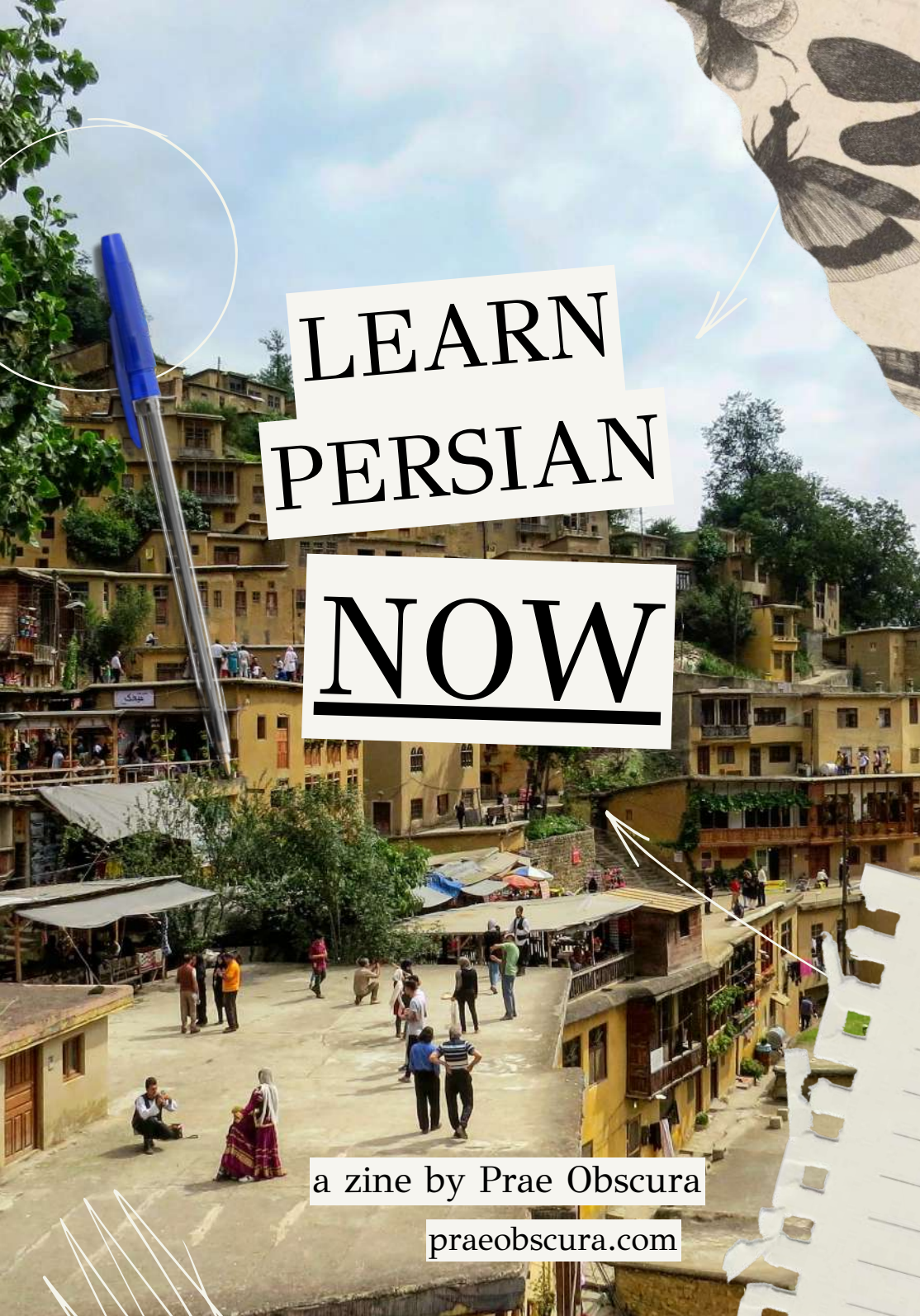




LEARN PERSIAN NOW

a zine by Prae Obscura

praeobscura.com



WHY?

Because I
want you to.

If English is
not your L1,
I love you.

(You should
still learn
Persian.)

In reading this zine, you have indicated to me that you are someone who speaks English.

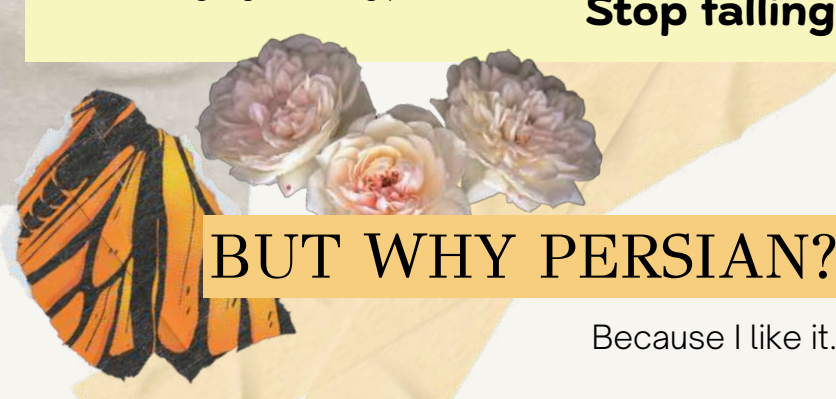
The internet is very English-centric.
Maybe you have noticed that.

(It is due to the imperialism.)

It is healthy to learn a language that is structurally different from your L1. For L1 English speakers, that includes Persian, Japanese, and Mandarin.

This is an attainable task, no matter what textbooks tell you. Here is a secret: **Language learning materials hate you.** They are written as if English speakers are uniquely infantile and incapable of learning any other language. They are incorrect. They are just coddling you so that you buy more language learning products.

Stop falling for it.



BUT WHY PERSIAN?

Because I like it.



شما انگلیسی
صحبت می کنید

BUT I DON'T KNOW THE PERSIAN LETTERS? I'M SCARED

Go here: persianlanguageonline.com/alphabet

I made an Anki deck to practice reading the letters. It is available through this zine's page on itch.io

I recommend using Custom Study to review the entire deck, once in the morning and once at night.

BUT—

- Your brain **does** continue to develop and change after the age of 25.
- Adults learn languages **more easily** than children, using the help of grammar.
- You **can** learn as many languages as you want.
- There is **no such thing** as a "fixed amount of space for languages" in the brain.
- You do not need to be good at it to **try**.

You should do what you want.

Persian uses an abjad writing system, by the way.



OK

WAIT, IS THIS ABOUT GRAMMAR?

You have fallen into my trap. I am locking the doors. I am now going to give you a primer on Persian grammar. Be quiet. This is for me.

EVERYONE SAYS GRAMMAR IS SCARY, THOUGH

WRONG. Grammar is a wonderful cheat sheet that lets you know which order to put the words in.

Observe the comparison of English left-to-right SVO word order and Persian right-to-left SOV word order:

English Word Order

subject verb direct object

Persian Word Order

verb direct object subject

Using this guideline, you can intuit that the English sentence

I read the book

would become something like

read the book I

in Persian. Which is true!

Example

Read all future examples from right to left.

خواندم کتاب را من

khaandam ketab-ra man

read the book I

Take note!

-ra does not translate to *the*.
-ra is a suffix that marks its paired word as a direct object.

Persian does not really have a word that 1-to-1 means *the*.

... IS THAT ALL?

Absolutely not.

Conjunctions in Persian function similarly to conjunctions in English.

They connect two clauses, or two different thoughts, in the same way.

من و تو
to va man
you and me

The **ezafe** is a vowel sound (-e / -ye) which links a word to other words that describe or modify it. Typically nouns, adjectives, or possessors.

The ezafe will not always be written. This is a sound that you will learn to include based on context.

کتاب بزرگ را کتاب علی
ra bozorg ketab-e Ali ketab-e
the big book Ali's book

You may have also noticed that the direct object marker **-ra** comes after any adjectives when they describe the direct object.

Adjectives come after the noun that they describe.

Adverbs usually come before the verb, after the subject and objects.

او زود آمد
oomad zud oo
came early he

WHAT ABOUT—

Expressions of time often appear at the beginning of the sentence, but *can* be placed before the verb instead.

من امروز رفتم

امروز من رفتم

raftam emruz man

raftam man emruz

went today I

went I today

Expressions of location and orientation

are also most often placed before the verb and the direct/indirect object.

کتاب روی میز است

ast miz ru-ye ketab

is table on book

Indirect objects are just objects that are not actively impacted by the verb. No need to use our friend -ra for those.

The beloved ezafe in action. Unlike the earlier example, this one is written.

Particle words are words that fall outside of the primary grammar categories. Many are prefixes and suffixes, like the negating *nemi-* or our good friend *-ra*.

من هم رفتم

raftam ham man

went also I

The word *aya* functions as a way to ask “yes or no” questions. It’s a bit like how, in English, you can proceed a question with “yes or no -ra” to get the point across.

1. Subject
2. Indirect Object
3. Direct Object
4. Verb

Question words are the “who, what, where, when, and why” type of word. They most often come at the beginning, but can also take the place of the concept they are questioning.

تو کجا رفتی ؟

? rafti koja to

? went where you

VERBS?

Prefixes and Suffixes

Verbs begin with their stems. Each verb has a present/future and past/perfect tense version of their stem word.

(Unless they only have one form, like *budan*.)

Here are some stems that will be used in the next couple of examples.

infinitive (dictionary form) <i>past stem -an -tan -dan</i>	Present and future stem	Past and perfect stem
budan = to be, to have done	---	bud
khordan = to eat/drink	khor	khord
kardan = to do, to make	kon	kard
bardaashtan = to pick up, to take away	barbaar	bardaasht
residan = to arrive, to reach	res	resid

Perfect tense means that you are talking about an action that has been completed.

است

Another way to say "to be" in formal or written Persian is *ast*.

Ast is used in a similar way to English *is*.

It is not often used in informal conversation. Instead, see the suffixes on the next page.

Prefixes are used to specify certain tenses, tones, and modifications in meaning.

Prefix	Function	Example
mi- (می)	Ongoing, habitual, present	mi-khoram = I eat / I'm eating
nemi- (نمی) na- (نا)	Negation	nemi-khoram = I don't eat na-khordam = I didn't eat
be- (بـ)	Commands and desires	be-khor! = eat! be-khaaham = that I want
farā- (فرا)	Beyond, across, abstraction	fara-amush kardan = to forget
bar- (بر)	Directional movement	bar-daashtan = to pick up
baz- (باز)	Repetition	baz-kardan = to open
pish- (پیش)	Forward, before	pish-bini kardan = to predict
ham- (هم)	Together, also, co-	ham-kaari kardan = to cooperate
sar- (سر)	Primary, head, beginning	sar-residan = to reach the top



Each verb also includes a **suffix**, which matches the subject that it is paired to. This suffix system allows you to leave out pronouns in informal speech, because they are implied by the verb.

Persian does not use gendered pronouns.

Suffix	Function	Present Tense Stem Example	Past Tense Stem Example
-am (م)	I / me	mikhor-am = I eat / I'm eating	khord-am = I ate
-i (ی)	you (singular / informal)	mikhor-i = you eat / you're eating	khord-i = you ate
-ad (د)	he / she / they (singular)	mikhor-ad = she eats / she is eating	khord = she ate
-im (یم)	we	mikhor-im = we eat / we're eating	khord-im = we ate
-id (ید)	you (plural / formal)	mikhor-id = you all eat / you're all eating	khord-id = you all ate
-and (ند)	they (plural)	mikhor-and = they eat / they're eating	khord-and = they ate

نمی خورم

nemikhoram

ne- mi- khor -am

<negation> <present tense> to eat/drink I

I don't eat

In addition to being our good friend the exafe, -e can be used with budan to turn a verb into an adjective, or to show that the verb action is complete, or to make the verb passive.

(These two examples, specifically, are left to right. Stay with me now.)

خورده بودم

khorde budam

khord -e bud -am

to eat/drink <completed> have I

I have eaten

Of course, there are other reasons why a suffix could be used. Verbs do not have a monopoly on the Persian suffix roster.

Ending	Function	Example
-an / -tan / -dan (ن)	Dictionary form of the word	khor-dan = to eat
-tar (تر)	More / English -er	bozorg-tar = bigger
-tarin (ترین)	Most / English -est	bozorg-tarin = biggest
-andegi (ندگی)	English -ing, -ness, or -hood	band-egi = servitude (from band = to bind)
-esh (ش)	Turns a verb or adjective into a noun	parvar-esh = upbringing (from parvar = to nurture)
-mand (مند)	having X / English -ful, -ist, -having	honar-mand = artist, artful (from honar = art)

WAIT, BUT I HEARD THAT PERSIAN FORMALITY CASES ARE SO HARD AND BAD AND SCARY AND

Stop being afraid of a language.

All languages use formal and colloquial registers.

Do you not know the difference between the style of writing in a professional report and a relaxed verbal conversation between friends?

The aversion to learning situational registers is **rooted in shame** and **the fear of starting**.

Also:

- Internalized racism towards the people who live in the region of your target language.
- Language learning resources exaggerating an impossible difficulty to sell you more nonsense.
- General fear of the Other.

You must accept that **you will be wrong**. Learn to ask more questions. You are forever a student, **just like everyone else**, **L1 speakers included**.

You will never know all of the grammar, nor all of the words, for any language. Such is life! There will always be more to learn.



Now, go learn Persian.

بله آقا خانم!



khanom

agha

baleh

ma'am

sir

yes

made by Prae Obscura

این نوشته توسط موجود کوچکم بررسی شد



*Talalog / Filipino speakers' combination of ma'am and sir into mamsir as a neutral equivalent delights me.

This is unrelated to Persian.

Aghakhanom is not a proper or grammatically sound Persian word, by formal standards, but language exists to be used and played with.



read more by Prae Obscura at

praeobscura.com