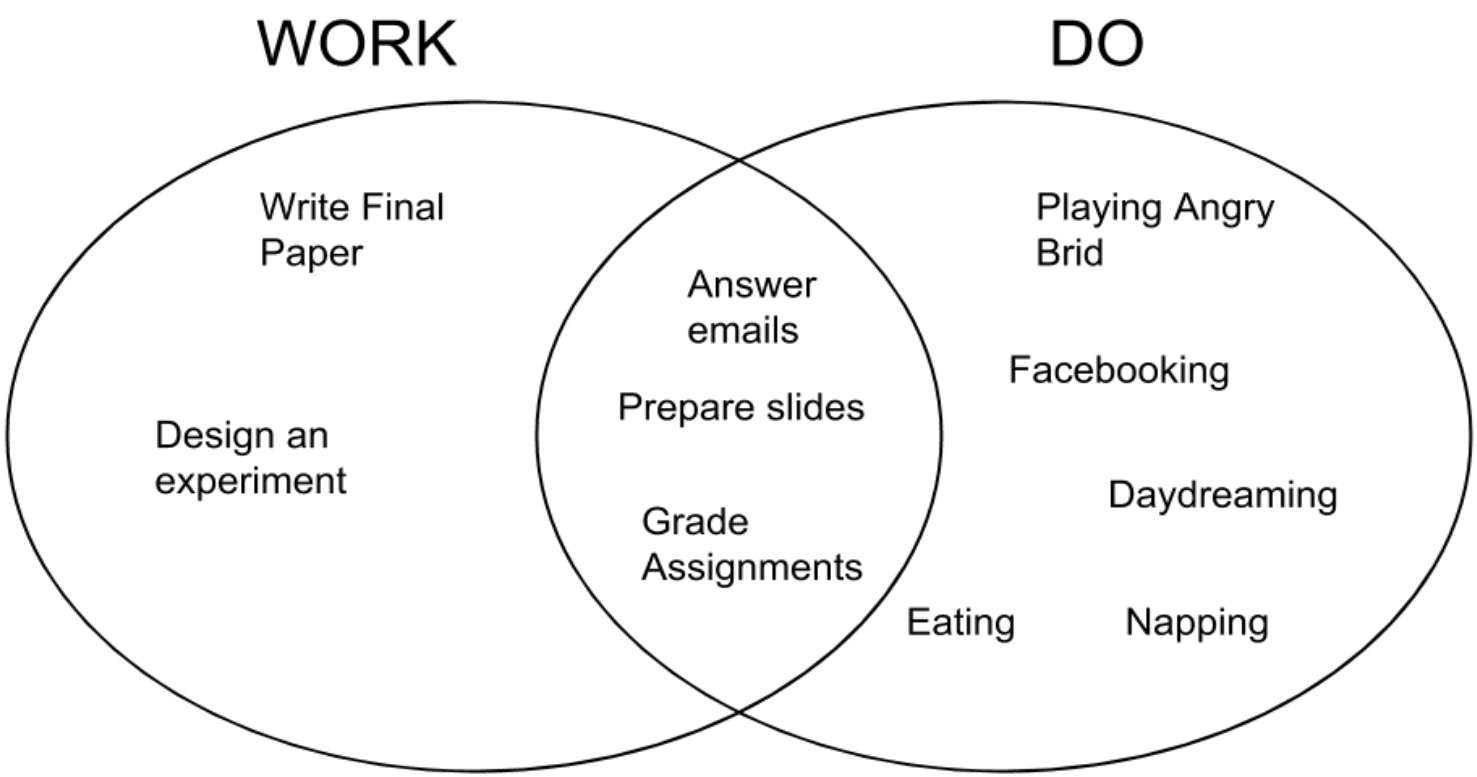
- $\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge \neg$ do(m,x)
- $[\![\text{work}]\!] \cap \neg [\![\text{do}]\!] \neq \emptyset$

ye-NP-*i*

(13) man emruz ye-[$_{NP}$kār]-i [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today one- work-*i* finish NEG-give-1.SG
"There is some work I didn't do today."

- $\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge \neg$ do(m,x)
- $[\![\text{work}]\!] \cap \neg [\![\text{do}]\!] \neq \emptyset$
- The intersection might be empty or not.

BUSY-WORKING STUDENT SCENARIO



ye-NP

(14) man emruz ye-[$_{NP}$kār] anjām na-dād-am
I today one- work finish NEG-give-1.SG

- "There is some work I didn't do today."
- "I didn't do a (single) task today."
  (special intonation)

- $\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge \neg$ do(m,x)
- $\neg$ [$\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge$ do(m,x)]

NP-*i*-ACC

(15) man emruz [$_{NP}$kār]-i ro [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today work-*i* ACC finish NEG-give-1.SG
"(I had work to do but) I didn't do any work today."

- $\partial(\exists x\ \text{work}(x)) \wedge \neg\ [\exists x\ \text{work}(x) \wedge \text{do}(\text{m},x)]$

NP-*i*-ACC

(16) man emruz [$_{NP}$kār]-i ro [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today work-*i* ACC finish NEG-give-1.SG
"(I had work to do but) I didn't do any work today."

- $\partial(\exists x\ \text{work}(x)) \wedge \neg\ [\exists x\ \text{work}(x) \wedge \text{do}(\text{m},x)]$
- $[\![\text{work}]\!] \cap [\![\text{do}]\!] = \emptyset$ (but $[\![\text{work}]\!] \neq \emptyset$)

NP-*i*-ACC

(17) man emruz [$_{NP}$kār]-i ro [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today work-*i* ACC finish NEG-give-1.SG
"(I had work to do but) I didn't do any work today."

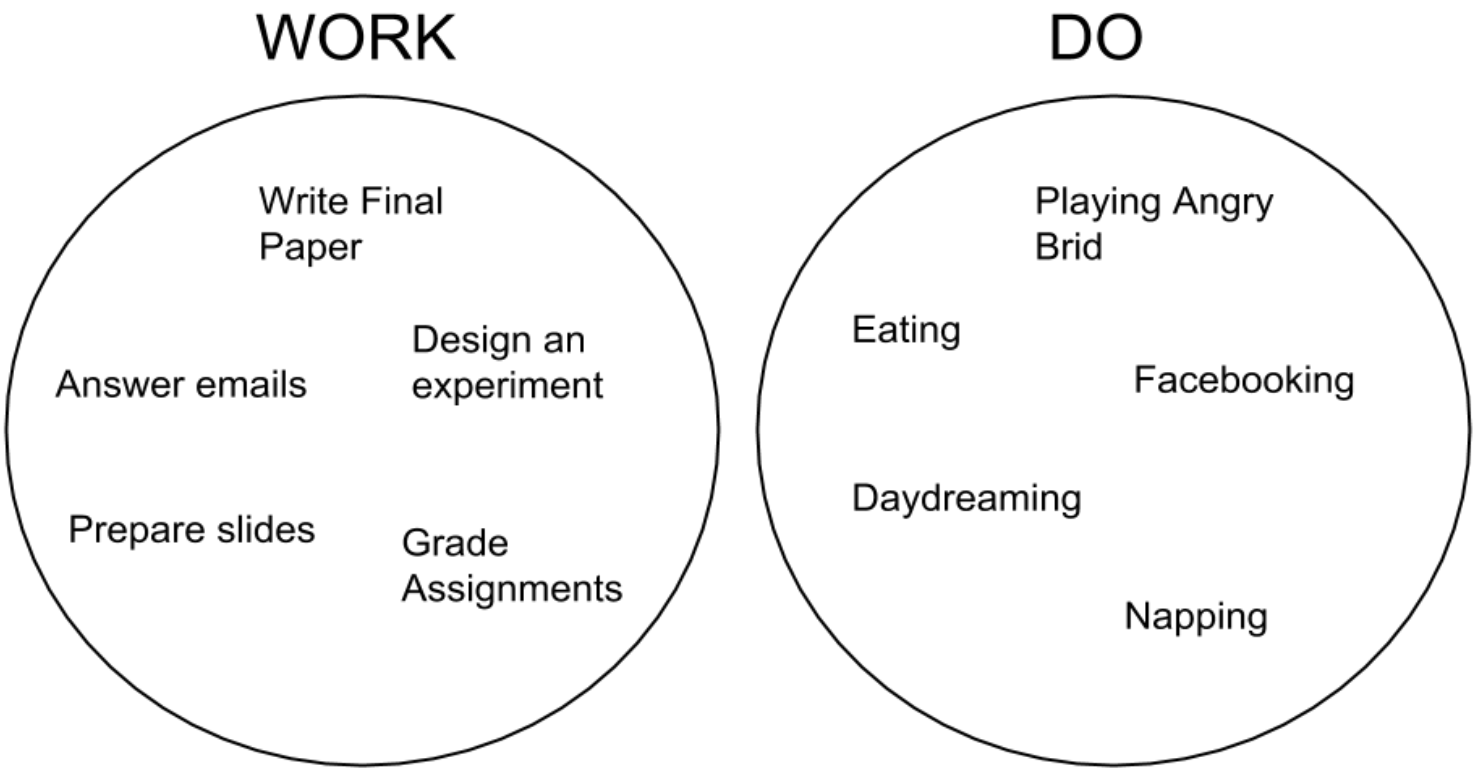
- $\partial(\exists x\ \text{work}(x)) \wedge \neg\ [\exists x\ \text{work}(x) \wedge \text{do}(\text{m},x)]$
- $[\![\text{work}]\!] \cap [\![\text{do}]\!] = \emptyset$ (but $[\![\text{work}]\!] \neq \emptyset$)
- The set denoted by "work" is presupposed to be non-empty.

NP-*i*-ACC

(18) man emruz [$_{NP}$kār]-i ro [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today work-*i* ACC finish NEG-give-1.SG
"(I had work to do but) I didn't do any work today."

- $\partial(\exists x\ \text{work}(x)) \wedge \neg\ [\exists x\ \text{work}(x) \wedge \text{do}(\text{m},x)]$
- $[\![\text{work}]\!] \cap [\![\text{do}]\!] = \emptyset$ (but $[\![\text{work}]\!] \neq \emptyset$)
- The set denoted by "work" is presupposed to be non-empty.
- Often used in contexts where both the speaker and addressee are familiar with the set of things the speaker had to do.

BUSY-LAZY STUDENT SCENARIO



BUSY-LAZY STUDENT SCENARIO

(19) # man emruz [kār]-i ro anjām na-dād-am chon
I today work-i ACC finish NEG-give-1.SG because
kār-i na-bud-ø ke anjām be-da-m
work-i NEG-was-3.SG that finish SUBJ-give-1.SG
"I didn't do any work today because there was no work to do."

ye-NP-*i*-ACC

(20) man emruz ye-[$_{NP}$kār]-i ro [$_{V}$anjām na-dād-am]
I today one- work-*i* ACC finish NEG-give-1.SG
"(I had work to do but) I didn't do any work today."

- $\partial(\exists x\ \text{work}(x)) \wedge \exists x\ \text{work}(x) \wedge \neg\ \text{do}(\text{m},x)$
- Often used in contexts where both the speaker and addressee are familiar with the set of things the speaker had to do.

ye-NP-ACC

(21) man emruz ye-[$_{NP}$kār] o anjām na-dād-am
I today one- work ACC finish NEG-give-1.SG

- "There is some work I didn't do today."
- "I didn't do a (single) task today."
  (special intonation)

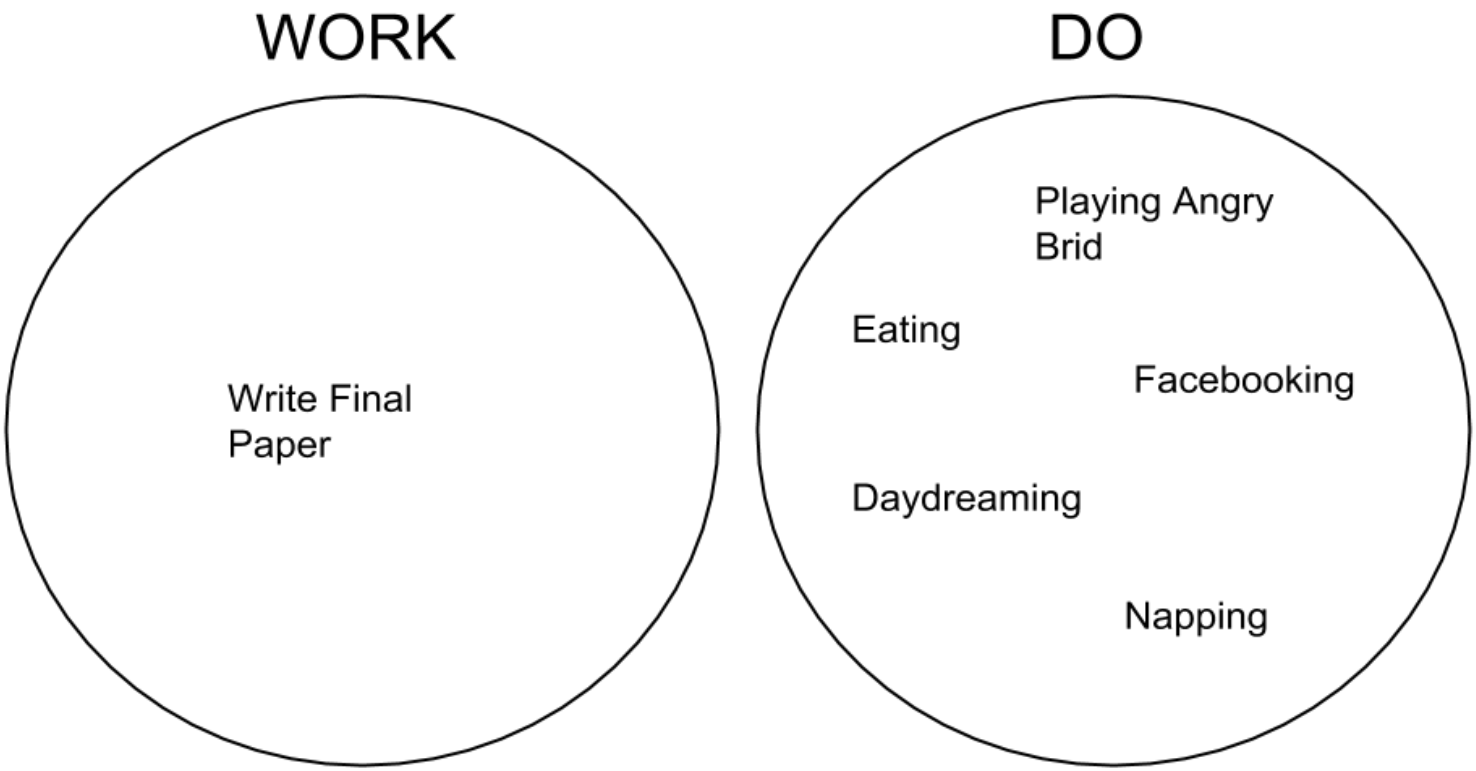
- $\partial(\exists x\ \text{work}(x)) \wedge \exists x\ \text{work}(x) \wedge \neg\ \text{do}(\text{m},x)$
- $\partial(\exists x\ \text{work}(x)) \wedge \neg\ [\exists x\ \text{work}(x) \wedge \text{do}(\text{m},x)]$

ø-NP-ø-Acc

(22) man emruz $\square$ -[$_{NP}$kār] $\square$ $\boxed{\text{o}}$ anjām na-dād-am
I today one - work *i* ACC finish NEG-give-1.SG
"I didn't do the work."

- ¬ do(m, ιx.work(x))

Definite Scenario



Examples

- NP - *i* : $\neg$ [$\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge$ do(m,x)]
- *ye* - NP - *i* : $\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge \neg$ do(m,x)
- *ye* - NP
- NP - *i* - $\boxed{r\bar{a}}$: $\partial(\exists x$ work(x)) $\wedge \neg$ [$\exists x$ work(x) $\wedge$ do(m,x)]
- *ye* - NP - *i* - $\boxed{r\bar{a}}$: $\partial(\exists x$ work(x)) $\wedge \exists x$ work(x) $\wedge \neg$ do(m,x)
- *ye* - NP - $\boxed{r\bar{a}}$
- ø - NP - ø- $\boxed{r\bar{a}}$: $\neg$ do(m, ιx.work(x))

Concluding Remarks

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- Persian object marker triggers the presupposition of existence in indefinites and definites.
- This account unifies the intuitions behind the previous analyses of *rā* as topic marker or definiteness marker.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Paul Kiparsky, Cleo Condoravdi, Eve Clark, Vera Gribanova, Chris Potts, Dan Lassiter, and James Collins for their help and support.